

Graduate Program in Social Psychology

I. MINIMUM PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS (revised 8/99)

The following are the minimum requirements for the graduate major and graduate minor in Social Psychology. Students are encouraged to take courses beyond these minimum requirements.

Minimum Requirements for the Major in Social Psychology

Coursework:

The required coursework consists of 19 hours of credit in Social Psychology, including: PSCH 512, 513, 516, four semesters of PSCH 519; plus two elective courses from PSCH 411, 415, 417, 515, 518, and 570. PSCH 518 may be repeated.

Other:

M.A. Thesis, Preliminary Examination, and Ph.D. Dissertation in Social Psychology. Beyond these, Departmental requirements also include a minor in another area of psychology, a first-year research apprenticeship, one year of coursework in statistics, and a course in the history of psychology.

Note:

Admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. under the sponsorship of the Social Psychology Division (i.e., as a Major in Social Psychology) requires completion of the coursework in Social Psychology specified above, with an average grade of B, and a preliminary examination that entails writing a theoretical or review paper in an area within Social Psychology chosen by the student with the approval of the Division. In order to take the preliminary examination, students must have first completed 3 of the 4 core courses, and have an average grade of B in all Social Psychology courses. Students are expected to propose a topic for this paper by Wednesday of the first week of the Fall Semester of their third year in residence, and to submit the completed paper to the Division Chair by the end of the fifteenth week of the Fall Semester.

Minimum Requirements for the Minor in Social Psychology (revised 12/96)

Coursework:

The required coursework consists of 11 hours of credit in Social Psychology, including: Two semesters of PSCH 519, plus one or both of PSCH 512 and 513, and one or two elective courses from PSCH 411, 415, 417, 515, 518, and 570. PSCH 518 may be repeated. If both PSCH 512 and 513 are taken, only one elective course is required. If just one of PSCH 512 or 513 is taken, then two elective courses are required.

II. COURSES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Note:

This list does not include courses that students may take from social psychologists in other parts of the University.

Core Courses:

PSCH 512 (3): Attitudes and Social Cognition
PSCH 513 (3): Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes
PSCH 516 (3): Research Methods in Social Psychology
PSCH 519 (1): Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar

Elective courses that can be taken to fulfill Major and Minor requirements:

PSCH 411 (3): Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Racism
PSCH 415 (3): Health and Social Behavior
PSCH 417 (3): Psychology and Law
PSCH 515 (3): Perspectives on Women and Gender
PSCH 518 (3): Seminar In Social Psychology (May be Repeated) *
PSCH 570 (3): Personality

* Examples of Recent Seminar Topics (PSCH 518)

Research on Psychological Defense
Small Group Performance
Evaluating Experts
Children and the Law
Issues in Eyewitness Testimony
The Regulation of Advertising
Close Relationships

Other related courses:

PSCH 517 (4): Social Psychology of Education
PSCH 539 (1): Psychology-Law Brown Bag
PSCH 595 (1): Social Psychology Journal Club

III. SELECTED COURSE DESCRIPTIONS (revised 2/97)

The following are descriptions of selected course offered for graduate credit in the Social Psychology program. These descriptions are more complete and informative than those that appear in the University's Graduate Catalog.

PSCH 411: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Racism. This graduate level seminar explores the social psychological nature of stereotyping, prejudice, and racism. The course focuses on psychological research and theory related to topics such as the expression of racism in society; the development of prejudice and racism in children; social, personality, and cognitive perspectives on stereotyping and prejudice; psychological consequences of prejudice for its targets; and prejudice reduction. Readings for the course consist of empirical, theoretical, and review articles from a variety of journals and books. Three to four common readings per class are supplemented by readings presented as special reports by seminar participants. Emphasis is placed on seminar members' active participation in discussions of the implications of readings for understanding the field.

PSCH 417: Psychology and Law. Psychology and Law are closely related. Psychology is the study of human behavior. Law is a primary instrument used by society to control and evaluate human behavior. Psychology and law often appear to be in conflict, however, because of differences in methods and goals. In this course, we examine the convergences and conflicts between psychology and law as we look at psychological research in and on law, and at the responses of law to psychological research. Psychological research addresses a variety of topics in law that become the substance of dispute in legal decisions (e.g., predictions of dangerousness, eyewitness testimony, competency, the defense of insanity). Psychologists also conduct research on law --- on the operation of the legal system (e.g., jury selection, procedural justice, decision biases in judgment) and how legal decisions can be affected by other societal institutions (e.g., the media). These topics cross the traditional sub-disciplines in psychology (e.g., social, cognitive, clinical) and we examine examples from all of these areas.

PSCH 512: Attitudes and Social Cognition. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to contemporary theory and research in attitudes and social cognition. The social cognition approach involves directly examining the cognitive processes underlying social-psychological phenomena. In this course, we learn about and critically analyze what is unique about this approach to social psychology. Course assignments and assigned readings (3-4 papers a week from primary sources) encourage students to think about what the social cognition approach has to offer for their own particular programs of research.

PSCH 513: Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes. This is an introductory, graduate-level course in interpersonal relations and group processes. It surveys a broad range of topics, including aggression, social facilitation and social loafing, social comparison, in-group/out-group biases, group formation and socialization processes, distributive justice, minority/majority influence processes, social power, coalition formation, leadership, and group problem-solving/decision-making. These topics are examined with two goals in mind: (a) to provide an in-depth analysis of one or more theories or perspectives that dominate each topic area, and (b) to develop an appreciation for some of the methodological approaches that have been used to investigate these topics empirically. To help accomplish these goals, the typical reading assignment for each topic (week) consists of one or two book chapters or review articles that examine the relevant literature in some detail and/or presents a theory on the topic in question, plus several journal articles that report recent empirical studies in that topic area. Class sessions are devoted to a discussion of these readings, and to consideration of related issues and topics.

PSCH 515: Theoretical Perspectives on Women and Gender. This graduate-level course reviews a number of theories of gendered behavior and considers their application to women's lives. We begin with a consideration of epistemological and methodological issues in the psychological study of women. We then critically examine research on sex differences, including considering why the question of sex differences has dominated the field of psychology of women. We consider sociobiology (and biosocial and evolutionary) approaches, social learning and social role theory, attribution theory, psychoanalysis, cognitive development theory, and other theories, including those that focus on power and status as they apply to the construction of gender. The aim is to a) develop a critical appreciation of psychological research on women and gender; and b) examine competing theoretical explanations for gendered behavior. Readings consist primarily of recent journal articles, which we critically discuss in class. Each student writes a review paper on a topic related to the course material.

PSCH 516: Research Methods in Social Psychology. This course covers the multiple ways of formulating questions, constructing theoretical predictions, and designing research in social psychology. We discuss randomized and quasi-experimental design, laboratory and field experiments, sampling, scaling, questionnaire construction, measurement issues, and meta-analysis, as well as ethical guidelines and ways to write up the results of research. Although selections from texts provide some of the basics, our primary focus is on journal articles that represent instances of the various types of research methods. Students can nominate studies for inclusion in the course, and studies selected for inclusions are inserted so that they fit with the methodological issues we are covering at that point in the course.

PSCH 518: Seminar In Social Psychology. This is a special topics seminar that is taught frequently (once or twice a year), with a different topic covered each time it is offered. The following are three sample topics from recent offerings.

Research on Psychological Defense. We review research on the mental maneuvers people use to suppress threatening thoughts, reinterpret their experiences in a self-serving way, and rewrite their personal histories. Particular emphasis is placed on learning about how these phenomena can be investigated empirically. Over the last two or three decades, social cognition researchers have investigated how people perceive themselves, assess their own abilities and traits, form impressions of others, and make causal attributions for behavior. The premise of this course is that the tools and concepts of social cognition can be used to broaden our thinking about how people manage to avoid dwelling on painful thoughts and experiences and what the consequences are of doing so.

The Social Psychology of Small Group Performance. This course is concerned with the performance of small groups. A small group consists of two or more (but less than 20) people who work cooperatively in pursuit of a common goal. Performance is defined as the completion of any kind of task, although emphasis is given to tasks that have a strong intellectual component (e.g., decision making). Performance implies an underlying evaluative (good-bad) dimension. This course deals with a variety of factors that affect member participation, group interaction, and group performance. Topics covered include: brainstorming, problem solving, social decision schemes, collective rule induction, information exchange and integration during discussion, computer models of group discussion and decision-making processes, the impact of various

discussion procedures and decision making rules, the impact of group goals and group cohesiveness, groupthink, the influence of opinion minorities, group polarization, group learning, collective memory, task interdependence, coordination, and group potency.

Responsibility and Justice. Who deserves government help in securing health care or in finding a job? In a world of finite resources, policy makers must frequently weigh competing claims on the public purse. They are expected to represent the "community's interest" and to distribute aid "fairly." This course will cover social psychological theory as it applies to how people believe both the benefits and burdens of social cooperation should be distributed (theories of distributive justice), how the perceived fairness of procedures influences perceptions of political outcomes (theories of procedural justice), and current perspectives on the interactive role of procedures and outcome distributions. The course will apply social psychological theory in an attempt to understand and make predictions about people's values and beliefs about distributive social policy. In addition to social psychological perspectives, we will read selected articles from political science, philosophy, and economics. Course requirements will include weekly readings, participating in class discussion, responsibility for leading seminar sessions, and a research proposal.

PSCH 519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar. The social psychology brown bag is used in a variety of ways to serve the developing professional needs of our students and to facilitate division cohesion and sense of community. The brown bag is often used as a vehicle for students to present research or research proposals, give practice conference or job talks, and to try out ideas in a friendly and supportive, yet intellectually critical atmosphere. We also use the brown bag for occasional faculty presentations, invited scholars from outside the department of special interest to our group (e.g. we have recently had guest speakers from Northwestern, DePaul, and Washington University), and to also have occasional sessions devoted to specific issues of professional development such as how to prepare one's vita, how to apply for external grants, and issues to consider when on the job market.

PSCH 549: Psychology and Law Brown Bag Seminar. This weekly seminar provides an informal forum for a range of activities related to psychology and law. Faculty and students present their own research, exchange research ideas, take field trips to legally relevant settings such as local courts, and participate in group discussions of recently published work. The seminar is enriched with speakers from outside the Department of Psychology. Topics of focus have included jurors' reactions to scientific evidence, risk and rehabilitation for juvenile delinquency, child abuse and neglect, legal response to rape, community policing, deceptive advertising, sexual harassment, race and jury decisions, foster care placement policy, and children's eyewitness testimony. The seminar is optional for all graduate students and required for students completing the specialty minor in Psychology and Law.

PSCH 570: Personality. This is a graduate-level survey course in Personality Psychology. The goal of the course is to explore the concepts, methodologies, issues, controversies, theories, and research findings that make up the contemporary field of Personality Psychology. Although we will cover the major theoretical approaches to Personality, it should be noted that our primary goal is not to survey traditional personality theories, but to examine the current state of the field of Personality Psychology. Typically, we will begin by examining "classic" conceptions of

personality and challenges to these approaches that arose in the late 1960's. We then will examine a number of conceptual and methodological advances resulting from these challenges. Following this, we will consider a series of broad theoretical perspectives. In each case, we will focus on specific phenomena that are highlighted by the theory and are current areas of investigation. Finally, we will examine some topics that cut across traditional theoretical boundaries.

PSCH 595: Journal Club. We all like to "keep up with the journals", but many of us find it hard to actually do so. The Journal Club is a weekly meeting at which we informally discuss a recent article, book chapter, or unpublished manuscript. Particular themes have sometimes developed over the course of a semester, but the most important thing is to expose us to new research and ideas in social psychology.

IV. SAMPLE COURSE SEQUENCE IN YEARS 1 THROUGH 4 (revised 8/99)

Year 1	
<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
513: Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes (3 hrs)	516: Research Methods in Social Psychology (3 hrs)
519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar (1 hr)	519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar (1 hr)
541: Introduction to Computing (1 hr)	xxx: Social Division Elective Course (3 hrs)
543: Advanced Statistics (4 hrs)	545: Multivariate Statistics (3 hrs)
591: Research Apprenticeship(2 hrs)	591: Research Apprenticeship(3 hrs)
508: Colloquium on the Teaching of PSCH(1 hr)	
Total = 12 Hours	Total = 13 Hours

Notes on Year 1:

1. University regulations require that all graduate students receiving a tuition and fee waiver in a given academic term be registered for at least 12 credit hours in that term.
2. Psychology 512, 513, and 516 are offered every other year. Thus, with respect to these three courses, the sequencing for Years 1 and 2 is reversed for students entering in alternating academic years.
3. The Social Division Elective Courses are Psychology 411, 415, 417, 515, 518, and 570. Psychology 518 may be repeated.
4. Students are strongly encouraged to propose their Master's Thesis Research to committee by the end of Year 1.

Year 2	
<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
512: Attitudes and Social Cognition (3 hrs)	519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar (1 hr)
519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar (1 hr)	xxx: Social Division Elective Course (3 hrs)
xxx Minor/Breadth Course (3 hrs)	xxx Minor/Breadth Course (3 hrs)
xxx Minor/Breadth Brown Bag Seminar (1 hr)	xxx Minor/Breadth Brown Bag Seminar (1 hr)
598: Master's Thesis Research (4 hrs)	598: Master's Thesis Research (4 hrs)
Total = 12 Hours	Total = 12 Hours

Notes on Year 2:

1. Most or all required Social Division coursework should be completed by the end of Year 2.
2. Students are expected to complete their Master's Thesis Research by the end of Year 2.
3. Students are encouraged to consider writing their Social Psychology Preliminary Exam during the Summer between Years 2 and 3.

Year 3	
<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
596: Independent Study --- Prelim Exam Paper (7 hrs)	519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar --(1 hr) *
519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar-(1 hr) *	xxx: Additional Social Division Elective Course (3 hrs) *
xxx: Minor/Breadth Course (3 hrs)	xxx: Other Elective Course (3 hrs)
599: Dissertation Research (1 hr)	599: Dissertation Research (5 hrs)
Total = 12 Hours	Total = 12 Hours

Notes on Year 3:

1. Courses marked with an asterisk are recommended, but not required, and may be substituted.
2. Departmental regulations require that the Preliminary Exam be completed by the end of Year 3. Social Division students are encouraged to complete it either during the summer before Year 3, or in the Fall of Year 3.
3. Students are strongly encouraged to propose their Dissertation Research to committee by the end of Year 3.

Year 4	
<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
505: Advanced History of Psychology (3 hrs)	519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar --(1 hr) *
519: Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar - (1 hr) *	xxx: Additional Social Division Elective Course (3 hrs) *
599: Dissertation Research (8 hrs)	599: Dissertation Research (8 hrs)
Total = 12 Hours	Total = 12 Hours

Notes on Year 4:

1. Courses marked with an asterisk are recommended, but not required, and may be substituted.
2. Students may wish to consider taking the teaching practicum during Year 4.
3. Most or all requirements for the Ph.D. should be completed by the end of Year 4.

V. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION (revised 8/99)

Admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. under the sponsorship of the Social Psychology Division (i.e., as a graduate major in Social Psychology) requires completion of a Preliminary Examination. The "Prelim" in Social Psychology entails writing a review or theoretical paper on a topic in Social Psychology that is chosen by the student and approved by the Division. This document describes the structure and timing of the Social Prelim.

Prerequisites:

In order to take the Social Prelim, the student must have first completed 3 of the 4 core courses in Social Psychology (512, 513, 516 and four semesters of 519), and have an average grade of B in all Social Psychology courses. Students are encouraged to take the Prelim during the Summer between their second and third years in the program, or in the Fall of their third year. This should make it possible for most students to complete all four of the required courses, plus one or more elective courses in Social Psychology, prior to taking the Prelim. It is also desirable (but not mandatory) to have finished all or most of the work on the M.A.Thesis before beginning the Prelim. In no case, however, will a student be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. until the M.A.Thesis is successfully defended.

The Nature of the Social Prelim:

There are two main types of Social Prelim Exams. Both are problem-oriented, critical, and integrative, rather than simply descriptive. The first is a critical analysis of the empirical literature in a carefully-circumscribed area of Social Psychology that is written in the style of a Psychological Bulletin article. This analysis may take either a narrative form, or the form of a quantitative meta-analysis. In either case, the topic area should be defined narrowly enough that a truly comprehensive, and fully up-to-date, critical review of the current empirical literature

bearing on the student's research question can be prepared. The second type of Prelim is a theory paper written in the style of a Psychological Review article. A student may be at a stage where he/she can propose a novel theoretical idea in a particular area of Social Psychology. In doing this, the student would draw upon empirical findings that bear upon the new theory, and compare and contrast the proposed new theory with other relevant theoretical notions currently found in the literature.

The Prelim Proposal:

It is necessary to get the topic of the Prelim paper approved by the Division prior to writing it. This is done by submitting a Prelim Proposal.

In developing the Prelim Proposal, the student is welcome to talk to anyone and everyone. It is expected that the student will discuss his/her topic with, and show a draft of the proposal to, his/her Advisor. The finished Proposal is then submitted to the Division Chair, who appoints a 2-person Reading Subcommittee (the student's Advisor may not be a member of the Subcommittee). The Subcommittee will provide the student with feedback on the proposal, and will be responsible for evaluating the final Prelim paper and making a recommendation to the Division as a whole.

The Prelim Proposal should describe what the student intends to do in sufficient detail that the Reading Subcommittee will have a clear understanding of what questions are being addressed and how the student intends to go about answering them. It is to the student's advantage to provide enough detail on the proposed paper and the references to be consulted that the Subcommittee can detect and share with the student any concerns about the scope and/or content of the project. The typical length of proposals approved in the past has been roughly 5-7 pages, though there is no formal restriction on length.

Once the Subcommittee approves the Proposal, the student should proceed independently. This means that neither the Subcommittee nor other faculty, including the Advisor, will provide further advice or assistance as the student writes the Prelim paper. Should it become necessary to make a change in what was proposed, the student may submit a written Change of Proposal to the Subcommittee, and the Subcommittee will decide whether or not the proposed change is acceptable.

Quality and Length:

It is expected that the Prelim paper will be of sufficient quality that it reasonably could be submitted for publication to a professional journal (though it need not actually be submitted to pass the Prelim). However, the paper may be somewhat shorter than the length of a typical Psychological Bulletin or Psychological Review article. A reasonable target length for the final Prelim paper is roughly 25 pages (give or take a few). Copies of successful Prelim papers (and Proposals) are available for inspection from the Division Chair.

Timing:

Students are encouraged to write the Prelim during the summer between their second and third years in the program. Alternatively, students may write it in the Fall of the third year. Students are strongly discouraged from waiting until the Spring of the third year to write the Prelim, although this is permitted under Departmental rules. Departmental rules do not allow extensions beyond the 7th semester.

Note that the Social Division requires all graduate students who want to teach an undergraduate course in Social Psychology at UIC to have first passed their Prelim. In order to teach during the Spring term of the third year, therefore, a student must have taken the Prelim during the preceding Summer. (Because advanced registration for Spring courses takes place before the end of the Fall semester, and because the Division will not allow graduate students who have not completed the Prelim even to be scheduled to teach an undergraduate social psychology course, it is not possible to take the Prelim in the Fall and then teach in the following Spring semester). For students taking the Prelim in the Summer, the Prelim Proposal is due by Noon on Friday of the 12th week of instruction of the preceding Spring semester (three weeks before the end of instruction). Three copies should be submitted to the Division Chair. Three copies of the final Prelim paper, also submitted to the Division Chair, are due by Noon on the Friday exactly 14 full weeks after that.

For students taking the Prelim during either the Fall or Spring semesters, the Prelim Proposal is due by Noon on Friday of the 1st week of instruction, and the final Prelim paper is due by Noon on Friday of the 15th (last) week of instruction. Submit three copies of each to the Division Chair by their respective due dates.

If asked by a prelim committee to provide a revision of the prelim proposal, that revision is due 1 week after receiving feedback. Students must begin the prelim after receiving feedback on this revision. If a revision is requested, the deadline for submitting the prelim paper will be 14 full weeks after the revised proposal is approved. The student should be advised that if the deadline is extended, the winter (in the case of a fall prelim) or summer (in the case of a spring prelim) breaks may prevent divisional review of the prelim and the student's overall case for advancement to candidacy until the beginning of the next semester.

For students taking the Prelim during either the Fall or Spring semesters, the Prelim Proposal is due by Noon on Friday of the 1st week of instruction, and the final Prelim paper is due by Noon on Friday of the 15th (last) week of instruction. Submit three copies of each to the Division Chair by their respective due dates.

Evaluation:

As noted above, the Prelim Reading Subcommittee is responsible for evaluating the Prelim paper, and for making a recommendation to the Division. It is the Social Division as a whole, however, that ultimately decides whether or not a paper is acceptable. Obviously, the Reading Committee's recommendation carries tremendous weight in this decision. However, the Division will also take into consideration the student's overall progress and performance in the program to

date. The student will not be considered to have passed the Prelim until this Divisional review is passed.

The Division must assign the paper itself to one of three evaluative categories: Pass, Revision Requested, or Fail. The first category needs little explanation, except to say that in very unusual circumstances, where an especially meritorious paper deserves special commendation, the Division may elect to award the paper a "High Pass." The second category is reserved for those papers that, while although not completely acceptable in their current form, nevertheless show substantial promise, and in the estimation of the Division, can be improved to a passing status with relatively little additional work. If this category is selected, the student will be given a brief period of additional time, typically not more than 4-6 weeks, to return an acceptable revision. Note that although a "Revision Requested" should be viewed as an encouraging sign, it is not a guarantee that the final revision will be accepted as a Pass. The revision will be evaluated independently, and must pass on its own merits. Finally, the third evaluative category, Fail, requires that an additional decision be made about whether the student will be allowed to retake the Prelim at a later date. The prelim may be retaken only with the permission of the Division, and in no case may it be retaken more than once.