

# FRESNO STATE

## Psychology

### What is Psychology?

- Psychology is the scientific study of the human mind and behavior
- Science, not "intuition"
- Broad field, including quantitative, personality, cognitive, developmental, social psychology
- Not just about therapy/abnormal psychology/"helping people"
- Good fit for those with an interest in scientific thinking and an ability to think critically and deeply about the human experience

### Careers in Psychology: B.A.

- Human services worker
- Social worker
- Child care worker
- Group home worker
- Human resources trainer
- Parole officer
- Juvenile intake worker
- Public relations
- Career services

### Careers in Psychology: M.A. or Ed.S.

- Community college instructor
- Research analyst
- Applied behavior analyst
- School psychologist

### Careers in Psychology: Ph.D. or Psy.D.

- Research psychologist
- Psychology professor
- Clinical psychologist



# Psychology Major at Fresno State

## Faculty

- 20 full-time faculty, all with Ph.D.s, with specialties including cognitive, developmental, quantitative, school, clinical, and social psychology
- Many active researchers and/or practitioners



## Students

- 1,200 undergraduates; 80 graduates
- Average class size 45

## Strengths

- Outstanding teaching
- Strong commitment to research
- Extensive student involvement in research
- Psi Chi; Psychology Student Union; ABA club
- Honors program
- Central California Autism Center
- Good preparation for and placement in M.A., Ed.S., and Ph.D. programs
- Genuine dedication to quality experience for students, including frequent advising re: courses and career guidance



## People to know

- Student Advisors: Angelica Gil, Yia Lee, Sarah Pantoya, & Jazmin Rios
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- Graduate Advisor: Karl Oswald, Ph.D.                      koswald@csufresno.edu                      278-4853
- Chair: Constance Jones, Ph.D.                      conniej@csufresno.edu                      278-2691
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# What is Psychology?

Psychology is a science associated with human thoughts and behaviors. Psychologists at all levels of training tend to be interested in explaining, understanding, and predicting how humans (and animals) think, feel, act.



Many of us are drawn to psychology out of emotional and intellectual interest in humans and humanity. Consequently, we like to think of the discipline as a great combination of the heart and head.

So, no matter what career you pursue, you will be expected to be able to analyze situations and make intelligent choices; courses in psychology should help you develop good critical thinking skills to aid in the informed decision making.

## Is Psychology a Science?

YES! Psychology is both a distinct, unique, and diverse field. Psychology is a social science and therefore should provide you with a good understanding of the benefits of the scientific method.

Psychology offers students a wide range of practical and professional skills in addition to a solid liberal education such as literacy, numeracy, computer literacy, information-finding skills, research skills, measurement skills, contextual awareness, interpersonal awareness, problem-solving skills, critical evaluation, higher order analysis, and practical skills.

## My Future with Psychology

### Will I be able to get a job with an undergraduate psychology degree?

Nationally, the vast majority of psychology majors is employed and report being satisfied with the length of time to employment (usually within three months of graduation). You might not be working directly in a psychology-related field, but employers are interested in the skills that psychology majors tend to have.

### Will I make any money?

Psychology majors do tend to make less money than many other college graduates. Nationally, average starting salaries for individuals with bachelor's degrees are in the low 40s (that's in the thousands), whereas psychology majors tend to start at salaries in the mid 30s.

There are four primary ways to increase your earning potential as a person with an undergraduate degree in psychology.

1. Consider private sectors jobs, particularly jobs in the business world (e.g., sales), public sector jobs tend to pay less.
2. A master's or doctorate degree may be financially beneficial.
3. Aim high! Superior academic records tend to begin at higher salaries.
4. Geographic flexibility and job type flexibility will enhance your earning potential.



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# Majoring in Psychology?

## What does it mean to major in psychology?

Many students think that they will be psychologists when they graduate with an undergraduate degree in psychology. Unfortunately, no, you **must** have an advanced degree to be a psychologist.


In fact, to be called a psychologist you would need a master's, specialist, or doctoral degree in psychology, and to be practicing psychologist you would also need a license or certification. However, you will be able to work in psychology related areas with a bachelor's degree in psychology.

BUT psychology is a good background for many fields. Employers are looking for students with good problem-solving skills who can write and speak well. Psychology provides an excellent training in those areas because it is a good all-purpose liberal arts major. Many students go into psychology because they "want to help people". Great! However, there are many ways to help people and many jobs that involve people-skills. You need not necessarily get a psychology-related job in order to use the skills you will acquire.

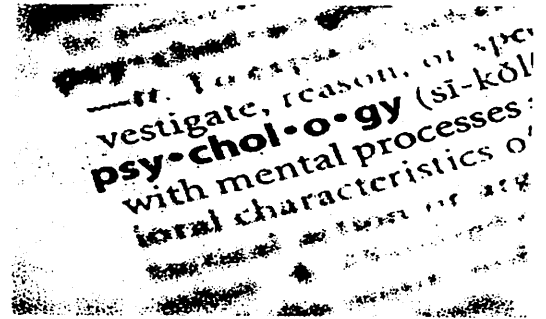
Currently, slightly over half of the doctorate degrees (PhDs or PsyDs) in psychology are in the clinical and/or counseling area, but the rest span a wide variety of fields (e.g., developmental, experimental, neuroscience, etc.). Most of the programs in these areas are extremely competitive and graduate training is expensive. We don't want to frighten you off, but we want you to be sure that you've thoroughly explored what your options are with an undergraduate degree in psychology before you make one of the biggest decisions of your life. We also don't want you to overlook the master's programs in applied areas that may be a good choice (e.g., school psychology, school counselor, marriage and family therapy, rehabilitation, etc.) most of which are a two- to three-year commitment.

## So, why should I be a psychology major?

There are several reasons to major in psychology. Psychology might be a good major if you:

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- Want to signal employers that you have an interest in people and interpersonal skills.
  - Want to work in human services.
  - Want to continue on in a psychology-related graduate program
  - Want to double major with another field (e.g. biology) to combine several interests.
  - Just find the subject fascinating.
  - Are planning a career in a field that requires people skills (such as sales or working with children).
  - Want to develop quantitative skills for use in a variety of social science research settings.

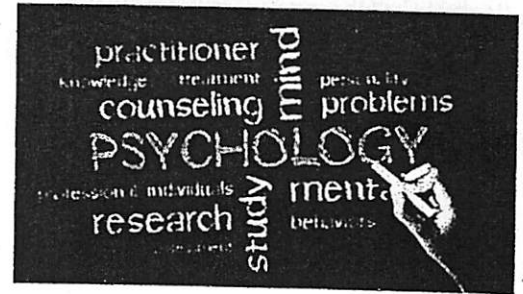
That's just to name a few. Psychology also makes a good minor or emphasis because it nicely complements other fields. You will be well suited by psychology as a major if you want a broad,



well-rounded degree. Because psychology is a diverse field, it offers many opportunities. But, you must play an active role in defining how it will work toward your own career plans.

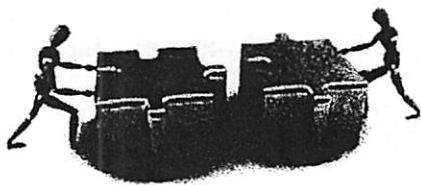
## How can I make sure psychology is for me?

- Talk to psychology majors. Ask them to tell you about some of their psychology classes. What were the topics? What projects were required, what was least interesting? As they talk, what is your reaction? How do the classes sound? Also ask the students to identify a couple of approachable psychology instructors with whom you could talk.
- Talk with psychology instructors. Drop by during their office hours. Ask them about the major, course, career paths, expectations, and anything else that concerns you.
- Take some psychology classes. You should take some courses that you give you an understanding of the broad theoretical perspectives within psychology (e.g. introduction to psychology, developmental or social psychology). Do keep in mind that psychology is an impacted major at Fresno State that getting into these classes may be difficult.
- Ask yourself, do I like to work with people? If your answer is tentative, you must explore why. Obviously, not ALL psychology majors will work with people, but usually the expectation is that if you majored in psychology you are interested in people. If you are not interested in people from perspective, we suggest you think again about why you are majoring in psychology.



## What if I decide that psychology is NOT the best major for me?

One option would be to switch completely to another major but that may cost you in time, money, and may not always be guaranteed. Another option would be to finish the psychology major but pick up additional courses in an area of interest. Please feel free to talk with a psychology advisor,



career advisor, or the advisor from your other area of interest regarding the best strategy for you. Keep in mind that the CSUF policies do not permit any student to change or add a major pass the 90+ unit mark. For example, if you want to change or add a Psychology major while having another major, you have to meet

with a Psychology Advisor to review your DPR, calculate units, and create a graduation plan within 144 units. If the graduation plan exceeds passed 144 units, unfortunately, you would not be able to change or add a Psychology major.

## I am positive psychology is for me . . . what is next?

We would love to meet with you one to one to review the psychology road map, pre-requisites, major requirements, upper division writing requirement, possible graduate programs, if you are on track for graduation, and how to minor in psychology if decided to as well. Please **call the Psychology Department at 559- 278- 2691** to schedule an academic advising appointment with the psychology advisors. To get more information about events, opportunities, graduation requirements, or want to learn about graduate programs please visit our Psychology Advising website at <https://sites.google.com/a/mail.fresnostate.edu/psychadvising/home> .

Morgan, B.L., & Korschgen, A.J. (2006). *Majoring in Psych?: Career options for psychology undergraduates*. Boston: Pearson Education.