

Below, we try to answer some common questions that sophomores and juniors have about the psychology major. If you have additional questions, please reach out to your academic advisor or the chair of the department (if you have not already declared the major).

### **Statistics/ Research Methods sequence**

Students are required to complete Statistics (PSYC 218) and a methods course (PSYC 261 or PSYC 262) by the end of their junior year. Because the vast majority of students take research methods in their junior year (in whichever semester they are not abroad), this means students should take statistics sometime in their sophomore year. Typically, there is one section offered in the fall semester and two sections offered in the winter semester.

If a student does not plan to study abroad, then this consideration is moot and taking both statistics and research methods in junior year will keep them on track.

### **Which Research Methods Should I Take?**

There are many similarities between PSYC 261 (research methods) and PSYC 262 (community-based research methods) as both courses provide students with the tools necessary to collect and analyze data. The key difference is that PSYC 262 offers more extensive coverage of doing research in the community (i.e., in applied settings such as schools). One factor for students to consider is what kind of senior thesis they think they might like to do, as the methodology course provides a background for thesis work. For students considering an empirical thesis (e.g., involving data collection in a lab setting), then PSYC 261 would be appropriate. For students considering a community-based thesis (e.g., at a school, courtroom, social service agency, etc.), then PSYC 262 would be appropriate. To be clear, students do *not* obligate themselves to complete a certain kind of thesis depending on whichever type of research methods course they take.

### **Other Courses**

After completing PSYC 101, students should consider taking at least one foundational course (e.g., a 200-level course in psychology (PSYC), NSPY 160, MUPY 253). Taking a course from an instructor other than students' 101 instructor is advisable in order to start getting a feel for different faculty and different instructional approaches.

It is not necessary to take upper-level courses (i.e., 300-level courses) in sophomore year, although it is fine for students to do so if they meet the prerequisites for the course. These courses are often open only to juniors and seniors, or have prerequisites like PSYC 261/262 that preclude sophomores from taking them.

For juniors, the priority should turn to completing at least one 300-level course. Due to

prerequisites, enrollment pressure, completing other requirements, etc., it is common for students to complete the bulk of their 300-level courses in their senior year.

### **Do I Have Time to Finish Everything?**

It is common for students to become anxious that they are “falling behind” when they fail to get into any psychology courses in a given semester. As long as students are making steady progress, it is unnecessary to worry in this way. For example: A student who had only taken 101, Statistics, and one foundational course by the end of their sophomore year would still have plenty of time to finish everything (i.e., they would still have 16 course “slots” in which to complete the 7 courses they have left). This would be true even if that student also went abroad in their junior year (assuming they got some abroad courses to transfer to the major). Up to two courses may be transferred into the major from other institutions, including abroad programs. Information on how to transfer abroad (and other) courses into the major is available here:

<https://www.bates.edu/psychology/academics/transferring-non-bates-credits/>