Experimental Psychology, Ph.D.

Saint Louis University's multifaceted, full-time Ph.D. program in experimental psychology prepares students for academic teaching and research careers in the areas of cognitive neuroscience, developmental or social psychology.

Curriculum Overview

Thirty credits of coursework are required for the master's degree, which counts toward the 59 credits required for the Ph.D. Students entering the program with a master's degree may present course syllabi or other documentation from previous courses to the experimental psychology graduate program director to request substitutions for specific requirements.

The experimental psychology program includes three concentration areas: cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, and social psychology. All areas integrate theory and research in courses, research and professional experiences.

Cognitive Neuroscience Concentration

This concentration focuses on the integration of cognitive psychology and neuroscience. It is designed to prepare students for research careers in basic and applied settings, and teaching at the college level.

Coursework in the cognitive neuroscience concentration deals with basic issues in cognition and neuroscience, while specialty seminars address specific interests. In the laboratory, emphasis is placed on acquiring technical and practical skills in the instrumentation and research methodology associated with a specialization. Writing and presentation skills necessary for the communication of research are emphasized through course assignments, grant writing, presentations at regional and national meetings, and publications.

Students in the cognitive neuroscience concentration participate in Cognitive Neuroscience of Stress Lab; Neuroscience Sleep Laboratory; Multidisciplinary Aging and Cognition Research Lab; Memory, Language and Cognition Lab; and Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience of Aging Lab.

Developmental Psychology Concentration

This concentration investigates developmental processes in childhood and adolescence, with an emphasis on the social aspects of development, such as parent-child interaction, gender cognitions and socio-moral reasoning. It prepares students to teach and conduct research in academic and research settings. Students complete survey courses exploring issues in social and cognitive development, as well as topical seminars more specific to faculty research interests.

Research training for this concentration follows an apprenticeship model. Students begin by immersing themselves in their mentor's research area, conducting collaborative and increasingly independent work throughout their tenure in the program. Many students begin teaching — ranging from assistant duties or guest lectures to full responsibility for a course — to prepare for future academic appointments.

Gender Cognitions and Development Lab, Child and Adolescent Social Development Lab, and Child and Family Research Lab are associated with the developmental psychology concentration.

Social Psychology Concentration

This concentration examines the behavior of groups and individuals in a social context. Areas explored include: self-concept structure, self-regulation, close relationships, stereotyping and prejudice, social justice, the social psychology of health, social exclusion, racial and social identification, and attitudes.

The social psychology specialty offers academic and research training, as well as an applied component that involves both coursework and professional experience. Students are trained in theoretical and programmatic research as those fields relate to both basic and applied issues. Graduates of the specialty will be prepared for research careers in academic and applied settings, as well as teaching at the college level.

Applied Social Psychology Lab and Social Justice Lab are associated with the social psychology concentration.

Fieldwork and Research Opportunities

During each term of the program, students will actively participate in a research vertical team, which will include individual lab groups, concentration groups and/or full program groups. Through discussions, presentations and other activities, this team will help students stay involved in research and other professional development activities during the program.

Careers

This program prepares students for academic teaching and research careers in the areas of cognitive neuroscience, developmental or social psychology.

Admission Requirements

Application Requirements

- Application form and fee
- Transcript(s)
- Three letters of recommendation
- GRE scores
- Résumé
- Professional goal statement
- Interview (may be requested by review committee, usually by phone)

Requirements for International Students

All admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students along with the following:

- Demonstrate English Language Proficiency (http://catalog.slu.edu/previous-catalogs/2018-2019/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency)
- Proof of financial support must include:
  - A letter of financial support from the person(s) or sponsoring agency funding the time at Saint Louis University
  - A letter from the sponsor's bank verifying that the funds are available and will be so for the duration of study at the University
- Academic records, in English translation, of students who have undertaken postsecondary studies outside the United States must include the courses taken and/or lectures attended, practical laboratory work, the maximum and minimum grades attainable, the grades earned or the results of all end-of-term examinations, and any honors or degrees received. WES and ECE transcripts are accepted.
Assistantship Application Deadline
Students who want to be considered for an assistantship must submit their application by Dec. 15.

Review Process
Applications are reviewed by a committee of experimental psychology department faculty members representing the concentration to which a student has applied.

Because the program operates on an apprenticeship model, it is important that the applicant's research interests match the expertise of one or more program faculty members, as reflected in their professional goal statement.

Six to seven students are accepted into the program each year with each faculty member accepting one new student a year, on average. GPA, GRE scores, TOEFL scores (if applicable), letters of recommendation, experience and the fit between the applicant's research interests/career goals and program offerings are all considered.

Scholarships, Assistantships and Financial Aid
For priority consideration for graduate assistantship, applicants should complete their applications by the program admission deadlines listed. Fellowships and assistantships provide a stipend and may include health insurance and a tuition scholarship for the duration of the award.

For more information, visit the student financial services office online at http://www.slu.edu/financial-aid.

Learning Outcomes
1. Graduates will be able to demonstrate competency in the conceptualization, design, conducting, analysis and reporting of psychological research.
2. Graduates will be able to demonstrate broad professional knowledge in the field of experimental psychology and more specialized knowledge in their area of concentration (i.e., cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, social psychology) and in their topic of research expertise.
3. Graduates will be able to demonstrate an understanding of diversity and ethics issues as they apply to psychological research, teaching, and professional development as an experimental psychologist.
4. Graduates will be able to demonstrate professional development by acquiring skills in the areas of written and oral communication, teaching or general professionalism.

Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6030</td>
<td>Human Diversity</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 6800</td>
<td>Ethics and Professional Issues</td>
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Program Core

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 5120</td>
<td>Memory &amp; Cognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 5130</td>
<td>Neuroscience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 5250</td>
<td>Cognitive Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or PSY 5260</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 5300</td>
<td>Advanced Social Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
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Concentration Requirements

Select one of the following concentrations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6000</td>
<td>Teaching of Psychology (or any of the courses listed in the Concentration Requirements)</td>
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Research

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 5990</td>
<td>Thesis Research (taken over multiple semesters)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 6990</td>
<td>Dissertation Research (taken over multiple semesters)</td>
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Total Credits: 59

Cognitive Neuroscience Concentration

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6190</td>
<td>Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience (taken over multiple semesters)</td>
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Concentration Elective

Select one of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 5250</td>
<td>Cognitive Development (course not chosen to fulfill program core)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or PSY 5260</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6190</td>
<td>Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 6290</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 6390</td>
<td>Topics in Social Psychology</td>
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Total Credits: 12

Developmental Psychology Concentration

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6290</td>
<td>Topics: Developmental Psych (taken over multiple semesters)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>or PSY 5260</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
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Total Credits: 12

Social Psychology Concentration

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6390</td>
<td>Topics in Social Psychology (taken over multiple semesters)</td>
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Concentration Elective

Select one of the following:

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<td>Topics: Developmental Psych</td>
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Non-Course Requirements
Successful completion of the written preliminary and the oral qualifying exams.

Continuation Standards
Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in all graduate/professional courses.

Roadmap
Roadmaps are recommended semester-by-semester plans of study for programs and assume full-time enrollment unless otherwise noted.

Courses and milestones designated as critical (marked with !) must be completed in the semester listed to ensure a timely graduation. Transfer credit may change the roadmap.

This roadmap should not be used in the place of regular academic advising appointments. All students are encouraged to meet with their advisor/mentor each semester. Requirements, course availability and sequencing are subject to change.

Course Title Credits
Year One
Fall
PSY 5080 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods 3
PSY 5790 Applied Univariate Statistics in Behavioral Science 3
Select one of the following: 3
PSY 5120 Memory & Cognition
or
PSY 5130 Neuroscience
PSY 5250 Cognitive Development
or
PSY 5260 Social Development
PSY 5300 Advanced Social Psychology
PSY 5840 Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team 0

Credits 9

Spring
PSY 6500 Applied Multivariable and Multivariate Statistics in Behavioral Science 3
PSY 5120 Memory & Cognition
or
PSY 5130 Neuroscience
Select one of the following: 3
PSY 6190 Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience
PSY 6290 Topics: Developmental Psych
PSY 6390 Topics in Social Psychology
PSY 5840 Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team 0

Credits 9

Summer
PSY 5990 Thesis Research 3

Year Two
Fall
Select from the following third "experimental core" courses: 8 3
PSY 5120 Memory & Cognition
PSY 5130 Neuroscience
PSY 5250 Cognitive Development
PSY 5260 Social Development
PSY 5300 Advanced Social Psychology
Select six credits from the following 4th "experimental core" courses: 6
PSY 5120 Memory & Cognition
PSY 5130 Neuroscience
PSY 5250 Cognitive Development
PSY 5260 Social Development
PSY 5300 Advanced Social Psychology
or methods/stats or program/concentration elective:
PSY 5990 Thesis Research (up to six credits total)
PSY 5840 Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team 0

Credits 9

Spring
Select one of the following: 3
PSY 6190 Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience
PSY 6290 Topics: Developmental Psych
PSY 6390 Topics in Social Psychology
Select six credits from the following methods/stats or program/concentration electives:
PSY 5990 Thesis Research (up to six credits)
PSY 6030 Human Diversity (one credit)
PSY 6800 Ethics and Professional Issues (one credit; offered every other spring)
PSY 5840 Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team 0

Credits 9

Summer
Select one of the following: 8 3
PSY 5990 Thesis Research (up to six credits total)
PSY 6990 Dissertation Research
PSY 5840 Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team 0

Credits 3

Year Three
Fall
Select any remaining experimental core courses, stats/methods electives, or program/concentration electives 0-9
Select one of the following: 0-9
PSY 5990 Thesis Research (up to six credits total, then 0)
PSY 6990 Dissertation Research (up to 12 credits total, then 0)
PSY 5840  Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team  0

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>0-18</th>
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### Spring

Select one of the following:

- PSY 6190  Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience  5
- PSY 6290  Topics: Developmental Psych  6
- PSY 6390  Topics in Social Psychology  7

Select six credits from the following 4th "experimental core" courses:

- PSY 5120  Memory & Cognition
- PSY 5130  Neuroscience
- PSY 5250  Cognitive Development
- PSY 5260  Social Development
- PSY 5300  Advanced Social Psychology
- or methods/stats or program/concentration electives:
  - PSY 5990  Thesis Research (up to six credits total)
  - PSY 6990  Dissertation Research (up to 12 credits total)
  - PSY 6030  Human Diversity (one credit)
  - PSY 6800  Ethics and Professional Issues (one credit; offered every other spring)
  - PSY 5840  Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team  0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>9</th>
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### Summer

- PSY 6990  Dissertation Research (up to 12 credits total, then 0)  12
- PSY 5840  Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team  0

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<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
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### Year Four

#### Fall

Finish any coursework or credits that were missed in previous semesters 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
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</table>

| Total Credits | 63-81 |

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1. Offered in alternate fall semesters; taken in semester one by students in the cognitive neuroscience concentration
2. Offered in alternate fall semesters; taken in semester one by students in the developmental psychology concentration
3. Taken in semester one by students in the social psychology concentration
4. Students in the cognitive neuroscience concentration only
5. Students in the developmental neuroscience concentration only
6. Students in the social concentration only
7. Students in the developmental concentration must take PSY 5250 Cognitive Development (3 cr) or PSY 5260 Social Development (3 cr) in semester three (offered in alternate fall semesters)
8. If the Master’s degree has been completed, student should petition into the Ph.D. program, and may begin taking PSY 6990 Dissertation Research (0-12 cr) credits; otherwise, students should register for PSY 5990 Thesis Research (0-6 cr) until a total of 6 credits have been earned, then register for 0 credits until the Master’s degree is complete.
9. The program is designed such that all coursework, including thesis (PSY 5990 Thesis Research (0-6 cr)) and dissertation (PSY 6990 Dissertation Research (0-12 cr)) credits, may be completed in three years; however, semesters seven and eight may be used to finish any coursework or credits that were missed in previous semesters; students should continue enrolling in PSY 6990 Dissertation Research (0-12 cr) (once the 12 required credits are completed) and in PSY 5840 Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team (0-6 cr) for 0 credits every semester, including summers, until the degree is completed.

### Program Notes

Students may replace PSY 5990 Thesis Research (0-6 cr) or PSY 6990 Dissertation Research (0-12 cr) in any of the summers with three methods/statistics, program elective, or concentration elective credits if offered. However, because such courses are only rarely offered in the summer, students are advised not to complete thesis or dissertation credits during fall or spring semesters (particularly in semesters 1-3) unless they have verified that alternative courses that meet degree requirements will be offered in the upcoming summer, especially if they have tuition scholarship credits available in the summer.

Program or concentration electives may be selected from the following:

<table>
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<td>PSY 5260</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6000</td>
<td>Teaching of Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6190</td>
<td>Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6390</td>
<td>Topics in Social Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 5930</td>
<td>Special Topics (Fundamentals of Neuropsychology; cognitive neuroscience concentration only)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 6490</td>
<td>Topics in Organizational Psychology (social concentration only)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above roadmap applies to students entering the program without a master’s degree (i.e., who are admitted to the “M.S. to Ph.D.” program), and is designed to culminate in the Ph.D. degree, as we do not offer a terminal master’s degree. Students who are admitted with a pre-existing master’s degree in psychology from another university (i.e., who are admitted directly to the Ph.D. program) must meet the same course requirements (with the exception of the six credits of PSY 5990 Thesis Research (0-6 cr), which are not required). However, because several of the course requirements may be met by courses taken as part of the previous master’s program, the roadmap may be accelerated relative to the one shown above, and will be individualized depending on the equivalent courses that a given student has already completed prior to entering the Ph.D. program.