

EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, PH.D.

Saint Louis University's multifaceted, full-time Ph.D. program in experimental psychology prepares students for academic teaching, research and data analysis, as well as careers in cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology and social psychology.

Curriculum Overview

Thirty credits of coursework are required for the master's degree, which counts toward the 57 credits required for the Ph.D. Students entering the SLU 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 fundamental 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 the Brain and Cognition Lab, Cognitive Neuroscience of Stress Lab, Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience of Aging Lab and the Luking Lab.

Developmental Psychology Concentration

This concentration investigates developmental processes in childhood and adolescence, emphasizing 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 social and cognitive development issues and 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 – from assistant duties or guest lectures to full responsibility for a course – to prepare for future academic appointments.

The 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 and 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 and teaching at the college level.

The Applied Social Psychology Lab, Social Justice Lab and Collective Identity Lab are associated with the social psychology concentration.

Fieldwork and Research Opportunities

During each term, students will actively participate in a research vertical team, including 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, research, and data analysis, as well as careers in cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, and social psychology.

Admission Requirements

All applicants apply to the Ph.D. program. Applicants who have earned a Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in psychology (or a closely associated field) may apply for advanced standing upon matriculation into the program. Students who have not yet earned a Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in psychology (or a closely associated field) with a completed research thesis will complete a Master of Science in Experimental Psychology within the program before advancing to doctoral candidacy.

Admitted students typically have prior coursework and research experience relevant to psychology and/or neuroscience. Twelve or more credits in psychology or closely related fields are preferred, including coursework in research methods, statistics, and the area of our program in which you want to specialize (e.g., coursework related to cognitive psychology, neuroscience, developmental psychology, or social psychology).

While the criteria listed above are most typical of successful applicants, we invite applications that may fall below any of the criteria, as strengths in some areas may compensate for weaknesses in other areas.

Application Requirements

- Application form (no fee required)
- Academic transcript(s)
- Professional Goal Statement (should describe why you want to enroll in the Experimental Psychology Ph.D. program in your chosen concentration; your relevant prior research, academic, and/or professional experience; your research interests; your career goals; and the faculty member(s) with whom you are most interested in conducting research)

- Résumé or Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Three letters of recommendation
- GRE scores are not required or expected

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the faculty member(s) with whom they are most interested in conducting research prior to submitting their application.

The deadline for applications to the experimental psychology program is December 15.

Requirements for International Students

All Saint Louis University admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students. International students applying to SLU must also meet the following additional requirements:

- Demonstrate English language proficiency (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency/>)
- Academic records must include an English translation. Unofficial copies may be accepted in some cases for initial admission review, however official copies must be received prior to enrollment. Course-by-course transcript evaluations are accepted and are required in some cases.

Students must submit financial documents to be issued an I-20 for their F-1 visa application. Proof of financial support must include:

- A letter of financial support from the person(s) or sponsoring agency funding the student's 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 the student's study at the University

Assistantship Application Deadline

Applicants who submit their application by the program deadline will be automatically considered for an experimental psychology program graduate assistantship. There is no additional application necessary for an assistantship. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for Saint Louis University Presidential and/or Diversity Fellowships.

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, the applicant's research interests must match the expertise of one or more program faculty members, as reflected in their professional goal statement.

Three to four students are accepted into the program each year with each concentration accepting one new student a year, on average. GPA, GRE scores (if submitted), 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.

Tuition

Tuition	Cost Per Credit
Graduate Tuition	\$1,450

Additional charges may apply. Other resources are listed below:

Information on Tuition and Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition/>)

Miscellaneous Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/fees/>)

Information on Summer Tuition (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition-summer-current/>)

Scholarships, Assistantships, and Financial Aid

For consideration for an experimental psychology program graduate assistantship, apply by the program application deadline listed. Assistantships provide a stipend and tuition scholarship and may include health insurance for the duration of the award. Domestic and international applicants are eligible for assistantships.

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 experimental psychologists.
4. Graduates will be able to demonstrate professional development by acquiring skills in the areas of written and oral communication, teaching and general professionalism.

Requirements

For all PSY courses taken for more than 0 credits at Saint Louis University, Experimental Psychology Program graduate students must earn a grade of B- or better for the course to count toward M.S. degree, Ph.D. degree, and secondary concentration requirements.

Code	Title	Credits
Department Core		
PSY 6020	Ethics and Human Diversity in the Behavioral Sciences	3
Research Methods and Statistics		
PSY 5080	Advanced Quantitative Research Methods *	3
PSY 5790	Applied Univariate Statistics in Behavioral Science *	3
PSY 6500	Applied Multivariable and Multivariate Statistics in Behavioral Science	3
	Students should select a course with Psychology Graduate Methods/Stats attribute.	3
Program Core		
PSY 5120	Memory & Cognition	3
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development	3
or PSY 5260	Social Development	
PSY 5300	Advanced Social Psychology	3

PSY 5840	Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team *	0
Students are required to enroll in PSY 5840 every fall and spring while pursuing their M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Experimental Psychology.		
Concentration		12
Select one of the following concentrations:		
Cognitive Neuroscience (p. 3)		
Developmental Psychology (p. 3)		
Social Psychology (p. 3)		
Program Elective		3
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	
PSY 5260	Social Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	
PSY 6000	Teaching of Psychology	
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience	
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych	
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology	
Research		
PSY 5990	Thesis Research (taken over multiple semesters) *	6
PSY 6990	Dissertation Research (taken over multiple semesters)	12
Total Credits		57

* To earn a M.S. in Experimental Psychology, students must complete 30 credits (including PSY 5080 and PSY 5790, 6 credits from the program core, 6 credits of thesis research, and 12 additional credits from the program core, concentration courses, and/or program electives) and successfully pass a thesis defense.

Continuation Standards

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

Non-Course Requirements

Successful completion of the written preliminary and the oral qualifying exams.

Cognitive Neuroscience Concentration

Code	Title	Credits
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience (taken over multiple semesters)	9
Concentration Elective		
Select one of the following:		3
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	
PSY 5260	Social Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	
PSY 5230	Fundamentals of Neuropsychology	
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience	
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych	

PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology	
Total Credits		12

Developmental Psychology Concentration

Code	Title	Credits
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych (taken over multiple semesters)	9
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	3
OR		
PSY 5260	Social Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	
Total Credits		12

Social Psychology Concentration

Code	Title	Credits
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology (taken over multiple semesters)	9
Concentration Elective		
Select one of the following:		3
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	
PSY 5260	Social Development (only if this course is not chosen to fulfill program core)	
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience	
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych	
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology	
PSY 6490	Topics in Organizational Psychology	
Total Credits		12

Optional Secondary Concentration Requirements (Six Additional Hours)

Code	Title	Credits
In addition to completing the departmental, program, and (primary) concentration requirements, students may also elect to pursue a secondary concentration in one of the three primary concentration areas. Additional course requirements for a secondary concentration vary by concentration, as follows:		
<i>Development</i> *		
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development ¹	
or PSY 5260	Social Development	
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych (1 section)	
<i>Social</i> *		
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology (2 sections)	
<i>Cognitive Neuroscience</i> *		
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience (2 sections)	

* For all three secondary concentrations, only one of the extra classes taken to fulfill the secondary concentration course requirements may replace an existing (program or concentration) elective taken as part of the overall degree/primary concentration. As a result, in order to earn a secondary concentration, students will need to take at least one extra course beyond the minimum required for earning only a primary

concentration in the program (i.e., for a total of 60 credit hours rather than 57). **In addition to these course requirements, at least one faculty member representing the secondary concentration area must serve on the student's doctoral oral examination committee in order to fulfill all secondary concentration requirements.**

¹ Whichever course was not taken to fulfill the program core.

Roadmap

This roadmap is just one example of a semester-by-semester plan of study for this program. There are other plans students can and do take. The plan of study for each particular student is established in consultation with each student's academic advisor; *this roadmap does not replace academic advising appointments.*

Roadmap notes:

- This Roadmap assumes full-time enrollment unless otherwise noted.
- Courses/Milestones marked with an "!" are critical and must be completed in the semester listed in the Roadmap to ensure a timely graduation.
- 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
PSY 5840	Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team	0
Select one of the following:		3
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development ¹	
or	or Social Development	
PSY 5260		
PSY 5300	Advanced Social Psychology ²	
Credits		9
Spring		
PSY 6500	Applied Multivariable and Multivariate Statistics in Behavioral Science	3
PSY 5840	Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team	0
Select two of the following:		6
PSY 5120	Memory & Cognition	
PSY 6000	Teaching of Psychology	
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience ³	
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych ⁴	
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology ⁵	
Credits		9
Summer		
PSY 5990	Thesis Research	3
Credits		3
Year Two		
Fall		
PSY 5840	Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team	0

PSY 6020	Ethics and Human Diversity in the Behavioral Sciences	3
Select one course from the following "experimental core" courses:		3
PSY 5120	Memory & Cognition	
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development ⁶	
PSY 5260	Social Development ⁶	
PSY 5300	Advanced Social Psychology	
Select any remaining experimental core courses, stats/methods electives, or program/concentration electives		3
PSY 5990	Thesis Research (up to six credits total)	
Credits		9
Spring		
PSY 5840	Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team	0
Select 3-6 credits of the following:		3-6
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience ³	
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych ⁴	
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology ⁵	
Select 3-6 credits from methods/stats electives or the following program/concentration electives:		3-6
PSY 5120	Memory & Cognition	
PSY 5990	Thesis Research (up to six credits)	
PSY 6000	Teaching of Psychology	
Credits		9
Summer		
Select one of the following:		3
PSY 5990	Thesis Research (up to six credits total)	
PSY 6990	Dissertation Research	
Credits		3
Year Three		
Fall		
PSY 5840	Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team	0
Select any remaining experimental core courses, stats/methods electives, or program/concentration electives		6
PSY 5990	Thesis Research (up to six credits total, then 0)	
PSY 6990	Dissertation Research (up to 12 credits total, then 0)	
Credits		6
Spring		
PSY 5840	Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team	0
Select 3-6 credits of the following:		3-6
PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience ³	
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych ⁴	
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology ⁵	
Select any remaining credits of experimental core courses, stats/methods electives, or program/concentration electives		3
PSY 5990	Thesis Research (up to six credits total, then 0)	

PSY 6990	Dissertation Research (up to 12 credits total, then 0)	
Credits		6
Summer		
PSY 6990	Dissertation Research (up to 12 credits total, then 0)	3
Credits		3
Year Four		
Fall		
Finish any coursework or credits that were missed in previous semesters ⁷		
Credits		0
Spring		
Finish any coursework or credits that were missed in previous semesters ⁷		
Credits		0
Total Credits		57

PSY 6190	Topics: Cognitive Neuroscience	3
PSY 6290	Topics: Developmental Psych	3
PSY 6390	Topics in Social Psychology	3
PSY 6490	Topics in Organizational Psychology (social concentration only)	3

The above roadmap applies to students entering the program without a master’s degree, 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 generally 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.

Contact Us

For additional information about graduate study in experimental psychology, please email exp-psych@health.slu.edu or call 314-977-2300.

- ¹ Offered in alternate fall semesters; taken in semester one by students in the developmental psychology concentration.
- ² Taken in semester one by students in the social psychology concentration.
- ³ Taken by students in the cognitive neuroscience concentration.
- ⁴ Taken by students in the developmental neuroscience concentration.
- ⁵ Taken by students in the social psychology concentration.
- ⁶ Students in the developmental psychology concentration must take PSY 5250 Cognitive Development (3 cr) *or* PSY 5260 Social Development (3 cr) in semester three (offered in alternate fall semesters).
- ⁷ 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) for 0 credits per semester until their finish their Ph.D. and in PSY 5840 Experimental Psychology Research Vertical Team (0-6 cr) for 0 credits every fall and spring semester until they finish their Ph.D.

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:

Code	Title	Credits
PSY 5230	Fundamentals of Neuropsychology	3
PSY 5250	Cognitive Development	3
PSY 5260	Social Development	3
PSY 6000	Teaching of Psychology	3