

**HANDBOOK FOR**  
**MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAMS IN PSYCHOLOGY**  
**AT**  
**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA**

**Department of Psychology**  
**Washington, D.C. 20064**

NOTE:

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Psychology course requirements and other regulations affecting M.A. students are subject to change. The information contained in this Handbook is believed accurate, however please refer to the current, online CUA “University Graduate Announcements” for official University policy.

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## Overview of M.A. Programs in Psychology

The Psychology Department offers terminal M.A. Degrees in *Psychological Science*, *Human Factors Psychology*, and *Psychology & Law*. All programs require at least 31 hours of courses and successful completion of a course-based comprehensive examination.<sup>1</sup> The *Psychological Science* and the *Psychology & Law* programs require a topic paper based on either a critical literature review or, optionally, an empirical study. The *Psychological Science* also offers an optional traditional empirical thesis. The *Human Factors* Program requires a traditional empirical thesis.

Each M.A. program has a specific emphasis. The *Psychological Science* program provides a broad overview of theoretical issues in several areas of the field which can provide good preparation for doctoral training in psychology. The *Human Factors* Program emphasizes research experience, and prepares students for work in research, consulting, or evaluation settings. It is also good preparation for experimentally oriented Ph.D. programs. *Psychology & Law* is a joint program in which students who have been admitted to The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law earn a Master of Arts degree in conjunction with the Juris Doctor.

This handbook describes the goals and requirements of each program in detail. It also contains checklists and procedures that will be helpful to students enrolled in the programs. The following section summarizes the requirements and objectives of each program.

### Specific Programs

#### Psychological Science

The *Psychological Science* program is designed for individuals who (1) want to generally broaden their understanding of the field of psychology, (2) intend to seek a doctorate in psychology but require additional academic training or research experience, (3) hope to find specific masters-level career opportunities in areas related to psychology, or (4) have academic or professional backgrounds outside of psychology and are interested in making a transition to a career in psychology. The *Psychological Science* program stresses breadth and is therefore a good preparation for more advanced study or direct employment in careers that require interpersonal and/or statistical skills such as human relations, research assistant, marketing, advertising, management, arbitration, and lobbying. Research psychologists (who work in academic, corporate, and industrial settings) and professional counseling and clinical psychologists (who work in academic, community, and private settings)

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<sup>1</sup> For the *Psychology & Law* Program, 9 credits are accepted from the CUA Columbus School of Law. The 22 remaining credits are taken in the Psychology Department.

have specialized skills gained either through graduate work at the doctoral level or from specialized M.A. programs such as our *Human Factors* program. The program emphasizes doctoral-level classes in diverse topic areas. In addition, the program emphasizes providing students with the opportunity to gain research training by joining a faculty member's research lab and/or by conducting research with other psychology institutions in the Washington, D.C. region. The program does not offer practica clinical training, but students may be able to obtain clinical training via field placements. However, the breadth of experience obtained in the program may enhance one's application to clinical or counseling doctoral programs.

The M.A. in Psychological Science is awarded after 31 credit hours of courses, approval of a topic paper (or thesis), and successful completion of a comprehensive examination. The course requirements are designed to provide broad training in psychology. There are 16 required credit hours: statistics (4 credits), research methods (3 credits), plus at least one course in Clinical Psychology, one in Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience, and one in Developmental and Social Psychology. There are also 15 credit hours of electives, which may include individual supervised readings and/or a research apprenticeship. This flexibility in course requirements allows to students to tailor their studies to their interests while studying core domains of the field. Finally, there is a required topic paper (or thesis) and comprehensive exam.

A total of up to three credits may be taken as independent readings (Psychology 792 [3 credits], 792A [2 credits], 792B [1 credit], Readings in Psychology) supervised by a regular member of the Department. After consulting with his or her supervisor, the student must indicate the content area of the readings on the approval form available in the Department office.

The Research Apprenticeship is designed for students who wish to obtain hands-on research experience as part of their training. This experience may be especially important for those who plan to continue their studies in a doctoral program. Students interested in this option enter into an agreement with a faculty member to carry out specified research (see page 16 for rules about an off-campus research apprenticeship.) In most cases, this involves assisting on an ongoing project, but occasionally students conduct an original study. The student may sign up for 1, 2, or 3 credits in any one semester. Normally students take 1 credit (693B) in the second semester of their Program and two credits (693A) in the third semester. The research interests of current faculty members are listed in Appendix B. It is important to note that all master's students may pursue research experiences in psychology *without* taking research apprenticeship credits.

<b>MA in Psychological Science Program Requirements</b>	
<b>1. Statistics</b>	PSY 705 Statistics I (or 522 for those without prior statistics coursework)
<b>2. Research Methods</b>	PSY 811 Research Methods in Psychology
<b>3. Clinical Psychology</b>	(one course)
<b>4. Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience</b>	(one course)
<b>5. Developmental and Social Psychology</b>	(one course)
<b>6-10. Five other electives.</b>	(You may substitute a research apprenticeship and/or a readings in psychology for one of the elective courses.) PSY 693 Research Apprenticeship (three credits) PSY 792 Readings in Psychology (three credits)
<b>11. Comprehensive Exam.</b>	You must sign up for either PSY 698A (with classes) or PSY 698B (with no classes).
<b>12. Topic paper</b>	(you must sign up for PSY 697 for each semester in which you receive guidance on your topic paper) OR <b>Thesis</b> (register for PSY 696 for the two semesters in which you receive guidance on your thesis; 6 credits will track as electives).

## Human Factors

The *Human Factors* Program prepares students for positions in applied psychological research settings by offering doctoral level training in experimental design and quantitative methods, specific content areas and hands-on research experience. Students select an area of concentration such as "Applied Cognitive Psychology," "Human-Computer Interaction," or "Virtual Environments." Research experience is obtained either by working in on-campus laboratories or in conjunction with an off-campus employer.

Applied psychologists can expect to find jobs as research and administrative consultants in corporate, industrial, and government settings. The expertise of Engineering Psychologists lies primarily in systems engineering and design related to the human-machine interface. Applied Cognitive Science specialists concentrate on issues in which the information processing aspects of human performance are relevant. Finally, a concentration in Research Methods prepares a student to design and analyze data in a wide variety of settings.

The M.A. in Human Factors is awarded after 35 credits (including directed readings and research experience), research seminars, successful completion of a written comprehensive examination, and a successful oral defense of the thesis. Each student is required to take six credits of approved courses in their area of concentration. These requirements are summarized in the following table.

<b>Human Factors Program Requirements</b>	
<b>1 &amp; 2. Statistics</b>	Psy 705 Statistics I (Ph.D. Level) Psy 706 Statistics II (Ph.D. level)
<b>3. Research Methods</b>	Psy 811 Research Methods in Psychology (Ph.D. level)
<b>4 &amp; 5. Aspects of Behavior</b>	PSY 709 Biological and Cognitive Aspects of Behavior PSY 710 Social and Affective Aspects of Behavior
<b>6. Applied Experimental Seminar</b>	Psy 623 AE Seminar (1 credit)
<b>7 &amp; 8. Specialty Seminars</b>	Two advanced courses in the chosen area of specialization
<b>9 &amp; 10. Electives</b>	(Two courses. You may substitute 2 credits of research apprenticeship and/or readings in psychology for <u>one</u> of the elective courses.)
<b>11. Research Seminar</b>	Each semester after the first semester
<b>12 &amp; 13. Two Semesters of MA Thesis Guidance</b>	PSY 696 Master's Thesis (tuition of three credits each semester)
<b>14. Master's Thesis with Oral Defense</b>	After successfully defending the thesis, formatting it in accordance with university guidelines, and making any required revisions, thesis must be deposited with the university.
<b>15. Comprehensive Exam</b>	You must register for either Psy 698A (with classes) or Psy 698B (with no classes) before the course "Add" deadline at the beginning of the semester. Also at that time, submit a "Course Information" form to the Assistant to the Chair.

## Psychology & Law

Students who have been admitted to The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law may obtain an M.A. in Psychological Science in conjunction with their J.D. through the *Psychology & Law* Program. Law School Admissions is handled through the Columbus School of Law Admissions Office (202-319-5144). There is no requirement for M.A./J.D. students to take the Graduate Record Exam; admission to the Columbus School of Law is sufficient to be admitted to the program. Knowledge of psychological theory and methods often proves useful in legal applications. Some specific areas in which psychology has an impact on the legal profession include eyewitness memory and testimony, product testing and producer liability, psychological testing, competency and the insanity defense, arbitration, juvenile and family law, and interpretation of statistical results. The M.A. is awarded in conjunction with the J.D. after completing 22 credits of Psychology courses and fulfilling the requirements of the law degree. Because 9 credits of Law classes are counted toward the Psychology MA degree and some credits of Psychology classes are counted toward the Law degree, the two degrees are granted in conjunction. That is, neither degree is granted until both degrees are completed. Getting Law School academic advising is particularly important for Psychology and Law students, to make sure all the degree requirements are met.

<b>Psychology and Law Program Requirements (requires admission to the Columbus School of Law)</b>
<b>1. Statistics</b>  Psy 705 Statistics I (Ph.D. level) (or 522 for those without prior statistics coursework)
<b>2. Research Methods</b>  Psy 811 Research Methods in Psychology (Ph.D. level)
<b>3. Clinical Psychology</b> (one course)
<b>4. Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience</b> (one course)
<b>5. Developmental and Social Psychology</b> (one course)
<b>6-10. Three other electives</b> , usually three <b>law</b> classes (You may substitute a research apprenticeship and/or a readings in psychology for one of the elective courses. Note: psychology electives do not reduce the law degree requirements)  PSY 693 Research Apprenticeship (three credits) PSY 792 Readings in Psychology (three credits with content area indicated at time of approval)

**11. Comprehensive Exam.** You must sign up for either Psy 698A (with classes) or Psy 698B (with no classes). Before the course "Add" deadline at the beginning of the semester, submit a "Course Information" form to the Dept Academic Specialist

**12. Topic paper** You must sign up for Psy 697 for each semester in which you receive guidance on your topic paper.

**\*\* And fulfill all requirements of the JD degree \*\***

## Requirements for All Programs

### Courses

Each M.A. program has specific requirements as summarized in the previous section. All programs require at least one course each in statistics and research methods. Generally, students are expected to take these courses in their first semester. Both *Statistics I* (PSY 705) and *Statistics II* (PSY 706) are required for students in the *Human Factors* Program. For the research methods requirement, students in all three programs must take PSY 811 *Research Methods in Psychology*, which is offered **only** in the Fall semester. *Research Methods in Psychology* (PSY 811) is a doctoral level research methods course.

### **The Topic Paper (Psychological Science Program)/M.A. Thesis (Human Factors Program; optional for Psychological Science Program)**

The purpose of the topic paper is to provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate expertise in a specific area of psychology. The paper should represent an informative, in depth analysis of a particular content area and reflect the competencies developed during completion of the M.A. program. The content, format, and organization of the paper should be of such quality that an interested professional would find it useful and informative. Students in the *Human Factors* Program are required to complete a traditional Master's thesis, whereas students in the *Psychological Science* and *Psychology and Law* Programs can must complete a topic paper or can select to complete a thesis, following the guidelines described below.

Students are encouraged to choose a topic of personal interest consistent with the emphasis of their particular M.A. program. Topics must be timely and relevant to psychology. There should be a sufficient body of recent literature accessible in recent psychological journals and other professional sources to provide a scholarly base for the paper. Older literature and secondary sources may be used for historical and theoretical foundations, but the bulk of the paper should describe and critique empirical studies in the recent literature. Papers written for graduate courses may **not** be used to fulfill this requirement. However, it may be acceptable to develop a related topic, but in substantially greater depth. In such cases, the



advisor should be presented with the previous paper which will serve as a basis for the topic paper.

The specific approach used to complete the topic paper/M.A. thesis requirement will depend on the arrangements made between the student and his or her advisor. However, in general the following steps are involved: (1) locate a Psychology Department faculty member with an interest in your chosen topic area. Then, obtain agreement regarding your plan and frequency of contacts expected; (2) review the literature; (3) develop an outline for the topics to be covered; (4) create a list of references used; (5) submit a first draft of paper to the advisor; (6) obtain feedback; (7) incorporate the changes; and (8) get the advisor's feedback and/or final approval. By maintaining contact with the advisor throughout this process, last minute disappointments can be prevented. Different faculty members may have different ways of negotiating and working with students on topic papers; it is crucial to carefully negotiate expectations and a timetable with your topic paper advisor well in advance. The paper must be written in accordance with the standards presented in the current *American Psychological Association Publication Manual*. In particular, the writer should refer to the *APA Manual* regarding referencing (both in the text and in the reference list), writing the abstract, using headings, and citing direct quotations. A research-oriented paper will include Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections as specified in the *APA Manual*. A theoretical paper should be organized into logical subtopics. The general organization required for the paper is summarized in the following table.

For students in the *Psychological Science* and *Psychology and Law* Programs the topic paper may be either theoretical or empirical. A theoretical topic paper should go beyond a simple review of the literature. The author should consider implications and extensions of the material reviewed including elaboration of controversial issues, critical analysis of opposing orientations, examination of methodological shortcomings, and specific recommendations for future work. Authors of theoretical papers may propose hypotheses and experiments as part of their presentation. An empirical topic paper reports the findings of an empirical study undertaken by the student through the Research Apprenticeship option described previously. The paper is written using the traditional American Psychological Association format for empirical papers. The empirical topic paper is much like the traditional Master's thesis described below, but without the committee and oral defense.

Having a general idea of what the topic for the paper will be, the writer should contact a faculty member in the Department of Psychology to serve as advisor. The advisor assists the student in selecting a specific topic and in organizing the paper and provides an overall evaluation and final approval of the manuscript. In the case of empirical papers, the advisor will typically recommend a specific study. Research psychologists from outside the Department may be consulted or in some cases serve as the primary advisor to a topic paper, but the official reader of the paper must be a CUA faculty member. This reader must approve the topic paper before it is submitted to the Director of the M.A. Program. Given the time required to

develop an appropriate topic, students should contact an advisor long before the topic paper is due.

For students in the *Psychological Science* and *Psychology and Law* Programs the final approved copy is due in the Department Office at least one week before the end of classes in the student's final semester. The Dean's "last date to take the oral" serves as the deadline for defending the master's thesis. The deadline for officially depositing the approved final version of the thesis, in correct format, is the Registrar's "Final date to deposit theses and dissertations." See the Academic Calendar and the Graduate Student Bulletin Board outside the Psychology Office for the current semester's deadlines.

If you are a student in the *Psychological Science* or *Psychology and Law* Programs you must register for the 1-credit MA Topic Paper Guidance, PSY 697, each semester during which you are working on the topic paper with faculty guidance, and at a minimum you must register for this course for the semester when you will be completing the topic paper. The final approved copy is due in the Department Office at least one week before the end of classes in the student's final semester. See the Graduate Student Bulletin Board outside the Psychology Office for the current semester's deadlines. Most students will take topic paper guidance in their third and fourth semesters. PSY 697 does not count as part of the 31 credits required for your degree. Those students who are doing only comps and the topic paper in a given semester should register for PSY 697 and PSY 698A, Master's Comps (with classes). Topic paper guidance is generally not offered during the summer.

Students in the *Human Factors* program are expected to write a traditional master's thesis, and students in the *Psychological Science* program can elect to do so. This thesis is a research-oriented paper which describes an empirical study they conducted. Although the analyses reported are expected to be original to the student, the topic will typically be one assigned to the student by his or her research advisor.

To complete the *Human Factors* thesis requirement, the student and his/her advisor arrange for an oral defense of the work. The examining committee consists of the advisor, a committee member, and an additional faculty member selected by the research advisor. After successfully defending the thesis and making any required revisions, the student must deposit the thesis with the formatting approval of the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Students in the *Human Factors* program should request an information sheet on defending the master's thesis from the program director during the semester before they plan to defend. If you are a student in the *Human Factors* Program, you must register for Thesis Guidance, Psy 696, for 2 semesters, generally the third and fourth semesters in the program. Those students who are doing only comps and thesis in a given semester should register for PSY 696 and Psy 698A, Master's Comps (with classes).

To complete the Psychological Science thesis requirement, the M.A. student must have 1) received an A or A- in PSY 705 Statistical Methods I and PSY 811 Research Methods (or that grade in comparable courses that were transferred to CUA); 2) be enrolled in PSY 706, Statistical Methods II (or have taken a comparable course that was transferred to CUA); 3) worked in their faculty mentor's (i.e., thesis supervisor's) research lab for a minimum of 1 semester prior to beginning work on the thesis, and; 4) obtained permission of their faculty mentor to complete a thesis. The decision to select the thesis option or the topic paper must be made by the end of the second semester of the student's first year.

Upon meeting these requirements and gaining their faculty mentor's approval, the student will: 1) construct a thesis committee that will be comprised of the Thesis Director (mentor) and 1 additional faculty Reader; 2) write a 2-page summary of their intended project, similar to that produced for a doctoral student's dissertation; 3) obtain approval of this 2-page summary by their thesis director and reader by June 1; 4) register for Master's Thesis Guidance (PSY 696) for two consecutive semesters for a total of 6 credits. These credits will track as elective courses required for the M.A. degree (i.e., 6 of the 9 elective credits); the credit for these courses will appear on the transcript after the thesis has been deposited (Registration for and completion of a Topic Paper is not required for those completing a thesis.); 5) obtain preliminary approval of the thesis document by the director and reader; 6) complete an oral defense of the thesis. This will be comprised of a 15-20 minute presentation of the project (notes allowed, PowerPoint slides not expected), followed by a 40-45 minute question period. The oral defense will not exceed 60 minutes; 7) obtain final approval of the thesis document by the director and reader, and; 8) deposit the thesis following the University regulations. Students who register for Thesis Guidance and then are unable to complete the requirements would be required to: 1) make up those 6 credits in elective courses, and; 2) complete the M.A. Topic Paper following the guidelines stipulated in the Handbook. Students who choose the thesis option should be aware that failing to complete the thesis, particularly in the Spring semester, may necessitate an additional semester of enrollment in order to meet the 6 credits in elective courses.

<b>Organization of the M.A. Topic Paper or Thesis</b>	
<b>Topic Paper Approval Form (see Appendix B)</b>	This form must be signed by the student's advisor before the paper is submitted for final approval.
<b>Title Page</b>	The paper should include a title page in the exact format shown in Appendix C.
<b>Abstract (500 words)</b>	The abstract should appear on a separate single-spaced page with the title and author's name centered at the top. It should not exceed 500 words.
<b>Table of Contents</b>	The table of contents should appear on a separate page and list all section headings with their page numbers.
<b>Body</b>	The body of the paper should be typed with one inch margins on all sides and double spaced (lengthy quotations should be single spaced). Center the title of the paper on the top of the first page and number subsequent pages in the upper right corner. The paper will typically range from 25-45 pages of text exclusive of references, tables and figures.
<b>References</b>	The reference section begins on a new page with the heading References centered at the top. References should be in the APA Style, single spaced with a blank line separating each reference.
<b>Guidelines are in the "Master's Thesis Handbook," available at <a href="http://graduatestudies.cua.edu">http://graduatestudies.cua.edu</a>. Well before submitting your thesis, make an appointment to review the format requirements with the Assistant to the Dean of Graduate Studies.</b>	

## **The Comprehensive Examination**

A course-based comprehensive examination is required of all students. The examination is generally taken in the student's last semester (when at least 25 credits have been completed **and** the student is currently completing the remaining six credits) or in the semester immediately following completion of course requirements. Students who fail to take the exam within one year of completing courses must request and receive special approval to take comprehensives by the Chair of the Department.

The comprehensive exams are offered twice a year during a two day period, usually in late October and in mid-March. Check the Psychology Department (not the university) calendar for exact dates. A student who fails a comprehensive exam is required to retake all parts of the exam. A student who incurs two failures on comprehensive examinations is no longer eligible to receive the Master's degree.

The examination format is standard, although the specific questions are tailored to the course histories of individual students. The exams are given from 9:00-12:00 on two consecutive days. Students typically answer 3 questions on each day. On the first day, two of the questions are always on the required statistics and

research methods courses. Questions may be selected from courses in which the student is currently enrolled, as well as courses taken at other institutions for which credit was transferred to CUA. Copies of exams from past years are available in the Department. Students are encouraged to look at these exams to gain familiarity with the form and expectations for the comprehensives. Requirements for taking the comprehensive examination are summarized in the following table.

<b>Requirements for Taking the Comprehensive Examination</b>	
<b>Courses</b>	The student must have completed at least 25 credits of courses and be enrolled in the remaining courses.
<b>Registration</b>	The student must have registered to take the Comprehensive Examination, either Psy 698A (if you are taking other classes) or Psy 698B (no other classes).
<b>Sign up in the Department Office</b>	The student must <b>also</b> sign up to take the examination in the Psychology Department Office during the first week of the semester. Before the course "Add" deadline at the beginning of the semester, the student must submit a "Course Information" form to the Dept Academic Specialist.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Application and Admission**

Students applying to one of the M.A. programs must have a bachelor's degree. Although, an undergraduate major in psychology is not required, applicants are expected to have taken some psychology courses. Applicants to the *Psychology & Law* Program must apply to **both** the School of Arts and Sciences **and** The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law. The materials required for application to the School of Arts and Sciences are listed in the following table.

<b>Admissions Materials Required by the School of Arts and Sciences</b>	
Completed application form and fee	
Official transcripts of undergraduate work	
Results of the Verbal, Quantitative, and Writing Graduate Record Exam. GRE Subject Test in Psychology is highly recommended for psychology majors. <b>Note:</b> M.A./J.D. students who have taken the LSAT and have been admitted to the Columbus School of Law are not required to additionally submit GRE scores.	
Three letters of recommendation, preferably some from former professors	

### **Special (nondegree) Students**

Special students are non-matriculating (i.e., they are not enrolled in any degree program), but they may take most graduate level courses in psychology. Special students may apply for acceptance into an M.A. program at any time.

Simply passing courses does not guarantee acceptance into a degree program. Acceptance is based primarily on the faculty's judgment of whether or not the student will succeed at the M.A. level. If admitted as a regular student in a degree program, only three courses taken as a "special" student can be counted toward a degree.

### **Faculty Advising**

After initial advising by the M.A. Program Director, it is expected that the faculty member with whom the student selects to do research will become the student's faculty advisor. The advisor assists in course selection, but it is the student's responsibility to ensure that graduation requirements are fulfilled. The M.A. Program Director will always assist in any advising needs throughout the program. The student can select any faculty member to supervise his/her topic paper/thesis.

### **Transfer of Graduate Credits**

A maximum of six graduate credit hours, earned after completing a bachelor's degree, may be transferred from other institutions and applied toward the M.A. degree. All requests for transfer of credit must meet the conditions summarized in the following table. Once the requirements are met, students should complete a *Transfer of Credit Form* and submit it to the Chair of the Department of Psychology. Requests should include the name of the institution, course name(s) and number(s), semester and year taken, and grade(s) earned. A description of each course should be attached together with a copy of the course syllabus. If the syllabus is not available, a photocopy of the relevant pages from the graduate catalog should be attached.

<b>Conditions for Transfer of Credit</b>
The transfer credits were earned within the past three years
The student obtained a grade of B or better in each course
The credits are relevant to the student's program at CUA as determined by the M.A. Program Director and/or Department Chair
An official transcript for the credits must be deposited with the Dean of Arts & Sciences
A Transfer of Credit Form must be completed and approved by the Chair of Psychology

### **Maintaining Good Academic Standing**

All graduate students must maintain a good academic record to remain enrolled. University regulations governing academic performance are detailed in the *Catholic University Announcements, Graduate Study in Arts and Sciences*. Furthermore, the Department of Psychology has specified that any student who receives (1) a grade of "F" in any course, (2) two "C" grades in any one semester, or (3) one "C" grade in each of two consecutive semesters will be subject to immediate academic review

by a committee of the faculty. Upon hearing the committee's report and recommendations, the faculty may set specific conditions for the student to fulfill during a specified period of time in order to continue his or her good standing in the program. The committee may also recommend dismissal from the program.

### **Registration, Continuous Enrollment, and Leave of Absence**

Full time study requires registration for eight or more credit hours each semester. Part time study consists of registration for less than eight hours a semester. Every graduate student is required to maintain continuous enrollment from the date of first registration until a degree is granted. Students must register for at least three (3) credits of graduate study each semester until all degree requirements are completed.

An M.A. student who has finished all courses and needs only take the comprehensive exam must register for *Comprehensive Examination Only* (Comp 698B, one credit hour tuition, zero course credit) for the semester in which they take the examination.

A student who fails to maintain continuous enrollment is considered to have withdrawn from the University. If the student wishes to resume graduate work a petition for readmission must be made. An applicant for readmission must pay the application fee and must, after review of the student's record of progress toward the degree, be recommended by the Department Chair. The Dean must then approve the recommendation.

### **Deadlines**

Master's degree candidates must complete all degree requirements within three years after completion of course work. An extension of up to one year may be granted upon petition to the Department Chair; the recommendation of the Chair is then transmitted to the Dean for approval. An approved Leave of Absence period is not counted in determining calendar deadlines.

### **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence (LOA) is granted only for valid emergency reasons or circumstances causing involuntary interruption of graduate studies (generally restricted to situations such as ill health, financial crisis, required military service). Academic pressures, employment conflicts, and geographic moves are usually not sufficient reasons for granting a LOA.

Leave of absence must be requested by a letter addressed to the Chair of the Department, after first being approved by the student's advisor and the M.A. Program Director. The Chair's recommendation will then be forwarded to the Dean who makes the final decision. The letter requesting leave must be submitted before

the beginning of the registration period for that semester. If granted, the leave will be for a specified period, usually not exceeding one year.

While on leave the student pays no fees, receives no credit, and the period is not counted as part of the time allowed for the completion of residence or other degree requirements. The student does not have access to University facilities or to faculty consultation during the leave.

### **Change of Program**

If a registered student desires to change from one M.A. program to another within the Psychology Department, that student should first confer with his or her advisor and the M.A. Program Director. A letter requesting the change of programs must be sent to the M.A. Program Director and Department Chair. Once approved by the Chair, the departmental Administrative Assistant will notify the Dean of the change.

### **Joint B.A./M.A. Program**

At the end of their sophomore year, undergraduates with at least a 3.5 cumulative G.P.A. may upon approval of the Undergraduate and M.A. Program Directors designate four courses to be taken for credit toward a joint B.A./M.A. or B.S./M.A. degree. Students should complete the "Application for Acceptance to the 4+1 Bachelor to Master's Degree" form, to be signed by the Department Chair and Undergraduate and Graduate Deans. In the fall of their senior year, B.A. (B.S.)/MA students must formally apply for the MA program. They should submit an application, statement of purpose, GRE scores, and 3 letters of recommendation. For B.A. (B.S.)/M.A. students, the M.A. degree must be completed five years after matriculation of the B.A./B.S. program. All other requirements are the same as for the regular M. A. students.

### **Consortium Registration Policy**

You may be allowed to take courses at Washington Metropolitan Area universities if such courses are needed for your degree and are not offered at CUA. See the Consortium Coordinator in the Office of the Registrar for a request form.

## **Research Apprenticeships**

### **Research Apprenticeships in the Department**

We encourage, but do not require, all M.A. students to participate in research apprenticeships. Research experience is particularly important for those students who will eventually want to apply to Ph.D. programs in psychology.



Research apprenticeships differ in the number of units (credit hours); each unit requires 4 hours of research per week. In your first semester of research apprenticeship you could take:

PSY 693 (12 hours per week, 3 units of credit),  
PSY 693A (8 hours per week, 2 units of credit),  
or PSY 693B (4 hours per week, 1 unit of credit).

You can repeat and/or combine research apprenticeships to total 3 credits, which will then count as one (1) course toward the M.A. degree. You do not have to take all three credits in the same semester. For example, you can take PSY 693B in each of three successive semesters or take PSY 693B in one semester and PSY 693 A in another semester; either combination would satisfy one 3-credit course requirement.

### **Off-Campus Research Apprenticeships**

You should try to obtain research experience with CUA faculty members, but you may also earn CUA credit for your research apprenticeship by working with a researcher who is not at CUA. Your off-campus supervisor must be a Ph.D. psychologist or M.D. researcher. To earn credit, you must be learning how to do research, e.g., reviewing literature, formulating hypotheses, designing measures, doing sophisticated statistical analyses, etc. Ideally, you should be doing enough to perhaps warrant a co-authorship in a poster or paper. An apprentice should not be just an “assistant” who finds references, collects and cleans data, types tables, etc.—essential work that could be probably done by a good undergraduate.

If you work with a non-CUA faculty member, you must complete two forms. One form requires you to have a CUA faculty member agree to oversee your apprenticeship. The faculty member does not necessarily need to be knowledgeable in the specific research area, but must be willing to check to make sure that you are receiving appropriate training. The faculty member will probably call your supervisor and meet with you a few times during the semester. The faculty member who oversees your apprenticeship will not necessarily be the same person who supervises your M.A. topic paper.

The other form is for your off-campus supervisor to complete at the end of the semester, so as to indicate what training you received and how well you did in your apprenticeship. Please give this form to your off-campus supervisor at the beginning of the semester so that they know what to do for you to receive credit.

You should register for the same courses—693, 693A, 693B—as a research apprenticeship in the department. (See previous section).

## **The Children, Families, and Cultures (CFC) Focus in the Psychological Science M.A. Program**

Information on the CFC Focus can be found on the psychology website. Here are the requirements for the CFC Focus in Psychological Science (M.A.)

### ***Requirement 1: Coursework***

- Three of the seven electives must be taken from the CFC course offerings (ask a CFC faculty member if you have questions about whether a course will count).

### ***Requirement 2: Research Apprenticeship (RP)***

- Complete topic paper (RP) in the CFC area

### ***Requirement 3: CFC Roundtable Meetings***

- Participate in CFC roundtables and attend CFC related colloquia. Although students are expected to participate consistently throughout their tenure in the program, a minimum of two semesters of participation is required. The group meetings include student- and faculty-led presentations and discussions of relevant issues and readings in the CFC area.

## ***Protocol for CFC Focus in the Master of Arts Program***

### **Joining the CFC Focus in the M.A. Program**

Students with an interest in children, families, and cultures, whose mentors are CFC faculty, are encouraged to join the CFC Focus. In the first semester of his/her graduate training, the student is encouraged to attend the CFC meetings and discuss the Focus with faculty and students.

### **CFC Focus Plan**

By the end of the first semester in the program, a student seeking the CFC Focus is required to develop a plan with his/her major advisor to achieve the core competencies defined above. This plan will clearly indicate the methods and timeframe in which each of the requirements will be completed. The student's advisor will sign and retain the CFC Focus Plan for M.A. students (see <http://psychology.cua.edu/res/docs/CFCconcenma.pdf>); students are encouraged to keep a copy for their records. The plan may be revised as needed.

### **CFC Petition**

When all requirements have been met, the student will submit a Petition for the CFC Focus to the CFC faculty for approval. Written by the student, the Petition describes the manner by which each of the CFC Focus requirements has been fulfilled. Upon approval, the CFC faculty will confirm in writing that the student has completed all requirements of the Focus. You can indicate that you completed the Focus on your CV, but there is no official recognition of it on your transcript or your diploma.

Appendix A: Department Courses by Content Area

<b>Clinical Psychology</b>		
610	Clinical Interviewing	
615	Forensic Psychology	
617	Seminar on Suicide	Jobes
618	Family Therapy: Theory and Practice	Wagner
619	Health Psychology	
663	Social Psychology & Clinical Practice	
714	Introduction to Neuropsychology (double listed)	
715	Neuropsychological Assessment	
729	Contemporary Approaches Group Psychotherapy	Jobes
733	Contemporary Psychodynamic Theory and Practice	Wagner
735	Developmental Psychopathology (double listed)	
745	Cognitive and Behavior Therapy	
805	Assessment in Clinical Practice	Rich
807	Clinical Assessment of Children and Adolescents	Rich
810	Psychotherapy with Children	Wagner
812	Family Therapy: Theory and Practice (PSY 618)	
813	Psychopathology	
820	Clinical Psychopharmacology	
830	Cultural Issues in Clinical Psychology (double listed)	
840	Ethics and Professional Issues	Jobes
<b>Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience</b>		
536	Human-Computer Interaction	Sebrechts
570	Visualization and Virtual Reality	Sebrechts
611	Mindfulness	
620	Psychology, Biology, and Technology	Sebrechts
621	Cognitive Rehabilitation	
622	Cognitive Development {double listed}	Degnan
625	Psychological Perspectives on Aging {double listed}	
628	Psychology of Memory	
633	Techniques in Electroencephalography/Event-Related Potentials	
636	Human Computer Interaction	Sebrechts
670	Visualization and Virtual Reality	
671	Human Factors	Sebrechts
709	Seminar in Cognitive Disabilities	Sebrechts
712	Biological and Cognitive Aspects of Behavior	Adleman
714	Introduction to Neuropsychology {double listed}	
728	Cognitive & Neuropsychological Approaches to Human Memory	
754	Social Neuroscience	Adleman
755	Affective & Cognitive Neuroscience	Adleman
759	Cognitive Neuroscience	Sebrechts

<b>Developmental and Social Psychology</b>		
622	Cognitive Development (double listed)	Degnan
625	Psychological Perspectives on Aging (double listed)	
627	Couples and Family Interaction	Goeke-Morey
640	Human Development	Degnan
645	Social Development	Goeke-Morey
652	Cultural Psychology	
710	Social and Affective Aspects of Behavior	
726	Personality	
735	Developmental Psychopathology (double listed)	Wagner
754	Social Neuroscience	Tang
777	Psychology of Emotions	
830	Cultural Issues in Clinical Psychology (double listed)	
<b>Other Courses</b>		
522	Introduction to Statistics	Cardinale
705	Statistical Methods I	Degnan
706	Statistical Methods II	Degnan
811	Research Methods in Psychology	Goeke-Morey

Note: The above listing is not exhaustive and not all courses are routinely offered. A few courses satisfy requirements in more than one area. Certain psychology-relevant courses in other departments can also satisfy requirements. Get these courses approved by your advisor and the M.A. program director.

## **Appendix B: Faculty Research Interests**

Nancy E. Adleman, Ph.D., Stanford University.  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Neuroimaging, cognitive and affective neuroscience, neural mechanisms of pediatric psychopathology, emotion and attention.  
Email: [adleman@cua.edu](mailto:adleman@cua.edu)

Elise Cardinale, Ph.D., Georgetown University  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Brain-behavior mechanisms that underlie the emergence of externalizing behaviors in adolescence  
Email: [cardinale@cua.edu](mailto:cardinale@cua.edu)

Kathryn Degnan, Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Greensboro.  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Social and emotional development throughout the lifespan; Individual differences in temperamental reactivity; Parent-child relations  
Email: [degnan@cua.edu](mailto:degnan@cua.edu)

Marcie Goeke-Morey, Ph. D., University of Notre Dame (Indiana)  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Children's emotional security and social and emotional development in the context of the family and community.  
Email: [goekemorey@cua.edu](mailto:goekemorey@cua.edu)

David A. Jobes, Ph.D., American University.  
Professor of Psychology, Associate Director of Clinical Training  
Suicide prevention, clinical suicidology, professional ethics, and training.  
Email: [jobes@cua.edu](mailto:jobes@cua.edu)

Abby Adler Mandel, Ph.D., Ohio State University  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Cognitive factors of depression and suicide, cognitive behavioral therapy  
Email: [adlermandel@cua.edu](mailto:adlermandel@cua.edu)

Brendan Rich, Ph.D., University of Florida.  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Childhood psychopathology, social skills group therapy with children.  
Email: [richb@cua.edu](mailto:richb@cua.edu)

Marc M. Sebrechts, Ph.D., Yale University.  
Professor of Psychology, Department Chair  
Spatial learning and virtual reality, human-computer interaction, visualization and problem solving, planning and memory.  
Email: [sebrechts@cua.edu](mailto:sebrechts@cua.edu)

Christina Sharkey, Ph.D., Oklahoma State University  
Assistant Professor  
Psychological functioning in youth with complex medical conditions and their families,  
integrated interventions  
Email: [sharkeyc@cua.edu](mailto:sharkeyc@cua.edu)

Barry M. Wagner, Ph.D., University of Vermont  
Professor of Psychology  
Parenting, family interactions, adolescent suicide, mindfulness in children and families.  
Email: [wagnerb@cua.edu](mailto:wagnerb@cua.edu)

### **Emeritus Faculty**

Diane B. Arnkoff, Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University.  
Professor Emeritus  
Psychotherapy process and outcome, psychotherapy integration, social anxiety, cognitive  
aspects of anxiety, mindfulness and anxiety.  
Email: [arnkoff@cua.edu](mailto:arnkoff@cua.edu)

Carol R. Glass, Ph.D., Indiana University.  
Professor of Psychology  
Cognitive-behavioral therapy and assessment, social anxiety, cognitive factors in anxiety,  
mindfulness, sports psychology, psychotherapy integration.  
Email: [glass@cua.edu](mailto:glass@cua.edu)

James H. Howard, Jr., Ph.D., Brown University.  
Wylma R & James R Curtin Professor of Psychology Emeritus  
Cognitive neuroscience of aging.  
Email: [howard@cua.edu](mailto:howard@cua.edu)

Martin A. Safer, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison.  
Professor Emeritus  
Emotion and memory, eyewitness memory, affective forecasting.  
Email: [safer@cua.edu](mailto:safer@cua.edu)

James E. Youniss, Ph.D., The Catholic University of America.  
Wylma R & James R Curtin Professor Emeritus  
The impact of community service and ways in which youth become civically engaged.  
Email: [youniss@cua.edu](mailto:youniss@cua.edu)

## Appendix C: Topic Paper Approval Form

### Topic Paper Approval

The Catholic University of America  
Department of Psychology

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

M.A. Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Paper: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
M.A. Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix D: Sample M.A. Topic Paper Title Page**

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Behavior Modification As A Treatment For  
Compulsive Behavior

A TOPIC PAPER

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Department of Psychology

School of Arts and Sciences

Of The Catholic University of America

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Gustav Fechner

Advisor: Dr. Mary Johnson

M.A. Program Director: Dr. William Riley

(date paper submitted)



## Psychological Science M.A. Tracking Sheet

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Course Requirements:

1. **Statistics Psy 705 (or 522)** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Research Methods Psy 811** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Clinical Psychology (course number and name):** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Cognitive Psychology / Neuroscience:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Developmental / Social Psychology:** \_\_\_\_\_

6-10. Five additional elective courses (3 credits of Readings and/or 3 credits of Research Apprenticeship may substitute for courses). Please enter course number and name.

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. **Comprehensive Exam:** Register for either Psy 698A\_\_\_\_ or Psy 698B\_\_\_\_. Prior to "Add" deadline, submit a "Course Information" form to the Dept Academic Specialist.

### 12. Select either Topic Paper or Thesis

**A. Topic Paper:** Register for PSY 697 for every semester that you work with a faculty member on the topic paper.

**B. Thesis:** Register for PSY 696 for two consecutive semesters. These 6 credits will track as elective courses.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis committee formed**

\_\_\_\_\_ **2-page summary approved by thesis director and reader**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Forms submitted at the beginning of the semester of defense:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **"Master's Thesis Topic Approval"**

\_\_\_\_\_ **"Application for Master's Degree"**

\_\_\_\_\_ **On-line CUA diploma application (approx. 1 month into the semester)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis written, revised, and approved by advisor**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis submitted to committee and revised**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis defended**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis revised and officially deposited (after Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies approves format)**

## Human Factors M.A. Tracking Sheet

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Requirements:**

**1 & 2. Statistics** **Psy 705** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psy 706** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Research Methods** **Psy 811** \_\_\_\_\_

**4 & 5. Aspects of Behavior courses** **Psy 709** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psy 710** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. AE Seminar (1 credit)** **Psy 623** \_\_\_\_\_

**Area of Concentration** (e.g., Applied Cognitive Psychology, Human-Computer Interaction, Aging, Cognitive Disabilities, Virtual Environments). \_\_\_\_\_

**7. & 8. Specialty Seminars**

**7.** \_\_\_\_\_

**8.** \_\_\_\_\_

**9 & 10. Two additional elective courses** (2 credits of Readings and/or Research Apprenticeship may substitute for one course).

**9.** \_\_\_\_\_

**10.** \_\_\_\_\_

**11 & 12. Master's Thesis Guidance 2 semesters:** **Psy 696** \_\_\_\_\_ **Psy 696** \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Master's Thesis**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis committee formed**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Proposal meeting with thesis committee, followed by revisions**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Forms submitted at the beginning of the semester of defense:**

**"Master's Thesis Topic Approval"**

**"Application for Master's Degree"**

**On-line CUA diploma application (approx. 1 month into the semester)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis written, revised, and approved by advisor**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis submitted to committee and revised**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis defended**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Thesis revised and officially deposited (after Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies approves format)**

**14. Comprehensive Exam:** You must register for either Psy 698A or Psy 698B before the course "Add" deadline at the beginning of the semester. Also at that time, submit a "Course Information" form to the Dept Academic Specialist.

## Psychology M.A. and Law Tracking Sheet

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Course Requirements:

1. **Statistics** Psy 705 or 522 \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Research Methods** Psy 811 \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Clinical Psychology (course number and name):** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Cognitive Psychology / Neuroscience:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Developmental / Social Psychology:** \_\_\_\_\_

**6-10.** Five additional elective courses, **usually Law classes** (3 credits of Readings and/or 3 credits of Research Apprenticeship may substitute for courses). Please enter course number and name.

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Comprehensive Exam:** You must sign up for either Psy 698A \_\_\_\_ or Psy 698B \_\_\_\_, as well as sign up in the Psychology Department Office during the first week of the semester in which you will be taking the comprehensive exam.

**12. Topic Paper:** You must sign up for Psy 697 for every semester that you work with a faculty member on the topic paper. The topic paper approval form, with the advisor's signature, must be given to the director of the M.A. program no later than the Monday of the final week of classes in the student's final semester. The student must also send an electronic version of the topic paper to the program director, so it can be filed in the psychology department archive.

**\*\* And completion of all degree requirements for J.D. degree. Note that Psychology and Law students must receive both degrees in conjunction. That is, neither degree is granted until both are completed. \*\***