

HANDBOOK FOR
MASTER OF ARTS IN
PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE
AT
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Department of Psychology
Washington, D.C. 20064

NOTE:

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 the Psychological Science M.A. Program

The Psychology Department offers a terminal M.A. degree in *Psychological Science*. This program requires at least 31 hours of courses and successful completion of a course-based comprehensive examination.¹ The *Psychological Science* program also offers an optional traditional empirical thesis.

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.

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

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) have specialized skills gained either through graduate work at the doctoral level or from specialized M.A. programs. 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. 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, a research apprenticeship, an internship and/or a thesis. This flexibility in course requirements allows to students to tailor their studies to their interests while studying core domains of the field.

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. 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.

M.A. in Psychological Science Program Requirements	
1. Statistics	PSY 705 Statistics I (or 522 for those without prior statistics coursework)
2. Research Methods	PSY 811 Research Methods in Psychology
3. Clinical Psychology	(one course)
4. Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience	(one course)
5. Developmental and Social Psychology	(one course)
6-10. Five other electives.	(You may substitute a research apprenticeship, internship, and/or a readings in psychology for some of the elective courses.) PSY 693 Research Apprenticeship (three credits) PSY 792 Readings in Psychology (three credits) PSY 795 Internship (three credits)
Thesis (register for PSY 696 for the two semesters in which you receive guidance on your thesis; 6 credits will track as electives).	

M.A. Thesis (optional for Psychological Science Program)

Students in the *Psychological Science* program can select to complete a thesis, following the guidelines described below. 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 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.

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; the credit for these courses will appear on the transcript after the thesis has been deposited; 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 make up those 6 credits in elective courses. 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.

Organization of the M.A. Thesis	
Title Page	The paper should include a title page in the exact format shown in Appendix C.
Abstract (500 words)	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.
Table of Contents	The table of contents should appear on a separate page and list all section headings with their page numbers.
Body	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.
References	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.
Guidelines are in the "Master's Thesis Handbook," available at http://graduatestudies.cua.edu. Well before submitting your thesis, make an appointment to review the format requirements with the Assistant to the Dean of Graduate Studies.	

Policies and Procedures

Application and Admission

Students applying to the M.A. program must have a bachelor's degree. Although, an undergraduate major in psychology is not required, applicants are expected to have taken some psychology courses. The materials required for application to the College of Arts and Sciences are a completed online application and an official transcript from all post-secondary institutions. Optional materials include GRE scores, letters of recommendation, a CV, and a personal statement.

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 him/her.

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 Director of the M.A. program. Requests should include the name of the institution, course name(s) and number(s), semester and year taken, and grade(s) earned. A copy of the course syllabus must also be included. If the syllabus is not available, a photocopy of the relevant pages from the graduate catalog should be attached. Official transfer of credits cannot occur until the student has completed one semester of study.

Conditions for Transfer of Credit
The transfer credits were earned within the past five 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*. Students must receive a grade of "C" or better in order to receive credit for that class. Further, students must have a grade point average of 3.0 or higher in order to graduate from the program. See the [Academic Standing Policy](#) webpage for details.

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.

A note on repeating classes:

If a student wishes to re-take a class:

- 1) If the original grade was better than a D, then both grades will factor into the GPA calculation, but credit will only be earned once. The original grade will still remain on the transcripts.
- 2) If the original grade was a D or an F, then the original grade will be removed from the GPA and credit calculations. Only the grade in the repeated class will count in the GPA and credit calculations. The original D or F would remain on the transcript, but it would not factor into the calculation of the GPA.

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.

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.

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. 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.

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 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

- Engage in research the CFC area either for credit or on a volunteer basis

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.

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

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

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

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

Kathryn Degnan, Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
 Associate Professor of Psychology
 Social and emotional development throughout the lifespan; Individual differences in temperamental reactivity; Parent-child relations
 Email: 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

Stefanie Goncalves, Ph.D., George Mason University
 Assistant Professor of Psychology
 Reward and punishment/loss sensitivity, emotion regulation, adolescent depression and substance use, particularly among high-risk youth (e.g., ADHD, impulsivity)
 Email: goncalvesc@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

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

Brendan Rich, Ph.D., University of Florida.
 Professor of Psychology, Department Chair
 Childhood psychopathology, social skills group therapy with children.
 Email: richb@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

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

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

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

Martin A. Safer, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor Emeritus

Emotion and memory, eyewitness memory, affective forecasting.

Email: safer@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

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

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

Appendix C

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, 3 credits of Research Apprenticeship, and/or 3 credits of Internship may substitute for courses). Please enter course number and name.

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

(OPTIONAL) 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:**
 "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)**