The City University of New York
Pathways Psychology Majors Committee

Pathways Psychology Proposal
Proposed Starter Courses in Psychology
March 7, 2012

Introduction

The following proposal presents a pathway of Psychology “starter courses” that, if each of its three recommended components is completed, is guaranteed to be accepted and applied toward the Psychology major at every senior college. Component 1 reflects the one course that is universally required by all major programs, Introduction to Psychology. Component 2 involves a choice between two courses which both reflect the individual differences perspective in Psychology. Component 3 involves a choice between two courses which both reflect the general processes perspective in Psychology.

Responsible use of this proposal requires that, while students may follow this pathway without seeking any academic guidance, such guidance is seen as the more responsible and academically prudent manner in which to determine student courses. This recommendation is made because of some critical realities about the Psychology major that students and their advisors are wise to heed while using this Pathways Psychology Proposal:

1) The only course in the Pathways Psychology Proposal that is required by all major programs is the first component, Introduction to Psychology. Because the major allows for extraordinary flexibility, other lower-level courses should be chosen to accommodate each particular student’s interests and career goals. Therefore,

2) Other lower-level courses may prove equally suitable for students intending to major in Psychology (and may be taken instead of the courses listed in Components 2 and 3), though they come with the responsibility of using TIPPS or the appropriate articulation guide to determine a priori at which campuses those courses will be accepted and applied to the major.

3) The 2nd and 3rd components of the Pathways Psychology Proposal each enable the student to make a choice between two courses. In some cases, students may wish to take extra courses beyond those recommended in this proposal, including taking both courses within either component 2 or component 3. A recommended “fine print” is provided in the Pathways Psychology Proposal to clarify that some senior colleges may not accept both courses within a component and apply them to the major. Students and their advisors should review this note closely if they plan to take both courses within either of Component 2 or 3.

4) The need for suitable advising demands on-going support for the Psychology Disciplinary Council to continually monitor articulation issues that arise among the CUNY colleges.
Pathways Psychology Proposal

Component 1) Introduction to Psychology

Component 2) *Either* an Abnormal Psychology or a Personality Psychology course\(^1\)

Component 3) *Either* a Child Development or a Lifespan Development course\(^2\)

\(^1\) It is recommended that students take either one of these courses. Students who wish to take both of these courses should note that Brooklyn College and the School of Professional Studies *will not* apply both of these courses toward the Psychology major; all other senior colleges will apply both courses toward the Psychology major.

\(^2\) It is recommended that students take either one of these courses. Students who wish to take both of these courses should note that the following senior colleges *will not* apply both courses toward the Psychology major: Brooklyn College, City College, College of Staten Island, John Jay College, Lehman College, the School of Professional Studies and York College. All other senior colleges will apply both courses toward the Psychology major.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Component 1: Introduction to Psychology

Appropriate to the level of an introductory course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze and evaluate research methods that make Psychology a science, including the advantages and disadvantages of each research method, as well as how they are complementary.
2. Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises with regards to both research and therapy.
3. Understand basic psychological theories, principles, and concepts.
4. Explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others.
5. Apply psychological concepts and principles to their own lives and experiences.

Component 2: Abnormal Psychology or Personality Psychology

Abnormal Psychology: After taking this course students will be able to:

1. Understand the rationale for categorizing behavior as "normal" or "abnormal" and how views of the causation and treatment of mental illnesses have changed over time.
2. Demonstrate understanding of how major theoretical approaches, such as the biological, psychoanalytic, and cognitive, address the development, categorization, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illnesses.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the purposes and processes of clinical assessment and diagnosis based on presenting symptoms and other relevant information and recognize the benefits and disadvantages of making diagnoses in today's world.
4. Identify treatment options and the process used to select appropriate treatments as well as the current practical, legal, social, and ethical concerns regarding the treatment of the psychologically ill in modern society.

Personality Psychology: After taking this course students will be able to:

1. Identify, understand and critically evaluate the central theories and concepts in personality psychology.
2. Analyze hypotheses and research findings relating to achieving valid and reliable theories of personality from multiple conceptual perspectives.
3. Apply the theoretical concepts in personality psychology to human behavior.
4. Understand the ways personality can be assessed and the challenges that measurement can present.
5. Examine cultural, gender and individual differences in the study of personality psychology.

❖ Component 3: Child Development or Lifespan Development

**Child Development:** After taking this course students will be able to:
1. Critically evaluate the major theories of child development and demonstrate understanding of their influence on the field of psychology and related fields.
2. Critically analyze the significance of—and interactions between—the physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains in the process of child development.
3. Describe the research methodologies used to study child development, demonstrate understanding of the benefits and limitations of research in laboratory and non-laboratory settings, and critically evaluate relevant research.
4. Examine cultural, gender and individual differences in the study of child development.
5. Gain insight into child development and apply knowledge learned to current issues in the field and to the student’s own life experiences.

**Lifespan Development:** After taking this course students will be able to:
1. Critically evaluate the major theories of lifespan development and demonstrate understanding of their influence on the field of psychology and related fields.
2. Critically analyze the significance of—and interactions between—the physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains in the process of lifespan development.
3. Describe the research methodology used to study lifespan development, demonstrate understanding of the benefits and limitations of research in laboratory and non-laboratory settings, and critically evaluate relevant research.
4. Examine cultural, gender and individual differences in the study of lifespan development.
5. Gain insight into lifespan development and apply knowledge learned to current issues in the field and to the student’s own life experiences.
Members of the Pathways Psychology Major Committee

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