

# ***LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGY***

## ***What is Psychology?***

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. It includes both normal and abnormal human (and animal) behavior, and the psychological, social, and biological processes related to that behavior. Psychology has a leading role to play in understanding how brain function relates to behavior.

Psychologists may specialize in many different areas such as development, education, memory, motivation, learning, and cognition. There are also clinical, school, health, industrial, sports, forensic, social, and rehabilitation psychologists. In addition, psychologists study addictions, aging, behavioral neuroscience, and personality among many other areas.

## ***What do Psychologists do?***

As scientists, psychologists conduct research following the scientific method and use observation, experimentation, and statistical analysis to evaluate the results. Psychologists conduct both basic and applied research. All psychologists are trained first as scientists. This is what sets psychologists apart from other professionals.

As a profession, practitioner psychologists are well skilled in a diversity of techniques to help people solve problems. These may include personal problems related to mental health and adjustment. Psychologists diagnose and treat mental health problems as well as work toward prevention and mental well-being. They measure intelligence and personality. Psychologists may also consult to schools to improve educational techniques or to enhance learning in students, or to organizations on industrial problems such as personnel issues and technology. In Ontario, the practice of psychology is regulated by the Health Professions Act (1991).

Psychologists teach and conduct research in universities. University professors have doctoral (Ph.D.) degrees in psychology or related fields. Some university psychologists are scientist-practitioners. Psychologists do research in other settings as well; for example, they may work for police forces, the armed services, correctional settings, or health agencies. Other psychologists may work in varied settings such as laboratories, industry, hospitals, government, mental health centres, schools, the legal system, and in private practice.

### ***Laurentian University and Psychology***

Laurentian University offers three and four year Bachelor's degrees in psychology in both French and in English. The programs provide students with a good foundation in the scientific approach as well as in various content areas. Students are required to take introductory psychology, statistics and experimental design, and tests and measurements. Other choices include but are not limited to development, perception, brain and behavior, emotion, cognition, learning, and psychopathology. Fourth year students must take systems and theories and conduct a thesis. Further details on specific program requirements are available from the department.

The Psychology department faculty are well known locally, nationally, and internationally. Our neuroscience research is on the leading edge. Other well known projects include those on the dictionary of emotions, explaining paranormal experiences, peer, school and family relationships, offenders, child abuse, and bilingualism. We do cross-cultural research in India and China. Our research has been applied to help the brain injured, to diagnose Alzheimer's disease, to help children learn to read better, and to make our roads safer. Some faculty are involved in providing local children's mental health services, in assessing brain injuries, and in treating offenders.

The department has numerous facilities and equipment to facilitate student teaching and research. Linkages are in place with a number of community resources and placement/ practicum opportunities are available.

### ***A Bachelor's Degree and You***

If you are interested in a career as a psychologist, you have to complete a graduate program in psychology. Laurentian University offers a Master's degree in Human Development as well as a Ph.D. in clinical psychology in conjunction with the University of Ottawa. Many Laurentian graduates go on to pursue graduate education. To practise as a psychologist requires membership in the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

Psychology is one of the most popular undergraduate majors in North America and job prospects are bright (A.P.A., 1996). Bachelor's degree training in psychology is useful even if you do not intend to pursue further education. Training in the scientific method will stand you in good stead no matter what career you pursue. Courses in development or learning for example will be of use to (future) parents and workers. Psychology graduates often have good research and writing skills, and are good problem solvers. Many possess good people skills.

Laurentian University students with B.A. degrees have obtained the following kinds of jobs: behavior therapist, research analyst, counsellor (addictions, employment,

corrections), interviewer, environmental planner, computer consultant, recruitment coordinator, psychometrist, and personnel administrator to name but a few. They have obtained jobs in the following settings: associations for the handicapped, school boards, correctional centres, industries such as Hydro and INCO, mental health centres, social service agencies and hospitals. Many use their training as springboards to other fields such as teaching and speech pathology.

For further information on *Psychology and You*, contact Claudette Larcher, Secretary, Psychology Department, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario, P3E 2C6 or email her at [clarcher@laurentian.ca](mailto:clarcher@laurentian.ca).

## PSYCHOLOGY AT LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

Psychology is a scientific approach to understanding the mind and behavior.

The Psychology Department is one of the largest and most diverse departments at Laurentian. Sixty percent of all first year students take Introductory Psychology.

We offer four sections of Introductory Psychology in English and two sections in French. There are usually about 600 students taking Introductory Psychology in English and about over 100 students in French.

There are 12 faculty members who teach in English and six faculty members who teach primarily in French. Our faculty members have expertise in several of the subareas of Psychology including:

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Clinical psychologists assess and treat people with psychological problems. They may act as therapists for people experiencing normal psychological crises (e.g., grief) or for individuals suffering from chronic psychiatric disorders.

**DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Developmental psychologists study how we develop intellectually, socially and emotionally over the lifespan. Some focus on just one period of life (e.g., childhood or adolescence).

**EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Educational psychologists are concerned with the study of human learning. They attempt to understand the basic aspects of learning and then develop materials and strategies for enhancing the learning process.

**EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:** This area includes a diverse group of psychologists who do research in the most basic areas of psychology (e.g., learning,

memory, cognition, perception, motivation and language). Their research may be conducted with animals instead of humans.

**FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY:** Forensic psychologists are involved in analyzing crime evidence and aiding law enforcement agencies in criminal investigations.

**PHYSIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Physiological psychologists study the physiological correlates of behavior. They study both very basic processes (e.g., how brain cells function) and more readily observable phenomena (e.g., behavioral changes as a function of drug use or the biological/genetic roots of psychiatric disorders).

**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Social psychologists study how our beliefs, feelings and behaviors are affected by other persons. Some topics of interest to social psychologists are attitude formation and change, aggression, prejudice, and interpersonal attraction.

## **WHY MAJOR IN PSYCHOLOGY?**

### **Learn About Yourself and Others**

Students choose to study psychology because they find the discipline fascinating and they want to learn how and why they and others think and behave the way they do, and why they react as they do to situations and to one another.

### **Careers in Psychology**

#### **A) Working with a BA**

- basic requirement for a wide variety of jobs
- learn skills such as ability to set goal, carry out plan, manage resources, not give up, interpersonal skills, communication, planning and development, analysis skills
- people do get jobs in the mental health field with a bachelor's degree
- work in specialized programs, e.g., programs for chronic psychiatric patients, prison settings, drug addictions
- may consider Children's Aid Society, Youth Detention Center, Group Home, Research Assistant, Day Care Center, Teaching Assistant in Elementary School
- often difficult work and does not pay very well
- people often use such jobs to get experience and as stepping stones to other jobs
- may consider taking courses in Business, Computer Science, Public Speaking, French
- develop skills outside of class through volunteer and work experience
- make personal contacts who can write reference letters and may offer jobs

#### General Job Areas of Graduates with a B.A. Degree

Advertising, customer services, hotel management, military service, technical writing, bank management, employee relations, insurance sales, news reporting, travel services.

#### **B) College Programs for Psychology Majors**

Addictions counseling, applied counseling, autism and behavioural science, career development practitioner, child and youth worker, communicative disorders assistant, corporate communications, developmental services worker, early childhood education, educational assistant, fitness and healthy lifestyle practitioner, human resources management, instructor for blind and visually impaired, international business management, marketing management, nursing, police services - constable training, public relations research analyst, social services worker, teaching English as a second language, workplace wellness and health promotion

### **C) University Level (other than Psychology)**

Art therapy, business, child studies, communication sciences and disorders, criminology, education, family relations, gerontology industrial relations, law, mediation, management sciences, marriage and family therapy, medicine, music therapy, occupational therapy, pastoral counseling, theology, science, social work, library sciences.

If you are interested in applying to these programs, check whether there are any specific prerequisites.

### **D) Graduate Programs in Psychology**

- typically no more than 5-15% of those graduating with an Honour's degree in Psychology will pursue graduate studies in Psychology
- preparation for applying to graduate school should begin before fourth year
- students will study in one of the many sub-disciplines of Psychology such as experimental, physiological, developmental, social, forensic, educational, industrial-organizational
- if you are interested in counseling students you might consider an MA or PhD in Clinical Psychology, MEd in Counseling Psychology, MSW in Clinical Social Work, PhD or EdD in School Psychology, MD. with a specialization in Psychiatry.

## **PROGRAMS IN PSYCHOLOGY**

Laurentian University offers courses leading to both three- and four-year degrees.

### **A 3-year B.A. General**

- Minimal training
- Doesn't allow one to pursue graduate studies in Psychology
- May be able to work in the field

### **A 4-year Honours Degree (B.A. 4 Honours)**

- Recommended if student wants to go to graduate school
- Do an independent research project (thesis) in 4<sup>th</sup> year

A **4-year Specialization Degree** (B.A. 4 Specialized)

- More flexible than an honour's degree
- Student doesn't do a thesis
- Doesn't allow you to go to graduate school

A **4-year Science Honours Degree** (B.Sc. Honours)

- Take more experimentally based courses
- Do a thesis
- Provide a "teachable" for teaching
- Prepares you to go to medical school or graduate school

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact: Mrs. Claudette Larcher, Secretary

Email: [clarcher@laurentian.ca](mailto:clarcher@laurentian.ca)

Phone: 705-675-1151, extension 4240