

# DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY



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## ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

There are three areas of study for psychology majors to choose from: Experimental Psychology, a concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience (BN), and a concentration in Clinical/Counseling (CC).

## INTERNSHIPS

Psychology is an active major—our students receive academic credit while gaining valuable real-world experience. Here's a list of recent placements:

- A.F. Whitsitt Center (residential treatment and detoxification services)
- Camp Ramapo
- Camp Wediko
- Kent Center
- Kent County Medical Adult Day Care
- Kent Family Center
- Little Creek (early learning center/preschool)
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness
- The Kennedy Krieger Institute at Johns Hopkins University
- Radcliffe Creek School (speech/language therapy and special education)
- Sheppard Pratt Hospital

## THESIS

The Psychology Senior Capstone Experience (SCE) allows students to answer their own research question. Students majoring in psychology satisfy degree requirements by completing either an empirical research project or a theoretical review paper. In addition to proposing, writing, and defending the SCE, students complete an assessment that measures content knowledge, writing, or critical thinking in the field of Psychology.

## SUMMER RESEARCH

Each spring, psychology students can apply to participate in the John S. Toll Science and Mathematics Summer Research Program. The 10-week program, which provides students with a \$3,000 stipend and funds for housing and research expenses, helps them gain hands-on, graduate-level research experience. Working one-on-one with faculty, students help their professors advance research in behavioral neuroscience, developmental psychology, and clinical psychology, among other sub-disciplines.

This intensely focused daily work in the lab sharpens and refines students' technical skills and encourages them to think and work independently to develop solutions to problems they encounter during their research. This work often leads to publications on a national or international level, presentations at national conferences, internships, and other opportunities throughout the country.

For more information on this opportunity, visit [washcoll.edu/academics/john-s-toll-fellows](http://washcoll.edu/academics/john-s-toll-fellows).

## FACILITIES

Located in the John S. Toll Science Center, Psychology Department facilities include flexible classrooms, labs, offices, and a psychology lounge where students and faculty can interact. Our outstanding facilities provide exciting teaching and research opportunities for students. A vast array of designated laboratory spaces are available for student use:

- 32-channel topographic electroencephalography (EEG) laboratory
- Animal cognition laboratory
- Behavioral pharmacology laboratory
- Biopsychology laboratory complete with neurohistology
- Child development observation suite
- Clinical interview rooms
- Computer-driven operant conditioning laboratory
- Counseling laboratory
- Eye gaze tracking laboratory
- Health psychology laboratory
- Perception and cognitive performance laboratory
- Psychometric assessment laboratory
- Social psychology observation laboratory
- Transcranial Doppler laboratory for measuring blood flow in the brain
- Vivarium that houses live animals



## WHY PSYCHOLOGY AT WASHINGTON COLLEGE?

### 1. Students get to “practice” psychology.

For students pursuing clinical psychology, we have many hands-on opportunities available, whether students are interested in working with children with special needs, chronically mentally ill adults, or geriatric patients, or whether students would rather pursue summer programs at major mental health facilities. In all, the department offers 20 regular internship placement sites, many of which are right here in Chestertown. In our research labs, students will test psychological hypotheses through various methods including EEG assessments, surveys, clinical assessments, and observations of children and adults. In our animal labs, students can even learn to perform surgeries and administer medications to see the effects on behavior.

### 2. Most students will present their work at professional conferences.

Several of our laboratory classes have the expectation that the work produced will be of sufficient quality to submit to professional conferences. This kind of experience and rigor helps our students compete at the highest level for graduate training and research positions after graduation. It is uncommon for a student to graduate without at least one co-authored presentation; many have more than one.

### 3. The curriculum is experience-based.

The Department provides an array of opportunities for hands-on learning, on campus and off, with faculty collaborators and colleagues. In the laboratory-based Neuroscience Research Methods courses, for instance, students conduct original research projects throughout the semester in specialty topics such as brain injury, human cognition, neuropsychology, or hormones and behavior. Students are also encouraged to pursue individualized internship opportunities in research and/or clinical environments. One recent intern studied the memory and language impairment of adult patients with autism at Johns Hopkins Hospital; another was placed with an alumnus at Temple University to study the thermoregulatory system in rats.

### 4. Students will probably beat the competition.

Our graduating seniors score very well on the ETS national outcomes exam in psychology, typically scoring well above average in the areas of learning and cognition, clinical/personality, and developmental/social psychology. Behavioral neuroscience and clinical/counseling students have routinely scored in the top 5% on the national test. The strong showing of our seniors against tens of thousands of similar students all across the U.S. is directly related to a curriculum focused on hands-on learning and our emphasis on the collaborative laboratory experience.

## Josh Samuels '19

*Psychology and Biology, concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience*

Josh Samuels '19 didn't expect to wind up double majoring in Psychology and Biology with a concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience, but as he started to look into the causes of human behavior, it just made sense. "I was drawn to the molecular level when attempting to explain human behavior. The brain and nervous system play a huge role in behavior and are connected to multiple dysfunctions," he says. "I had never dreamed of falling into biology, but my studies in psychology led me to understand that we use a lot of biology to explain psychology."

On top of two majors and a concentration, Josh was a varsity swimmer and goalkeeper on the men's soccer team. His Senior Capstone Experience research focused on the use of exercise as a treatment for depression, and how exercise-fueled changes in brain chemistry stack up against pharmaceuticals. "Psychology allows me to take a human-centered approach to the research questions that I ask."

While he plans to pursue graduate studies, Josh isn't running off to his Master's degree or Ph.D. just yet. Josh is currently participating in a 2-year post-baccalaureate research fellowship at the National Institutes of Health.

