

# Department of Psychology

*Professors:* Leonard A. Doerfler, Paula Fitzpatrick (Chairperson); *Associate Professors:* Sarah Cavanagh, Maria Kalpidou, Regina Kuersten-Hogan, Maria Parmley, Fang Zhang; *Assistant Professors:* Leamarie Gordon, Karen Lionello-DeNolf, Amy Cirillo, Alison Stoner, Adam Volungis; *Lecturers:* Leslie Adams, Johanna Sagarin, Gary Senecal, Colleen Smith, Arlene Vadum, William Warnken.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Psychology is a science concerned with mind and behavior. The psychology program introduces students to a variety of ways to understand cognition, emotion, and behavior. In addition, the program prepares students for various career paths within psychology (human service jobs, graduate study) or in other professions (business, education, public service). The curriculum requires students to sample from diverse courses that provide the foundation for understanding the major concepts and theoretical perspectives of psychology. Students also develop skills for understanding and conducting psychological research. The curriculum promotes personal growth and development and challenges students to critically evaluate complex social issues. Students can explore opportunities for independent research and work in supervised fieldwork placements. The department apprises students of the many fields with which psychology shares borders of concern and inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge.

## Description of Our Program

The goal of our program is to introduce students to the breadth of the discipline and give them the opportunity to develop competence, both as scientists and practitioners. As a consequence, our curriculum requires students to sample from core courses like developmental psychology, social psychology, cognitive psychology, and abnormal psychology. Students are also required to complete courses to provide the foundation for conducting psychological research. In addition, students are given the opportunity to explore more specialized areas within the field like child psychopathology, interpersonal communication, stereotypes and prejudice, or psychology of women. Students are encouraged to explore opportunities for independent research with faculty members and work in supervised fieldwork placements where psychological services are provided. Students are encouraged to work closely with a member of the psychology faculty to develop a program that will best satisfy their intellectual, vocational, and personal interests.

## Learning Outcomes

We expect that our students will develop a strong psychological knowledge base, sharpen their critical thinking and communication skills, understand psychological applications and research methods, develop a socio-cultural awareness, and plan effectively for their career, academic, and personal futures.

## MINOR IN APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (7)

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the science of learning and behavior used in order to solve socially significant problems (to influence changes in behavior that are meaningful to individuals and those around them). ABA has been applied in a variety of settings, including developmental and intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, regular and special education, clinical psychology, medicine, counseling, job effectiveness, business, animal training, sports training, environmental protection, exercise and health, criminology, and other areas. The Minor in ABA is a multi-disciplinary program that complements coursework in the Education, Human Services and Rehabilitation Studies, and Psychology majors. Given the prevalence of developmental and intellectual disabilities in society, the minor may also be of interest to students in other majors, such Business Studies, Biology, and Criminology. Students who complete undergraduate courses in ABA will learn how to effectively apply behavior-analytic procedures to solve behavioral problems that occur in their professional and personal lives. Students who complete the minor will also meet the coursework requirements to sit for the Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst exam and to become licensed as an Assistant Applied Behavior Analyst in Massachusetts (students will need to meet other requirements to qualify). Students interested in pursuing a Minor in ABA are encouraged to take PSY 253, HRS 331, and ABA 340 during their Sophomore and Junior years and to take ABA 350, ABA 360, and ABA 450 during their Senior year.

Students interested in pursuing the Minor in ABA are encouraged to talk with the ABA Program Director as well as work with their academic advisor to plan their course of study.

## REQUIRED COURSES (7)

PSY 253 Psychology of Learning  
HRS 331 Basic Concepts and Principles in Applied Behavior Analysis  
ABA 340 Applied Behavior Analysis: Skill Acquisition  
ABA 350 Applied Behavior Analysis: Evidence-based Interventions  
ABA 360 Applied Behavior Analysis: The Professional Compliance Code (1 credit\*)  
ABA 450 Applied Behavior Analysis: Implications for Practice

\*ABA 360 is a 1-credit course. Completion of this course is required for the Minor in ABA but ABA 360 does not count as one of the 38 courses required for graduation.

## ELECTIVE (1)

Students choose one elective from either the Foundations or Interventions group. Students are encouraged to choose an elective outside of their major field of study.

### Foundations Options:

EDU 101 Schools in American Society  
HRS 119 Introduction to Human Services and Rehabilitation Studies  
HRS 121 Human Development and Disability across the Lifespan  
HRS 225 Introduction to Human Communication and Its Disorders  
HRS 420 Family Aspects of Disability  
PSY 101 General Psychology  
PSY 216 Abnormal Psychology  
PSY 290 Psychology of Development: Infancy and Childhood  
PSY 225 Research Methods

### Interventions Options:

EDU 260 Teaching Students with Special Needs  
EDU 265 Effective Classroom Management  
HRS 241 Prevention and Intervention Models and Approaches with Youth  
HRS 321 Social Skills Development Strategies for Youth  
HRS 330 Interviewing Techniques and Human and Rehabilitation Services  
PSY 301 Internship in Psychology\*\*  
PSY 409 Common Problems in Childhood  
PSY416 Abnormal Child and Adolescent Psychology

\*\*This course is open to students who complete an internship focused on applied behavior analysis. Prior permission of the ABA Program Director is required to count this course as an elective.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

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### APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

#### **ABA 340 APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS: SKILL ACQUISITION**

This is an advanced course in applied behavior analysis for students interested in learning fundamental skill acquisition procedures. The course focuses on assessment of behavioral deficits and procedures for increasing a variety of self-care, communication, academic, and social skills. There will be a focus on identifying pivotal skills to teach and prioritizing teaching goals. Students will learn to identify and implement behavioral interventions to promote positive behaviors related to reinforcement, motivation, and stimulus control. In addition, interventions based on token economies, behavioral contracts, and group contingencies will be examined. There will be an emphasis on application of behavioral interventions across multiple domains, including autism and other developmental disorders, intellectual disability, education, health, and other areas. Value: 3 credits. Prerequisites: HRS 331 or PSY 253 or permission of the ABA Program Director.

**ABA 350 APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS: EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS**

This is an advanced course intended for students pursuing a minor in applied behavior analysis. The course focuses on the delivery of evidence-based behavior-analytic procedures. Students will explore what it means to say that an intervention is “behavior analytic” and “evidence based.” There will be an emphasis on application of interventions based on behavioral principles across multiple domains, including autism and other developmental disorders, intellectual disability, education, health, and other areas. Students will learn to identify and implement behavioral interventions related to reinforcement, motivation, stimulus control, extinction, punishment, and verbal behavior. In addition, students will learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention based on visual data analysis and experimental design. Value: 3 credits. Prerequisites: HRS 331 or PSY 253 or permission of the ABA Program Director.

**ABA 360 APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS: THE PROFESSIONAL COMPLIANCE CODE**

This is a one-credit course intended for students pursuing a minor in applied behavior analysis. In this course, students will be introduced to the BACB Compliance Code. This course will provide students with an understanding of legal, professional, and ethical issues in the delivery of behavior-analytic services and the practice of behavior-analytic research. A variety of common dilemmas involving assessing behavior, selecting treatment protocols, evaluating behavior change, collaborating with other professionals, and relationships with clients will be presented and students will learn to identify the relevant aspects of the compliance code. Students will learn how to develop solutions to dilemmas and will practice implementing their solutions in interactive exercises. Finally, professional behavior related to behavior-analytic service delivery will be discussed. Value: 1 credits. Prerequisites: ABA 340 or ABA 350 or permission of the ABA Program Director.

**ABA 450 APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

This is an advanced course intended for students pursuing a minor in applied behavior analysis and includes a required community service learning component. In this course, students will focus on the implementation, management, and supervision of behavioral services across a variety of settings. Students will learn methods of case management, monitoring program efficiency, and staff training. In addition, students will explore the Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts and will practice solving common ethical problems that occur during service delivery. Students will learn of current certification and licensure standards as well as graduate training and career options. Finally, students will gain real-world experience with behavior-analytic service delivery via the community service learning component. This experience will enable students to integrate knowledge learned across the applied behavior analysis curriculum and give them the opportunity see first-hand the positive effect behavioral intervention can have in the lives of clients. Value: 3 credits. Prerequisites: ABA 350 or permission of the ABA Program Director.