

Temple's undergraduate psychology program helps students tailor courses to meet career goals



Temple University's nationally prominent psychology department will unveil a redesigned undergraduate program this fall tailored to meet the needs of students who will enter the world of work upon completion of their bachelor's degrees--as well as those who will go on to graduate study.

"It's a much richer curriculum at all levels," says psychology professor Luci Paul, who chaired the curriculum redesign committee. "We've changed our program to provide many more options to students. They'll now be able to tailor their course choices to their career goals."

As the most popular undergraduate major in Temple's College of Liberal Arts, the psychology program draws students interested in careers ranging from human resource administration to education to business to community and social services to law--and even law enforcement. Other students enter the program with graduate school and, often, a life of research and teaching in mind.

Either way, the program is a good fit, providing students with the opportunity to begin their undergraduate studies with introductory and foundation courses which give a broad base of understanding of the differing fields of psychology. As students become juniors and seniors, they can take advanced, in-depth 300-level courses that will allow them to specialize in an area of particular interest to them.

For instance, a student interested in working with children, or one looking to pursue a career researching child development issues, might likely take a concentration in developmental psychology courses. Areas of concentration within Temple's psychology department include cognitive, behavior, neuroscience, developmental, clinical and social.

Courses are taught by University faculty who have achieved national prominence in areas as diverse as infant language development, social anxiety, adolescence, child anxiety, depression, aggression, child development, aging, and eating disorders.

In the senior year, the program requires undergraduates to take a capstone course, which ties together students' knowledge within the psychology field and helps them analyze and

assess their career preparation and professional development. "The capstones are an integration of undergraduates' experiences in psychology as a whole," says Paul, adding that some courses may be actual research projects.

"For this redesign, our faculty had to rethink all of the courses they offer," adds psychology department associate chair Margo Storm. "All of our 300 and 400 level courses are new. This really is a faculty-based change."

Students in the program also can take advantage of independent study courses, where they work one-on-one with faculty and high-level doctoral students, as well as a host of internship opportunities.

Additionally, the program is offering a new set of general interest courses. Among them: theories of personality; aggression and violence; drugs and addiction; principles of behavior for everyday life; memory and brain; and the psychology of food. "Some of these courses are really directed at helping students understand their lives better," notes Paul. "Our student body is tremendously varied. That's another real strength of the program."