

# University of California-Santa Barbara

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## Overview

The Department of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) has cultivated a tradition of strong, empirically based teaching and research in contemporary experimental psychology. The twenty-six faculty, fifty graduate students, and many of the approximately 1500 undergraduate majors carry out leading edge research in several core areas of experimental psychology, including cognition and the perceptual sciences, developmental and evolutionary psychology, neuroscience and behavior, and social psychology. The department's commitment to interdisciplinary pursuits are reflected in exciting new research and teaching collaborations with a variety of other disciplines, including the biological sciences, anthropology, communication, educational psychology, linguistics, and sociology. One of nine campuses of the prestigious University of California system, UCSB provides an exciting intellectual environment in a setting of natural beauty between the Santa Ynez mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

## Graduate Program

UCSB's Department of Psychology offers top ranked Ph.D. programs featuring prominent faculty working in a wide range of individual specialties. These specialties are organized into four graduate research training areas:

- The graduate program in Cognitive and Perceptual Sciences (CAPS) focuses on how humans perceive, remember, and think about the world. Faculty in Cognition have interests in problem solving, reasoning, human-computer interaction, language, spatial cognition, categorization, and attention. Faculty in Perception have interests in color vision, space perception, pattern vision, visual search, visual control of locomotion and basic sensory processes. Research in CAPS is concerned with the development of basic theories of perception and cognition, the biological basis of these processes and the application of theories of perception and cognition to problems in information technology and education using a variety of methods.
- Research in the Developmental and Evolutionary Psychology program focuses on the developmental and evolutionary origins of human thought, reasoning, and behavior in a uniquely interdisciplinary way. Research is carried out on such topics as: conflict, coalitions, and nonverbal communication within social interaction; violence and aggressive threat within human relationships; developmental psychopathology. These topics are approached from a social cognitive neuroscience perspective, with particular attention to the evolved design of the brain, and the ways in which social interaction and thought are influenced by neurohormonal regulatory processes.
- Faculty and students in the graduate program in Neuroscience and Behavior have interests in three broad areas of research: visual neuroscience, behavioral neuroscience, and psychopharmacology. Within these three subareas of specialization, the varying backgrounds and

expertise of the faculty provide the student with an opportunity to explore such diverse research topics as: the physiological basis of color vision; the developmental neuroanatomy of visual pathways; the behavioral regulation of body temperature, food and water intake; the neuroendocrinological analysis of sexual behavior; the neuropharmacological analysis of drug action in developing and adult organisms; and the neurobiology of drug reward and dependence.

- Research interests in the Social Psychology Program span the spectrum of cognitive, affective, and motivational processes underlying intraindividual, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup behavior. Specific topics currently studied include, for example, stereotyping; self-knowledge; stigma; social memory; coping with stressful life events; motivational states such as challenge and threat; prejudice and discrimination; interpersonal and group-level impression formation; close relationships; social influences within virtual environments; and attitude change and social influence. Many of these topics are the focus of research by more than one faculty member, allowing students to study them from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Reflecting the multi- and inter-disciplinary nature of psychology at UCSB, many faculty are affiliated with and conduct research in more than one of these training programs, and the department offers a wide range of opportunities for cutting edge scholarship at the interstices of related fields.

Such training opportunities include Interdisciplinary Emphasis Programs in Human Development, Cognitive Sciences, and Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences; as well as interactions with the UCSB Neuroscience Research Institute, the UCSB Center for Evolutionary Psychology, and the departments of Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Communication, Education, and Geography. The department is the home of the multidisciplinary Research Center for Virtual Environments and Behavior.

The department's graduate instruction is designed to help students obtain both depth and breadth of knowledge in their chosen areas of specialization with a combined emphasis on theoretical underpinnings and practical applications. Students complete a core set of courses designed to provide comprehensive coverage of theoretical and empirical issues in psychology and gain research experience under the supervision of a faculty advisor. Students become skilled researchers as they obtain experience working in one or more faculty laboratories.

With 23 faculty supervising 50 graduate students the program is large enough to field a full range of graduate courses and seminars, but small enough to provide a sense of community and a high level of faculty attention per student. The excellent student-to-faculty ratio ensures an enriched and personal graduate experience where each student works closely with his or her faculty mentor.

Coursework, independent study, and research activities typically become more specialized as students progress through the program, culminating in comprehensive candidacy examinations and the completion of a doctoral dissertation. The Ph.D. program in psychology is typically completed in five years. This training prepares students to carry out cutting-edge research at the very best national and international, public and private teaching and research institutions. With the projected increase in demand for people with Ph.D.'s in Psychology over the next five to ten years, it is reassuring to note that the graduates of our program have been highly successful in the competition for academic, private sector, and post-doctoral positions.

## **Undergraduate Program**

The psychology major at UCSB is designed to provide students with knowledge of the scientific study of behavior ranging from that of simple organisms to humans and groups of humans in complicated situations. At UCSB, the focus is on experimental psychology, but the program offers excellent preparation for graduate study in any area of the discipline, including clinical or counseling psychology, or for careers in such fields as education, law enforcement, sales and marketing.

The Department of Psychology has 1,417 undergraduates enrolled in the B.S. degree in Biopsychology and the B.A. degree in psychology. Psychology is among the fastest growing disciplines on the UCSB campus and is the third largest major program on campus. Many of the psychology faculty and graduate student teaching assistants have been honored with campus-wide teaching awards, and the department boasts some of the most popular courses on campus.

In addition to lecture classes, psychology students are offered instruction in 11 different laboratory courses each academic year. These courses range from statistical methods and experimental psychology at the lower division level, to highly specialized upper division laboratory classes in such topics as behavioral endocrinology, personality, neuroanatomy, animal behavior, social psychology, and cognitive psychology. The goal of these courses (particularly at the upper division level) is to provide hands-on exposure to psychology and neuroscience research methods in preparation for the post-graduate training and private sector careers that many of these students will pursue upon completion of their undergraduate studies. Additionally, the psychology faculty conducts a mentoring program involving approximately 100 students per quarter in a variety of one-on-one independent studies classes in which students are immersed in the research being conducted within individual faculty laboratories. Psychology undergraduates' involvement in research is among the highest of any discipline in the social or life sciences on the campus.

## **Facilities**

The department enjoys truly outstanding facilities. In addition to an extensive range of state-of-the-art equipped faculty research laboratories, the department of Psychology provides technical support staff and facilities that greatly enhance the quality of the work environment and increase the research possibilities open to graduate students. The psychology department and the two biological science departments on the campus share a microcomputer facility (the Life Sciences Computer Facility), which serves graduate and undergraduate instructional and research needs within the three departments. The department has its own state of the art Departmental Computer Facility open to faculty and graduate students. Each faculty laboratory is linked with the Life Sciences Computing Facility, the UCSB Library, and "on-line" reference data bases, such as Medline and Current Contents, as well as the campus Molecular Modeling Computing Facility. There are workshops within the Psychology Building for metal, carpentry, and electronic fabrication, as well as extensive computing facilities, all of which are available for graduate student use. The Department houses a modern animal vivarium suitable for housing a variety of rodent species and a newly renovated central vivarium located in the Biological Sciences Building, equipped to accommodate a wide range of vertebrates, including primates.

## **Faculty**

James J. Blascovich (*Department Chair*), F. Gregory Ashby, David H. Brainard, Wayne Brake, Daphne B. Bugental, Harry Carlisle, Nancy Collins, Leda Cosmides, Aaron Ettenberg, Miguel Eckstein, John Foley, Alan J. Fridlund, David L. Hamilton, Mary Hegarty, Arturo Hernandez, Gerald Jacobs, Stanley B. Klein, Jack Loomis, Loy Lytle, Diane M. Mackie, Brenda N. Major, Richard E. Mayer, Deborah H. Olster, Benjamin Reese, Russell Revlin, A. Robert Sherman

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