

## **Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Wittenberg** **FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)**

*Is a BS degree better than a BA degree for getting into graduate school?*

Answer: The answer to this question is...it depends on many factors! These include:

- a) What type of graduate degree are you considering? A MSW degree will require less of the content you learn for your BS degree than a neuroscience Ph.D. will require. For some types of programs such as neuroscience, a BS degree can act as a sort of “flag” that you have received appropriate training, but graduate school faculty will be looking at your coursework in total and not just at the letters in your degree.
- b) What strengths do you have as a student and what grades are you likely to receive in the additional science and mathematics coursework? If you are likely to perform poorly in some of the courses required for the BS, you may not want to tackle it, as poor grades will affect your admission to graduate programs. It is better to concentrate on and do well in your BA coursework.

*Can I conduct and write an Honors thesis for either the BA or the BS degree?*

Answer: Students aiming for BS and BA degrees can both complete Honors theses. Doing so is one great way your advisors can get to know you and write recommendation letters for you. Moreover, successful execution of an individual thesis project is highly regarded by graduate programs.

*Are there particular cognate courses I should select from the BS list, or will any additional math and science courses on the list suffice?*

Answer: There is no stock answer. Courses you might take for a BS can satisfy your personal curiosity, be used to make sure you have prerequisites for graduate school, or both! If you are interested in neuroscience, we strongly recommend that you take general courses in biology, chemistry, and physics. In addition to these courses, a neuroscience Ph.D. program will require organic chemistry (CHEM 201), and a computational neuroscience Ph.D. program will require calculus (MATH 201 and 202). If your interests are in quantitative psychology, concentrate in mathematics, and consider taking the infrequently-offered upper-level statistics course (MATH 327). If you are interested in artificial intelligence/computer applications to psychology, you may want to take other math courses such as linear algebra. For a cognitive Ph.D. program, being well-rounded in philosophy and mathematics is desirable. For cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and cognitive neuroscience, programming ability may be extremely useful and you can be exposed to programming environments that are in wide use in graduate school labs, such as MATLAB or Python, by asking which math and physics courses utilize them.

In short, work with your advisor and faculty in other departments on course selection!

*I am required to take two 400-level experiences for the BS degree. Should one be an Honors thesis or can I take two 400 seminars?*

Answer: Either choice is OK. Again, meet with your advisor early and often about this. Being able to fit two 400 seminars into your schedule requires advance planning. Of course, conducting an Honors thesis also requires thinking ahead!