

DR. G'S ACADEMIC ADVISING TIPS FOR PSYCH STUDENTS

How Many Credits Should I Take Each Semester?

- You need 127 credits to graduate, so you should average 15.87 per semester (or 4 4-credit courses). During some semesters you may be able to take fewer credits if you have extra credit from elsewhere (e.g., summer school, AP credit, transfer courses, etc.).

Where Can I Find the Course Catalog, and Why Should I Look at It?

- The course catalog for any given year (be sure to find the correct one for you—it may be from your entering year, or a different year if you have filed to switch catalogs) can be found here:
<http://www.southwestern.edu/academics/registrar/catalog/>
- Use the catalog to find course descriptions (which are often not available on WebAdvisor); the index lists each area alphabetically. (The catalog also contains degree requirements for each major, information about interdisciplinary programs, and other useful policies and procedures).

Should I Change Catalogs?

- A big advantage of the 2013-2014 catalog is that there is no “upper level” minimum requirement (courses designated with 0 or 1 after the dash are “lower level”). In older catalogs, 54 credits of upper level (200 and higher course numbers) were required.
- NOTE: If students change catalogs, they (a) are subject to the requirements of the new catalog for the major (in psych, our curriculum became more flexible—choose 5 from one course grouping rather than 2 from one grouping and 3 from another) and (b) they cannot change back.
- It can be helpful to go to the templates for the new and old catalog to compare them before switching.

Where to Find Degree Plan Templates For Any Major (including the BS in Psychology)

- The link below will take you to an alphabetical list of the degree plans for every major—the forms are nicely laid out in boxes and make it visually easy to see what classes you need to take to satisfy requirements of the major and the gen ed program.
- <http://www.southwestern.edu/live/files/2650-degree-plans-20132014pdf> (From SU's home page, choose “academic” and then “registrar”. Click on “degree plan templates.”)
- I highly recommend that students go to this page and print out the degree plan for the specific major or majors, fill in the courses that they have already taken or are currently taking, and then use this form to help them decide which classes to take for future semesters.

Helpful Webadvisor Tips for Students

- Always look at *view student courses* in the menu (rather than *view student transcript*); the former tells exactly which degree requirements (IP, HUMdiv, etc.) are counted by each course as well as which transfer credits (AP, community college) count for what.
- In *search for sections*, it is helpful to designate courses to find courses that meet multiple requirements (e.g., IP, SJ).
- Note that courses can count for 3 requirements (e.g., IP, SJ, DIV) AND in the major, but in the social sciences only, the DIV requirement of 2 courses must be from different majors (e.g., an anthropology course can count for 4 requirements including the major, but the second Div course must be from a different field than anthropology).

Registration Blocks or Restrictions

- Due to federal law, students must sign an agreement (to pay tuition) every semester before they are allowed to register. (These students can be identified by looking at the “student batch eligibility”—they will have “Y” in the column labeled “restriction”).
- Fortunately, it's an easy fix: on webadvisor, under “financial information”, click on the “payment terms and agreement form”. Read the info and hit “submit”, and the restriction will be removed.

Registering for the Biology Mini-Mesters

- What you're trying to accomplish is to get the lecture and the lab to be compatible within a given mini-mester, and then to get the second half (S) of the mini-mester (both lecture and lab) to match the exact time of the first mini-mester (F)
- To do this, always match evens with evens (sections numbers) and odds with odds.
- Hint: Always start with the lecture time that you want for the First (F) mini-mester.
 - Example. If you choose the F1 lecture, then choose your lab from F1, F3, or F5 (to match odds with odd). For the second (S) mini-mester, you must choose the S1 lecture (to match F1 lecture), and then you choose the lab that matches your first mini-mester lab (e.g., if you chose F3 lab, you now must choose S3 lab).
- Note: The **FALL** mini-mesters are ALWAYS **cell biology** and **biodiversity** (either order) and the **SPRING** mini-mesters are always **genes & molecules** and **genetics and evolution**. (Either semester is fine as a pre-requisite for Behavioral Neuroscience).

When Students Should File for Degree Plans and Updates

1. **When students declare their major (Spring of Sophomore year)**
 - Note: this MUST be done no later than 60 credits—typically the end of the sophomore year—but doing it earlier during the Spring Sophomore semester is suggested. Any time a student wishes to change, add, or drop a major, they should file for a degree plan as well.
 - *To declare your major, you need to turn a form into the registrar's office. You can either walk in and sign the form right there, or download it from online, fill it out, and drop it off. [From SU's home page, choose "academic" and then "registrar." On the right side, choose "transcript request and other forms." Near the bottom of the list, choose "Request for a degree plan (declaring a major)." Here is the exact link: <http://www.southwestern.edu/academics/registrar/forms/ReqDegP.pdf>]*
2. **Required Degree Audit (Spring of Junior year)**
 - Students will get an email (usually in January of their Junior year) that asks them to come into the office (usually in February or March) to go over (and sign) a degree plan audit. This happens automatically, so you don't have to do anything to initiate the audit.
3. **Senior Year Degree Plan Update (Fall of Senior year)**
 - In August of the senior year, students should file for a degree plan update to make sure they are on track for graduation. [From SU's home page, choose "academic" and then "registrar." On the right side, choose "transcript request and other forms." Near the bottom of the list, choose "Request for a degree plan (declaring a major)." Here is the exact link: <http://www.southwestern.edu/academics/registrar/forms/ReqDegPU.pdf>]

How Can I get the Most Out of My Pre-Registration Meetings with My Advisor?

- **Be on the lookout for meeting signups.** As soon as pre-registration is announced (a few weeks before registration), check with your advisor for his or her preferred sign up method (e.g., some have signup sheets on the door; others have online signups) and sign up early. If registration is a few days away and you haven't seen any opportunities to sign up, contact your advisor (because you won't be able to register without being cleared by your advisor).
- **Come Prepared to the meeting**
 - **Spend time carefully researching the classes you want to take, including several backup options.** Before the senior year especially, it's unlikely that you'll get every class you want at the time you want it; better to do the research now when you have time than during your registration window, when other students will snap up available spots.
 - **Bring the following with you to the meeting: (a) a filled-out degree plan** (with courses you've already taken or are currently taking), **(b) a list of all the classes you're considering taking**, including your backup choices (be sure to list days, times, and professors) and **(c) a list of specific questions for your advisor.**
- **Be on Time** (being late or a no-show without notifying your advisor isn't respectful of your advisor's time, and you may have trouble getting another appointment)
- **Think Long Term.** Try to map out courses/areas you want to take for several semesters in the future; it's especially helpful to map out when you'll take the courses in your major (to help fit in internships and study abroad). The following pages contain a semester-by-semester checklist with relevant advising issues.

SEMESTER BY SEMESTER CHECKLIST

1st Semester (Fall):

➤ Pre-Registration for SPRING of First Year:

- Verify that all transfer/dual-credit work has been reported to the Records office.
- Check proper Foreign Language sequence. Which language do you want to take? If you took a placement test, in which course are you supposed to start?
- In addition to a class or two in a possible major, take some general education requirements.
- PSYCH MAJORS:**
 - Be sure to sign up for statistics if you haven't already taken it, so you'll have the prerequisite necessary for Research Methods next fall.
 - Join the "su-psych" google group to get announcements about psychology department events, jobs, internships, etc. Do this by sending a blank email to su-psych+subscribe@southwestern.edu.

2nd Semester (Spring):

➤ Pre-Registration for SUMMER and FALL of Sophomore Year:

- Thinking about major/minor? If you want to major in psychology, switch to a psych advisor. If you have a psych advisor but want to major in a different area, change to an advisor in your new major (by having the new advisor sign a "change of advisor" form); don't worry, advisors aren't offended when you switch—we want students to be with the advisor who can most help them!
- Have you begun Foreign Language sequence? If not, **START NOW!**
- Summer courses needed to have sophomore standing (30 credits.) by Fall. Can you take them at SU? If not, check for transfer approval (from the chair of the department the course is in) **before the end of Spring.**
- Planning to Study Abroad? Broadening cultural perspectives is valuable for graduate study and career goals. Check with the Office of Intercultural Learning and attend a Study Abroad interest session.
- PSYCH MAJORS:**
 - Sign up for Research Methods for next Fall (to be eligible, you must have passed statistics with a C or better). Note that you have two options: (a) the 2-semester sequence (RM I in the fall, RM II in the Spring) which is required for anyone wanting a research (rather than an internship) capstone or (b) the one-semester option ("Survey of Research Methodologies"), which fulfills the requirement for the major but is not recommended for majors considering applying to graduate school in psychology (but is recommended for psych minors, non-psych pre-med majors, and those pursuing a non-psychology path, such as law school, social work, etc.); see the online catalog and talk with your advisor for more information. You should also attend the psych department's pre-registration fair.
 - If you'd like, you can sign up for a psych course that doesn't require RM as a prerequisite (e.g., developmental or personality; or human sexuality or forensic, both of which are offered in May Term).

3rd Semester (Fall):

➤ Pre-Registration for SPRING of Sophomore Year:

- Verify that all summer work taken elsewhere has been reported to the Records office.
- Request an Official Degree Plan (and declare your major) if you know what you want to major in. If not, talk to your advisor or professors in classes that you really like. Note: If possible, declare a major before Spring Pre-Registration (March).
- Once you declare a psych major, it's a good idea to switch to a psychology advisor if you don't have one.
- Have you started exploring your future goals? Consider experiential learning experiences like internships. Visit the Internship Development office in the Prothro Center for Lifelong Learning -- many internships recruit in the Spring. For psychology capstone internships, see Dr. Neighbors.
- Are you developing marketable skills? Get involved with academic and extracurricular activities to enhance leadership, communication, computer, time-management and teamwork skills.
- PSYCH MAJORS:** If you are taking the year-long methods sequence, sign up for Research Methods II (with same professor as RM I; you must earn a C or better in RMI to take RMII). All students can begin to take other psych courses in areas of interest (e.g., possible future career areas, or areas you liked covering in Principles of Psych).

4th Semester (Spring)

➤ Pre-Registration for SUMMER and FALL of Junior Year:

- Have you declared a major? If not, you **must before registering**. Do this by completing the Request for Degree Plan card and obtaining appropriate signatures.
- If you have previously requested a degree plan, request an update prior to registration.
- Do you need summer courses to have junior standing (60 credits.) by Fall? Can you take them at SU? If not, complete yellow Transfer Permission Form **before the end of Spring**.
- Want to do an internship Junior year/summer? Visit the Internship Development office in the Prothro Center for Lifelong Learning; if you're interested in an internship for capstone, see Dr. Neighbors.
- Looking for a summer job? Do you have a resume? Call Career Services at x1346 for resume development assistance.
- Have you begun setting goals for after graduation (graduate study, volunteerism, careers, etc.)? Attend Career Services programs and visit Career Services in the Prothro Center for Lifelong Learning for resources and individual advising to help develop goals and strategies.
- PSYCH MAJORS:** Continue to take area courses in psychology; talk with your advisor about career options, and start thinking about whether you'll do an internship or research for capstone. If you're leaning toward an internship, talk to Dr. Neighbors about your interest, and watch for the "psychology internship informational" that is held each spring. See also the internship information on the psychology department home page. If you're thinking about a research capstone, consider whose lab you'd like to work in (note that capstone research requires instructor permission).

General Ed. Requirements yet to be completed: (check Catalog for list and any restrictions/exceptions.)

Fine Arts (Lecture)	_____	Fine Arts (Performance)	_____
Humanities	_____	Humanities	_____
Natural Sciences (Lab)	_____	Math/Comp. Sci.	_____
Social Sciences	_____	Social Sciences	_____
Intercultural Perspectives	_____	Social Justice	_____

5th Semester (Fall)

➤ Pre-Registration for SPRING of Junior Year:

- Verify that all summer work taken elsewhere has been reported to the Records office.
- Have you declared a major? If not, SU cannot assure that you will graduate in 4 years.
- Have you requested a Degree Plan? If not, DO IT!
- Request degree plan update prior to registration.
- Do you need an advisor in your major? ANSWER: YES, FOR PSYCH, YOU DO!! ☺
- Are you interested in doing an internship? Most psychology majors who are doing an internship for capstone do so in summer after the junior year. Talk to Dr. Neighbors about your plan, and watch for information about the Doug Hooker Scholarship (award money for summer internships). You can also visit the Internship Development office in the Prothro Center for Lifelong Learning -- many internships recruit in the Fall for the following summer.
- Do you have a resume? Call Career Services at x1346 for resume development assistance.
- Have you investigated career options? Attend Career Services programs and visit Career Services for resources and individual advising.
- PSYCH MAJORS:** Continue to take area courses in psychology; talk with your advisor about career options and graduate school. Be on the lookout for Psi Chi events (grad school panels and careers in psych panels).

6th Semester (Spring)

➤ Pre-Registration for SUMMER and FALL of Senior Year:

- Request degree plan update prior to registration. You will also need to complete a graduation audit prior to registering for your 7th semester.
- Do you need summer courses to have Senior standing (90 credits) by Fall? Can you take them at SU? If not, complete yellow Transfer Permission Form **before end of Spring**.
- Thinking about graduate school? A meeting with your advisor (or mentor in psychology) is crucial. Use Junior year and summer following to research grad/professional school options. Sign up now for entrance exams, cultivate references (*be* the qualities you want them to say you have!), and apply for national scholarships and fellowships.
- Do you have a resume? Call Career Services at x1346 for resume development assistance.
- PSYCH MAJORS:** If you're doing a summer internship for capstone, meet with Dr. Neighbors to set it up. If you're doing research, ask for permission from the instructor before signing up for the research class. If you're going to grad school, schedule the GRE for sometime this summer (sign up now, in advance). Plan to spend 6 weeks beforehand studying (about 10 hours per week). You'll also want to do preliminary research into types of programs; meeting with your advisor will help. Consider taking a lighter load in the fall, because the application process is equivalent to a tough course.

7th Semester (Fall)

➤ Pre-Registration for SPRING of Senior Year:

- Verify that all summer work taken elsewhere has been reported to the Records office.
- Request degree plan update prior to registration
- Are all degree requirements in place or scheduled?
- Check all deadlines for Application for Diploma, cap & gown, Business Office clearance, etc.
- Will any credits earned at another school be reported to SU in time to meet deadlines for graduation?
- Have you completed an internship? It's not too late to get career-related experience before graduation. Make an appointment with the Internship Development office at x1671.
- Do you have a resume? Call Career Services at x1346 for resume development assistance. If going to grad school, you want a "vita" or academic resume. See your advisor for examples.
- Planning to work after graduation? Been to Career Services? Make an appointment (x1346) for individual assistance to develop your job search strategy. NOTE: Many employers recruit in the early Fall, so don't delay!
- Going to grad school? Apply early for best chance of funding. For law school, see Dr. Tim O'Neill. For med school, see Dr. Kerry Bruns. You can also visit Academic Success and Career Services for assistance in the graduate school application process, including entrance exam preparation, cultivating references, and resume-development and interviewing skills.
- PSYCH MAJORS:** Apply to grad school during the Fall semester (research programs, write multiple drafts of your vitae and personal statement, pre-contact grad advisors you might want to work with). Ask faculty to write letters of recommendation at least a month before the first deadline, and give them ALL the info they need to write good letters (see the handout outside Dr. G's office door and on the psych dept home page) at least two weeks (but preferably 3 weeks) before the first deadline.

➤ **8th Semester (Spring)**

- All clear for graduation?
- Up-to-date Official Degree Plan and Application for Diploma turned in?
- Have a plan for after graduation? Employment, continuing education, volunteerism, etc? Visit Career Services for assistance -- it's never too late! -- to develop a graduate school/job search strategy, create a resume, research career fields, network with employers, attend job and graduate school fairs, etc.
- Keep in touch with the University upon graduation to create future opportunities. Get involved with the Alumni Association, visit Career Services to learn about Alumni resources, visit individual professors, etc.
- Good-bye and good luck!