

Combining Psychology with your Bachelor of Criminal Justice (BCJ) degree

Psychology is a scientific discipline and profession that contributes in diverse and significant ways to understanding criminal behaviour and to the management and operation of modern correctional systems. Psychological theories inform us about the origins and trajectories of criminal offending. Psychological research evaluates the causes of crime, the impact of different sentences and treatment programmes and investigates potential methods of preventing crime. Professional psychologists provide rehabilitation and treatment services for offenders.

If you are interested in enriching your BCJ with as much Psychology as possible, the following describes optional pathways through which this can be achieved.

OPTION 1: Maximizing Psychology courses within the BCJ.

BCJ compulsory courses:

@ 100 level: PSYC 105; PSYC 106 (15pts each = 30pts total in PSYC). These are two core BCJ courses you must take. They are also the prerequisite courses for all other advanced PSYC courses, so passing them opens up progression into all other 200 and 300-level PSYC courses.

BCJ Elective courses:

@ 200-level: PSYC 206 (Research Design & Statistics); PSYC 208 (Cognition); PSYC 211(Personality). These are all 15 pts = 45pts in PSYC in total. Note: It is likely that this list will change in 2019 with the addition of PSYC213 Social Psychology replacing PSYC208.

@300-level: PSYC336 (Abnormal Psychology); PSYC 336 (Industrial & Organizational Psychology). PSYC335 = 30pts and PSYC 336 = 15 pts, total = 45pts.

BCJ residual course:

You have a balance of 15pts in the BCJ you can use to take any course at 100, 200 or 300 level from the BA or BSc schedule. You should consult an advisor in Psychology about how best to use up these 15 points. You could take another 200-level course such as PSYC 207 (Developmental Psychology), or you might take another 300-level course. Depending on what you want to do after you graduate you might need to take PSYC 344 (Research Methods) to ensure that you are eligible to take postgraduate courses in Psychology.

Benefits of taking PSYC courses:

What do you get from taking these 200 and 300-level courses that will enhance your interest in crime/criminal justice? PSYC 206 Research Design & Statistics is a prerequisite for almost all other 300-level PSYC courses, so passing this makes it possible to advance to 300-level PSYC without difficulty. It is a course that gives you a basic introduction to how quantitative research is conducted

in Psychology and how the data produced by such research is analysed statistically. These principles of research design and statistical procedures are relevant to any kind of quantitative social science research. Employers have emphasised that they value these skills, so having passed PSYC 206 is a potential advantage for BCJ graduates in seeking subsequent employment. PSYC 211 is an introduction to the study of personality, and differences in personality contribute in major ways to the development of criminality and are a factor in determining how offenders respond to punishment and rehabilitation. Such knowledge is, therefore, directly relevant to many issues of concern within the discipline of Criminology/Criminal Justice and in the correctional system. PSYC 208 is about how the brain works in functions such as memory, thinking, decision-making, and language. Given the known impact of head injury and drug use on crime, the study of human cognition provides essential knowledge about the origins, persistence, and desistance of criminal conduct. PSYC213 is an introduction to the rapidly growing field of social psychology, and introduces students to the role of social perception of self and others, social influences on behaviour, bias, and discrimination, and aggression. PSYC207 is an introduction to human development from conception to young adulthood, covering behavioural, cognitive, and social-emotional development, all of which is relevant to the emergence of criminal activity. PSYC 335 Abnormal Psychology provides a comprehensive overview of psychopathology, including the symptoms of major disorders (e.g., depression; schizophrenia), major diagnostic systems (e.g., DSM-5 & ICD-10), and major contemporary theories about the causes of psychological disorders. From 2018 this course will include a specific focus on the relationship of psychopathology to criminal behaviour. PSYC 336 Industrial/Organizational Psychology is included in the BCJ electives to specifically cater for BCJ graduates who are preparing for management roles in criminal justice institutions (e.g., police, prisons) or in relevant government departments/ministries (e.g., Corrections). It focusses on the applications of psychological knowledge to the workplace, particularly to enhancing organizational performance and employee satisfaction and safety.

Option 2: Double degree BCJ + BA or BSc majoring in Psychology.

University regulations permit students to do double degrees. These typically take 5 years (one year shorter than doing two degrees end-to-end) and permit some cross-crediting between the two degrees. Double degrees are complex and any student interested in this option should consult an Academic Advisor for comprehensive advice before enrolling. As student who graduated BCJ/BA or BCJ/BSc with a major in Psychology that included PSYC344 would be eligible to enrol in advanced degrees (Honours or Masters degrees) in Psychology, and would be eligible (subject to having passed specific prerequisite courses) to apply for entry into the professional programmes in Applied Psychology (Industrial/Organizational Psychology) or Clinical Psychology. They might also become eligible to enrol for the PhD in Psychology. Research projects, dissertations, and Masters and PhD thesis research could all be undertaken in areas relevant to Crime and Criminal Justice.

For more information and to discuss options, please make an appointment with an appropriate staff member via Robyn Daly, Administrative Services Manager, robyn.daly@canterbury.ac.nz