

Educational Psychology

Undergraduate Handbook



LAST REVISED

2/16/2021

**Department of Counseling, Educational
Psychology, and Foundations (CEPF)
College of Education
Mississippi State University**



**EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM**

CEPF Statement of Diversity

The Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Foundations (CEPF) prides itself on its diversity of professional disciplines, including the diversity of cultures and ethnic backgrounds of faculty, staff, and students. The Department strongly encourages our faculty and students in pursuing cross inter-disciplinary collaboration in reference to teaching, research, and community service. If you want to be deeply involved in shaping the future, this is the place to be to pursue your career goals.

Welcome to Educational Psychology!

Educational Psychology is an undergraduate degree program in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Foundations. This is a non-teaching major that leads to a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in educational psychology but not certification as a teacher.¹ It is generally referred to as the EPY major. This handbook will give you information about the degree requirements and other useful information you will need to know as you complete your degree program in EPY.

You should consider educational psychology major if you are interested in working with people of various ages and in a range of settings. It is an appropriate major for those who want to work in helping professions but are not seeking to become a classroom teacher.

Educational psychology is the science of learners and learning, including their differences and their development as they grow and change. These differences include changes that are biosocial, cognitive, and psychosocial. Educational psychologists are interested in areas that affect students' learning and achievement; such that they are interested in understanding motivation, individual differences in abilities, student exceptionalities, creative thinking, and personality. Educational psychology also involves learning the techniques of the scientific method that apply to our field—using tests and measurements, statistics, and research methodology. Thus, educational psychology involves a wide range of topics about people, and your major courses are designed to help you learn about these topics while also helping you learn the methods in how knowledge is gained in the field.

This undergraduate major is designed for people who

- enjoy helping and working with others,
- want to understand why people think and act the way they do, and
- seek enriching courses in human development, learning, and other topics relevant for applying psychology to teaching, coaching, counseling, and other professions. See career opportunities page.

¹ Although our major is a non-teaching program, sometimes students do wish to look into teaching as a career after completing our degree. The Mississippi Department of Education does have several *alternative routes* to becoming a teacher. Each differ in their requirements and the areas in which you can be certified. For further information, check their web page (<https://www.mdek12.org/OTL/OEL/Alternate>).

EPY B.S. Degree Requirements

Our 124-hour degree program curriculum includes completion of the following (see also the EPY Undergraduate Curriculum Guide sheet):

1. general education requirements (42 hours)
2. educational psychology major requirements (70 hours)
 - a. educational psychology major core (46 hours; C or better)
 - b. educational psychology other requirements (6 hours)
 - i. communication (3 hours)
 - ii. human/cultural diversity (3 hours)
 - c. supporting interest area (18 hours)
3. free/general electives (12 hours)

To graduate in four academic years, an EPY student should plan to take approximately 15 hours (five courses) each regular (i.e., fall and spring) semester.² A student must have a total of 124 hours as listed above (repeated courses NOT counted) with a minimum GPA of 2.25 overall and on MSU coursework to graduate with a B.S. degree in EPY. A transfer student must also have a minimum GPA of 2.25 overall and on MSU coursework to be accepted to the EPY program.

Planning for EPY Core Courses

The program curriculum guide includes all required coursework and is available on our website (<https://www.cep.msstate.edu/programs/undergrad/edpsych>). Although there is not a defined order in which you must follow to take the EPY core courses, it is recommended that you take some subset of courses prior to others.

The first set (A) are intended to prepare your entry into the field and ideally should be taken in your first two years. (Note that courses marked with an asterisk * serve as prerequisite courses for other ones in the major.)

Set A

| | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| PSY 1013 | General Psychology |
| EPY 2513 | Human Growth and Development |
| EPY 3543 | Psychology of Adolescence |
| EPY 3503 | Principles of Educational Psychology |
| EPY 3513 | Writing in the Behavioral Sciences* |

² **Three-Year Degree Option is available if you start early.**

Students entering MSU in Fall 2013 or after may elect to complete the B.S. degree in Educational Psychology in three years. This requires full time enrollment in fall and spring semesters, as well as taking summer school courses after both the first and second year. For additional information, see <https://www.threeyeardegree.msstate.edu/>.

The second set (B) involve a set of courses that can be taken at any point in your major, especially after taking courses in set A.

Set B

| | |
|----------|--|
| EPY 3063 | Psychology of Individual Differences and Exceptional Ability |
| PSY 3623 | Social Psychology |
| EPY 4073 | Personal and Motivational Factors in Education |
| EPY 4214 | Educational and Psychological Statistics* |
| EPY 4313 | Measurement and Evaluation |
| EPY 4553 | Creativity/Innovation |

Most of the EPY courses in Set B are offered every semester (i.e., spring, summer, and fall), except for the following:

- EPY 3063 is *usually* offered in fall and summer semesters
- EPY 4073 is *usually* offered in fall and summer semesters
- EPY 4214 is *usually* offered in fall and spring semesters
- EPY 4313 is *usually* offered in spring and summer semesters

Finally, the last set (C) are capstone courses that are intended for you to take in your final two semesters. You should also be deciding on and taking courses in your supporting interest area during your junior and senior years.

Set C

| | |
|----------|--|
| EPY 4033 | Application of Learning Theories (Prerequisite: EPY 3513) |
| EPY 4683 | Advanced Issues in Educational Psychology (recommend in fall for students aiming to apply for graduate school & spring for those seeking a job upon graduation) |
| EPY 4513 | Research Methods (Prerequisites: EPY 3513 & 4214) |

Planning for EPY Supporting Interest Area Courses

Included in the 124 hours to meet the major is a requirement to fulfill a supporting interest area. This includes 18 hours in another major or group of courses that serve to complement the EPY courses. The supporting interest areas include: *The Developing Child, Law and Order, Counseling and Clinical Applications, Youth and Teen Studies, Human Resources and Industrial Applications, Kinesiology, Speech/Language Pathology (SLP; a majority of courses taken at MUW), and Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA minor)*. As an alternative, you may elect to complete a minor or certificate to meet the EPY supporting interest area requirements. See EPY Supporting Interest Areas sheet for details.

Advising

Your college experience is made up of what you make it! In terms of your academic planning, you are responsible for attending the group advising, meeting with your advisor when needed, asking appropriate questions, listening to their advice, and making informed decisions. Please come prepared to advising appointments by reviewing this handbook, noting your progress, and having a draft plan of courses to take in the upcoming semester. This plan should include some alternative ideas in case some courses are full before you can register for them. **Always keep in mind that your education is your responsibility.**

Program Faculty (Advisors are marked with *)

- Dr. Ty Abernathy
- Dr. Donna Gainer
- Dr. Kasia Gallo*
- Dr. Sareh Karami*
- Dr. Dinetta Karriem* Student Services Coordinator
- Dr. Tianlan Wei* Program Coordinator
- Dr. Jianling Xie*

How do I get an advisor and an advising session?

An advisor will be assigned to you once you get enrolled in the EPY program as a new, continuing, or transfer student. You may find your advisor's name and contact information via the Banner. If the advisor information is missing, please contact Ms. Onnie Blackshire (OBlackshire@colled.msstate.edu) to assign.

Group advising sessions will be offered every fall and spring semester during the pre-registration period as specified in MSU's academic calendar (<https://www.registrar.msstate.edu/calendars/academic-calendar>), and you should make your best effort to attend at least one of these sessions. If you remain to have unanswered questions after the group advising or need additional help, you may also contact your advisor to set up one-on-one advising sessions.

Do I have to attend the advising session or set an appointment?

Yes, you must attend the group advising or meet with your advisor to submit your trial/tentative schedule. Your advisor will release you for registration only after reviewing your proposed schedule.

What should I prepare for advising?

- A trial schedule with courses you want (& alternatives)
- Any questions you might have about classes or supporting interest areas

Career Opportunities With an EPY Degree

The EPY B.S. degree prepares graduates to work in variety of areas within many helping professions. The human services professions are a growing area, and our graduates work as psychiatric assistants, child welfare workers, youth workers, human resources specialists, community mental health center case workers, outreach and community specialists, drug abuse/resistance counselors, preschool care givers, military officers, and so forth. You may find jobs requiring a degree in behavioral science majors (e.g., education or psychology majors) to be appropriate for EPY majors to apply. In addition, many of our graduates are admitted to graduate programs in educational psychology, counseling, or school psychology.

1. MENTAL HEALTH

Case Worker
Geriatric Technician Behavioral Technician
Program Assistant

2. GROUP HOME SETTING

Resident Manager
Program Assistant

3. PRIVATE MENTAL HEALTH/ SUBSTANCE ABUSE WORKER

Psychiatric Assistant
Substance Abuse Counselor

4. DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Child Welfare Worker
Adult Services Worker

5. FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

Youth Worker
Domestic Abuse/Crime Violence Aide
Shelter Counselor
Child Services Worker

6. CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Family Support Worker

7. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Parent Educator
Family Programs Aide
Teen Pregnancy Counselor
Tutor

8. NURSING HOME

Social Worker (unlicensed)
Activities Coordinator
Case Manager

9. ADOLESCENT REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Wilderness Counselor
Family Services Aide

10. BUSINESS

Human Resources Specialist

11. STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DELAYED

Ellisville Aides
Case Worker

12. HOSPICE WORKER

Social Worker

13. PRIVATE CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

Girl Scout
Catholic Charities

14. CHURCH RELATED

Youth Worker
Religious Education
Pre-Seminary Intern

15. PRISONS

Classification Specialist
Mental Health Technician

16. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Recreation Assistants
Court-Appointed Youth
Court Position

Obtain Your B.S. Degree in EPY Online

The Educational Psychology B.S. degree can now be completed online. Our online program (<https://online.msstate.edu/epy/>) offers great flexibility for those who want to build a solid foundation in educational psychology. The advisor for our online EPY program is Dr. Donna Gainer. You can reach her by email at browning@colled.msstate.edu, or by phone during daytime hours at (662) 889-0038.

If you would like to know exactly what to do to get started, follow these steps:

1. Fill out the online Application for Admission and pay an application fee online. Choose Educational Psychology (BS) as your major and Online Education as your campus.
2. Request official transcripts from EVERY university or school you have previously attended. Your application will not be considered until **ALL** transcripts are received. Transcripts can be mailed to the Office of Admissions and Scholarships, P.O. Box 6334, Mississippi State, MS 39762 or electronically submitted (eScripted) to admit@msstate.edu.
3. If you **have** attended college; please submit the following:
 - a. Official transcripts from each school attended.
 - b. ACT or SAT scores may possibly be required; NOT required if you have already earned a bachelor's degree.
 - c. High school transcript; may possibly be required.
4. If you have **never** attended college; please submit the following:
 - a. High school transcript showing graduation date.
 - b. ACT or SAT scores.Once students have been accepted, register for online orientation.
5. Every new student must register for Online@State Orientation. Students must successfully complete orientation to obtain a release to register. After students have successfully completed Online orientation, the advisor is notified.
6. Release to register for class. Advisor releases and advises the students to register for class.

If you are already a Mississippi State Student and looking to transfer into this online program, complete the change of major form. Then contact Ms. Valerie Tate at v.tate@msstate.edu to get started.