GRADUATE COUNCIL

PROPOSAL FOR CHANGE IN EXISTING COURSE/PROGRAM

ORIGINATING UNIT: Department of Psychology

TYPE OF ACTION:

_________ Change in existing course

_________ X_ Change in existing program

TYPE OF CHANGE REQUESTED:

_________ Number

_________ Title

_________ Description

_________ Prerequisite(s)

_________ Drop course/program

_________ X__ Program Requirements

_________ Other (specify)

Semester and Year Change(s) take effect: Fall 2010

Appropriate Computer Abbreviation (30 spaces or less):

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE (omit if dropping a course or program):

Present catalog copy:

Psychology PhD Requirements

The program leading to the PhD in Psychology has a research emphasis reflecting the study of psychology as a science rather than the therapeutic aspects of psychology. The term "research" should be interpreted broadly. The program is not limited to traditional experimental psychology, nor is it committed solely to laboratory-based methods. The department believes that a measure of specialized knowledge is built upon a firm but broad base of psychological principles and methods that constitute the best plan for most of its students. Although the graduate program leads to a PhD in General-Experimental Psychology, the student is expected to pursue a specialized area of research. For information about areas of research interests of the faculty, contact the Department of Psychology or visit www.psy.tcu.edu/.
A PhD is a research degree. It is awarded for demonstrating competence in research by successfully defending a PhD dissertation. The emphasis is on a research apprenticeship, so few courses are required, and those few courses could all be waived, at the discretion of the graduate director. It is possible to earn a PhD without ever taking a course other than the Advanced Studies courses, which satisfy the research apprenticeship, plus 12 dissertation hours: six hours of PSYC 90980 and six hours of PSYC 90990.

In the usual program, students must take and "pass" (grade of "B-" or better in each) five core courses that include:

PSYC 50403 Advanced Physiological Psychology
PSYC 60553 Conditioning and Learning

One of:
PSYC 50423 Graduate Statistics
PSYC 50523 Experimental Design

One of:
PSYC 50583 Cognition
PSYC 50563 Developmental Psychology
PSYC 60533 Perception

One of:
PSYC 60823 Group Processes
PSYC 60833 Attitudes
PSYC 80500 Special Topics in Social Psychology and Personality

Any or all of these courses could be waived if the graduate director finds that the student has previously taken an equivalent course in another graduate program. Beyond those courses, each student takes any and all courses required by his/her area committee, which could be many or none. Successful completion of the PhD requires completing the course requirements, if any; successfully defending a master's thesis if required by the faculty; passing the preliminary evaluation vote by the full faculty; passing a qualifying examination that has both written and oral components in order to advance to doctoral candidacy; and defending a PhD dissertation.

The usual timeline involves completing the five core courses listed above by the end of the second year; completing the master's thesis, when required, by the end of the second year; continuing to take any and all additional courses required by the area committee; passing the preliminary evaluation vote by the end of the third year; passing the qualifying examination to advance to doctoral candidacy by the end of the fall semester of the fourth year; and successfully defending the PhD dissertation within six years after advancing to doctoral candidacy.
Proposed catalog copy:

Psychology PhD Requirements

The program leading to the PhD in Psychology has a research emphasis reflecting the study of psychology as a science rather than the therapeutic aspects of psychology. The term "research" should be interpreted broadly. The program is not limited to traditional experimental psychology, nor is it committed solely to laboratory-based methods. The department believes that a measure of specialized knowledge is built upon a firm but broad base of psychological principles and methods that constitute the best plan for most of its students. Although the graduate program leads to a PhD in General-Experimental Psychology, the student is expected to pursue a specialized area of research. For information about areas of research interests of the faculty, contact the Department of Psychology or visit www.psy.tcu.edu/. Students who enter the Ph.D. program having completed a thesis-based master's degree at an accredited institution can request on first entering the program that the graduate faculty design a course sequence tailored to their individual needs, which might include different courses than those listed below.

All other entering students must take and "pass" (grade of "B-" or better in each) five core courses that include:

PSYC 50403 Advanced Neuroscience
PSYC 60553 Conditioning and Learning
PSYC 60663 Advanced Social Psychology

Plus

One of:
PSYC 50423 Graduate Statistics
PSYC 50523 Experimental Design

One of:
PSYC 50583 Cognition
PSYC 50563 Developmental Psychology

Beyond those required courses, each student takes any and all courses required by his/her area committee. Successful completion of the PhD requires completing the course requirements; successfully defending a master's thesis if required by the faculty; passing the preliminary evaluation vote by the full faculty; passing a qualifying examination that has both written and oral components in order to advance to doctoral candidacy; and defending a PhD dissertation.

The usual timeline involves completing the five core courses listed above by the end of the second year; completing the master's thesis, when required, by the end of the second year; continuing to take any and all additional courses required by the area committee; passing the preliminary evaluation vote by the end of the third year; passing the qualifying examination to advance to doctoral candidacy by the end of the fall semester of the fourth year; and successfully defending the PhD dissertation within six years after advancing to doctoral candidacy.
Supporting EVIDENCE OR JUSTIFICATION:

Changes

1. Omit statements that the graduate director can waive course requirements.
   
   Justification: It is difficult to know whether a course taken elsewhere matches a course of the same name at TCU. Also, requiring all students to take the same five core courses improves faculty ability to evaluate student progress. The new catalog wording makes clear that it is only in the special case of a student entering with a completed thesis-based master's degree that a different course sequence might be allowed, and that exception would need to be approved by the entire graduate faculty, not just the graduate director.

2. Make three (rather than two) of the required five courses standard for all students.
   
   Justification: One course that covers all of social psychology replaces three courses that each covered a different aspect of social psychology. In addition, requiring all students to take the same course in the social psychology area improves faculty ability to evaluate student progress.

3. Omit PSYC 60533 from courses that satisfy the cognitive psychology requirement.
   
   Justification: The faculty member who taught that course is no longer at TCU.

Explain how the change(s) will affect the current outcomes and assessment mechanisms?

The department graduate faculty believe that assessment will be more accurate if ways for students to satisfy the course requirements are more restricted.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Faculty: None

Space: None

Equipment: None

Library: None

Other:
If yes, submit supporting statement signed by chair of affected unit.
If cross-listed, provide evidence of approval by all curriculum committees appropriate to both the originating and the cross-listed units.

Chair of Originating Unit: ___________________________
Signature: [Signature]
Name: ____________________ Timothy M. Barth
Unit: ____________________ Department of Psychology

Revised 12/07