

## Understanding the B.L.A. Degree

*Q: What is this degree?*

A: The Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree is a 120-credit bachelor's degree option for which students declare two separate academic fields as Concentrations, completing 24-30 credits in each of two (with at least 12 credits in each at the 300-level or above), along with the university's General Education requirements, and a 12-credit competency requirement involving study of a foreign language, or culture, or some practical skill.

*Q: What fields may be declared as Concentrations?*

A. These fields include many of the majors/tracks and interdisciplinary programs within the College of Fine Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences (except Criminal Justice), such as Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Philosophy, Theater Arts, Gender Studies, etc. The complete list may be found at [http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/colleges/fahss/humanities-social-science\\_programs.htm#BLA Degree](http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/colleges/fahss/humanities-social-science_programs.htm#BLA Degree) (Note that only a few of these areas of concentrations may be pursued online.)

*Q: If I concentrate in Psychology in the BLA, how does that differ from the B.A. in Psychology?*

Pursuing a B.A. in Psychology means (1) taking at least 36 credits in Psychology, rather than 24-30; (2) completing the three-course research sequence (Research I, II, III)—these courses would be concentration electives in the BLA; (3) taking at least one 400-level advanced seminar in Psychology plus one other 400-level course—these, too, would be concentration electives in the BLA; and (4) fulfilling the foreign language proficiency requirement (in the BLA, this is one of three different ways to fulfill the 12-credit competency requirement).

*Q: Why would I consider it?*

For most students, the attraction of the BLA is a function of not having to complete the research sequence and/or not having to study a foreign language. For transfer students, their transfer courses sometimes map on to the BLA and its two concentrations a little bit more easily than with the B.A. And the BLA has fewer specific requirements within the concentrations so students are freer to pursue the electives they wish to take.

*Q: Will it still prepare me for careers and graduate study?*

For the most part, yes. For most careers and graduate programs, having some background in psychology is often enough, regardless of whether it was a major, a minor, or a concentration, or even as just free electives. One exception, however, would be graduate study in Psychology, especially at the doctorate level, where there is often a significant emphasis on students having a solid background in psychology as science, with exposure to research courses and perhaps even with the some participation in doing their own research.

*Q: Will I still have my Psychology faculty advisor?*

No, the BLA is offered within the Cultural Studies department, and those faculty serve as advisors to all BLA students.

*Q: How do I make the change?*

Fill out the Declaration/Change of Major form available from the Registrar and bring it to Dr. Liana Cheney, Chair of Cultural Studies (Coburn 201).

*Q: Should I make the change?*

That is entirely up to you. The faculty in the Department of Psychology are very proud of our B.A. major and believe that it is the best route for students to follow who have a passion for Psychology (no matter what their future goals might be). But we also recognize that there are many situations where the choice of BLA might make perfectly good sense.