Cognitive Science BA: Details

See the general bulletin for information on required ("core") courses, a list of COGS courses, and detail on which COGS courses fulfill which General Education Requirements. Remember that foundation courses (101, 102, 201, 202) can be taken in any order. You can start the major with any course, any semester.

Ready to declare? Go here, navigate to the declaration form, fill out. No concentration/sequence info is needed for COGS (leave blank). Email the form to any COGS faculty member. We are all academic reps.

Methods requirement

In addition to courses listed in the general bulletin, COGS 330: Cognition and Computation, can sometimes be used to fulfill the quantitative methods requirement. Consult with the instructor for more information. Some students also use STAT312(R), talk to your advisor if you are already planning to take that course. To have a methods course other than those that show up in SIS count, you will need to fill out an Academic Advisement Report.

Understanding how to fulfill elective requirements

Majors must complete fifteen approved elective credit hours (typically five courses). At least three of these courses must be at the 200 or 300 level.

There's no list of courses that fulfill elective requirements. Students design their major by choosing electives that focus on the study of human cognition as part of a unified COGS degree. Such courses are offered by many departments and programs, including PSCL, COSI, PHIL, BIOL, NEUR, DSCI, and others. Choosing electives happens over time in consultation with your advisor. These decision rules are useful in understanding whether a course will count.

- **If 100 level COGS course** -> Counts only if you are a MINOR, and have already taken COGS 101 and one other of 201, or 202. (Basically, this is a special case for minors who take 201 or 202--they can use 102 as an elective.)
- **If 200/300 level COGS course** -> Yes, it counts.
- **If cross-listed with 200/300 level COGS course, and you registered with the other heading** -> Yes, it counts. (Example: You registered for BIOL 302. It's cross-listed as COGS

322, so it's also a 300-level COGS elective.) Cross-listings are found in the [general bulletin](#).

- **If no COGS heading** -> It only counts if you make the case that it focuses on the study of human cognition and fits with your other electives as part of a unified COGS degree, see below on the process.

Justification process for elective courses with no COGS heading

Step 1

Have informal conversations with your advisor about the set of courses you plan to use to fulfill your elective requirements. This is a chance to reflect on what you are doing with your undergraduate career, and how your education in cognitive science might serve your plans for the future.

Step 2

As you get towards the end of your time at CWRU, decide on the list of courses you'll use to complete the elective requirement for the COGS major. For courses with no COGS heading, you'll need to do two things:

1) Use [this google form](#) to submit your response to this question: *In combination with your other electives for the major, how does this course contribute to your transdisciplinary study of the human mind*?

2) Fill out an [Academic Advisement Report](#). Under "Other Changes," write "Please count [the courses you're using] as COGS electives." Sign electronically, send to your advisor, tell them you have filled out the google form with your proposed justification for the courses. If they accept your justification, they'll sign and return the Academic Advisement Report to you for you to submit to the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

FAQ about Elective Justification

1) **Can my advisor tell me if a non-COGS course will count before I take it**? Not exactly. Your advisor can't approve a non-COGS elective until you have taken it and submitted your justification. It's up to you to make the case that a class is appropriate for your

individual program. But you can discuss it with your advisor and your advisor can tell you whether they are likely or unlikely to approve it for you.

2) **Should I get my electives approved one at a time or all at once**? It's up to you. Some students prefer to do this one course at a time since it gives them security, while others prefer to do it all at once to streamline paperwork.

3) **A non-COGS course was approved for someone else majoring in COGS**. **Does that mean it will be approved for me**? No. Your advisor can't approve a non-COGS elective until you have submitted your justification. It's up to you to make the case that a class is appropriate for your individual program.

4) **Why doesn't the department automatically approve courses that are very relevant to COGS**? Because asking students to justify their courses encourages them to think about what they are accomplishing with their set of electives. And, a course that makes sense for one student may not make sense for another.

How do capstones work?
This [presentation](#) has some useful info.

Significant Work Requirement

The significant work requirement allows our department to collect examples of student work so we can improve our program. To fulfill the significant work graduation requirement, any student majoring in cognitive science who declared the major after August 2023 must [upload two things to this box folder](#), using the following specific filenames:
Lastname_firstname_signficantwork.whateverfiletype
Lastname_firstname_assignment.whateverfiletype

1) **The piece of work that best demonstrates your mastery of the program learning outcomes** below
   a. Outcome 1: Recognize and describe concepts, theories and research methods in cognitive science.
   b. Outcome 2: Summarize and interpret findings from different areas of cognitive science, critique methodological and theoretical approaches, and identify new areas for future research.

      c. Outcome 3: Identify differences in cognition that result from differences in experience and reflect on how cognition is shaped by diversity and commonality in experience.

      d. Outcome 4: Extend existing empirical work to new research questions by proposing a solution to a problem / designing a way of testing a theory or claim / predicting how a phenomenon would pattern in a new context.

2) The **assignment** for which the piece of work was created.

Papers written for 300-level cognitive science courses are good candidates for this requirement. Students can also use significant works created for non-cogs courses, including works that are not papers, such as computer programs, dance works, pieces of music, podcasts, and others.

This requirement is fulfilled once you have submitted the two items above. The department will communicate with undergraduate studies (usually twice a year) to let them know the requirement has been fulfilled, at which point it will show up as completed in SIS. We urge you to fulfill this requirement **at least a semester before** you plan to graduate.

Honors in the Major

The honors program allows highly motivated undergraduate cognitive science majors to receive additional mentoring, professional development, and research supervision. To graduate with honors in the major, students must have…

1) 3.5 major GPA at the time of graduation
2) Completed either COGS 308 (Advanced Research Workshop I, usually offered in the fall) OR COGS 309 (Advanced Research Workshop II, usually offered in the spring) with a final grade of A.

In both courses, students develop a research topic (theoretical or empirical), and work on it with the input of other workshop members to produce final papers. COGS 308 and 309 are enrollment via instructor permission only.

FAQ about Honors

1) **Will honors show up on my diploma**? No. Departmental honors appear in the graduation program and on your transcript. Only Latin honors (cum laude, etc.) appear on the diploma.
2) **How is the honors program different from a capstone**? The capstone is a General Education requirement that all undergraduates must fulfill in order to graduate.
3) **Can I do the honors program and the capstone at the same time**? Yes. Students who are doing the two in the same semester can work with the 308/309 instructor and their capstone supervisor to figure out how to best use the student's time. You can work on related or entirely different topics for the two requirements.
4) **What happens if I've taken COGS 308 or 309 and earned an A, but don't have a 3.5 GPA when I graduate**? You won't be awarded honors in the major.
5) **Do COGS 308 or 309 fulfill any requirements**? These courses count as COGS electives.
6) **Can I take COGS 308 or 309 if I don't want to be in the honors program**? Yes. You will receive honors if you meet the requirements, so if there's some reason (excessive modesty?) you don't want that notation, let the instructor know.
7) **Can I take both COGS 308 and 309**? Yes.
8) **When should I take COGS 308 or 309**? The optimal time is junior or senior year, after you've acquired a solid background in cognitive science. There are no prerequisites for 308 or 309, which means that you can take the course at any time.

Minor elective requirements

Electives for the COGS MINOR are much more restricted than electives for the major. If you MAJOR in COGS, you can often use courses you'd be taking anyway for other programs or your interests as COGS electives. We usually have 120 students in the major including many secondary majors (BA + BS), and only about 5 COGS minors. This is because the difference between a major and a minor often comes down to of 2-3 courses, due to the flexible nature of electives for majors and the inflexible nature of electives for minors.