

Cognitive Science Minor

Cognitive science (CogSci) is the study of the mind, of how we come to know the world and how we use that knowledge. Cognitive scientists use theories and methods drawn from many disciplines, including cognitive psychology, neuroscience, philosophy of mind, linguistics, computer science, artificial intelligence, physics, mathematics, biology, and anthropology. They ask questions such as: How do people acquire language? What are the neural bases of perceiving, learning and remembering? What is the nature of knowledge? Can machines think? How do experts differ from novices? Are there innate ideas? How did human intelligence evolve?

Faculty from the Main Campus, the Medical Center, and the Law Center are involved in the Cognitive Science minor. Our program involves faculty from several Main Campus departments (including Biology, Computer Science, Linguistics, Mathematics, Philosophy, Physics, and Psychology) and from the Medical Center (including Neurology, Neuroscience, Pediatrics, Pharmacology, and Psychiatry). We help students take advantage of the exciting research being conducted across the University's three campuses.

We foster student involvement in research in several ways. The two Core Courses of the Cognitive Science minor are designed as a year-long experiential learning sequence that combines interdisciplinary theory in the fall with hands-on research experience in the spring. Students begin with the foundational theory course (ICOS 2201, then spend time in faculty laboratories (ICOS 2950)—reading about, discussing, experiencing, and potentially assisting with research projects underway at Georgetown.

Both of our Core Courses, which are open to all students, are team-taught and interdisciplinary, allowing students to meet professors and students from a range of departments. This also offers the opportunity to experience an unusually broad range of perspectives and disciplines. For this reason, our Core Courses can help students choose a major during their first year at Georgetown or broaden their horizons in their later years.

In addition, Cognitive Science minors may choose to conduct a senior thesis in Cognitive Science, working with a faculty member who agrees to supervise the research.

Minor in Cognitive Science

The Minor in Cognitive Science normally requires that students have a Major (planned or declared) in one of the following participating disciplines: Biology, Computer Science, Linguistics, Mathematics, Philosophy, Physics or Psychology. Students undertaking other majors may seek permission to take the Minor by contacting the Director of the Program.

The Distribution Requirement

The purpose of the distribution requirement is to give the student a broad background in Cognitive Science. This is why students are required to take at least one designated course in each of two departments outside of their major field. For purposes of this distribution requirement, Cognitive Science (ICOS) counts as a department. Therefore, if the student takes a course offered (or cross

listed) by Cognitive Science—other than the two core required courses (ICOS 2201, ICOS 2950)—this counts as one of the two departments outside the student's Major.

The Cognitive Science Senior Thesis Option

Students who are not writing a thesis for their Major are encouraged to exercise the Cognitive Science Senior Thesis option. They should enroll for the Senior Thesis in Cognitive Science (ICOS 4970, ICOS 4971), for a minimum of 4 credits (maximum of 6 credits). ICOS 4970 is offered in the fall, and ICOS 4971 is offered in the spring.

The number of credits and their distribution across semesters (e.g., 2 in fall, 2 in spring; 1 in fall, 3 in spring) must be approved by the thesis advisor prior to the Fall Add/Drop period and, regardless of the distribution of credits, the completed senior thesis substitutes for one of the four distribution courses. Thus, students undertaking a thesis in Cognitive Science need to take only 3, instead of 4, designated distribution courses.

Students considering the thesis option should connect with a Senior Thesis Advisor willing to support their research project as early as possible, but no later than the beginning of their senior year, prior to the Fall Add/Drop period, and they should plan to work on the thesis throughout the year. Students must be manually enrolled in ICOS 4970 and 4971 by the Director in accordance with their approved credit distribution plan. See <https://cognitivescience.georgetown.edu/undergraduate-research/> for specific instructions and important logistical information for contacting the Director and beginning the approval and enrollment process for a senior thesis in Cognitive Science.

Students who are undertaking a thesis in their Major are encouraged, but not required, to conduct the thesis for their major in an area related to Cognitive Science. However, they should not enroll in any thesis credits other than those required for the major. Students completing a thesis in their major should take a total of four distribution courses approved for the ICOS Minor.

(For course listings for Cognitive Science see the Schedule of Classes (<https://schedule.georgetown.edu/>))

For more information about the Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Program in Cognitive Science (the "CogSci Minor"), please visit the program website: <https://cognitivescience.georgetown.edu/>.

Requirements

Requirements for the Minor

To complete the Minor, students must earn a minimum of 18 credits distributed as follows:

Code	Title	Credits
ICOS 2201	Intro to Cognitive Science	3
ICOS 2950	Res Modules:Cognitive Science	3
Select 12 credits consisting of four designated distribution courses in at least two of the participating disciplines outside the Major		12
Total Credits		18

¹ Courses that meet the Cognitive Science distribution credits are drawn from the participating disciplines across the University. For the current list of participating disciplines, please visit cognitivescience.georgetown.edu/requirements/ (<http://cognitivescience.georgetown.edu/requirements/>). Students seeking confirmation that a particular course satisfies a distribution requirement should contact the Program Director.