Undergraduate Specialization in Cognitive Science

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is cognitive science?
- Cognitive science is the interdisciplinary scientific study of mind and its processes, whether embodied in the biological stuff of neurons in a brain, or in the silicon stuff of computer chips in an artificial brain-like system. Cognitive science encompasses multiple disciplines, including psychology, computer science, neuroscience, linguistics, zoology, education, and philosophy.

Why would I want to enroll in a specialization in cognitive science?
- A specialization in cognitive science is a good idea for a number of reasons. Taking courses and being involved in research in fields outside of your major will broaden your educational experience and give you valuable interdisciplinary research training. You will be exposed to different ways of thinking and problem solving that may give you novel insight in your major discipline. Having the cognitive science specialization on your transcript will highlight these factors to future employers and graduate schools.

What does the Cognitive Science Program do throughout the year?
- Along with offering an undergraduate and graduate course on cognitive science, PSY/LIN/ZOL 463 and 867 respectively, the Cognitive Science Program hosts a number of events bringing researchers from other schools to MSU, as well as events to share the research of different members of the cognitive science program. One of the large events is the Distinguished Speaker Series. More information on this, as well as the schedule for the upcoming year can be found at http://www.cogsci.msu.edu/DSS/2011-2012/.

How do I enroll in the undergraduate specialization in cognitive science?
- Send an email to ugradinfo@cogsci.msu.edu with your full name and PID and indicate that you would like to enroll in the undergraduate specialization in cognitive science. You should also set up an appointment with Cindy Walter (walterc2@msu.edu), who is the undergraduate advisor for the specialization. It would also be a good idea at this time to set up an advising meeting to go over the requirements. To do that, go to https://www.egr.msu.edu/adcalendar/ and select College of Arts and Letters.

Is there a deadline for applications?
- No. You can enroll in the specialization whenever you want. It is best to do it as early as possible, however, to give yourself enough time to complete the requirements.

What majors can enroll in the specialization?
- An MSU undergraduate student from any department can enroll in the specialization.

Is the specialization a major/minor/cognate?
- A specialization is an interdisciplinary program of thematically related courses. It serves as a complement to your other program of study that will show up on your MSU transcript.

What are the requirements of the specialization?
- The requirements of the undergraduate cognitive science specialization can be found at: http://www.reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/ProgramDetail.asp?Program=5649.
Can I double count courses for my major, minor, or cognate with those for the cognitive science specialization?
- Double counting courses may be possible with the specialization. Please check with your academic advisor for approval.

If I don't see a specific class listed on the website, can it count toward the specialization?
  - If you believe a specific class may be suitable for the specialization, please email ugradinfo@cogsci.msu.edu. The list of approved classes at http://www.cogsci.msu.edu/courses.html is not comprehensive and does not include a number of cognitive science related classes that are only offered occasionally.

I took some cognitive science courses before I enrolled in the specialization, will they still count?
  - Yes. As long as the classes were taken at MSU and approved to fulfill the requirements of the specialization, they will count.

Some of the approved cognitive science courses have prerequisites. Do I need to take them first?
- Yes, unless you have approval from the instructor to have the prerequisite waived.

Who should I contact with questions?
  - Questions regarding the undergraduate specialization should be sent to ugradinfo@cogsci.msu.edu.

Who are the faculty members associated with the specialization?
  - The faculty members affiliated with the Cognitive Science Program are listed at http://www.cogsci.msu.edu/faculty.html.