Department of Psychology

To:  Psychology Department Graduate Students  
From: Arty Samuel, Graduate Director  

August 13, 2007

I am writing to give you information about the departmental Breadth Course requirement. As you know, in recent years there has been some confusion about exactly what the rules are, and what courses might count toward this requirement. In order to reduce confusion, and to make sure our policies are current, a faculty committee met over the course of the last year. The faculty as a whole then discussed the issues, and approved the policy described below. The new policy will apply to all new students, and to most continuing students. If you believe it would be better for you to meet the Breadth requirement under the old rules rather than the new ones, you should discuss this with your advisor and with the Graduate Director.

The new policy is very similar to the old one, but there are some differences. As before, the basic idea is that students must take three courses outside of their own Area of specialization. The most significant change is a breakdown of the three courses into two “traditional” Breadth courses, plus one “wildcard”.

**Standard Breadth Courses:** The “traditional” Breadth courses are ones that will be regularly offered. Generally speaking, such courses will be offered every other year, on a predictable basis. Each of the four Areas will offer four such courses. There are also a small number of courses that are considered to be outside of everyone’s home Area, and thus permissible for everyone to use as a Breadth course. As a result, for any given student there will be 15 Breadth courses (four courses in the three Areas outside of the student’s, plus three that are outside for everyone). Courses may be added to the list on an ad hoc basis, if a faculty member nominates a course (if the course seems to have the broad content expected of Breadth courses, the Graduate Committee can approve it as allowable; such courses may or may not be offered regularly).
In the very near future, we will distribute the list of the regularly offered Breadth courses. The list will provide information about when each of these courses will be offered. The plan is that each summer we will be able to distribute a two-year list, providing a schedule for the next four semesters. A major goal of the new policy is to provide students with clear and predictable offerings.

**The Wildcard**: In satisfying the Breadth requirement, students must use at least two “traditional” courses of the type just described (Clinical students, due to APA rules, have additional constraints that should be discussed with Clinical faculty members). For the third Breadth course, students may choose among the following options: (a) another “traditional” Breadth course; (b) a broad course offered in another department; (c) a course from outside their own Area, even if that course is not on the list of Breadth courses (e.g., a seminar); (d) a methods-based course (currently, the two that are being offered are *Meta-Analysis* and *Structural Equation Modeling*). Even under the wildcard, courses such as the teaching seminar are not usable.

If you have any questions about the new rules, please ask the Graduate Director for clarification.