Counseling Psychology

Graduate education in counseling psychology involves training in both the science of psychology and the practice of counseling, assessment, and consultation. Most programs in counseling, clinical, and school psychology involve acquisition of a broad range of competencies in research, as well as applied skills in counseling, assessment, consultation, supervision, and teaching. As a specialty, counseling psychology is unique in its emphasis upon interventions designed to promote growth, coping, and enhanced functioning among those individuals who are facing life choices or decisions, such as aging, entering or changing careers, or crises associated with personal relationships. The theories and assumptions that form the core of the specialty emphasize choices, growth, and interventions intended to enhance functioning, more than the diagnoses or treatment of pathology.

To effectively compete for graduate study admission in any of the person-focused applied specialties in psychology the following courses are recommended. Courses in experimental design, cognition, statistics, learning, and history of psychology are also helpful.

Most graduate programs will look for evidence of research experience. Therefore, Psych 491 (Research Practicum), even if not in your area of interest is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

PSYCH 230 – Developmental Psych - Life-span development of physical traits, cognition, intelligence, social and emotional behavior, personality, and adjustment.

PSYCH 310/PSYCH 315 - Brain and Behavior (310) surveys the basic concepts in neuroscience with emphasis on brain mechanisms, mediating sensory processes, arousal, motivation, learning, and abnormal behavior. Drugs and Behavior (315) studies the fundamentals of psychoactive drugs and use in experimental, therapeutic, and social settings.

PSYCH 360 - Psychology of Normal Personality - Theories and research in the study of development and functioning of normal personality.

PSYCH 410 - Behavioral Neurology - Examination of the neuroanatomical foundation of cognition, affect, and action from a neurological perspective. Focus on basic and applied research with neurological patients.

PSYCH 422 - Counseling Theories and Techniques - Learn major theories and approaches to counseling and write case reports. Basic counseling skills are practiced through role-playing in the lab setting of 422L.

PSYCH 422L – Laboratory in Counseling Theory and Techniques - Learn basic counseling skills such as active listening, reflecting feelings, empathy, confrontation, immediacy and self-disclosure. Supervised practice using basic counseling skills.

PSYCH 460 - Abnormal Psychology - Descriptions, development, maintenance, and treatment of major forms of maladaptation including anxiety, mood disorders, personality disorders, substance dependence and schizophrenia.
PSYCH 488 – Cultural Psychology – Focus on cultural factors that influence psychological processes among people living in different parts of the world. Research in the areas of social, developmental, and cognitive psychology will form the core of the material in the course.

PSYCH 492 - Fieldwork Practicum - Volunteer experience is available at a variety of agencies in Ames and surrounding areas. This practicum gives credit for hours worked under supervision and provides relevant experience in the field, which is beneficial for future counseling practice.

300-400 Level Philosophy Courses - These courses emphasize critical thinking and writing skills that will assist you in understanding and researching theoretical, ethical, and methodological issues in general. Experience of this kind is very applicable to graduate work, especially in the area of conceptualizing, undertaking, or evaluating research or theories.

PHIL 381 – Philosophy of the Social and Behavioral Sciences - Methodological, ideological, and doctrinal issues about the social and behavioral sciences against the background of influence of the natural sciences. Focus is on the historical and cultural background of the 19th and 20th century western thought.

STAT 401 – Statistical Methods for Research Workers - Methods of analyzing and interpreting experimental and survey data. Statistical concepts and models; estimation; hypothesis tests with continuous and discrete data; simple and multiple linear regression and correlation; introduction to analysis of variance and blocking.

For additional information and advice, please visit with your academic adviser and/or graduate student assistant advisers, faculty adviser, or faculty in the counseling psychology area. Counseling psychology professors include: Dr. Patrick Armstrong, Dr. Carolyn Cutrona, Dr. Max Guyll, Dr. Art Konar, Dr. Lisa Larson, Dr. Warren Phillips, Dr. Loreto Prieto, Dr. Karen Scheel, Dr. Norm Scott, Dr. David Vogel, Dr. Nathaniel Wade, and Dr. Meifen Wei.