

CAREER ORIENTATION OVERLAY:
COOL for CLINICAL AND COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

The COOL for Clinical and Counseling Psychology emphasizes specific coursework for psychology majors who wish to pursue graduate study in order to practice psychology in a clinical setting. This COOL is designed to provide students with direction in course selection that allows for flexibility in exploring specific interests while maximizing one's chances of being admitted to graduate school. Therefore, the curriculum provides for a few required courses, some highly recommended courses, and some courses that are suggested for students interested in pursuing graduate education.

Clinical Psychologists: Clinical psychologists assess and treat people with psychological problems. They may act as therapists for people experiencing normal psychological crises (e.g., grief) or for individuals suffering from chronic psychiatric disorders. Some clinical psychologists are generalists who work with a wide variety of populations, while others work with specific groups like children, the elderly, or those with specific disorders (e.g., schizophrenia). They are trained in universities or professional schools of psychology. They may be found working in academic settings, hospitals, community health centers, or private practice.

Counseling Psychologists: Counseling psychologists do many of the same things that clinical psychologists do. However, counseling psychologists tend to focus more on persons with adjustment problems rather than on persons suffering from severe psychological disorders. They may be trained in Psychology Departments or in Schools of Education. Counseling psychologists are employed in academic settings, community mental health centers, and private practice.

School Psychologists: Your successful application to graduate school will depend on at least four things: (a) good grades, particularly in your psychology classes during your junior and senior years (3.0 overall is a minimum at many schools); (b) your letters of reference; (c) your research and/or clinical experience; and (d) your test scores such as the GRE (minimum requirements can vary from 500 to 650 on each of the Verbal and Quantitative portions of the exam). For more information about increasing your chances of being accepted into graduate school, talk to your advisor and instructors, and consult the handout entitled APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL: STRATEGIES AND TIME-LINE which is available in the Self-Advising Center in the Psychology Department.

Required Courses

The Department of Psychology requires at least 30 credits in psychology, which must include Psych. 111 (Introduction to Psychology), Psych 350 (Research Methods I), and Psych 351 (Research Methods II). In addition the department requires successful completion of an elementary statistics course (Stat 330), Computer Science 147 or equivalent, and 15 credits of courses in psychology at the 400 level (e.g., five courses). See ADegree Programs for Majors in Psychology@ located in the advising center for specific information regarding psychology requirements for 400 level courses.

Highly Recommended Courses

The lower level psychology classes which are recommended by this COOL include: Psych 213 (Developmental Psychology), Psych 214 (Social Interaction), and Psych 231 (Abnormal Psychology).

The upper level psychology classes which are recommended by this COOL include Psych 440 (Experimental Methods), Psych 472 (Advanced Psychopathology) or Psych 473 (Child Psychopathology), and Psych 480 (History & Systems). These courses have prerequisites; consult the NDSU Bulletin for details.

The psychology core courses which are most desirable for students applying for graduate study include Psych 370 (Personality), Psych 462 (Learning), Psych 465 (Psychobiology), and Psych 470 (Experimental Social Psychology).

Because most clinical and some counseling graduate programs give high priority to applicants' research experience in making acceptance decisions, research involvement is highly recommended. Psych 497 (Independent Study) can be taken to earn course credit for conducting research.

Many counseling psychology programs prefer students who have had some clinical experience. Psych 495 (Field Experience) is a way of earning course credit for volunteer work in an applied setting (e.g., crisis hotline, rape and abuse crisis center). For more information, see the handout on Field Experience available in the Psychology Self-Advising Center.

Suggested Courses

Psychology courses which are helpful for students interested in clinical practice include Psych 210 (Human Sexuality), Psych 211 (Behavior Modification), Psych 212 (Drug Use & Abuse), Psych 380 (Clinical Psychology) and Psych 496 (Psychology of Aging).

Psychology courses which are geared towards particular clinical interests include Psych 474 (Developmental Disabilities), Psych 481 (Behavioral Medicine), and Psych 486 (Neuropsychology). These courses are typically offered every other year. See the NDSU Bulletin for course prerequisites.

For students who wish to achieve a high level of research competence and thus enhance their graduate school opportunities, Psych 499 (Honors Thesis) is suggested. This full-year course involves planning and completing an independent research project. For more information, see the handout on Honors Thesis available in the Psychology Self-Advising Center.

Courses in other disciplines may be taken to supplement the psychology major. Additional statistics courses such as Stat 331 (Regression Analysis) and Stat 461 (Applied Regression Models) are suggested.

Other courses of general interest include SOC 427 (Sociology of Mental Health), BIOC 260 (Elements of Biochemistry), BIO 115 (Human Biology), BIO 150 (General Biology), CLLG 120 (Scientific Terminology), SPCM 110 (Public Speaking), SPCM 116 (Interpersonal Communication), SPCM 271 (Listening and Nonverbal Communication), COMP 128 (Computer Problem Solving), CWS 111 or CWS 311 (Genetics), EDUC 122 (Interpersonal Relationships), EDUC 125 (Assertiveness Training), EDUC 480 (Stress Management), ENGL 320 (Practical Writing), F&N 111 (Wellness), LIB 121 (Library Research), PSCI 300 (Introduction to Pharmacology), PHIL 212 or REL 260 (Ethics), PHIL 481 (Philosophy of Science), SOC 112 (Introduction to Sociology), SOC 202 (Minorities and Race Relations), SOC 407 (Deviant Behavior), SOC 412 (Sociology of Sex Roles), SOC 418 (Social Psychology), SOC 427 (Sociology of Mental Health), and ZOO 120 (Human Anatomy and Physiology). See the NDSU Bulletin for course descriptions and prerequisites requirements.

For students interested in working with families, a minor in CDFS or any of the following courses are suggested: CDFS 135 (Family Science), CDFS 242 (Marriage and Family), CDFS 462 (Family Crisis), CDFS 483 (Family Wellness), CDFS 485 (Family Systems) and Soc 417 (Sociology of Family). For students interested in working with children, a minor in CDFS or any of the following courses are suggested: CDFS 230 (Life Span Development), CDFS 232 (Prenatal/Infant Development), CDFS 330 (Early Childhood Development), CDFS 341 (Parenting and Guidance), CDFS 450 (Middle Childhood/Adolescent Development), and CDFS 488 (Exceptional Child). For students

interested in working with adolescents, a minor in CDFS or Sociology or any of the following courses are suggested: CDFS 230 (Life Span Development), CDFS 450 (Middle Childhood/Adolescent Development), Soc 112 (Introduction to Sociology), Soc 201 (Social Problems), and Soc 406 (Crime and Delinquency). For students interested in working with older adults, a minor in gerontology is suggested.