

Certificate Program in Mental Health

Objectives

Many students graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology seek employment with local employers such as hospital inpatient psychiatric programs, group homes, shelters for victims of domestic violence, or within the criminal justice system. While area employers may appreciate the knowledge base psychology majors have developed in pursuing their degree, they are more focused on the issue of what practical skills a prospective employee will bring to the setting.

The Psychology Department has traditionally offered various courses aimed at developing the practical skills necessary for effective functioning in the clinical setting. However, there has not been any formal recognition for students who have developed these skills nor any organized way to encourage this in students. The Mental Health Certificate Program has been developed to rectify this. The student completing this certificate will have been exposed to the core applied clinical skills employers seek in entry level clinical positions. Moreover, through a combination of program description, the development of a portfolio, and a minimum grade requirement in the certificate courses, students will be able to demonstrate to prospective employers their competencies in these areas. The certificate program will, therefore, enhance the employment prospects of our students while helping area employers select employees who will be better prepared to work with their client populations.

The University of Wisconsin-Parkside is committed to the full development of its students to assume their role as contributing members of the local area, region, and world. This includes the ability to apply knowledge in ways that enhance one's occupational, civic, and cultural involvement. Psychology, with its focus on understanding behavior, can have a significant impact in achieving these goals. Specifically, this certificate focuses on developing assessment skills, interpersonal skills, and behavior change skills. While these skills are clearly related to success in the mental health field, they are also quite relevant to all efforts of one person to relate effectively to another.

In addition to having specific mental health skills, it is frequently necessary to tailor those skills to particular populations. That is, awareness of the diverse needs of different populations is seen as a critical skill. The Mental Health Certificate approaches the issue of diversity from three directions. First, effective mental health workers need to be sensitive to differences in cultural values, beliefs, and expectations. Issues related to race, gender, age, sexual orientation and other major subcultures contribute to the kinds of difficulties a given client might present. They may also create barriers to effective helping efforts. In addition to this "traditional" definition of diversity, mental health workers need to be sensitive to the unique issues presented by different mental health populations. For example, clients struggling with substance abuse problems require different assessment procedures and interventions than those diagnosed with schizophrenia. Finally, it is our belief that the more ways a student has to understand a client, the more effect the intervention will be. While psychology is a broad subject area, it primarily views problem

behavior from the perspective of the individual. In the certificate program, we will broaden the awareness of differences associated with subcultures and diagnostic categories by requiring that students sample the perspectives of other academic disciplines.

Certificate Description

The Certificate in Mental Health will require the successful completion of 18 credits (four required courses and two elective courses) as listed below. Students must achieve a 3.0 GPA or better in these courses to receive the certificate.

REQUIRED COURSES

COURSE	OFFERED	PREREQUISITE
PSYC 318 Psychological Assessment	Fall	PSYC 101 and PSYC 250
PSYC 330 Interviewing	Fall	PSYC 101 and 6 Crs. in PSYC, SOCA, or BUS
PSYC 331 Counseling Psychology	Spring	PSYC 101 and PSYC 260
PSYC 360 Abnormal Psychology	Spring	PSYC 101 and PSYC 260

Each of these classes has an experiential element as well as the didactic material necessary to support the student’s efforts to apply his/her understanding.

PSYC 318--Psychological Assessment: This course provides an introduction to the methods and principles of psychological assessment, including tests of personality, intelligence, ability, and vocation. As part of the course, students are required to complete two group projects aimed at developing practical skills in analyzing test data and in constructing objective tests. The culmination is a paper involving a comprehensive, critical analysis of a selected psychological test.

PSYC 330--Interviewing: This course introduces interviewing as a skill that is important in many different areas. Students in the course participate in three recorded interviews-- a qualitative research interview, a selection interview, and a diagnostic/problem solving interview. Each interview is critiqued by the student, a group of fellow students, and the professor.

PSYC 331--Counseling Psychology: The student in this course participates in two projects. The first involves the application of change processes to the student him/herself.

The second project requires the student to function as a counselor to a fellow student who is seeking to make some change in his/her life. Each project is monitored on a weekly basis with feedback from the instructor to the student as an integral part of the course.

PSYC 360--Abnormal Psychology: This course provides an overview of the field of abnormal psychology. Students learn about theoretical models, methods of study, diagnostic classification, and the various forms of mental disorder. The course follows and is organized around the current diagnostic system, the DSM-IV, which is used by most mental professionals today.. An important part of the course is a case study project (see attached), in which students are presented with a case and required to perform an in-depth, diagnostic analysis. The result is a paper, which is returned at the end of the course with critical feedback.

ELECTIVE COURSES (GROUP A)

COURSE	OFFERED	PREREQUISITE
COMM 315 Communication & Gender	Spring	Core Courses in COMM or Consent of Instructor
COMM 363 Communication & Ethnicity	Fall & Spring	COMM 107 or Consent of Instructor
COMM 365/ETHN 365 Intercultural Communication	Fall	Core Courses in COMM or Consent of Instructor
PHIL 215 Contemporary Moral Problems	Alternate Years	None
POLS 203 Women, Power & Politics	Every 3 rd Semester	None
SOCA 206 Race & Ethnic Relations in the US	Fall	SOCA 100 or 101 or Consent of Instructor
SOCA 213 Gender & Society	Fall	3 credits in SOCA
SOCA 247 Latinas/os in the United States	Every 3 rd Semester	SOCA 100 or 101 or Consent of Instructor
SOCA 365/CRMJ 365 Race, Crime & Law	Annually	SOCA 100 or 101 or CRMJ 101

Each student chooses one elective from the courses listed above. The purpose of these courses is to expose the student to issues of diversity as they are viewed by disciplines outside of psychology.

ELECTIVE COURSES (GROUP B)

COURSE	OFFERED	PREREQUISITES
CRMJ 305 Domestic Violence	Occasional	CRMJ 101 or Consent of Instructor
PHIL 328 Ethics in the Criminal Justice System	Annually	One course in PHIL, CRMJ 101, or Consent of Instructor
SOCA 207 Marriage & Family	Spring	SOCA 100 or 101 or Consent of Instructor
SOCA 216 Social Issues in Substance Abuse	Occasional	3 credits in SOCA
SOCA 234 Juvenile Delinquency/ Juvenile Justice	Annually	SOCA 100, or SOCA 101, or CRMJ 101 or Consent of Instructor
SOCA 332 Sociology of Mental Illness	Occasional	SOCA 100 or 101 and Junior Standing
SOCA 319 Death and Dying	Occasional	SOCA 101 and 3 other SOCA credits or Consent of Instructor
SOCA 326 Social Gerontology	Fall	Junior Standing or Consent of Instructor

Each student will select one elective from the above options. These electives are courses offered by other departments that focus on some specific problem area or group that is commonly addressed by Mental Health professionals.

The Portfolio

The Psychology department has committed itself to assuring that the core courses will be staffed with experienced instructors. Further, these courses will continue to have 'hands-on' components that will encourage and assess skill development. Thus, in the completion of the Mental Health Certificate, the student will build a portfolio comprised of work samples from each of the four core courses. Prior to granting the certificate, this portfolio will be reviewed by the department's clinical faculty (currently, Ed Conrad and/or Michael Gurtman). The student will be given constructive feedback on the quality of skills demonstrated in these classes. The certificate and portfolio will then be part of what the student can present to a prospective employer when applying for jobs in the mental health area.