COUNSELOR EDUCATION

The Counselor Education Department offers the master of arts degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling. The Counselor Education Department also offers a Sixth Year Certificate (SYC) in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling.

The Clinical Mental Health concentration prepares candidates to work in a variety of human service settings, including community and mental health counseling centers, career centers, substance abuse centers, crisis counseling centers, and other community agencies offering counseling services. The School Counseling concentration prepares candidates to work as counselors in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Candidates are endorsed for certification and/or job placement only in their area of concentration.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredits the MA programs in School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. In January 2017 after being reviewed on all 241 2009 Standards, CACREP accredited the School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs for eight years, through March 31, 2025.

As Dr. Carol Bobby, President and CEO of CACREP observed, “programs receiving accreditation for an eight-year period deserve to be commended for the work completed throughout the accreditation process. This is indeed a worthy achievement.”

CACREP accredited the Fairfield counseling programs in 1986, the first programs in Connecticut to receive this accreditation. CACREP accreditation affirms:

- to the public that our programs conform to general expectations for the counseling field;
- to our students that our educational activities are satisfactory and that they meet the needs of those wishing to enter the counseling profession;
- to Fairfield University that our department is committed to self-evaluation and program improvement.

Professional Preparation

In addition to preparing our graduates for certification and licensure, our programs provide opportunities that can serve to further our students’ professional development or increase their readiness for post-masters studies. Many of these opportunities occur in the Counselor Education Lab and Training Center, a state-of-the-art campus facility, is home to our 3-tier practicum supervision model; a model often seen only in doctoral training programs. In addition to the standard coursework, our students have many opportunities to gain additional preparation in supervision, research, group work, substance abuse counseling, and spirituality in counseling.

As students increase and refine their clinical skills they are encouraged to participate as coaches in several core courses; participate as process observers for the group, career, and theories courses; and engage in research, writing, and professional presentations with faculty. Combined with ongoing supervision, these various opportunities solidify a set of teaching, research, and supervision skills, that when added to the high level of clinical training, create a bridge for entry into the professional field or post-masters studies.

Counselor Education Department Position on Dispositions

The Counselor Education programs in School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) at Fairfield University align with the humanistic narrative; a narrative that recognizes the major role that the counselor-client relationship plays in promoting therapeutic change. As such, the program faculty emphasize interpersonal learning as a core competency, along with academic and clinical skill competencies.

Central to the mission of the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP) are the personal and professional qualities and characteristics of students who aspire to be practicing school and clinical mental health counselors. Therefore, the Counselor Education Department reviews students’ professional dispositions during the application process, in all courses, and in practicum and internship experiences. Faculty factor students’ professional dispositions into the awarding of final grades, as noted in all syllabi.

As gatekeepers for the counseling profession, the Counselor Education faculty have adapted items from the Evaluation of Counselor Behavior Checklist to assess counseling students’ proficiencies in:

- recognizing defensive behavior
- accepting and applying feedback from instructors and supervisors
- exhibiting a balance between self-assurance and awareness of the need for supervision
- recognizing personal feelings while handling them appropriately
- demonstrating awareness about how one’s behavior impacts others
- communicating responsibility for self
- behaving in an ethical manner

In view of the responsibilities and role of the counselor in school and clinical settings, candidates whose work is of marginal quality in pertinent courses or who demonstrate personal qualities that are not conducive to the role of counselor may be removed from the program. Candidates are expected to abide by the policies and procedures described in the student handbook and to behave in accordance with the American Counseling Association code of ethics. In addition, the disposition statement is applicable to these programs as it is to all programs in the Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions.

Admission to the Department

Application deadlines are listed online (https://www.fairfield.edu/graduate/academics/graduate-school-of-education-and-allied-professions/how-to-apply).

The formal admission application process consists of 3 steps.

1. Applicants complete an online application which includes required additional questions. Once the application has received a positive faculty review the applicant proceeds to the next step.
2. Applicants are invited to Admissions Day where they interact in small and large groups and participate in individual interviews with faculty members and current students. Application decisions are made at the end of Admissions Day.
3. The final step in the application process is attendance at a New Student Orientation where newly admitted students meet their advisors and receive important information about the program’s policies and procedures.
Testing Requirements for Programs Leading to Initial Certification (School Counseling): Candidates must take PRAXIS CORE, SAT, ACT or the GRE. Candidates who do not have passing scores on one or more sections of the test may be required to remediate any deficient area. Remediation may include re-taking and passing the sections that were not passed, taking additional coursework, or other remediation activities. If additional courses are required, the candidate must complete the coursework at a grade of B (3.0) or above and provide an official transcript to the Dean’s office prior to internship. Please see advisor for additional details and recommendations.

Prior to admission review qualified school counseling candidates may take a maximum of six credits; qualified clinical mental health counseling candidates may take a maximum of nine credits.

School Counselor Certification
Candidates who have no prior teaching experience but wish to be certified in Connecticut as school counselors may do so by completing 700 clock hours of supervised internship over 10 months in a public, private, or charter school setting prior to completion of the MA.

Advanced Training Certificates
Students are required to have earned a prior master’s or higher degree in a relevant field.

Preparation for Connecticut State Licensure and National Counselor Certification
Candidates who graduate from the clinical mental health master’s degree program will have completed the requirements to sit for the National Counselor Exam and the 60 credit hours required to become a licensed professional counselor within the State of Connecticut. School counseling candidates graduate with 48 credits. If they want to seek licensure, they must complete additional courses specified in the Connecticut licensure law that include: Introduction to Substance Abuse, Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Trauma and Crisis Intervention, and an internship in a clinical mental health setting. They must have 60 credits in counseling related coursework and also must sit for the National Counselor Exam.

Candidates graduating with a SYC are not covered under these guidelines and need to obtain national certification and state licensure on an individual basis according to guidelines outlined by the National Board of Certified Counselors and Connecticut Department of Public Health.

Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CN 0098</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam in School Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>CN 0099</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam in Clinical Mental Health Counseling</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>CN 0403</td>
<td>Seminar in Special Topics (Shell)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CN 0410</td>
<td>Grief and Loss Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>CN 0432</td>
<td>Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Management, Delivery, and Evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CN 0433</td>
<td>Multicultural Issues in Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CN 0446</td>
<td>Spirituality and Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) is a standardized multiple choice exam with 136 questions that requires School Counseling candidates to demonstrate understanding and mastery of content reflecting the eight core CACREP areas. It is highly recommended that candidates complete their comprehensive exam during the semester prior to the one in which they plan to graduate.

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) is a standardized multiple choice exam with 136 questions that requires Clinical Mental Health Counseling candidates to demonstrate understanding and mastery of content reflecting the eight core CACREP areas. It is highly recommended that candidates complete their comprehensive exam during the semester prior to the one in which they plan to graduate.

This course explores advanced topics in the field of counselor education. Topics vary each term, are determined by the counselor education department chair, and reflect current trends and themes in the field of counseling.

The focus of this course is on developing sensitivity, knowledge, and practical skills working with grief, bereavement, and end of life issues in counseling and cross-cultural approaches. It is designed to inform students how loss is a pervasive, natural process of life and with skilled understanding and intervention can provide healing, meaning, and transformation to self and others. The impact of religious and spiritual belief systems on bereavement, grief, and loss will be covered. Family interventions and conceptualizing grief and loss from a systems perspective will be discussed. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences. This course is open only to matriculated counselor education candidates; others by permission of the department chair.

Designed to familiarize candidates with the workings of community-based human service programs, this course focuses on organizational structure, agency goals and human resources, program development, needs assessment, grant writing, consultation roles, and program evaluation.

Candidates examine issues in counseling individuals and families from diverse ethnic, cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds and discuss the social, educational, economic, and behavioral factors that impact clinical work. The course addresses counseling men, women, and couples, and the issues of gender role stereotyping and changing sex roles, and integrates professional contributions from individual counseling and family therapy literature.

An introductory course in the exploration of developmental models and clinical interventions related to the interface of spirituality and counseling. The focus of this course is on developing knowledge and practical skills in working with spiritual and religious issues in counseling. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences.
CN 0447 Lifespan Human Development  
This course explores the processes of individual and family development from childhood through old age. Presenting theoretical perspectives for studying child, adolescent, adult, and family development, the course examines the modification of family structures over time and psychosocial development within family systems and cultural contexts. Crosslisted with FT 0447.

CN 0454 Introduction to Counseling Children and Adolescents  
Prerequisites: CN 0447, CN 0500, CN 0553.
This course provides an overview of theories and research pertinent to counseling children and adolescents. Candidates examine factors that promote and hinder healthy human development and receive information regarding assessment, counseling process, and evaluation process unique to working with children and adolescents. The course addresses multicultural dynamics and identifies issues relevant to divorce, grieving, and coping with crisis. Procedures include activities designed to help candidates conceptualize an ecosystemic framework for the counseling process.

CN 0455 Group Work: Theory and Practice  
Prerequisites: CN 0500, CN 0553.
This course focuses on the broad methodology of group work and theories and tasks in interpersonal and multicultural contexts. Candidates observe the nature of their interactions with others and enhance their knowledge about the nature of groups and the current theories and models. Understanding of group work with substance abusers will be explored. This course includes an experiential component.

CN 0457 Career Development: Theory and Practice  
Fee: $60 GSEAP Lab Fee
This course explores theories of career development across the lifespan and applications used in practice. Career assessment tools, world of work information, and the career counseling process are included.

CN 0465 Introduction to Substance Abuse and Addictions  
Candidates explore basic information about the history and current use and abuse of various drugs and alcohol. Topics include addiction, 12-step programs, physiological effects, FAS, COAs, and family systems, as well as culturally relevant prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies for individuals and families. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences. Crosslisted with FT 0465.

CN 0466 Substance Abuse Interventions  
Prerequisite: CN 0465.
This course uses didactic and experiential techniques to understand and facilitate interventions with substance abusers and their families. Topics include the role of motivational counseling and techniques developed by the Johnson Institute. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences.

CN 0467 Assessment in Counseling  
Fee: $60 GSEAP Lab Fee
Prerequisite: CN 0553.
This course establishes an understanding of principles and procedures associated with standardized and non-standardized assessment in community and school settings. Candidates acquire skills necessary for conducting basic assessments and explore principles of diagnosis, individual, group, and environmental assessments. The course includes an overview of intelligence, attitude, interest, motivation, aptitude, achievement, personality, adjustment, and development; examines legal, ethical, and multicultural concerns; and presents considerations unique to individuals with special needs.

CN 0468 Professional Issues in Counseling  
This course provides an orientation to the counseling profession, including the history of professional counseling; professional identity; the social, economic, and philosophical bases of the profession; the major legal and ethical issues facing the profession; and current and future issues and trends in counseling.

CN 0500 Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy  
This course examines philosophical bases for counseling theory, ethical and professional issues, and various theories that contribute to the practice of professional counseling, including psychoanalytic, humanistic/existential, cognitive/behavioral, and systemic approaches.

CN 0515 Trauma and Crisis Intervention  
This course addresses current theory, research, and models relevant to trauma and crisis intervention. Specific focus will be placed on understanding the role of spirituality, across cultures, in counseling children, men, women, and families. In addition, skills essential for response to trauma while working with groups will be addressed. Conceptualization from a systems perspective will be addressed. Forgiveness, hardiness, resiliency, and the dynamics of violence, religious, and political, will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the role of spirituality while working with individuals and groups. An overview of the affective, behavioral, cognitive, and neurological sequelae in response to trauma and crisis will be discussed, with emphasis on skills essential for crisis intervention, including assessment of safety and security concerns, triage, lethality, mass disaster, death notification, suicide, murder, and natural disaster. In addition, models essential for the care of the caregiver will be identified. The course’s instructional format will combine experiential, demonstration, and discussion methods. Active learning is essential to continued development. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences. This course is open only to matriculated counselor education candidates; others by permission of the department chair.

CN 0524 Domestic Violence in Nicaragua  
Prerequisite: CN 0553.
The course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to work outside of the country in Nicaragua. Specifically, students will work with groups of women from two rural villages on issues of gender equality and violence against women. The course is structured such that students will be required to meet throughout the summer, learning about Nicaraguan culture and laws, and designing a training program. Students will then travel to Nicaragua and provide training. This course is open only to students matriculated in the Counselor Education program.

CN 0525 Spirituality and Wellness  
This course provides a holistic approach to wellness integrating mind, body, and spirit interventions into the counseling process. An overview of wellness models, assessment tools, and spiritual practices as strength resources will be explored. Students will explore lifespan and cross cultural influences on wellness. Development of wellness and prevention plans and research on health and spirituality will be a focus. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences.

CN 0531 School Counseling: Procedures, Organization, and Evaluation  
This course provides candidates with the information necessary to apply basic counseling knowledge and skills in a school setting. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and Connecticut school counseling models are presented, and issues pertinent to working in the school system are explored.
CN 0533 Advanced Multicultural Counseling Strategies and Skills  3 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0433, CN 0553.
This course provides in-depth opportunities for students to deepen and expand their multicultural competencies and counseling skills for working with diverse belief systems and populations. Exploration of diverse spiritual, religious, ethnic, and systemic belief systems will allow students to develop cross-cultural competencies and understanding of the impact of the cultural context on the therapeutic process. Topics included will be pedagogy of the oppressed, religious violence and trauma, refugee and immigration concerns. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences.

CN 0553 Counseling Relationships and Skills  3 Credits
This introductory course equips candidates with various techniques of interpersonal communication and assessment, and reviews their application in counseling. The course emphasizes role-playing with the use of videotape and two-way mirror observation.

CN 0554 Group Facilitation  3 Credits
Prerequisites: CN 0455, CN 0553.
Candidates explore the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in a laboratory setting as participants and leaders in a group. The course focuses on identifying the structure and leadership of counseling groups and analyzing the dynamics that render them therapeutic.

CN 0555 Substance Abuse Counseling: Skills and Strategies  3 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0465.
This course focuses on learning, practicing, and developing counseling skills and strategies as they relate to substance abuse counseling. An overview of assessment, treatment planning, relapse prevention, and recovery will be explored. The course addresses theories that are fundamental to addiction counseling with emphasis on the relationship between theory and the practice of effective skills. Candidates will reflect on their roles as counselors and define the qualities, knowledge, and essential skills to become a competent, ethical, culturally aware counselor in training specific to the treatment of substance abuse. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences.

CN 0557 Co-occurring Disorders in Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling  3 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0465.
This course will introduce students to major concepts in the treatment of co-occurring substance use disorders and mental health disorders. Students will develop an awareness of the unique challenges that face clients who are struggling with multiple diagnoses. Students will practice conducting assessments, recovery plans, counseling skills and continuum of care issues relevant to the recovery process for this special population. Combines didactic and experiential learning opportunities. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences.

CN 0558 Counseling Practicum  3 Credits
Prerequisites: Matriculation in Counselor Education, completion of core requirements, and practicum review.
Candidates develop their individual, group, and consultation skills in this course through placement in a counseling setting, while receiving individual and group supervision on campus weekly. Participation requires audio recording at the practicum site for supervision and demonstration of diagnosis and treatment planning skills. Additional requirements include 100 clock hours, including 40 direct service hours. Candidates may repeat this course once for credit.

CN 0565 Substance Abuse and the Family  3 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0465.
This course brings together substance abuse studies and family systems approaches. Students are presented with a knowledge base of skills and methods for assessing and treating family systems. The course identifies the addictive and intergenerational patterns within families. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the theoretical frameworks to understand and create interventions for alcoholic and substance-abusing family systems. Relational clinical models including developmental, systemic, solution-focused, and narrative approaches are reviewed and evaluated. The course examines the history and methods of treatment models. Issues of social justice are emphasized in a review of socio-cultural and social policy that influence family behaviors and treatment. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences. Crosslisted with FT 0566.

CN 0566 Research Methodology  3 Credits
This course covers statistical procedures and research design for the consumer of human services research, with an emphasis on program evaluation, understanding the inferential potential of statistical procedures, and evaluating published research. Candidates focus on research in their respective disciplines (school counseling, family therapy, etc.).

CN 0585 Introduction to Clinical Supervision  3 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0558 or permission of instructor.
Intended for post-master's degree practitioners in counseling, marriage and family therapy, psychology, or social work, who are engaged in the practice of clinical supervision or preparing to become supervisors, this course covers major conceptual approaches to supervision, supervision methods, evaluation of supervisees, ethical and legal issues, and additional variables that affect supervision. The course offers experiential components to supplement didactic material.

CN 0590C Internship: Clinical Mental Health Counseling  3 or 6 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0558.
In clinical mental health counseling setting placements consistent with their career goals, candidate interns receive individual supervision. University faculty conduct weekly group supervision on campus that includes an emphasis on clinical work, prevention, and consultation, as well as professional issues related to practice. Internship requirements include 600 clock hours, including 240 direct service hours. Candidates arrange their internships with the assistance of the clinical coordinator.

CN 0590S Internship: School Counseling  3 or 6 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0558.
In elementary, middle, and/or secondary school setting placements, candidate interns receive individual supervision. University faculty conduct weekly group supervision on campus that includes an emphasis on clinical work, prevention, and consultation, as well as professional issues related to practice. Internship requirements include 700 clock hours over 10 months, including 240 direct service hours. Candidates make their internship arrangements with the assistance of the clinical coordinator.

CN 0591C Continuing Clinical Mental Health Internship  3 Credits
Prerequisite: CN 0590C.
This course is a continuation of CN 0590C. Faculty conduct weekly group supervision on campus that includes an emphasis on clinical work, prevention, and consultation as well as professional issues related to practice. This continuation course ensures that interns complete the required 600 clock hours including 240 direct service hours.
CN 0595 Independent Study 3-6 Credits
Candidates undertake individual projects in consultation with a faculty member, based on proposals submitted one semester in advance.

Faculty

Professor
Robert, Chair

Assistant Professor
Morrison
Novella

Visiting Instructor
O'Connell