

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 for those with a master's degree in counseling but seeking a different specialization.

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentration prepares candidates to work in a variety of human service settings, including private practice, community and mental health counseling centers, career centers, substance abuse centers, crisis counseling centers, college 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 in each concentration 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 of the 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, which is home to our 3-tier practicum supervision 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 at Fairfield University align with the multicultural and humanistic narratives recognizing the major role that client individual variables play in the counselor-client relationship in promoting therapeutic change. As such, the program faculty emphasize multicultural and interpersonal learning as core competencies, along with academic and clinical skill competencies.

Central to the mission of the School of Education and Human Development are the personal and professional qualities and characteristics of students who aspire to be practicing clinical mental health and school 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, American Mental Health Counseling, and/or American School Counseling (ASCA) national code of ASCA ethics. In addition, the disposition statement is applicable to these programs as it is to all programs in the School of Education and Human Development.

Admission to the Department

Application deadlines are listed online.

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 an **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 process**.
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 either exam offered by the National Board of Certified Counselors: the National Counselor Exam (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counselors Exam (NCMHCE). Graduates also will have completed 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.

Programs

- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- School Counseling
- Advanced Training Certificates

Courses

COUN 5350 Introduction to Substance and Process Addictions 3 Credits

This course includes the history and other related issues of substance use and process addiction including the neurobiological and medical foundation and etiology of addiction and co-occurring disorders; process addictions counseling including but not limited to gambling, sex, food, alcohol, or drugs; and basic concepts of terminology, models, ethical issues, substance classifications, effects and associated dangers, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning with both adults and children. Previously CN 0465, COUN 5465.

COUN 5410 Grief and Loss Counseling 3 Credits

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. Previously CN 0410.

COUN 5432 Introduction to Clinical Mental Health Counseling 3 Credits

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. Previously CN 0432.

COUN 5433 Multicultural Issues in Counseling 3 Credits

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. Previously CN 0433.

COUN 5446 Spirituality and Counseling 3 Credits

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. Previously CN 0446.

COUN 5447 Lifespan Human Development 3 Credits

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 MFTH 5447. Previously CN 0447.

COUN 5454 Introduction to Counseling Children and Adolescents**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** COUN 5447, COUN 5501, COUN 5553.

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. Previously CN 0454.

COUN 5457 Career Development: Theory and Practice**3 Credits****Fee:** \$70 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. Previously CN 0457.

COUN 5468 Professional Issues in Counseling**3 Credits**

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. Previously CN 0468.

COUN 5501 Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy**3 Credits**

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. Previously CN 0500.

COUN 5531 Introduction to School Counseling**3 Credits**

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. Previously CN 0531.

COUN 5553 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. Previously CN 0553.

COUN 5900 Special Topics (Shell)**1-3 Credits**

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. Previously CN 0403.

COUN 6250 Diagnosis and Treatment Across the Lifespan**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 5433.

This course covers the etiology, nomenclature, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders across the lifespan. The course includes the diagnostic process and classifications from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) as well as indications and contradictions of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation. The department recommends that the course be taken after or concurrently with COUN 5468.

COUN 6450 Career Readiness and College/Workforce Access Counseling in P-12**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** COUN 5433, COUN 5457, COUN 5531.

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the career readiness and college access counseling role of the school counselor working within the P-12 school setting. By utilizing an equity, diversity, and inclusion framework the course will explore career readiness and college access from a holistic and lifespan developmental perspective. In view of the CACREP standards, this course will explore and appropriately address the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national domains in academic, career, and the personal needs of P-12 students from kindergarten through high school as it relates to transitioning into career readiness, college/work force access, and planning.

COUN 6455 Group Work: Theory and Practice**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** COUN 5501, COUN 5553.

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. Previously CN 0455.

COUN 6467 Assessment in Counseling**3 Credits****Fee:** \$70 GSEAP Lab Fee**Prerequisite:** COUN 5553.

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. Previously CN 0467.

COUN 6515 Trauma and Crisis Intervention**3 Credits**

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. Previously CN 0515.

COUN 6524 Domestic Violence in Nicaragua**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 5553.

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. Previously CN 0524.

COUN 6525 Spirituality and Wellness**3 Credits**

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. Previously CN 0525.

COUN 6533 Advanced Multicultural Counseling Strategies and Skills**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 5433, COUN 5553.

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, and refugee and immigration concerns. This course is an advanced graduate course that includes interpersonal, interactive, and affective content and experiences. Previously CN 0533.

COUN 6555 Substance Abuse Counseling: Skills and Strategies**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 5465.

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. Previously CN 0555.

COUN 6557 Co-occurring Disorders in Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 5465.

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. Previously CN 0557.

COUN 6566 Substance Abuse and the Family**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 5465.

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 MFTH 6566. Previously CN 0565.

COUN 6568 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. Previously CN 0566.

COUN 6585 Introduction to Clinical Supervision**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 6950.

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. Previously CN 0585.

COUN 6840 Consultation and Collaboration for School Counselors**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** COUN 5433, COUN 5531.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the process of collaboration, consultation, and intervention within the school counseling environment. Emphasis is placed on the school counselor's role in working with school staff, parents, and community members to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of students.

COUN 6950 Counseling Practicum**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** 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. Open only to matriculated students in Counselor Education. Previously CN 0558.

COUN 6981C Internship: Clinical Mental Health Counseling**3 or 6 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 6950.

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. Previously CN 0590C.

COUN 6981S Internship: School Counseling**3 or 6 Credits**

JoAnn O'Connell, LPC, CSC

Daniel Sullivan, CSC

Prerequisite: COUN 6950.

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. Previously CN 0590S.

LPC = Licensed Professional Counselor

CSC = Certified School Counselor

COUN 6982C Cont Clin Mntl Hlth Internship**1-3 Credits****Prerequisite:** COUN 6981C.

This course is a continuation of COUN 6981C. 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. Previously CN 0591C.

COUN 6990 Independent Study**3-6 Credits**

Candidates undertake individual projects in consultation with a faculty member, based on proposals submitted one semester in advance.

Previously CN 0595.

COUN 6999C Comprehensive Exam in Clinical Mental Health Counseling**0 Credits**

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) is a standardized multiple-choice exam with 120 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 their penultimate semester. Previously CN 0099.

COUN 6999S Comprehensive Exam in School Counseling**0 Credits**

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) is a standardized multiple-choice exam with 120 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 their penultimate semester. Previously CN 0098.

Faculty

Professors

Perera, *chair*

Robert

Associate Professors

Morrison

Assistant Professors

Novella

Adjunct Faculty

Pamela Anderson, CSC, Clinical Coordinator

James Geisler, LPC

Joseph Graziano, LPC

Holly Mensching, LPC

Patricia Morrissey, CSC