

Master of Arts in Psychology

Administrative Unit

This program is administered by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research through the faculty of Psychology, Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences.

Objectives

The Master of Arts program in Psychology offers two programs, one in Clinical Psychology and one in Applied Research Psychology. The programs provide advanced training both for recent B.A. and B.S. graduates, as well as for individuals who have been in the work force for a number of years. Graduates of our two M.A. programs are provided with instruction related to working in a wide range of settings, including mental health centers, juvenile detention centers, child service agencies, specialized school services, residential treatment facilities, family counseling agencies, governmental and community agencies, teaching in community colleges, or preparing for study at the doctoral level (Ph.D.).

Admission Requirements

Applicants must provide three letters of reference, must have taken the Graduate Record Examination general aptitude test (GRE) and meet minimum University requirements. Two of the three references must be from past professors who are in a position to evaluate the applicant's qualifications for graduate study. Applicants are also required to submit a letter of "intent" of no more than two typed pages which explains reasons for applying to a Master's degree program in Psychology. The applicant should also indicate their reasons for selecting UTPB and their preferred option of either clinical or applied research studies.

All application information should be completed by April 22 for admission to the subsequent summer or fall semesters, and by October 22 for admission to the subsequent Spring semester. Note: meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to the program.

Four upper level (12 hours minimum) undergraduate psychology courses are required for admission to the graduate program in psychology. These four courses must include one course in statistics (i.e., PSYC 3301), one course in experimental psychology or research methods in psychology (i.e., PSYC 3404), and one course in biological foundations of behavior (i.e., PSYC 4304). In addition, students interested in the clinical psychology graduate program are encouraged to take PSYC 4351 Tests and Measurements, as it is a prerequisite for several clinical graduate courses. Students with deficiencies in these prerequisites must take the appropriate courses and earn a minimum grade of B during the first two semesters the student is enrolled provisionally in the graduate program. Students may enroll in the necessary undergraduate courses (PSYC 3301, Statistics; and/or PSYC 3404, Experimental Psychology; and/or PSYC 4304, Physiological Psychology) and in selected graduate courses concurrently.

Options

The M.A. in Clinical Psychology (45 to 48 hours)

The Clinical Psychology program offers training in child, adolescent, and adult disorders. The program is grounded in the scientist-practitioner model and thus involves training in theory, research design and statistics, and the application of principles to the provision of psychological services.

Successful completion of the M.A. in Clinical Psychology provides students the education required to take the state examination for the Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA) in the State of Texas (45 hours minimum; for additional information see <http://www.tsbep.state.tx.us/>) or, with additional coursework, the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in the State of Texas (48 hours minimum; for more information see: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default/shtm>). In addition to completing the requirements for the M.A. degree, the Licensed Professional Counselor also requires an additional 3000 supervised hours after completing the MA degree. Both licensures, the LPA and LPC, require the successful passage of an examination called for by the licensing body after the completion of the M.A.

The M.A. in Applied Research (36 hours)

The Applied Research Psychology program focuses on advanced psychological theory (i.e., developmental, personality, social, etc.), research methods, statistics, and manuscript preparation. All students are expected to be involved in research activities throughout their graduate program. Research activities are coordinated with faculty members depending, in part, on the students' interests.

Successful completion of the M.A. in Applied Research is designed to provide students with a broad background in general psychology and research methods that will prepare them for employment in a variety of settings. Graduates from this program will have developed critical thinking skills, communication skills (both oral and written), and problem-solving skills, as well as extensive training in advanced research methods and statistics. This program will prepare students to pursue further education for various Ph.D. programs in Psychology, and will enable students to work in more applied settings with invaluable skills for occupations including positions in business, mental health and social services, research, granting agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF, NIMH), industry, advertising and marketing, consulting, and even government agencies.

Course Requirements - Clinical Psychology

For about half of the courses listed below there are course prerequisites. If a course does not have a prerequisite listed, then there are none and the student may enroll in that course at any time. Course descriptions are provided under "Course Listings."

A. Required "Foundation" Courses (9 hours):

PSYC 6302 Research Methodology
PSYC 6304 Advanced Statistics I
PSYC 6324 Ethics and Professional Issues

B. Concentration Courses (21 hours):

PSYC 6305 Cognitive Behavior Therapy
PSYC 6321 Psychopathology
PSYC 6322 Current Psychotherapies
PSYC 6350 Intellectual Assessment
PSYC 6351 Personality Assessment
PSYC 6392 Practicum (6 hours)

C. Elective Psychology Courses (12-18 hours):

These courses are selected in consultation with the advisor, consistent with certification or licensure objectives.

PSYC 6306 Clinical Psychopharmacology
PSYC 6330 Cross-Cultural Psychology, **or** EDUC 6302, Cultural Diversity in America
PSYC 6341 Development Psychology I: Social and Personality Development
PSYC 6341 Development Psychology II: Cognitive Processes
PSYC 6343 Family Dynamics
PSYC 6371 Advanced Social Psychology
PSYC 6375 Psychology and the Law
PSYC 6378 Career Counseling and Development
PSYC 6389 Selected Topics
PSYC 6395 Seminar on Selected Topics

Note: For students seeking to become Licensed Professional Counselors, the "elective" courses are precisely specified by the licensing board, and should be selected with the assistance of your faculty advisor.

D. Master's Thesis (3 hours):

Each student must complete a master's thesis which consists of research in the application of principles and theories of behavior to some problem of interest. Problems are investigated under the supervision and direction of the student's graduate committee comprised of faculty, with the student's advisor ordinarily serving as chairperson. The student will later defend the thesis before the committee.

Course Requirements - Applied Research Psychology

A. Required "Foundation" Courses (12 hours):

PSYC 6302 Research Methodology
PSYC 6304 Advanced Statistics I
PSYC 6314 Advanced Statistics II
PSYC 6324 Ethics and Professional Issues

B. Elective Courses (15 hours):

These course should be chosen in consultation with the Faculty Advisor and be consistent with the overall goals of the student. Up to 6 hours of PSYC 6391, Contract Study/Directed Research, may be included in these 15 hours.

PSYC 6305 Cognitive Behavior Therapy
PSYC 6321 Psychopathology
PSYC 6322 Current Psychotherapies
PSYC 6330 Cross-cultural Psychology
PSYC 6341 Development Psychology I: Social and Personality Development
PSYC 6341 Development Psychology II: Cognitive Processes
PSYC 6343 Family Dynamics
PSYC 6371 Advanced Social Psychology
PSYC 6375 Psychology and the Law
PSYC 6378 Career Counseling and Development
PSYC 6389 Selected Topics
PSYC 6395 Seminar on Selected Topics

C. Research Courses (6 hours):

PSYC 6392 Practicum (3-6 hours), or PSYC 6391 Contract Study/Directed Research (3-6 hours)
PSYC 6389 Selected Topics (Thesis Preparation)

D. Master's Thesis (3 hours):

Each student must complete a master's thesis which consists of research in the application of principles and theories of behavior to some problem of interest. Problems are investigated under the supervision and direction of the student's graduate committee comprised of faculty, with the student's advisor ordinarily serving as chairperson. The student will later defend the thesis before the committee.

Grade Achievement Policy

Students in the graduate program in Psychology receive credit for only graduate (6000 level) courses in which a grade of A or B has been earned. Any 4000 level course taken as requisite to regular status must have a B or better as well. Continuation in the graduate program in Psychology is contingent on maintaining a minimum grade of B in all courses counting toward the degree. Under no circumstances will a grade of C be counted for credit in the Psychology graduate program.

A student who earns a C+ or lower in any course taken to apply to the MA degree will, at a minimum, receive an academic review by the graduate program faculty, and will be monitored and placed on academic probation until the course is repeated with a B or better grade. Such notice will be made in writing by the department chairperson or the graduate program head. Any student placed on academic probation is limited to six credits per semester while on academic probation. Occurrence of a second C or lower grades in one's graduate course work shall be grounds for dismissal from the graduate program.

Student Professionalism

For both the MA in Clinical Psychology and the MA in Applied Psychology programs, academic progress (e.g., course grades) and professional behavior are expected and monitored. Professional behavior is an expectation. Clearly, professionalism consists of a variety of behaviors, and although it is often difficult to exhaustively define and assess professional behavior, the graduate student is expected to demonstrate professionalism in the following ways: coming prepared for class, having completed readings or other assignments; regular attendance and participation in class, and other obligations (this includes practicum appointments and regular meetings with one's Thesis Advisor during the thesis semester); arriving for classes, thesis meetings, and practicum appointments at the scheduled time; meeting the due dates established for class assignments (including Thesis deadlines); adhering to the American Psychological Association's professional code of ethics (e.g., confidentiality, dual relationships) and university regulations (e.g.,

academic dishonesty; drug free environment, and so on); maintaining appropriate dress, personal appearance, and hygiene, particularly in the clinical and applied practicum experience, maintaining courteous, civil relationships with fellow students, faculty, staff and individuals in community agencies; being psychologically sound, interpersonally effective, and able to engage with fellow students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals in the community in a healthy and responsible manner; and maintaining professional conduct in community agencies and the local community in general.

For both the clinical and applied practicum experience, a “zero tolerance” policy is in effect to protect the welfare of clients as well as the integrity of the psychology M.A. programs. Examples of unprofessional behavior include, but are not limited to, the following: disorderly, aggressive, or threatening conduct on campus or in the community; and behavior that endangers the safety, health, or welfare of others on or off campus (i.e., driving while under the influence.)

Course Listings

PSYC 6301 Tests and Measurement (3)

Survey of major personality, intelligence and achievement tests with emphasis on their construction, reliability and validity. Prerequisite: Introductory Statistics

PSYC 6302 Research Methodology (3)

Foundations of research planning, methodology, analytic techniques, interpretation and reporting of psychological research. Prerequisite: Introductory Statistics.

PSYC 6304 Advanced Statistics 1 (3)

Application of statistical methods in the design and analysis of psychological research. Topics include analysis of variance models, correlation and regression, and multivariate techniques. Prerequisite: Introductory Statistics.

PSYC 6305 Cognitive Behavior Therapy (3)

A survey of current behavioral and cognitive therapies used to facilitate effective change in children and adults.

PSYC 6306 Clinical Psychopharmacology (3)

This course is designed to provide the student with a foundation in neurophysiology, psychopharmacology, and principles of pharmacodynamics. May be substituted for the undergraduate course prerequisite in Physiological Psychology. Prerequisite: PSYC 6321.

PSYC 6312 Group Psychotherapy (3)

A survey of theories of group therapy including the application and evaluation of basic group techniques.

PSYC 6314 Advanced Statistics II (3)

Application of statistical methods in the design and analysis of psychological research. Topics include multiple regression, factor analysis, path analysis and discriminant analysis. Prerequisites: Introductory statistics and PSYC 6304 or permission of the instructor.

PSYC 6321 Psychopathology (3)

A survey of the manifestations of abnormal behavior and psychological processes. Detailed analysis of the clinical and experimental literature concerning psychological and psychiatric disorders and their etiology.

PSYC 6322 Current Psychotherapies (3)

A critical analysis of various psychotherapeutic systems.

PSYC 6323 Individual Psychotherapy Skills (3)

Training in the skills necessary to conduct effective therapy with a wide range of clients. Included videotaped practice and evaluation. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

PSYC 6324 Ethics and Professional Issues (3)

Seminar concerning the field of psychology as it relates to current ethical, social, legal and medical issues. Emphasis is placed on the role of the psychologist in psychotherapeutic relationships, the conduct of research, and in applied settings.

PSYC 6330 Cross-Cultural Psychology (3)

An overview of cross-cultural studies from developmental, social cognitive, personality, and perceptual psychology. Topics covered include child-rearing acculturation, work, communication, health, and ethnic and minority groups. The course will emphasize how nature and nurture interact to produce unique behavior for a given culture.

PSYC 6341 Developmental Psychology I: Social and Personality Development (3)

Lifespan developmental course focusing on the theories and research of intellectual, physical, social and emotional development as they relate to social and personality development.

PSYC 6342 Developmental Psychology II: Cognitive Processes (3)

Lifespan developmental course focusing on the theories and research of intellectual, physical, social and emotional development as they relate to social and personality development.

PSYC 6343 Family Dynamics (3)

A survey of the history, current trends, and theories of family structure and processes in relation to the behavior of the individual.

PSYC 6350 Intellectual Assessment (3)

An examination of the principles and methods of assessing intelligence in both children and adults. Prerequisite: Tests and Measurement and permission of instructor.

PSYC 6351 Personality Assessment (3)

An examination of the principles and methods of assessing personality. Prerequisite: Tests and Measurement and permission of instructor.

PSYC 6371 Advanced Social Psychology (3)

An examination of the historical development of theories and methods in social psychology. Designed to provide a thorough background in social psychology and to motivate students to continue exploration of theories and issues in the field.

PSYC 6375 Psychology and the Law (3)

An examination of psychological effects in the legal system. Topics include: theories of crime, police selection and training, criminal investigation, identification and evaluation of suspects, rights of victims vs. the rights of the accused, the trial process, jury selection and decision-making, and punishment. PSYC 6371 recommended.

PSYC 6378 Career Counseling and Development (3)

A survey of theory and techniques of career planning and counseling. Includes strategies for career choice, career counseling, and sources of occupational and educational information.

PSYC 6389 Selected Topics

Graduate courses which will be offered only once, will be offered infrequently or are being developed before a regular listing in the catalog.

PSYC 6391 Contract Study/Directed Research (3)

Under the direction of a faculty member, design and conduct a research project, analyze data, and submit findings for presentation or publication. Prerequisite: admission to Psychology graduate program and permission of instructor.

PSYC 6392 Practicum (3)

Three semester hours (225 clock hours) of supervised practical experience in an appropriate clinic or research setting (depending on area of concentration). Prerequisites for applied students: PSYC 6302, 6304 and 6324. Prerequisites for clinical students: PSYC 6305, 6312, 6321, 6322, 6323, 6324, 6350 and 6351; proof of liability insurance; and permission of instructor. Course may be repeated for a total of six maximum hours. Practicum will be graded by S for satisfactory and U for unsatisfactory. The S does not calculate in the GPA; the U calculates as a failing grade in the GPA.

PSYC 6395 Seminar on Selected Topics (3)

Seminars on topics to be explored in depth as selected by individual professors. Course may be repeated on different topics.

PSYC 6399 Master's Thesis (3)

Research and preparation of the Master's Thesis. Course may be repeated for a total of six maximum hours. Thesis will be graded by S for satisfactory upon completion of all the requirements of the thesis. The S does not calculate in the GPA. If, at the end of the semester the student has not completed all of the requirements of the thesis but has made satisfactory progress, a grade of Z will be reported, which translates as "work in progress". The Z does not calculate in the GPA. Students desiring to complete the thesis requirements must reregister in the course the following semester.

