

Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Master of Arts

Outcomes align with Standards from the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE—studies that provide an understanding of all of the following aspects of professional functioning:

- history and philosophy of the counseling profession;
- professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers, including strategies for interagency/interorganization collaboration and communications;
- counselors' roles and responsibilities as members of an interdisciplinary emergency management response team during a local, regional, or national crisis, disaster or other trauma-causing event;
- self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role;
- counseling supervision models, practices, and processes;
- professional organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues;
- professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues;
- the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of the profession;
- advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients; and ethical standards of professional and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY—studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

- multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally;
- attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities designed to foster students' understanding of self and culturally diverse clients;
- theories of multicultural counseling, identity development, and social justice;
- individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies;
- counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body; and
- counselors' roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT—studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts, including all of the following:

- theories of individual and family development and transitions across the life span;
- theories of learning and personality development, including current understandings about neurobiological behavior;
- effects of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on persons of all ages;
- theories and models of individual, cultural, couple, family, and community resilience;
- a general framework for understanding exceptional abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions;
- human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior;
- theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors, including strategies for prevention, intervention, and treatment; and

- theories for facilitating optimal development and wellness over the life span.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT—studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors, including all of the following:

- career development theories and decision-making models;
- career, avocational, educational, occupational and labor market information resources, and career information systems;
- career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation;
- interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors, including the role of multicultural issues in career development;
- career and educational planning, placement, follow-up, and evaluation;
- assessment instruments and techniques relevant to career planning and decision making; and
- career counseling processes, techniques, and resources, including those applicable to specific populations in a global economy.

HELPING RELATIONSHIPS—studies that provide an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

- an orientation to wellness and prevention as desired counseling goals;
- counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes;
- essential interviewing and counseling skills;
- counseling theories that provide the student with models to conceptualize client presentation and that help the student select appropriate counseling interventions. Students will be exposed to models of counseling that are consistent with current professional research and practice in the field so they begin to develop a personal model of counseling;
- a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions;
- a general framework for understanding and practicing consultation; and
- crisis intervention and suicide prevention models, including the use of psychological first aid strategies.

GROUP WORK—studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

- principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work;
- group leadership or facilitation styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles;
- theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature;
- group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness; and
- direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term.

ASSESSMENT—studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society, including all of the following:

- historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment;
- basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques, including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, psychological testing, and behavioral observations; statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations;
- reliability (i.e., theory of measurement error, models of reliability, and the use of reliability information);
- validity (i.e., evidence of validity, types of validity, and the relationship between reliability and validity);
- social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations; and
- ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION—studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including all of the following:

- the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession;
- research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;
- statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation;
- principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and the use of findings to effect program modifications;
- the use of research to inform evidence-based practice; and
- ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies.

FOUNDATIONS

- history and development of clinical mental health counseling
- theories and models related to clinical mental health counseling
- principles, models, and documentation formats of biopsychosocial case conceptualization and treatment planning
- neurobiological and medical foundation and etiology of addiction and co-occurring disorders
- psychological tests and assessments specific to clinical mental health counseling

CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS

- roles and settings of clinical mental health counselors
- etiology, nomenclature, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders
- mental health service delivery modalities within the continuum of care, such as inpatient, outpatient, partial treatment and aftercare, and the mental health counseling services networks
- diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)
- potential for substance use disorders to mimic and/or co-occur with a variety of neurological, medical, and psychological disorders
- impact of crisis and trauma on individuals with mental health diagnoses
- impact of biological and neurological mechanisms on mental health
- classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation
- legislation and government policy relevant to clinical mental health counseling
- cultural factors relevant to clinical mental health counseling
- professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of clinical mental health counseling
- legal and ethical considerations specific to clinical mental health counseling

- record keeping, third party reimbursement, and other practice and management issues in clinical mental health counseling

PRACTICE

- intake interview, mental status evaluation, biopsychosocial history, mental health history, and psychological assessment for treatment planning and caseload management
- techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues
- strategies for interfacing with the legal system regarding court-referred clients
- strategies for interfacing with integrated behavioral health care professionals
- strategies to advocate for persons with mental health issues