

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY, MA

Program Description

The Master of Arts (MA) in Clinical Psychology program is a 60 hour program designed to develop mastery of the scientific principles and methods of psychology and their application to clinical issues. The primary education and training mission of the program is to provide a program of study with an applied clinical emphasis to prepare students for the practice of psychology or counseling at the master's level of licensure. Students are required to take a sequence of core curriculum coursework that emphasizes major academic areas within the discipline of psychology before advancing to specialized coursework in the area of clinical psychology that prepares them for the professional application of psychological principles. In addition, students receive supervised clinical practicum experience as part of their training. They may also choose to complete an empirical thesis under the supervision of a faculty advisor.

Upon admission, each student will be assigned a faculty advisor who will assist the student with academic decisions during the course of the degree program. During their first year in the program students will also meet with the Graduate Coordinator to develop a degree plan.

Upon completion of the program, graduates will meet the necessary qualifications to take the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists examination for certification as a Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA). With additional coursework and experience, graduates may elect to take the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) examinations. Following licensure, graduates typically work under the supervision of a licensed psychologist, or as independent practitioners in a variety of public agency and private settings.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Graduates of the MA Clinical Psychology program will demonstrate knowledge of developmental, empirical, physiological and social psychology principals.
- Graduates will demonstrate mastery of the basic principles of clinical assessment and their therapeutic application as well as the ethical use of these principles.
- Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of research design and statistical analysis.

For Additional Information

Website:

<https://www.tamucc.edu/liberal-arts/departments/psychology-sociology/clinical-psychology-ma/index.php> (<https://www.tamucc.edu/liberal-arts/departments/psychology-sociology/clinical-psychology-ma/>)

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Admission Requirements

In addition to the university admission requirements outlined for all graduate programs, the MA Clinical Psychology program requires:

A bachelor's degree in psychology, or a bachelor's degree with 15 semester hours of undergraduate coursework in psychology for unconditional admission. This foundational undergraduate coursework must include general psychology, statistics, experimental psychology, and six hours of upper division psychology electives. (Students may be conditionally accepted into the program contingent upon completion of the required undergraduate courses.)

A cumulative grade point average (G. P. A.) of no less than 3.0 on a 4-point scale.

Graduate Record Exam (GRE) not required. For those with a GPA below 3.25, GRE is recommended to supplement application.

Two letters of evaluation from individuals such as professors and employers who can attest to the applicant's potential for success in a graduate program of study. Letters of evaluation should specifically address the applicant's potential for a successful career as well as qualifications and motivation for graduate study.

An application essay. Applicants must submit a 500-1,000 word essay describing their educational and professional goals as well as their qualifications for graduate study (e. g. academic achievements, research experience, relevant work or volunteer experience, etc.).

Admission Deadline

The graduate program in Clinical Psychology only accepts students for Fall admission. Application materials should be submitted electronically by following the instructions at https://gradcollege.tamucc.edu/new_students/application_process.html. Materials must be submitted by March 15 for priority consideration for Fall admission. Final deadline for receipt of complete applications is June 15.

Admission to the Program

Upon receipt of all application materials, the MA Clinical Psychology Admissions Committee will meet to review the application materials. Only complete applications are evaluated. The committee will review applications for the fall semester only. The committee may choose to admit, conditionally admit, or deny admission, based on the information contained in the application materials.

For unconditional admission, applicants must be a graduate of a regionally accredited university or, if an international student, have the equivalent of an U. S. accredited degree as determined by the Dean or Graduate Studies. Applicants must have completed at least 15 hours of undergraduate psychology and possess an overall grade point average (G. P. A.) of no less than 3.0 on a 4-point scale. (These are minimum requirements; admission to the program is competitive and also dependent upon the size and quality of the overall applicant pool).

Applicants with less than a 3.0 G. P. A. may be admitted to the program if the graduate admissions committee determines that the student's G. R. E. combined verbal and quantitative scores and other application materials compensate for the deficient G. P. A.

Applicants admitted into the program must attend the program's orientation meeting where general information about the department, program, and courses will be provided.

Conditional Admission

At the discretion of the admissions committee, students who have not completed all of the required undergraduate courses (general psychology, statistics, experimental psychology, and 6 hours of upper division electives) may be conditionally accepted into the program contingent upon completion of the required undergraduate courses prior to starting the graduate program.

Program Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Required Core Courses ¹		
PSYC 5311	Research Methods and Statistics I	3
PSYC 5312	Research Methods and Statistics II	3
PSYC 5321	Biological Bases of Behavior	3
PSYC 5323	Advanced Social Psychology	3
PSYC 5324	Advanced Developmental Psychology	3
Required Clinical Courses		
PSYC 5322	Advanced Personality Theories	3
PSYC 5341	Graduate Psychopathology	3
PSYC 5342	Professional Issues and Ethics in Psychology	3
PSYC 5343	Intellectual Assessment	3
PSYC 5344	Personality Assessment	3
PSYC 5349	Diversity Issues and Multiculturalism in Psychology	3
PSYC 5350	Introduction to Psychotherapy	3
PSYC 5352	Therapy with Multiple Clients: Interpersonal and Group Dynamics	3
PSYC 5356	Applied Behavioral/Cognitive Psychology	3
PSYC 5357	Psychopharmacology	3
PSYC 5398	Clinical Practicum (three semesters)	9
Electives		
Select 6 hours of electives		6
May include 6 hours of PSYC 5395 - Thesis. Non-PSYC electives must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator.		
Total Hours		60

¹ The five core courses (15 credit hours) must be taken within the first 24 credit hours of graduate study.

Course Sequence

Courses must be taken in the prescribed sequence (please refer to the Psychology program student handbook for the prescribed course sequence). Failure to take the courses as prescribed may result in a delay in time toward graduation as courses are typically offered only once per rotation year.

Additional Requirements

Annual Performance Evaluation

Students' progress in the program will be formally evaluated at the end of each semester by all faculty teaching a graduate course. Each student will be evaluated in three areas: (1) academic readiness, (2)

professionalism and communication skills, and (3) clinical skills. Student progress will be rated as "satisfactory," or "needs improvement." Once completed, evaluations will be compiled and reviewed by the current graduate program committee who will provide the final evaluation for each student. Any areas rated as "needs improvement" by more than one faculty member will require a personalized improvement plan (consisting of remedial steps with specific timelines) for the student. Please refer to the handbook for a more specific timeline for completing improvement plans. Students must make progress on documented deficiencies (as evaluated by the faculty committee) before continuing in the program. Multiple consecutive ratings of "needs improvement" on the same criteria may result in dismissal from the program. The results of the annual evaluation, including any improvement plans, will be shared with the student in a letter written by the graduate coordinator.

Practicum

Students will participate in three practicum placements as part of their clinical training. Students must apply for practicum the semester before they intend to register for it. The Practicum Supervisor will arrange the assignment of the student to a practicum training facility during those semesters the student registers for practicum, and will have overall responsibility for supervising and evaluating the student's performance.

Thesis Option

Students may also elect to complete a thesis option in addition to the required coursework. This involves six credit hours (completed over two semesters) in which the student designs and conducts an original research study, resulting in a written thesis that is presented to the student's thesis committee. This option is highly recommended to those students who wish to pursue advanced clinical training at the doctoral level.

Students who elect to complete a thesis are encouraged to begin thesis work at the end of their first year/start of their second year. In consultation with the assigned advisor, the student will select a thesis committee consisting of a chair (primary thesis advisor) and two additional university faculty. The chair and one of the members must be full time graduate faculty members within the psychology department. The student is expected to work closely with the committee chair when designing and executing the thesis research project. In consultation with the thesis committee, a proposal defense meeting will be scheduled. The student should distribute copies of the proposal to the committee members at least one week prior to the time of the proposal defense meeting. Upon successful completion of the thesis proposal meeting, the student will obtain permission (if applicable) of the institutional review board (IRB) to begin collecting data. When permission is granted, the student will collect data and complete the final thesis manuscript. Once the manuscript is complete, the student must successfully complete an oral defense and submit their thesis according to the instructions and deadlines detailed in the Graduate Education student handbook for Master's students (see Additional Exit Requirement for Student Completing a Thesis section below).

Exit Requirement for All Students

An oral examination will be given toward the end of the program over a therapy and testing case conducted during their practicum placement. Students are required to prepare a comprehensive written analysis of the case which will be presented during the oral examination with the faculty. Development of this presentation will be under the direction of the practicum faculty supervisor and the final draft of the paper must be approved before the oral exam. The practicum faculty supervisor is responsible for scheduling and administering the oral examination.

The oral examination is graded as “satisfactory”, “conditional” or “re-examination required.” If deficiencies are identified during the exam, additional requirements may be added for successful completion of this requirement and may include, but are not limited to: repeating the examination, resubmission of written examination materials, or repeating a practicum placement. The student may retake the oral examination once, with a second failure resulting in termination from the program.

Additional Exit Requirements for Students Completing a Thesis

A final oral thesis defense will be required of all students completing a thesis. The chair of the thesis committee is responsible for scheduling and administering the final oral defense. The thesis defense is graded “pass” or “fail.” The student may retake the final oral examination once. When the final version of the thesis is completed and all committee members have approved the final document, the student is required to submit the thesis according to the instructions and deadlines detailed in the Graduate Education student handbook for Master’s students. When submitting their thesis, students are required to order and purchase one bound copy of their thesis (for the University library, and provide a pdf of the finalized thesis for the Department of Psychology & Sociology).

Grade-Point Average

A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (“B”) on a 4 point scale in all graduate-level work taken at this university is required for graduation. In addition, a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (“B”) is required in all psychology courses (PSYC prefix) taken at the graduate level. No grade of less than “C” and no more than two “C’s” earned at this university will be accepted as credit for any Master’s program (please see graduate academic and degree requirements in the graduate catalog). Students receiving more than two grades of “C” in their coursework will be terminated from the program.

Registration Restrictions

Students who have not been accepted into the MA Clinical Psychology program (Non Degree Seeking Students or students enrolled in other programs) may enroll in:

Code	Title	Hours
PSYC 5311	Research Methods and Statistics I	3
PSYC 5312	Research Methods and Statistics II	3
PSYC 5321	Biological Bases of Behavior	3
PSYC 5322	Advanced Personality Theories	3
PSYC 5323	Advanced Social Psychology	3
PSYC 5324	Advanced Developmental Psychology	3

Students who enroll in these courses must satisfy the course prerequisites (see Courses A-Z (<http://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/courses-az/>)). Permission of the instructor is required for enrollment in any other graduate course in Psychology.

Courses

PSYC 5311 Research Methods and Statistics I

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

The purpose of this course is to provide beginners knowledge on topics related to Psychological methodology and statistics. Specifically, the course will cover a range of topics related to standard normal curve, t-scores, z-scores, transformation of scales, reliability, validity, confidence intervals, effect size, item analysis and factor analysis. The course will cover these topics within the context of t-tests, correlation and regression analyses. It will also cover the research methods in which these tests are most commonly used: non-experimental methods such as survey and longitudinal studies.

PSYC 5312 Research Methods and Statistics II

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

The purpose of this course is to provide advanced knowledge on topics related to psychological methodology and statistics. Specifically, the course will cover the following statistical tests: ANOVA, non-parametric statistics, between, within/repeated and mixed studies design. Furthermore, it will also cover the research designs in which these tests are commonly used. Specifically, the course will focus primarily on quantitative and qualitative experiments.

Prerequisite: PSYC 5311.

PSYC 5321 Biological Bases of Behavior

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

The study of the anatomy and physiology of the human nervous system including neural transmission, motor systems, speech and higher cortical functions with special emphasis on the physiological changes associated with pathological conditions and their impact on human behavior. Core course.

PSYC 5322 Advanced Personality Theories

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

A survey of the major approaches to the study of personality. Psychoanalytic, trait, behavioral and humanistic paradigms will be studied with respect to theory, research, and therapeutic application.

PSYC 5323 Advanced Social Psychology

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

A survey of social psychological theory and research. Topics include attitudes, cognition, interpersonal relationships, social influence, prejudice, and group behavior.

PSYC 5324 Advanced Developmental Psychology

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

A review of research and theories on normal physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development across the lifespan.

PSYC 5341 Graduate Psychopathology

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

The study of psychological disorders including diagnosis, etiology, and treatment.

PSYC 5342 Professional Issues and Ethics in Psychology

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the ethical standards and contemporary issues affecting professional conduct in the field of psychology. The topics covered revolve around ethical conduct in practice and research, as well as the decision-making foundations for resolving ethical issues. In addition to ethical standards, legal issues affecting professional practice will be covered in detail.

PSYC 5343 Intellectual Assessment**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

Instruction in the theoretical, ethical and practical application of intellectual assessment in a clinical setting using standardized instruments, such as the WAIS-IV and WISC-IV. Also reviews the current development and use of other instruments that assess cognitive function.

PSYC 5344 Personality Assessment**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

A review of theories underlying the methods and rationale for various psychological assessment approaches as well as administration, scoring, and interpretation of assessment instruments. Conceptualization processes, relevant intervention recommendations, and a comprehensive evaluation process for cases in psychology are covered.

PSYC 5345 Family Theory, Practice and Therapy**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

Provides an introductory survey of the major theories and theorists in the area of the psychological formulation of family theory. This course will cover various theories of family therapy as well as assessment of family dynamics, and the implications for the application of family theory in practice. A review of the research done in the area and the applicability of the research findings in practice.

PSYC 5349 Diversity Issues and Multiculturalism in Psychology**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

This purpose of this course is to build foundation on multicultural competencies and skills to provide culturally relevant, sensitive, and effective psychotherapy services and assessments to diverse populations. Students will obtain a thorough review on multicultural awareness, skills and knowledge which will improve competencies related to the practice of psychology. Evaluation of culture from the standpoint of both the therapist and client in the delivery of therapeutic services is the key feature of this course. Thus, the course will provide a sociopolitical perspective as well as identify how specific forms of oppression operate and impact clinical practice and psychology research.

PSYC 5350 Introduction to Psychotherapy**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

The course includes a review of numerous theoretical approaches to psychotherapy, with a reliance on information from research-supported psychotherapeutic approaches. Students will learn the similarities and differences between these approaches at both the theoretical and technical level. Various stages of treatment and a range of important issues in conducting psychotherapy are considered. Students will develop a general understanding of the process of therapy, an ability to conceptualize client problems in a way that suggests potential interventions, and knowledge of techniques that can facilitate improvement.

PSYC 5351 Developmental Psychopathology**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

The course will take a developmental approach in explaining child psychopathology. The course will include a consideration of diagnostic, epidemiological, developmental, and psychophysiological determinants of behavior.

Prerequisite: PSYC 5324 and 5341.

PSYC 5352 Therapy with Multiple Clients: Interpersonal and Group Dynamics**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

This course will engage graduate-level students in the study of the principal theories of group therapy and family therapy. The class will focus on the theoretical, ethical, and practical and culturally-informed application of both group process and family therapy.

PSYC 5355 Group Psychotherapy**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

This course is designed to introduce the graduate student to the theoretical and applied issues related to the practice of group psychotherapy. Examines a variety of therapeutic groups as well as the issues related to the practice of group psychotherapy with special populations.

Prerequisite: PSYC 5350.

PSYC 5356 Applied Behavioral/Cognitive Psychology**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

The focus of this course will be on key cognitive and affective bases of behavior and the manner in which these interact with environmental influences. The course will cover how essential concepts within these areas are linked to theoretical conceptualizations of behavior and psychopathology. Theoretical principles will be linked to applications within clinical psychology and to evidence-based interventions for psychological disorders.

PSYC 5357 Psychopharmacology**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

This course is designed to introduce the graduate student to the basic classes of psychotropic drugs and their effects on human behavior. The course will begin with a basic review of how drugs are processed and used by the body including pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics and neural transmission. A discussion of the chemical properties of both therapeutic drugs and drugs of abuse by drug class will follow, including a discussion of the most common drugs used to treat psychological disorders. A previous course in graduate Physiological Psychology (PSYC 5321) is a prerequisite for this course.

Prerequisite: PSYC 5321.

PSYC 5360 Seminar in Psychology**3 Semester Credit Hours (3 Lecture Hours)**

In depth study of various topics within psychology such as those related to history, clinical, social, and experimental psychology. May be repeated when topics vary.

PSYC 5395 Thesis**3 Semester Credit Hours**

Independent research under the direction of a faculty member. May be repeated to a total of six semester hours.

PSYC 5396 Individual Study**1,3 Semester Credit Hours**

Individual study, reading or research with faculty direction and evaluation. Offered on application to and approval of the program coordinator. No more than 6 hours will be counted towards the degree.

PSYC 5398 Clinical Practicum**3 Semester Credit Hours**

Supervised experience in a placement such as a community mental health/mental retardation agency. May be repeated. (Limited to degree students in the Psychology program or graduates of the psychology program working on the LSSP [Licensed Specialist in School Psychology]). Liability insurance required. Enrollment is dependent on the number of suitable practicum sites available.

PSYC 5399 Clinical Internship**3 Semester Credit Hours**

Supervised clinical experience for graduates of clinical psychology Master's programs who are seeking additional supervision to fulfill requirements for the Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP; 22 TAC 463.9). To enroll in this course, students must be hired as LSSP interns in a local independent school district. Enrollment requires prior approval of the instructor. Liability insurance required. Course may be repeated. Cross-listed with PSYC 5398 Clinical Practicum.