



SAINT MARY'S
COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

KALMANOVITZ SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THE COUNSELING DEPARTMENT:

MISSION,

VISION,

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES,

AND CURRICULAR THEMES

UPDATED AND REVISED DECEMBER 2021

THE COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

The Counseling Department (COUN) aims to prepare counselors to competently address the whole person, given the individual's socio-political and cultural context. Faculty members are committed to a holistic, culturally sustaining approach to counseling, synthesizing physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, interpersonal, socio-cultural, and spiritual processes and emphasizing the systemic interconnection among these dimensions of our lives. Within this framework, the goal of counselor education matches that of counseling: the empowerment of the whole person, the family, the school, and, ultimately, the community. The faculty members prioritize the healthy personal and professional development of counselors-in-training, as well as their cultivation of self-awareness (particularly in regard to the therapeutic relationship and client-counselor differences), knowledge, demonstration of counseling skills, and ability to critically evaluate and integrate information relevant to this profession. Students are provided with the theoretical and research-based knowledge, experiential practice, supervision, and personal attention needed to become competent counselors. Master of Arts degree students are required to complete practicum and field experience placements in diverse community, school, and/or college/university settings that are appropriate to their career objectives and designed to make them more well-rounded counselors.

The Counseling Department specializations are designed for people who wish to work in schools, colleges, family service agencies, private practice, or a variety of other counseling settings. Candidates may choose a plan of study leading to a **Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Counseling with a specialization in one of these programs:**

Career Counseling

Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA)

Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) & Professional Clinical Counseling (PCC)
(integrated emphasis)

School Counseling (SC)

School Psychology (SP)

We also offer post-master's degree **Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Credential** specializations:

PPS Credential in School Counseling (SC)

PPS Credential in School Psychology (SP)

With the permission of their advisor, students may complete more than one program by taking additional courses and successfully completing all field placement requirements for the chosen programs.

COUN Mission Statement

The mission of the Counseling Department is to prepare counselors to be competent practitioners and agents for positive personal and social change through advocacy.

COUN Vision Statement

The Counseling Department provides a supportive learning environment that encourages students' personal wellness, cultural awareness, and professional development as counselors. As

students seek to learn not only facts but also fundamental principles, they gain insight into their own life experiences and personalities. They embark upon a quest that touches the spirit as well as the intellect, illuminates connectedness as much as individuality, and promotes wonder as much as it instills mastery.

The department enables the development of counselors who affirm and foster the essential goodness, dignity and freedom of all people. Becoming an effective helping professional requires more than learning theories, techniques, and research methods; ultimately, counselors integrate academic knowledge and clinical experience with their own quality of being. They become empathic listeners and potent allies, engage in self-awareness, and develop critical thinking skills that will make them effective advocates to address the needs of underprivileged populations as well as systemic discrimination. We ask students to be ready to grow, with the struggle and exhilaration that such growth implies. Cultivating self-awareness, self-inquiry, self-understanding, self-compassion, and cultural humility are essential traits of effective counselors. Students are strongly encouraged to do their own counseling as well their own inner work to examine who and what they are and believe, considering multiple dimensions, from self-constructs and world views to cultural/ethnic, sexual/gender, spiritual/religious, and other identities, beliefs, values, and biases.

The department's faculty members are also engaged in their own personal and professional development, thereby modeling as well as teaching the attitudes and behaviors that they value. Students can expect faculty and staff to care about them, treat them with respect, and attempt to accommodate individual needs. In the heritage of Saint Mary's College and the Lasallian tradition, students and faculty are expected to be as committed to a high standard of professional ethics and proactive social responsibility as they are to academic excellence. To this end, the Counseling Department offers a synthesis of foundational information in counseling theory, values, history, and research, as well as competency-based counseling skills, within a holistic, humanistic, multicultural, and systemic framework.

Student Learning Outcomes for the MA in Counseling

1. **Theories:** Students begin to demonstrate knowledge of and skills in applying a wide range of developmental and counseling theories relevant to counseling in general and specific to their specialization(s), and are aware of the limitations of these theories when working with diverse or multicultural populations.
2. **Counseling Skills:** Students will articulate the core conditions of a high quality therapeutic relationship and demonstrate proficiency in the key concepts of a wide range of microcounseling skills.
3. **Personal Growth and Wellness:** Students will identify goals and steps and implement action plans that promote their personal growth and wellness.
4. **Professional Development:** Students will identify goals and steps and implement action plans that encourage their professional development relevant to their counseling specialization(s).
5. **Culturally Sustaining and Anti-Racist Counseling:** Students will demonstrate self-awareness around their own biases, prejudices, limitations, and assets in working with diverse populations. Students will exhibit knowledge of and skills in counseling clients from a wide range of diversity in all its forms (e.g., gender, culture, ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, physical/mental abilities, class, and social and economic background), and gain competence in the principles of culturally sustaining and anti-racist counseling practices.
6. **Social Justice and Client Advocacy:** Students will actively promote sensitivity to and awareness of social and ethical concerns, specifically related to the consequences of economic and social injustice. Through coursework and field experiences, students will begin to engage in promoting social justice for their clients/students, and work towards addressing systemic oppression.
7. **Law and Ethics:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of and skills in applying the laws and ethical principles relevant to their counseling specialization(s), and discuss the limitations of ethical codes when working with diverse populations.
8. **Research:** Students will demonstrate their ability to access, evaluate, and apply culturally relevant research practices that emphasize a collaborative approach specific to their counseling specialization(s).
9. **Case Management:** Students will demonstrate the skills of goal-setting, assessment, and effective intervention with their clients as relevant to their specialization(s), counseling setting, and scope of practice, and learn to adapt their interventions to meet the needs of their diverse clients.
10. **Technology Literacy:** Students will demonstrate a basic level of information technology literacy and skills and use technology in culturally sensitive ways that reflect an understanding of the digital divide.
11. **Written and Oral Communication Skills:** Students will demonstrate professional and effective written and oral communication skills, including APA formatting.

Themes Infused in the Counseling Courses

The faculty of the Counseling Department have agreed that there are a number of themes that are to be represented in all of our courses. These are:

1. The mission and vision of the Counseling Department to prepare our students to be agents of positive personal and social change through advocacy;
2. The emphasis on addressing counselor and client holistic, systemic wellness;
3. The centrality of ethical and professional behaviors and ongoing professional development;
4. The importance of self-awareness and of gaining skills for working with a wide range of diverse clients, as well as of understanding, appreciating, and respecting the diversity and socio-cultural contexts of people (gender, culture, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, age, disabilities, language, class/economic status, sexual orientations, and other differences);
5. The social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position and how poverty and social stress impact an individual's mental health and recovery;
6. The importance of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environments; and
7. The value of using clinically relevant research (how to use the library; how to do a literature search, review, and critique of professional journal articles; how to keep current in the particular area covered by the class; and how to remain current in the profession of counseling).