

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COUNSELING
SPECIALIZATION/ EMPHASIS IN GERONTOLOGICAL COUNSELING

It is with great pleasure that we have learned of your interest in the Gerontological Counseling specialization/emphasis. We are one of only two master's programs in the nation (and the only one in the western United States) to receive accreditation for this specialization by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), certifying that it meets national standards.

Gerontology (*geront*: elder; *ology*: the study of) is the scientific study of the processes of aging in the older adult. It is a truly interdisciplinary field that has created a unique umbrella uniting diverse professions such as nursing, medicine, occupational and physical therapy, speech and hearing, pharmacology, dietetics, rehabilitation, counseling and psychotherapy, education, social work, long-term care administration, recreation, retirement housing, insurance and law.

Demographics indicate an increasing demand for gerontological professionals as the older adult population continues to grow, not only in terms of absolute numbers but also in the proportion of the total population. In 1900, only 4% of the population of the USA was over 65 years of age while the life expectancy was at 49 years. In 1995, 13% of the population was over 65 with a life expectancy of 78 years. It is projected that by the year 2020 22% of the population will be over 65 and we will have a life expectancy of 85 years.

Gerontological counselors are involved in direct service provision; program planning, delivery, and evaluation; management and administration; product development and marketing; and research. They are employed in diverse settings encompassing family service agencies, mental health centers, counseling clinics, hospitals, churches and temples, colleges and universities, community housing, nursing homes, senior and community centers, business and industry, professional associations, local, state and national organizations, and government agencies.

Gerontological counselors provide a spectrum of services that include but are not limited to counseling and psychotherapy, supervision, consultation, education and training, support groups and peer counseling, assessment, management, advocacy, health education and disease prevention, home-based services, and policy setting. With appropriate training, they provide rehabilitation, retirement, and career counseling. They address crucial issues such as elder abuse, age discrimination, family relationships, substance abuse and dependency, mourning and loss, the meaning of life and its quality, extending and ending life, lifestyle changes and life transitions. They are called upon to provide input in distinguishing normal from pathological aging, dementia from pseudodementia (depression), and so forth.

Curriculum. The Department of Counseling has four prerequisites to its program: (1) Theories of Personality (at SFSU, PSY 451), (2) Lifespan Developmental Psychology (at SFSU, PSY 431), (3)

Psychopathology (at SFSU, PSY 452), and (4) COUN 690 Field of Counseling. **All foundation Psychology courses should be taken prior to enrollment in the program.** Applicants who have met the prerequisites and who wish to begin certain classes before hearing whether he/she has been accepted into the program may do so through Open University on a space available basis only. (See the enclosed Brochure.)

Program	Units
COUN 700 Theories of Counseling	3
COUN 702 Developmental Foundations for Counselors.....	3
COUN 703 Psychological Foundations for Counselors.....	3
COUN 705 Fieldwork Traineeship.....	2
COUN 706 Interviewing Process.....	3
COUN 715 Assessment in Counseling.....	3
COUN 735 Fieldwork Traineeship.....	2
COUN 736 Advanced Counseling Process.....	3
COUN 738 Alcohol and Substance Abuse	2
COUN 794 Seminar in Research	3
COUN 811 Group Counseling Process	3
COUN 820 Counseling the Older Adult.....	2
COUN 821 Mental Health Assessment with the Older Adult	1
COUN 833 Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling	3
COUN 857 Law and Ethics in Counseling	3
COUN 858 Couples and Family Counseling	3
COUN 859 Counseling Aspects of Sexuality.....	2
COUN 890 Integrative Counseling	3
COUN 891 Case Studies and Internship.....	3
COUN 892 Fieldwork Traineeship.....	4
GERON 705 Gerontology: An Interdisciplinary Synthesis	3
GERON 710 Aging Process.....	3
Total	60

Application To The Program. The program is dedicated to the highest standards of pre-professional training available. The primary purpose of the Department of Counseling is to train competent, professional, culturally sensitive counselors. The Department of Counseling is one of the largest in the nation, with over 30 full and part-time instructors.

The Department admits students once a year for the fall semester only with an application deadline in January. Applications must be received by the department by the deadline in order to be accepted for admissions review. All prospective applicants can attend an orientation meeting, which will provide information on the application process, degree offerings, emphasis, and specializations. For information as to orientation dates and on how to apply, please refer to our website at counseling.sfsu.edu.

It is necessary to apply both to the Department of Counseling, using our program application, and to apply online to SFSU at the same time. The Department of Counseling program application is available for download at our website¹. Please visit the Graduate Studies website at www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy for instructions on how to apply to the university.

Ordinarily, a student taking a full time program can finish in two years. Many take classes in the summer and some complete the program part-time over a longer span of time. It should be noted that if contemplating a part-time program, it is necessary to have a flexible work schedule.

The Master of Science in Counseling, specialization in Gerontological Counseling, is a 60-unit degree program. As an integral part of the program there are two academic year field placements for a minimum of 12 to 16 hours per week. Students in collaboration with the Fieldwork Coordinator select fieldwork sites compatible with their interests. The department uses over one 150 community based sites for field placements and several of these are appropriate for training in Gerontological Counseling.

Completing this curriculum enables graduates to sit for the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) examination. Passing this examination, which can be taken as early as the final semester in the program, fulfills part of the licensing requirements in over 30 other states, and soon in California. The department is in the process of adapting it's curriculum so that-- in conjunction with fulfilling other requisites--Gerontological Counseling graduates will be eligible to sit for licensing as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). (Applicants may opt for application to the MFCC (MFT) specialization with Gerontological Counseling as an emphasis.)

We thank you for your interest in our Gerontological Counseling program.

For Further Information Contact:

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¹ The Department of Counseling program application download link is available on our website starting early August and is removed after the application deadline.