

The Master of Arts in Counseling Degree Program

OFFERED ON THE PORTLAND, SACRAMENTO, AND SAN JOSE CAMPUSES

Program Overview

The purpose of the Master of Arts (M.A.) in Counseling program is to train practitioners of personal integrity and spiritual maturity who will provide effective, ethical, culturally inclusive, professional counseling from a Christian worldview. The program prepares Christian counselors with the knowledge, skills, and insight needed to practice in church and parachurch organizations, family services, mental health clinics, residential and outpatient treatment programs, counseling centers, and public and private clinical mental health counseling settings.

Western's counseling program incorporates an integrative approach that seeks to understand, explain, and treat emotional, relational, behavioral, and spiritual problems that people face in life from a biblical worldview. The counseling program places an emphasis on theological reflection and spirituality as they relate to personal development and the therapeutic process. The program includes training in marriage and family issues.

Four major areas of study are included in the M.A. program: biblical, theological, clinical mental health counseling, and spiritual integration. The program uniquely provides a quality classroom experience. A wide variety of teaching methods assist individuals who have differing learning styles and allow for flexibility. Western Seminary emphasizes learning by doing. Each student spends five semesters of clinical experience in practicum and internship positions counseling clients in the community as early as the second semester in the program. Another critical component is the personal examination and reflection that takes place in a variety of settings, including small group case conferences and mentoring with faculty. Students will reflect upon practical application of theory and meaning it has for them not only professionally, but also personally.

Portland Campus Program *(CACREP accredited)*

Western Seminary offers several program options through the Portland campus. The CACREP accredited Master of Arts (M.A.) in Counseling degree specializing in Clinical Mental Health Counseling can be taken as a stand-alone degree, or combined with another degree to pursue a dual degree track. Dual degree options include the M.A. in Counseling and the M.Div. specialization in Pastoral Counseling; the M.A. in Counseling and the M.A. in Ministry and Leadership with specializations in either in Chaplaincy or Women's Transformational Leadership, and the M.A. in Counseling and the M.A. (Biblical and Theological Studies). Additionally, graduates of the Portland counseling program may choose to take five extra credits and pursue work with children and adolescents, receiving an official certificate of completion upon graduation.

Western Seminary's Portland M.A. in Counseling degree specializing in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is CACREP accredited and has designed the curriculum for students anticipating the possibility of seeking licensure in a variety of states. While Western Seminary cannot obtain the individual approval of these states, courses were designed after a careful review of national requirements. Students are encouraged to contact state licensing agencies to determine specific requirements. Western has built elective credits into the curriculum allowing the program to flex with state requirements.

Oregon license applicants who receive their degrees on or after October 1, 2014, must complete 60 or more semester credit hours of counseling and a clinical experience of 700 hours including at least 280 direct contact hours. For further information, please contact the counseling office.

Sacramento and San Jose Campus Program

Western Seminary's Sacramento and San Jose campuses offer an M.A. in Counseling specializing in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling. While not CACREP accredited, the program is approved to meet the requirements to become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of California. It also trains practitioners of personal integrity and spiritual maturity who will provide effective, ethical, culturally inclusive, professional counseling from a Christian worldview. The program prepares Christian counselors with the knowledge, skills, and insight needed to practice in church and parachurch organizations, family services, mental health clinics, residential and outpatient treatment programs, counseling centers, and public and private clinical mental health counseling settings. Additionally, the program may be augmented by two dual-track degree options: an M.A. in Counseling in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling/M.Div. (Pastoral Counseling) program (requiring 128 credits) and the M.A. in Counseling in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling/M.A. (Biblical and Theological Studies) program (requiring 108 credits). M.A. in Counseling students may also complete five additional credits to qualify for the Addiction Studies Certificate at these campuses. All Sacramento and San Jose counseling students must complete a clinical experience of 700 hours including at least 280 direct contact hours.

Sacramento and San Jose courses are held at convenient times for working adults. The M.A. in Counseling degree specializing in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling program is designed to be completed within three years. Courses have been strategically sequenced to maximize academic achievement, personal growth, and the integration of counseling and theology.

Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

The Master of Arts in Counseling program goals include:

- Equip counselors for clinical mental health counseling positions and for counseling ministry in church and parachurch settings;
- Integrate biblical and theological foundations with the insights of counseling theory and the use of counseling interventions;
- Promote growth in Christian maturity in students demonstrated through effective interpersonal relationships;
- Prepare individuals for state licensure and professional practice.

The Master of Arts in Counseling prepares graduates of integrity with the following learning outcomes:

- **Spiritual maturity (character)** by applying biblical truth to life and ministry resulting in gospel-centered spiritual growth and transformation;
- **Theological discernment (conviction)** by employing advanced theological thinking that integrates a gospel-centered worldview with biblical and social science studies;
- **Interpersonal skills and emotional health (character)** by demonstrating social and emotional awareness, respect for others, inclusivity in diversity, effectiveness in teamwork, intrapersonal and interpersonal awareness, and the ability to care for self;
- **Counseling skills (competence)** by evidencing theoretical knowledge, application of theory, and clinical competence; additionally, students will demonstrate an ability to build an effective culturally inclusive therapeutic alliance with clients utilizing a breadth of clinical skills and technique consistent with current clinical research evidence;
- **Professional practice (competence)** by applying their training to internship tasks, integrating supervisory input into clinical work, reflecting on multicultural and contextual issues, engaging cooperatively in the supervision relationship, and behaving in accordance with the ethical standards of the profession.

Admission Requirements

In addition to the general requirements for admission to the Seminary, applicants for the M.A. in Counseling program must possess a four-year baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent from a college or university accredited by a United States association holding membership in one of the seven regional accrediting associations, membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, membership in the Association for Biblical Higher Education, or from an institution which maintains similar academic requirements and standards. Additionally, M. A. applicants must present a GPA of 3.0 or higher, including a breadth of liberal arts. Applicants who do not meet these general academic requirements may petition the Admissions Committee for consideration. A recommendation from the applicant's pastor and three personal recommendations regarding the applicant's Christian character and leadership also are required.

Entering counseling students are expected to bring a foundational knowledge of psychology. Proficiency in this foundational knowledge will be confirmed through a placement exam, required of all incoming counseling students. If deficiencies are indicated, remedial work will be required. Counseling students may satisfy these deficiencies in one of the following two ways: Complete the appropriate undergraduate course(s) at an approved institution, or complete a recommended course of self-study. The student may not begin the second semester of counseling studies without satisfying proficiency requirements.

Applications must give evidence of personal character, interpersonal relationships, goals, motivation, and potential for future clinical counseling career and ministry. These will include a vital spiritual life, growing and nurturing relationships with people, commitment to a biblical/theological worldview, and vocational aspirations involving the care and nurture of people.

Transfer Credit, Advanced Standing, and Residence Requirements

Upon approval by the program director and the registrar's office, transfer of up to 8 credit hours of Bible and theology is allowed toward the M.A. in Counseling program from graduate institutions accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Transfer of up to 12 credit hours of is allowed from a state-approved graduate counseling program. Students must have earned a grade of B or higher for a course to be considered for transfer (courses assigned a passing grade rather than a letter grade will not be considered), and coursework must have been completed no more than five years prior to matriculation to Western Seminary. Transferability of credits earned at Western and transferred to another institution is at the discretion of the receiving institution.

Alternatively, students may receive advanced standing of up to 8 credit hours of Bible and Theology coursework toward their program if they are able to demonstrate current competency in required coursework based on prior study (based on parallel undergraduate work or transfer credit that is ineligible for consideration based on age). Consult the registrar's office for information on eligibility of transfer credit and advanced standing.

Of the 68 credit hours required for the M.A. in Counseling program, a minimum of 48 credit hours must be completed through coursework at Western Seminary, with a minimum of 40 credit hours taken in resident study at one of Western Seminary's campuses.

Degree Requirements

Students may complete their studies in as few as six semesters with a minimum of 68 credit hours required as a minimum for graduation (72 total credit hours required to complete the optional emphasis below). The program is designed around a common core of 60 credit hours of counseling coursework, 4 credit hours of biblical studies, and 4 credit hours of theological studies.

The Master of Arts in Counseling degree is conferred upon the attainment of certain personal and academic requirements. In addition to the general seminary requirements, degree candidates must (1) give evidence of a genuine Christian character, orthodox belief, and conduct consistent with a God-given call to a position of leadership; (2) complete all courses in the prescribed M.A. curriculum with a minimum grade

point average of 3.0; (3) pass the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam during their final semesters in the program, which is in preparation for national licensure exams; and (4) complete clinical experience hours as required.

All work leading to the Master of Arts in Counseling must be completed within five years from the time of matriculation. Permission to extend the five-year statute of limitation must be granted through submission of an academic petition. Reinstatement to the program after withdrawal requires Admissions Committee action and may subject the student to additional requirements for the degree. All credits applied toward the degree requirements must be earned within ten years of the awarding of the degree.

Professional Assessment of Candidates (PAC Review)

Western Seminary counseling faculty review each student every six months to insure progress is being made toward professional identity as a mental health professional. Students who are doing well receive encouragement. If concerns are indicated, members of the PAC Review committee meet with the student to discuss plans for strengthening their academic and professional candidacy. In rare situations, the committee may advise students to develop other vocational goals. This process is intended to encourage students and support them as they develop as counseling professionals. For a few, this process of monitoring student progress may help prevent unnecessary financial expense preparing for an unsatisfying career.

Master of Arts in Counseling Curriculum Plan

Biblical Studies: 4 credits

BL506	Old Testament Literature for Counselors	2
BL507	New Testament Literature for Counselors	2

Theological Studies: 4 credits

TH506	Theology I for Counselors	2
TH507	Theology II for Counselors	2

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Specialization *(Portland Campus only)*

Counseling Studies: 60 credits

CNS501	Clinical Foundations: Basic Counseling Skills/Interventions	2
CNS502	Psychological Theory and Techniques	2
CNS503	Family Systems Therapy	2
CNS504	Psychotherapeutic Systems	2
CNS505	Psychopathology	3
CNS506	Legal and Ethical Issues	3
CNS507	Human Life Span Development	3
CNS508	Introduction to Integrative Issues	2
CNS509	Advanced Integration	2
CNS510	Spiritual Development and Assessment	2
CNS512	Group Counseling	2
CNS513	Social and Cultural Foundations	2

CNS516	Marriage and Couple Counseling	2
CNS518	Career and Lifestyle Development	2
CNS519	Treatment Planning and Outcome Assessment	1
CNS520	Professional Orientation	1
CNS523	Human Sexuality	2
CNS524	Research in Counseling and Family Studies	2
CNS525	Tests and Measurements	3
CNS526	Psychopharmacology	1
CNS528	Neuropsychology and Intro to Psychopharmacology	1
CNS529	Counseling Addictions	2
CNS530	Counseling Practicum	2
CNS531	Internship Case Conference I	2
CNS532	Internship Case Conference II	2
CNS533	Internship Case Conference III	2
CNS534	Internship Case Conference IV	2
CNS544	Counseling Violence and Abuse Issues	1
CNS557	Emergency Preparedness: Suicide Prevention	1
CNS558	Emergency Preparedness: Trauma Counseling	1
CNS5XX	Counseling electives (Consult with department advisor)	3
CNS581	Comprehensive Clinical Integration Paper	0

Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy Specialization (Sacramento and San Jose Campus only)

Marital and Family Therapy/Counseling Studies: 60 credits

CNS501	Clinical Foundations: Basic Counseling Skills/Interventions	2
CNS502	Psychological Theory and Techniques	3
CNS503	Family Systems Therapy	3
CNS504	Psychotherapeutic Systems	2
CNS505	Psychopathology	3
CNS506	Legal and Ethical Issues	2
CNS507	Human Life Span Development	3
CNS508	Introduction to Integrative Issues	2
CNS509	Advanced Integration	2
CNS510	Spiritual Development and Assessment	2
CNS512	Group Counseling	3
CNS513	Social and Cultural Foundations	2
CNS516	Marriage and Couple Counseling	3
CNS517	Child and Adolescent Therapy	2
CNS518	Career and Lifestyle Development	2
CNS523	Human Sexuality	2
CNS524	Research in Counseling and Family Studies	2
CNS525	Tests and Measurements	3

CNS526 -or-	Psychopharmacology (<i>Sacramento students only</i>)	2
CNS527	Physiology, Pharmacology, and Addiction (<i>San Jose students only</i>)	2
CNS529	Counseling Addictions	2
CNS530	Counseling Practicum I	2
CNS531	Counseling Practicum II	2
CNS532	Counseling Practicum III	2
CNS544	Counseling Violence and Abuse Issues	3
CNS553	Human Services	2
CNS559	Emergency Preparedness: Crisis Management	2

Child and Youth Counseling emphasis (*Portland Campus only*)

Each year the Counseling Department admits a limited number of counseling students at the Portland Campus to an emphasis in Child and Youth Counseling within the M.A. program. In addition to the 60 required credit hours of counseling courses listed above, Child and Youth Counseling students use their electives toward the following required courses, bringing their total to 72 credit hours. Upon completion of the emphasis, students will receive confirmation of completion of Child and Youth Counseling coursework.

CNS542	Child Assessment and Treatment	1
CNS546	Counseling Adolescents	1
CNS561R	Parent Skills Training	1
CNS566	Introduction to Play Therapy	2
CNS563K	Advanced Child and Adolescent Counseling	2
CNS530C	Child/Youth Internship Case Conference	2