disaster mental health institute

Academic Components of the DMHI Center of Excellence

The undergraduate and graduate academic programs of the DMHI Center of Excellence received final approval January 21, 1999 by the South Dakota Board of Regents. In addition to the undergraduate and graduate programs, the DMHI recognizes the need for continuing education for professionals in the field. The Mental Health Institute is approved by the American Psychological Association to offer continuing education for psychologists. The DMHI maintains responsibility for the program.

Undergraduate Minor in Disaster Response

This minor requires 18 hours (15 required, 3 elective) of courses in disaster response, including both theoretical and practical course work. It provides skills useful in any career and to any citizen, as well as skills useful to students hoping to pursue a career in mental health. This minor is not available to psychology majors (see Specialization in Disaster Response for Psychology Majors below)

Required courses include: 15 hours

- PSYC 255, Introduction to Disaster Response, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 256, Psychological First Aid, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 258, Children and Trauma, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 359, Practicum in Disaster Response, 3 credit hours, and
- PSYC 456, Introduction to Disaster Psychology, 3 credit hours.

Elective courses include: 3 hours

- PSYC 455, Advanced Disaster Response, 1-3 credit hours
- PSYC 457, Directed Readings in Disaster, 1-3 credit hours
- PSYC 458, Directed Research in Disaster, 1-3 credit hours
- PSYC 459, Advanced Seminar: Selected Topics in Disaster, 1-3 credit hours
- SOC 100, Introduction to Sociology, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 241, Social Psychology, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 429, Psychology of Safety, 3 credit hours

Performance Requirement

Students pursuing the Minor in Disaster Response are required to maintain a "B" average in course the minor. Students completing the coursework for the Minor in Disaster Response are required to
Students completing the Psychology Major Specialization in Disaster Response are required to also complete six hours beyond the 31 hours which is the minimum requirement for psychology majors at USD.

Elective courses include: 3 hours

- PSYC 455, **Advanced Disaster Response**, 1-3 credit hours
- PSYC 457, **Directed Readings in Disaster**, 1-3 credit hours
- PSYC 458, **Directed Research in Disaster**, 1-3 credit hours
- PSYC 459, **Advanced Seminar: Selected Topics in Disaster**, 1-3 credit hours
- SOC 100, Introduction to Sociology, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 241, Social Psychology, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 429, Psychology of Safety, 3 credit hours

Students completing the Psychology Specialization in Disaster Response are required to maintain a "B" average in courses applied to the Specialization. Students are required to successfully perform a capstone exercise to complete the Specialization. They are also required to complete the Graduate Record Examination subject test in psychology and submit their scores to the DMHI.

**Performance Requirement**

Students completing the Psychology Major Specialization in Disaster Response are required to maintain a "B" average in courses applied to the Specialization. Students are required to successfully perform a capstone exercise to complete the Specialization. They are also required to complete the Graduate Record Examination subject test in psychology and submit their scores to the DMHI.

**Capstone Exercise**

The capstone exercise will be judged by an external team composed of disaster response personnel members of the DSHR, the ARC national disaster team. These examiners will be asked to compare the performance of these students on a practical disaster response examination with the skills and knowledge of entry level disaster response personnel with whom they have worked in disaster.

Alumni of the psychology major Specialization in Disaster Response will be tracked to determine if they continue participation in disaster response community service, and whether they pursue graduate training in mental health fields.
Doctoral Specialty Track in Clinical/Disaster Psychology

Within the USD American Psychological Association-accredited doctoral Clinical Psychology Training psychology, a Doctoral Specialty Track in Clinical/Disaster Psychology is offered.

Total semester credit hours: 21

Required courses: 18 hours

- PSYC 655, Crisis Intervention, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 656, Disaster Mental Health, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 657, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 658, Serving the Diverse Community in Disaster, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 754, Introduction to Behavior Therapy, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 780, Rural Community Mental Health (a required Clinical Training Program Course)

Elective Courses: 3 hours

- PSYC 659, International Disaster Psychology, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 755, Management in Disaster Mental Health, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 757, Directed Readings in Disaster Psychology, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 758, Directed Research in Disaster Psychology, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 759, Selected Topics in Disaster Psychology, 3 credit hours

If a student chooses all her or his elective courses from this pool of disaster courses, he or she only nine hours beyond the minimum courses required for the doctoral clinical degree. All students in the track are required to complete all requirements for the clinical doctoral degree as well as the requirements for the Doctoral Specialty Track in Clinical/Disaster Psychology. Doctoral students pursuing this specialty track are required to complete their theses and/or their dissertations in a trauma- or disaster-related field of study.

Performance Requirement:

A grade of "C" or lower in any course required for the Doctoral Specialty Track in Clinical/Disaster Psychology will necessitate the student repeating the course if he/she wishes to complete the specialty track.

Capstone Exercise:

Students in the Doctoral Specialty Track in Clinical/Disaster Psychology are required to complete a disaster response scenario simulation for the DMHI faculty and national figures in the field. This will be the capstone measure of the student's mastery of Clinical/Disaster Psychology. The goal for this assessment is that all students will be evaluated by the national team members as superior to entry level disaster mental health personnel.

Return to list of DMHI academic programs

Graduate Certificate in Disaster Mental Health

The DMHI offers a Graduate Certificate in Disaster Mental Health to graduate students in accredited master's level counseling, psychiatric nursing, and marriage and family therapy programs, to students in doctoral programs in clinical and counseling psychology, and students in psychiatric residency programs. (The actual certificate is not awarded until graduation from one of these programs.) This certificate is also available to existing licensed mental health professionals. Licensed mental health professionals may complete the certificate through continuing education or for graduate credit.

Total semester credit hours: 12

Required courses: 9 hours

- PSYC 655, Crisis Intervention, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 656, Disaster Mental Health, 3 credit hours
- PSYC 658, Serving the Diverse Community in Disaster, 3 credit hours

Elective Courses: 3 hours

- PSYC 659, International Disaster Psychology, 3 credit hours
PSYC 657, **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder**, 3 credit hours
PSYC 755, **Management in Disaster Mental Health**, 3 credit hours
PSYC 757, **Directed Readings in Disaster Psychology**, 3 credit hours
PSYC 758, **Directed Research in Disaster Psychology**, 3 credit hours
PSYC 759, **Selected Topics in Disaster Psychology**, 3 credit hours

All graduate students enrolled in mental health programs who wish to receive the Graduate Certificate in Disaster Mental Health are required to complete all requirements for their degrees in addition to the require proposed certificate.

**Performance Requirement:**

A grade of "C" or lower in any course required for the graduate certificate is unacceptable and necessitates the student repeating the course if she/he wish to complete the certificate.

**Capstone Exercise:**

Students in the Graduate Certificate program are required to complete a tabletop disaster response the DMHI faculty and national figures in the field, which normally takes place at the end of the Summer Intensive Program. This provides a capstone measure of the success of the graduate certificate program. The assessment is that all students will be evaluated by the national team members as superior to entry level disaster mental health personnel.

**Return to list of DMHI academic programs**