**Palo Alto University**

**Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis**

**Area of Emphasis Description**

Forensic Psychology is the application of the science and profession of psychology to issues relating to law and the legal system. The clinical application of psychology to the legal system requires broad and general training in clinical psychology, with specific forensic training *in addition to* that clinical training. The mission of the Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis at PGSP/PAU is to assure that participating students 1) maintain better than minimum performance in broad and general clinical courses and practical experience, and 2) maintain good performance throughout a sequence of specialized forensic elective courses and practical experiences.

**Assuring Broad & General Clinical Training –** The Forensic Area of Emphasis makes explicit the commitment to broad and general clinical training. Through admissions and continuation criteria (see below), only students who maintain high levels of performance in core clinical courses are permitted to seek the additional training resulting in formal completion of the Forensic Area of Emphasis.

**Area of Emphasis Admission and Continuation Criteria**

To facilitate the dissemination of forensic psychology to the broader PAU community, any PAU PhD student may take the Forensic I course (CLIN831) as an elective. To continue further in the Area of Emphasis, students must apply to the Director of the Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis for admission. The Director will solicit for applications near the end of the Forensic I course. Admission will be granted to all students who meet the Admission Criteria below. Students must also continue to meet the Continuation Criteria below in order to stay in the Area of Emphasis.

**Admission Criteria:**

To apply for admission to the Forensic Area of Emphasis, students must provide evidence of the following:

1) All course work at PAU (or course work transferred in from another institution) must reflect a grade of “B” or higher (e.g. not B-), with particular attention paid to the Research Methods and Statistics sequence.

2) The following core clinical and required courses (or equivalents) must be completed with an average passing grade of at least "A-".

⮚ ASMT800 Psychopathology and Psychodiagnosis I

⮚ ASMT801 Psychopathology and Psychodiagnosis II

⮚ CLIN800 Ethics in Clinical Psychology

⮚ CLIN831 Forensic Psychology I

⮚ CLIN825 Professional Standards I

Students not meeting initial admission criteria may be allowed into the AoE on probationary status. They will be allowed to continue into coursework, space permitting, pending a review of their adherence to the Continuation Criteria below.

**Continuation Criteria:**

To continue in the Forensic Area of Emphasis, students must:

1) Complete and maintain a 3.67 (A-) average in the Forensic Elective Course Curriculum Requirements (see below).

2) To assure broad and general clinical training, students must also maintain an average of at least a 3.67 (A-) over the following core clinical courses (or equivalents) designed to ensure broad and general clinical psychology training:

### ⮚ CLIN802 Introduction to Psychotherapy

⮚ ASMT809 Intellectual Assessment

⮚ ASMT825 Assessment of Personality

⮚ ASMT807 Integrated Test Batteries

### ⮚ CLIN803 Psychodynamic Psychotherapy I

### ⮚ CLIN806 Cognitive-Behavioral Psychotherapy I

### Forensic Area of Emphasis: Completion Requirements

### Research Requirement

Students wishing to complete the Forensic Area of Emphasis must complete a dissertation that will contribute to the body of knowledge that is relevant to the intersection of psychology and law. If students are not working primarily with one of the core faculty of the Area of Emphasis, they should seek approval with the Director of the AoE to assure that their dissertation topic meets this requirement prior to the dissertation proposal.

**Practicum Requirement**

Students wishing to complete the Forensic Area of Emphasis must complete an official practicum placement (one year of full or supplemental) in a setting that provides forensically-relevant practical experience. Ideally, students seeking internships and/or careers in correctional or forensic settings will complete practicum in a correctional or forensic setting. Students with other goals may seek different relevant experience (e.g. SUD treatment of parolees) that can satisfy this practicum requirement. Such considerations are to be arranged with the Director of the AoE prior to the beginning of the placement.

**Course Curriculum Requirements**

The forensic sequence includes five courses for a total of 15 credits. This sequence of courses and their content have been carefully designed to fulfill training requirements and competencies for forensic psychologists published in the literature (DeMatteo, Marczyk, Krauss, & Burl, 2009), and by relevant professional bodies (e.g. APA Division 41, AAFP). While students in the Forensic Area of Emphasis will receive broad training in all areas of psychology that pertain to the legal system, emphasis is placed on content specific to the clinical practice of forensic psychology. To continue in the Forensic Area of Emphasis, students must complete and maintain a 3.67 (A-) average in the following elective courses:

**CLIN831 Forensic Psychology I -** In this course students will learn about the variety of ways in which psycholo- gists may be involved in the legal system, definitions of forensic psychology, eth- ical considerations specific to the field of forensic psychology, and the nature of and regulations regarding expert witness testimony. Students will be exposed to several sub-disciplines within psychology and the law, including criminal and civil contexts. *3 units, elective.*

### CLIN832 Forensic Psychology II - This course is an advanced academic and practical course in clinical forensic psychology.  Students will learn to integrate legal and scientific research and knowledge into evidence-based and legally-grounded practice. *Elective, 3 units; Prerequisite: CLIN831, good standing in the Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis (or instructor permission).*

### ASMT830 Forensic Assessment - This course serves to provide more in-depth knowledge regarding the science and practice of forensic assessment, building upon the material you have learned in Forensic I and II. This includes the legal contours of various evaluations, research regarding the relevant psycholegal constructs and assessment measures, and best practices in the field. The course focuses primarily on assessment in criminal rather than civil contexts. This is a discussion-based and interactive class that assumes a certain amount of background knowledge in the field. *3 units, elective. Prerequisites: Successful completion of the Assessment Competency Exam; ASMT807, ASMT825, CLIN831; Completion of either CLIN832 or CLIN830*; *good standing in the Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis (or instructor permission).*

CLIN830 Advanced Ethical and Legal Issues in Forensic Psychology - This course is a survey of advanced legal and ethical issues in various fields within psychology and law.  It is designed to be the “capstone” course in the PAU forensic sequence.  The topics and procedures are created to finalize your presentation and thinking skills in the Forensic Program competency areas. Special emphasis is placed on advanced material designed to facilitate students’ eventual application to Forensic Board Certification. *3 units, elective. Prerequisite: CLIN831, good standing in the Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis (or instructor permission).*

### CLIN833 Advanced Forensic Psychology Seminar\* - An elective course in forensic psychology. Topics rotate, and have recently included: child custody, juvenile forensic, psychopathy, police psychology, etc. *3 units, elective. Prerequisite: S432, good standing in the Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis (or instructor permission).*

The typical sequence of courses is (Seminar may be taken any time prerequisites are met):

* 2nd year of PhD study
  + Fall quarter: Forensic I
  + Winter quarter: Forensic II or Advanced Ethical/Legal
* 3rd year of PhD study
  + Winter quarter: remaining of Forensic II or Advanced Ethical/Legal
  + Spring quarter: Forensic Assessment

\*Note: In order to facilitate the growing number of forensic students who wish to build expertise in Neuropsychology, Trauma Psychology or Diversity and Community Mental Health, specific courses from those Areas of Emphasis may be able to count as meeting the Forensic AoE Seminar requirement. Please contact the Director of the Forensic AoE to inquire about which courses are currently being cross-listed. Students looking to customize their training experience toward a career in correctional treatment and rehabilitation may also petition the Director to count courses focusing on Substance Abuse diagnosis and treatment.

**Forensic Area of Emphasis Completion**

Upon satisfying all of the criteria above, graduating students will receive a Certificate of Completion for the Forensic Psychology Area of Emphasis. Completion of the Forensic Area of Emphasis signifies a) completion of advanced training in areas of clinical forensic psychology designed to satisfy requirements and competencies published in the literature and by governing bodies in forensic psychology (e.g. APA Division 41, AAFP), b) completion of practical clinical and research activities relevant to the practice of clinical forensic psychology, c) performance in broad and general clinical doctoral requirements in excess of general required program minimums, and d) qualification to receive further professional training, education and experience in forensic psychology (e.g. during internship). As such, students cannot receive the formal Certificate of Completion with partial completion (e.g. less than a B+ average in core clinical courses) of the above requirements. As with the Neuropsychology certificate Area of Emphasis, completion of the Forensic Area of Emphasis does ***not*** qualify graduates to call themselves "Forensic Psychologists."

**Additional Forensic Activities at PAU**

**Forensic Mental Health Student Group**

In the Fall of 2010, in coordination with the Forensic Mental Health Association of California (FMHAC) and the Director of the PAU Forensic Program, students organized and enacted the Forensic Mental Health Student Group. In addition to serving as liaisons between the FMHAC and the PAU Forensic Program, the goals of this group include working with the Area of Emphasis Director to monitor and shape the ongoing development and continual improvement of the Forensic Program. The students offer and manage student travel and dissertation awards, the Forensic Speaker Series, as well as operate an internal forensic psychology listserve. http://www.paloaltou.edu/about/departments-and-offices/student-services/student-organization-directory/forensic-mental-health

**Forensic Speaker Series**

Through individual instructors and courses, as well as special events, the Forensic Area of Emphasis has a rich history of hosting speakers from our local, national and international forensic psychology communities. Speakers for the series have included Dr. Robert Horon, Training Director for the APA-approved internship program at Vacaville State Prison’s Department of Mental Health Unit, and Drs. Tani Shaffer and James Gregg, PAU alumni who are building successful careers in the CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. International guests have included Drs. Robert Hare and Matt Logan who provided a 2-day intensive training on psychopathy assessment to an international audience.

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