

# School Psychology (SPSY)

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Course information contained within the Bulletin is accurate at the time of publication in June 2025 but is subject to change. For the most up-to-date course information, please refer to the Course Catalog.

## **SPSY 5303. Ethical and Legal Issues. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course is designed to introduce students to the ethical codes relevant to their discipline for students studying ABA (Behavior Analyst Certification Board Professional and Ethical Compliance Code), School Psychology (American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct; National Association of School Psychologists Principles for Professional Ethics), and Counseling (American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct; American Counseling Association Code of Ethics). Students will explore common ethical and legal issues such as boundaries of competence, multiple relationships, confidentiality, research, client/student rights, effective treatment, etc. Students will begin to develop a professional decision making framework for resolving ethical conflicts around such issues. Students will also become conversant with current legislation and regulations relevant to their practice.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

## **SPSY 5501. Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care. 3 Credit Hours.**

The purpose of this course is to provide a theoretical and practical understanding of trauma at the individual and societal level and of trauma-informed practices and organizations. Students will become familiar with the impact and nature of a wide variety of traumatic stressors, including: childhood abuse, violent crimes in adulthood, domestic violence, accidents, racial trauma, traumatic deaths, natural disasters, and war and genocide. In addition, it will explore policies and practices individuals and organizations can use to reduce or remove the sources of traumatic stress when possible, to respond appropriately to trauma reactions, to promote healing, and to foster resilience. A particular focus will be on effective approaches to addressing trauma in schools and classrooms.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

## **SPSY 5667. Introduction to Cognitive Assessment. 3 Credit Hours.**

Intensive overview and training with diagnostic instruments of cognitive abilities. Practice with specific tests of intelligence, memory, and cognitive processing. Introduction to the assessment of adaptive behavior. Discussion of theories of cognitive functioning and research literature on intelligence testing.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

## **SPSY 5671. Integrative Assessment. 3 Credit Hours.**

The purpose of this course is to develop advanced skills in the individual assessment of children and adolescents. One major component of the course will be learning additional tests of cognitive skills. The second major component will be learning standardized, norm-referenced tests of academic achievement. The third major component will be coverage of assessment of children from a variety of cultural, language, and other backgrounds. The focus will be on administering, scoring, interpreting, and integrating test results to provide a full and accurate picture of the student. Successful students will become familiar with test administration, scoring, and interpretation of a variety of instruments and techniques, as well as gain practice in demands analysis and integrating assessment findings across cognitive, academic, and social/emotional domains. This course is designed for matriculated school psychology students only. The tests taught in this course are secure instruments, which can be administered only by psychologists; therefore, only in the rarest of circumstances will a student from another program be permitted to enroll. A course in introductory cognitive assessment (SPSY 5667 or equivalent) is a prerequisite of this course.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**Pre-requisites:** Minimum grade of C- in SPSY 5667.

## **SPSY 5672. Personality and Psychotherapy. 3 Credit Hours.**

Covers major theories of personality and psychotherapy, and applications to counseling, assessment, and projective testing in the schools.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

## **SPSY 5673. Introduction to the Diagnostic Process. 3 Credit Hours.**

Discussion of the integration of data from case histories, observations, interview and tests in making differential diagnosis. Diagnosis using DSM-IV-TR and educational identification under special education law with both covered. Overview of major diagnostic categories found in schools. Comprehensive study of skills in interviewing, report writing, systematic observation of child behavior, and evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Major emphasis on conceptualizing and writing recommendations for educational remediation.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 5674. Social and Emotional Aspects of Behavior and Assessment. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course is intended for graduate students in the helping professions. The course provides an overview of the affective/emotional and social aspects of behavior. Topics include defining emotion, emotion experience, and regulation, intrapersonal and interpersonal functions of emotion, gender and cultural differences in emotion, emotion across the lifespan, and emotion and well-being. Building on this foundation, the course provides theoretical and applied training in assessment techniques useful in evaluating children and adolescents with social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties. It covers a wide variety of methods including the use of direct and indirect assessment techniques for children and adolescents. The course also addresses the development of cultural competence in assessment, classification, decision-making, and intervention planning. The first portion of the course focuses on the foundations of social and emotional functioning. The second portion centers on methods of behavioral and social-emotional assessment. The third portion of the course covers the assessment of specific problems, competencies, and populations.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 5676. Applied Behavior Analysis. 3 Credit Hours.**

Introduction to the functional analysis of behavior of children in the school setting. Includes behavior theory, assessment, interaction, and evaluation. A behavior-change program is conducted.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 5771. Biological Aspects of Behavior. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course is designed to provide graduate level students with an understanding of principles, theories, and research in biological/physiological psychology. A major focus will be on the relationship between the brain and behavior. General topics will include: neuroanatomy and physiology, neural communication, behavior genetics and evolutionary psychology, brain damage and plasticity, vision, movement, emotions, learning, memory, language, intelligence, and neurological and psychological disorders. One of the objectives of this course is to relate the content to school-age children. Students will be expected to apply what they have learned to the science and practice of school psychology. Students will also be expected to critically evaluate relevant findings and claims generated by neuroscience research. The course will incorporate lecture, directed reading and writing assignments, case studies, videos, and class discussion.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8621. Academic Assessment and Intervention. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course is intended to introduce pre-service school psychologists to the theories, skills, and ethical and legal considerations of academic assessment in school settings. The assessment class will be taught within the over-arching framework of an ecological, multi-tiered assessment model. The link between assessment and instructional decision-making will be emphasized throughout the course, with attention to assessment practices for learners with diverse needs and providing instructional support to teachers. Students enrolled in the course will learn how to select, design, administer, score, interpret, and report results for a variety of assessment approaches related to monitoring instructional efficacy and learner outcomes in a standard-aligned model. Assessment approaches will include: (a) authentic; (b) screening; (c) diagnostic; (d) formative; (e) benchmark; and (f) summative.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**Pre-requisites:** Minimum grade of B in SPSY 5676 (may be taken concurrently)

**SPSY 8770. Seminar: Special Topics in School Psychology. 3 Credit Hours.**

Advanced seminar considering the literature in a specific area of school psychology research.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 8771. Social Psychology of Education. 3 Credit Hours.**

Discussion of principles of social psychology as applied to the school as an institution. Emphasis on the psychology of planned educational change. Theoretical bases of the process of change and innovation within the schools. Rationale for intervention strategies

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8772. Seminar: Role and Function of the School Psychologist. 3 Credit Hours.**

Analysis of role and functions of school psychologists. Study of relevant research dealing with varied roles the school psychologist can play within the school system and in other settings. Consideration of legal and ethical practices in school psychology.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8773. Developmental Psychopathology and Low Incidence Disabilities. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course will look at child psychopathology from a development perspective, covering typical social-emotional and cognitive development and then examining how this gets disrupted or otherwise altered to result in child and adolescent psychopathology. We will examine classification systems and models of diagnosis and disease, as well as alternatives to the more traditional "medical model" such as examining risk, resilience and the role of psychosocial and cultural factors. The course will aim to teach students to identify potential mental/behavioral health issues in children and adolescents, and then understand and be able to explain to others what the implications of this might be for a given child or teen. Students will think critically about the ethics and issues of controversy around child and adolescent mental health.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8774. Professional Issues and Literature in School Psychology. 3 Credit Hours.**

Doctoral seminar in professional issues and the research literature in school psychology. Required for School Psychology Ph.D. students.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8775. Legal and Ethical Problems and Professional Responsibility. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course familiarizes advanced graduate students in psychological studies with ethical principles and codes of conduct as well as legal requirements and legislative outcomes to guide our practice as psychologists and pupil services employees/administrators. The APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct and NASP Professional Conduct Manual will be perused, as well as PA Law governing the licensure and practice of psychologists. Also covered in this course will be federal and state law related to regular and special education, civil rights, and gifted education. Case law surrounding these issues will be explored.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8776. History and Systems of Psychology. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course is for graduate students in training to become psychologists. It introduces students to the history of psychology and the theoretical schools of psychology practice. It is required for students in the School Psychology PhD program.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8777. Theories and Techniques of Counseling for Youth. 3 Credit Hours.**

The purpose of this course is to develop the basic skills students will need in order to conduct successful school mental health counseling interactions. We accomplish this through the practice and development of counseling microskills in an experiential format. Students will have an opportunity to begin to develop mastery of these skills through in class role-playing, mock interviews, and videotaped counseling session role-plays and supervised counseling experiences to improve interpersonal, emotional, and social functioning in young children to adolescents. Students learn to design, deliver, and evaluate evidence-based prevention and intervention approaches and consultative mental health services. By working alongside a field site supervisor, students engage in case review, analysis, and delivery of counseling services designed to mirror expectations placed on mental health professionals in school and community settings. Self-reflection, transcript analysis, and peer, instructor, and supervisor feedback are employed to develop professional and personal individual and group counseling skills within a multi-tiered system of support.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 8780. Topical Seminar in School Psychology. 1 to 6 Credit Hour.**

Special topics of interest to the school psychologist. Topics may include therapeutic problems, school discipline problems, parenting and remediation strategies. Topics may vary.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 8787. Seminar on Verbal Behavior. 3 Credit Hours.**

Advanced course in applied behavior analysis with an emphasis on verbal behavior. Designed to provide students with an overview of verbal behavior (as defined in the field of applied behavior analysis) and an overview of its practical application in teaching language to children with diagnosed language delays.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**Pre-requisites:** Minimum grade of B- in SPSY 5676.

**SPSY 9487. Professional Issues and Practicum. 1 to 3 Credit Hour.**

Students will complete a school-based practicum, one day per week. The program will assign you to a school for this practicum. Your supervisor must be a certified school psychologist with at least 5 years of experience in the field. You should plan to be at your site one day per week (6 to 8 hours), for a total of at least 225 hours across the entire school year. The weekly class will include group supervision and discussion of cases, plus a didactic portion covering role and function and professional issues in school psychology.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9488. Advanced Practicum in School Psychology. 1 Credit Hour.**

Doctoral students complete advanced practicum, generally two days per week for an academic year. They are responsible for arranging this advanced practicum placement. In the third year, these placements are typically in specialized schools, agencies, clinics, or hospitals. In the fourth year, these placements may include public schools to allow students to complete the required 600 school-based hours for certification. Advanced practicum supervisors must be doctoral-level practitioners, appropriately credentialed for the site. In most cases, the supervisor is a licensed doctoral-level psychologist. Students should plan to be at their sites two days per week, for a total of at least 400 hours over the course of an academic year.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9551. Consultation. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course consists of learning about consulting with teachers regarding behavior change, instructional consultation, and mental health consultation. The course also addresses the assessment of treatment integrity. This introductory graduate course is designed to provide students with theoretical background and applied training in school-based psychological consultation. Students will be exposed to a variety of theoretical models of consultation (e.g., behavioral, mental health, ecological, instructional, organizational, and cross-cultural perspectives), and will have opportunities to develop relevant skills (e.g., problem-solving, data collection, and communication/interpersonal skills). The course includes both didactic and applied components, and will involve such diverse activities and assignments as readings, class discussions, lectures, and role-plays. This course will be conducted in a mixed format that includes lecture, discussion, and group activities. Students are expected to come to class on time each week, having completed all assignments, and participate actively in class discussions and activities.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**SPSY 9587. School Consultation. 3 Credit Hours.**

Extensive school practicum (practicum of 3 hours per week) consulting with teachers regarding behavior change, instructional consultation, and mental health consultation. Includes assessing treatment integrity.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9687. Clinical Supervision Seminar in School Psychology. 3 to 12 Credit Hours.**

Case studies by the student in the Psychoeducational Clinic (taken concurrently) are reviewed in depth. Assessment, observations, interviews, diagnosis, educational identification, and remedial strategies are covered. Open only to matriculated school psychology students.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9688. Psychoeducational Clinic. 3 Credit Hours.**

A practicum course providing supervised training in psychoeducational assessment and counseling of children with learning problems. Open only to matriculated school psychology students.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9787. Practicum on Children with Low Incidence Disabilities. 3 to 6 Credit Hours.**

Supervised experience in schools or related settings assessing students with a variety of disabilities.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9788. Seminar on Children with Low Incidence Disabilities. 3 Credit Hours.**

Training and supervision on special tests, rating scales, and observational assessment of children who are blind, deaf, or have disabilities such as mental retardation, autism, orthopedic disabilities, or multiple disabilities.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9876. Supervision of Psychological Services. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course will prepare school psychologists to conduct effective, ethical clinical supervision. Issues of administrative supervision and evaluation of school psychological services will also be addressed. Both theory and practice will be emphasized.

**Repeatability:** This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

**Pre-requisites:** Minimum grade of B- in SPSY 9687.

**SPSY 9885. Internship in School Psychology. 3 to 12 Credit Hours.**

Supervised internship as a full-time school psychologist in an approved school system, intermediate unit, or consortium.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9982. Independent Study in School Psychology. 1 to 6 Credit Hour.**

Intended to meet the needs of students in school psychology who desire to carry on an individual investigation.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9986. Internship in School Psychology. 1 to 12 Credit Hour.**

Supervised internship as a school psychologist in an approved school system, intermediate unit, or consortium.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.

**SPSY 9999. Doctoral Dissertation. 1 to 6 Credit Hour.**

Registration limited to candidates for the doctorate who have successfully completed the minimum number of semester hours required for the degree and the preliminary examination. Continuous registration during the fall and spring terms is required until the dissertation has been completed, successfully defended, and accepted by the Graduate School.

**Repeatability:** This course may be repeated for additional credit.