

**PSY 640F: Practicum Fieldwork in Counseling Psychology**  
**University of Hawaii at Hilo**  
**3 credits**

**Course Overview:**

Practicum is an advanced course designed to facilitate the student's integration of theory and practice in the therapeutic context. This course must be taken concurrently with PSY 640 (Practicum Supervision Course) and the three credits earned in this course is for the mental health counseling experience gained at a Program-approved field placement. Through direct client contact at a Program-approved field placement, students will develop a sound conceptualization of client issues and counseling process, mastery of skills, understanding of the role and function of professional counselors, and awareness of ethical and professional behavior. Issues related to counseling individuals from various cultural groups also will be a main area of focus. Evaluation of student trainees, supervisors, and training sites is another essential component to the experiential training sequence. Practicum functions as an orientation to working in a mental health setting and precedes Internship training.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Conceptualize client concerns using individual, cultural, and developmental understanding.
2. Gain competence in identifying an appropriate diagnosis of client issues based on the DSM-5.
3. Identify and define treatment goals.
4. Select and employ techniques designed to facilitate movement toward treatment goals as well as applying, evaluating, and altering these strategies as needed.
5. Evaluate counseling outcomes, level of goal attainment, and perceived therapeutic effectiveness.
6. Practice in a culturally competent manner.
7. Effectively negotiate the initial, middle, and termination stages of the therapeutic encounter.
8. Increase understanding of the professional counselor's role and function.
9. Increase understanding and appreciation for the role that diversity holds in working with all individuals.
10. Practice according to the ethical standards for professional behavior of the ACA and APA.

**Recommended Readings:**

- American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Arlington, VA: Author. ISBN: 978-0-89042-554-1
- Cormier, S., Nurius, P. S., & Osborn, C. J. (2017). *Interviewing and Change Strategies for Helpers: Fundamental Skills and Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (8<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks-Cole. ISBN: 978-1305271456

**Field Placement Requirements:**

1. Students are required to complete a minimum of 300 hours of supervised direct service across the PSY 640F Practicum and PSY 659F Internship courses.
  - a. Students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of supervised direct service during the PSY 640F Practicum course.
2. Students are also required to complete a minimum of 300 hours of indirect service (e.g., paperwork, supervision, class attendance) across the PSY 640F Practicum and PSY 659F Internship courses.
  - a. Students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of indirect service (e.g., paperwork, supervision, class attendance) during the PSY 640F Practicum course.
3. Students are required to receive a minimum of 60 minutes of individual or 90 minutes of small group supervision per week from the onsite supervisor.
4. The practicum site should not ask, or allow, the student to expend their own funds to pay for client-related expenses such as meals, mileage expenses for driving clients, etc. Note that student expenses related to commuting to the field placement site are not included and are the student's responsibility.
5. The practicum site will not ask, or allow, the student to drive clients to places in their own personal vehicles unless the site possesses insurance that will cover any injury or liability resulting from an

automobile accident that occurs while the student is driving a client, including property damage and injury to the student, client, or a third party.

6. The practicum site will not purposely assign severely difficult or dangerous clients to students, especially during their first semester (the Fall semester), and especially if the student is meeting these clients off-site. Who is a “difficult” or “dangerous” client is hard to define or predict, but might be considered to include persons who: have a history of violence, are chronically suicidal, have borderline personality disorder, etc.
7. The practicum site should not require that students give their personal telephone numbers or email addresses to clients.

### Course Expectations:

1. Confidentiality: As we will be discussing materials that are confidential in nature, students are expected to adhere to the fullest extent the standards of confidentiality of professional counseling. When describing their clients, students must avoid using any identifying information (e.g., actual name).
2. Communication with supervisors: The instructor will maintain an ongoing open communication with the students’ supervisors to discuss training goals and student progress during the semester. Two supervisor evaluations (mid-semester and end-semester) will be submitted to the instructor, which will be included in the student's academic file. **The student will be responsible for making sure that this evaluation is completed and reviewed with the site supervisor in a timely fashion.**

Mid-semester Clinical Evaluation Due: XX/XX/XX

Final Clinical Evaluation Due: XX/XX/XX

3. Counseling timesheet: Students are expected to maintain a timesheet that documents their counseling work. The cumulative timesheet should be signed by their counseling supervisors during their weekly supervision session and should be submitted to their instructor as noted below so that your instructor can monitor progress. Students should keep a copy of this for their records. The timesheet should detail both direct and indirect hours obtained.

Mid-semester Timesheet Due: XX/XX/XX

Final Clinical Timesheet Due: XX/XX/XX

4. Progress notes: Students are expected to maintain timely progress notes, preferably completed immediately following each session. The notes should be reviewed and signed by their counseling supervisors. The format of these notes will follow the agency-specific guidelines (e.g., SOAP, DIRT).
5. Other tasks as assigned: Students are also expected to complete other tasks their supervisors assign them to do. For instance, some sites require students to attend treatment team or staffing meetings even if the student is not seeing a client that is being discussed at the meeting. Some sites may require students to enter data from standardized assessments, print handouts, file forms, or engage in other administrative tasks that are needed to support clients served at the agency/site. Students are expected to complete these tasks as assigned even though they do not count as direct service hours.
6. Communication with course instructor and program administrators: Students are expected to maintain open communication with their course instructor and as needed, other program administrators (i.e., Field Placement Coordinator, Program Director). If a problem arises and the student is unable to resolve the problem with their site supervisor, the student should immediately bring this to the attention of the course instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved with the course instructor, the student and course

instructor may need to bring the matter to the Field Placement Coordinator and/or the Program Director to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

**Professional and Ethical Behavior:** Students are expected to attend their clinical fieldwork as scheduled. At the discretion of the instructor and the Director of the Counseling Psychology Program, students who commit serious professional or ethical violations or omissions may be removed from the course and may receive a W or F. Serious ethical/professional violations or mistakes may also lead to dismissal from the Counseling Psychology Program. Serious violations include but are not limited to plagiarism and violation of rules of client confidentiality.

**Grading:** Your final course grade will be based on your performance in the field component of the practicum course, which will be informed by the evaluations completed by your on-site supervisor.

- A = Excellent completion of mental health counseling experience
- B = Satisfactory completion of mental health counseling experience
- C = Lack of satisfactory completion of mental health counseling experience
- D = Poor completion of mental health counseling experience
- F = Very poor completion of mental health counseling experience

**Support for Students:** Please click on this link to download a document describing additional supports available to UHH students: <http://go.hawaii.edu/zAf>