



# COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

**(Subject to revisions on a periodic basis)**

Theory determines what we observe, how we understand the meaning of our observations, and what we eventually do with this information. Nowhere is theory so critical as in the profession of counseling.

**YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS TO WRITE A COHERENT PAPER DESCRIBING YOUR DEVELOPING VIEW OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR, PERSONALITY AND COUNSELING.**

Please organize your paper into seven separate sections. The seven roman numerals that follow contain descriptions of these seven major sections. At the beginning of each section of your paper, please type the capital, boldfaced words from each roman numeral listed below.

This position paper is designed to allow you to integrate and synthesize material. It is far more important to put ideas together in useful ways than to simply collect and/or repeat what others have written. Nonetheless, the paper should be well referenced and scholarly. You are strongly encouraged to cite primary sources in addition to any textbooks that you might utilize. Although you have been requested to identify seven separate sections in your paper, it will be evaluated as a total, integrated, internally consistent, and synthetic product in which clarity, logic, and thoroughness are extremely important. Please paginate (or number) your pages.

- I. **MAJOR INFLUENCES:** Present a coherent explanation of the theory (or combination of theories) that you use to inform your psychotherapeutic approach. Specifically, we want to know where you stand theoretically, and how this affects your understanding of clients and focuses your interventions. Please place particular emphasis on the parts of the theory (or combination of theories) that are most crucial to your work with clients.
  
- II. **YOUR VALUE SYSTEM AND BELIEFS:** In Section I, you wrote about how your psychotherapeutic approach has been influenced by theory. In this section, please address how your personal values and beliefs regarding the nature of human experience inform your emerging psychotherapeutic approach. Describe specific points of convergence and divergence between your psychological approach and your value systems and beliefs.

- III. **CONTRASTS WITH OTHER APPROACHS:** Please contrast your psychotherapeutic approach with the central elements of at least one other formal system of psychotherapy not mentioned in item I. In other words, how is your approach different from this other (or these other) approach(es)?

### **CASE EXAMPLE**

- IV. **ASSESSMENT:** How would you conduct a complete assessment on a client? Present a real case example and, using the DSM-5 diagnostic process, render a careful and complete diagnosis. Be sure to justify the particular diagnosis/diagnoses you chose and the diagnoses you considered and then ruled out. For 51/52.5-unit students, use a case example from practicum or another setting, even if the person was not seen in a clinical capacity. \*
- V. **CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION, TREATMENT PLAN, AND INTERVENTIONS:** Given your psychotherapeutic approach and your assessment, how would you conceptualize the case, plan the treatment, and establish therapeutic goals? Using your case example, describe the interventions you would make and why. Please be as specific as possible and consistent with your psychotherapeutic approach. \*

\* Include all gender, sexual orientation and/or diversity considerations that would be appropriate. What cultural considerations are pertinent to the case? If relevant, be sure to address these in your assessment, case conceptualization, treatment plan, and interventions. Within your scope of practice, please also address any relevant psychopharmacologic issues. If you are not in a 90-unit program and have not taken the psychopharmacology class, please indicate that with a single line in the text of your comprehensive exam (i.e. *"I am in a 51/52.5-unit program and have not taken psychopharmacology. Thus, I will not address these issues in my comprehensive exam."*)

- VI. **LEGAL/ETHICAL ISSUES:** What legal and ethical issues are relevant to your case example? How would you effectively respond to each of these legal and ethical considerations? (Be thorough.)
- VII. **EVALUATION OF EFFICACY:** How would you evaluate the effectiveness of your approach? Describe how you could tell if the interventions worked and the goals of therapy were met. What would a therapist with your psychotherapeutic approach want to see as a result of therapy? These indications may fall into the categories of symptom relief, intrapersonal or interpersonal functioning, or behavior change, among others.

## Counseling Psychology Comprehensive Examination (Position Paper)

The comprehensive examination has been designed in the following ways:

- 1) It is a Take-Home Exam.
- 2) You will have two weeks to complete the exam.
- 3) You may use any source materials you wish, however, you may not consult with other people, including faculty. Be certain to reference the sources that you use.
- 4) The final paper is to be handed in the Counseling Psychology Office, Guadalupe Hall 113 no later than 5:00 pm on May 14th, 2018. It is to be typed double-spaced. References should follow APA style\*. Maximum page limit is 20 pages (Including cover sheet and references).
- 5) Do not put your name on your exam paper.
- 6) On the top of the front page place:
  - a) Your SCU Student ID number
  - b) Name of your degree (emphasis) program
  - c) Number of units in program  
\_\_\_\_\_51/52.5; \_\_\_78; \_\_\_\_\_90

\* American Psychological Association Publication Manual is in the library, bookstores, and faculty offices.