
Graduate Program

PSYCHOLOGY
IN THE
PUBLIC INTEREST

Community Psychology
Human Systems Development
Innovation and Technology

North Carolina
State University



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<http://www.ncsu.edu/psychology/graduate/conc/pipi>

PSYCHOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The Psychology in the Public Interest (*Curriculum Code: PSP*) program focuses on using psychological and other social science theory and methods to analyze and ameliorate important social and organizational problems. Issues related to **community psychology**, **human systems development** and **innovation and technology** are a major focus for the program. Topics addressed include: prevention; evaluation of intervention programs; workforce development; technology transfer and adaptation; empowering individuals, groups and communities; and international development. Action-oriented methods are emphasized and guided, not by disciplinary considerations alone, but also by a pragmatic desire to **produce knowledge and solutions that serve the public interest**.

Faculty and students participate in collaborative research activities with public and private organizations. Emphasis is given to the development and evaluation of program interventions and policies for important problems of society, which often include problems faced by a disadvantaged group. Opportunities for action-oriented research have been found within both public and private organizations and in both local communities and international settings.

Students acquire core knowledge in the areas of organizational behavior, community psychology, socio-technical theory, social interaction, and performance. Students also develop competency in a broad set of scientific methodologies including surveys, experimental and quasi-experimental analysis, qualitative methods, program planning and evaluation, simulation models, and management information systems.

Specific curriculum requirements have been kept to a minimum. Instead, students work with faculty to plan and carry out an individual program of study including research that is specifically designed for their career objectives. Students are encouraged to supplement their psychological studies with relevant coursework in other schools and departments such as public administration, economics, public health, design, and engineering. Students may also take courses at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University.

The PSP program (also known as “PsyPI”) awards the degrees of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology. PSP students are expected to work towards the Ph.D. degree.

Graduates of the PSP program are employed in academic institutions, community programs, public health agencies, industry, and research and development settings; government at local, state and national levels; and international institutions. They are teachers, researchers, consultants, program directors, and leaders in organizations and communities.

FOCAL AREAS

While the PSP program provides a background for work in many settings and with a variety of problems, our coursework and faculty interests and our research programs provide exceptional support for specialization in three focal areas:

Community Psychology

This focal area is based on research and action designed to address community-based issues and problems. Students are trained to conduct high-quality field-based research and to develop and implement effective intervention projects. Topical areas of faculty and student research include: prevention, African-American youth development, community development, juvenile and adult justice issues, ecological programming, sexual harassment, violence prevention in schools and communities, gender equity, African-American identity development, and culturally-based programming. Community-based **health issues** are a major aspect of efforts within this focal area. Topics of interest include: evaluating the effects of community-based health interventions, especially in the areas of substance abuse; HIV/AIDS prevention; understanding the role of community coalitions and citizen mobilization in the community-health intervention process.

Human Systems Development

From a public-interest perspective, development is viewed as a progressive cause that can be advanced by appropriate analysis, design and management of human systems. The Human Systems Development area is concerned with the design, development and evaluation of systematic programs to enhance the education, health, productivity and general welfare of human populations in their diverse ecological contexts. The scope of activities ranges from innovative pilot programs for communities and organizations to the analysis and reform of large public or private organizational systems. Teaching and research activities are grounded in general systems theory and quantitative research methods.

Innovation and Technology

Coursework, ongoing research projects and the availability of numerous applied settings help support a programmatic focus on public-interest innovation issues. Faculty and students conduct research on a number of topics including: industry-university and community-university technology transfer; technology’s impact on organizational and economic development; adoption and implementation of hard (e.g., IT) and social technologies; the supply and mobility of scientific personnel; and technology access for disadvantaged groups. Many of these topics have been supported by National Science Foundation grants. NCSU and the Research Triangle community provide a rich environment for addressing these issues.

COURSEWORK

The Department requires nine semester hours of statistics and research methods for all psychology graduate students, as well as a one-credit orientation course, a two-credit ethics sequence, and three courses chosen from some short lists of “distributional” topics. Students are also expected to do individual study, thesis and dissertation research. Additional courses are selected, subject to approval of the student’s advisory committee. PSP students would normally take the PsyPI Seminar, Human Resource Planning, and Action Research courses in their first year. The typical first year curriculum is:

<u>FALL</u>		<u>Credit</u>
PSY 800	Introduction to Graduate Study in Psychology	1
PSY 751	Human Resource Planning	3
PSY 750	PsyPI Seminar	3
ST 507	Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences I	3
<u>SPRING</u>		<u>Credit</u>
PSY 553	Ecological Community Psychology	3
PSY 752	Action Research in Psychology	3
ST 508	Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences II	3

In subsequent semesters, PSP students would select courses such as:

PSY 558	Psychology and the African Experience
PSY 710	Special Topics: Health Psychology
PSY 714	Social Psychology: Small Groups Research
PSY 720	Psychological Survey Operations
PSY 755	Cross-cultural Research and Development
PSY 756	Consumer Research
PSY 757	Innovation and Technology
PSY 762	Quasi-Experimental Evaluation Design
PSY 763	Systems Theory
PSY 768	Organizational Psychology
PSY 851	Internship in Psychology

Many other courses are available covering advanced statistical methods, organizational behavior, public policy, social and developmental psychology. Supervised, individual study and special-topic seminars are also available.

SERVICE

Consistent with the traditions of a Land Grant University, the PSP program has established a record of service to a broad community ranging from rural and urban neighborhoods through private enterprises, state and local government to national and international organizations. These activities are considered central to our program and training goals.

PRIMARY AREA FACULTY

Craig C. Brookins: Associate Professor, Ph.D., Michigan State – community psychology; organizing, development and empowerment; identity development in African-American youth and adults; prevention programming, particularly in the area of child abuse and neglect.

Donald W. Drewes: Professor, Ph.D., Purdue – planning and evaluation of job skills education and training programs; study of the organizational and social impact of the information revolution; public policy with respect to allocation and utilization of its human resources.

Denis O. Gray: Professor, Ph.D., Michigan State – science and technology policy issues; mechanisms for university/industry cooperation; dissemination, utilization and implementation of innovative technologies and practices; community psychology.

Charles D. Korte: Professor Emeritus of Multidisciplinary Studies, Ph.D., Harvard – gerontology and social aspects of aging; social support networks and cooperative enterprises; community psychology.

Pamela Martin: Assistant Professor, Ph.D., Michigan State – community psychology; social support networks within African-American faith communities, including their impact on adolescents' racial identity, attitudes, academic achievements; HIV/AIDS issues.

Roger E. Mitchell: Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Maryland – evaluation of community-based health-promotion interventions; development and impact of community-based coalitions; prevention and harm-reduction approaches to substance abuse; psychosocial influences on health and health promotion; community psychology.

Frank J. Smith: Professor, Ph.D. Michigan State – international development policy, program planning and evaluation in the sectors of education, employment and environment; collaboration in research, transfer and adaptation of new technologies; adjustment to technical, structural, and social change.

Mary Wyer: Assistant Professor, Ph.D. NC State – diversity in science and technology; research on women's studies; scholarship as a social innovation; equality in higher education.

ALLIED FACULTY

Barri Burrus: Adjunct Associate Professor, Ph.D., NCSU – health issues, including tobacco control.

Debra Holden: Adjunct Assistant Professor, Ph.D., NCSU – research that promotes healthy behavior among high-risk populations, including cancer control among low income and minority women, and smoking and substance-abuse prevention among youth.

Samuel B. Pond: Associate Professor, Ph.D., Auburn – work motivation; organization change and development.

William Schlenger: Adjunct Professor, Ph.D. – post-traumatic stress and related issues.

Wendee Wechsberg: Adjunct Associate Professor, Ph.D. – HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment; drug abuse.

ADMISSION

Students are admitted each fall semester. Admission is competitive. Applicants should have a strong academic record. In addition to persons with prior degrees in psychology, those with appropriate degrees in other social sciences, engineering, and related disciplines are encouraged to apply. Relevant work and volunteer experiences are valued. Decisions are based on the appropriate match between applicant's strengths and program goals. Applications completed by January 15th are given first consideration for admission and assistantships.

NC State University no longer distributes/uses paper application packages; all applications are handled through the Graduate School and the on-line application system at: <http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/grad/applygrad.htm> If you need to contact the Graduate School for any other reason, you may do so by telephone (919-515-2872) or by writing to: The Graduate School, NC State University (Box 7102), Raleigh, NC 27695-7102.

Several items are required before an application is complete. In addition to the Graduate School application, these include a personal statement applicable to the program in which you are interested, transcripts of all previous academic work, and three letters of recommendation. Scores on the General GRE must be provided (the Psychology Subject Test is encouraged, but not required). The TOEFL is required for most international students. More specific details on what is needed, where to obtain the appropriate forms and/or how to submit required information can be found at: <http://psychology.chass.ncsu.edu/gradprograms> Select the FAQ page and then Applicants' **FAQ #1**.

SUPPORT

Within the Department of Psychology, a limited number of teaching and research assistantships are available. They provide a stipend of approximately \$12,500 and require half-time work. Assistantship "packages" include health insurance and tuition waivers, if certain conditions are met and the student carries a specified number of hours. Students with assistantships usually have access to shared-office space. A few students may also qualify for special Graduate School supplements. Other forms of financial assistance, available through the Office of Financial Aid, include scholarships, grants, loans, and campus employment.