



DIVINE MERCY
UNIVERSITY

Master of Science in Psychology

Student Program Handbook

2025-2026

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MSP Program Handbook

PART I: Academic Program

Introduction and Welcome

Welcome to the Global Campus programs at Divine Mercy University (DMU). We are excited that you have chosen our institution to earn your Master of Science in Psychology (MSP) degree. DMU's online Master of Science in Psychology program provides professional competency in psychology while developing an integrative understanding of the human person in application to service delivery.

The **M.S. in Psychology online degree program** at Divine Mercy University equips students to use psychological knowledge and practical skills to promote flourishing in a vast variety of settings from business and leadership to various ministry settings. Students learn to integrate a Catholic Christian vision of the person with best practices in psychological theory, research, and intervention. This non-licensing program focuses on training for broader interventions and the development of work and ministry cultures that foster well-being. The program offers two concentrations: Organizational Leadership and Pastoral and Spiritual Care.

Divine Mercy University Mission

Divine Mercy University is an institution of higher education offering graduate degrees, continuing education, and certificate programs globally. It is affiliated with the Legionaries of Christ. The University is dedicated to the renewal of the Catholic Christian intellectual tradition and the integration of the theoretical and empirical bases of psychology, professional counseling and related fields, with a Catholic Christian view of the human person through teaching and learning both knowledge and critical skills. The University provides students an appropriate academic and educational environment that supports the integration of science, scholarship and a Catholic Christian understanding of the person through a rigorous, critical, and objective search for truth. It assists students intellectually, humanly, and professionally as they prepare themselves to respond to their vocation as mental health professionals or as men and women in helping professions. The University's mission also involves dialogue about its integrative approach with practitioners, scholars, and cultural leaders, nationally and internationally.

Divine Mercy University Vision

Divine Mercy University's vision is to be an international center for scholarship and professional education dedicated to the study of the mind and soul grounded in an integral Catholic Christian

view of the human person. Maintaining the highest academic standards, the institution educates new generations of professionals in psychology-related fields and opens new areas of scholarship for theories that explore the relationship of the human psyche and Catholic Christian theological, philosophical, and anthropological principles.

MSP Philosophy

This program prepares professionals and leaders to employ basic social and behavioral sciences and develop a habit of using evidential reasoning to promote human flourishing within the context of the focused program's concentrations.

Institutional Accreditation

Institutional accreditation applies to an entire institution, indicating that each of an institution's parts is contributing to the achievement of the institution's objectives. The regional and national accreditors perform institutional accreditation (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, June 15, 13).

Divine Mercy University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award master's and doctorate degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Divine Mercy University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

Divine Mercy University is an approved institutional participant in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). As an approved SARA participant, Divine Mercy University complies with established standards for offering postsecondary distance education courses and programs among SARA member states, districts, and territories. SARA is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state.

Divine Mercy University is authorized to operate in all SARA member states (<https://nc-sara.org/directory>), and is registered, authorized, or otherwise not subject to approval in all states not currently participating in SARA that require such authorization.

MSP: Organizational Leadership Concentration

Overview

The Master of Science in Psychology's Organizational Leadership is a 33 credit concentration that prepares students for career choices in management, executive leadership, human resource management, and further graduate studies. Courses in the concentration provide knowledge and skills needed to face multifaceted challenges of managing public, private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations. The Catholic Christian vision of the flourishing person serves as a foundation for

leadership and management endeavors with a focus on leadership that fosters flourishing of individuals and organizations. In addition, the concentration provides an in-depth knowledge base for HR Management for individuals who wish to seek certification by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) demonstrating expertise and credibility to employers and colleagues. This concentration has also been approved by SHRM for recertification of already certified HR specialists.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

Goal 1: The master's program in psychology demonstrates a broad knowledge of psychology's core domains, knowledge of psychology as a science, and advanced knowledge in the area of organizational leadership. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 1: Analyze and deepen knowledge of the major concepts, theories, and methodologies in psychology relevant for organizational leadership settings;

Outcome 2: Develop a holistic, Catholic Christian understanding of the flourishing person that permeates all aspects of psychological and leadership study;

Outcome 3: Synthesize the Catholic Christian vision with contemporary philosophical, theological, and psychological theories, research, and interventions.

Goal 2: Scientific mindedness for strategic thinking, problem solving, and decision making: Graduates apply appropriate techniques to identify and answer research and applied questions and to make informed decisions as knowledgeable consumers of the research literature. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 4: Utilize psychological literacy and scientific methodology and mindedness to formulate plausible psychological explanations for behavior and to solve problems as transformational leaders employing culturally appropriate, innovative approaches in diverse settings.

Goal 3: Ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world: Graduates of the MSP program recognize and embrace the ethical standards of the discipline. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 5: Evaluate critically their own biases, assumptions, attitudes, etc., and their effect on decision-making, planning, interpersonal communication, and working in teams including resolving conflicts;

Outcome 6: Engage in behavior that is in accordance with the dignity of the person and ethical standards for organizational leadership in order to bring about flourishing of individuals and organizations;

Goal 4: Communication: Graduates demonstrate competence in written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills in multiple formats and organizational contexts. They express psychological concepts clearly and with culturally appropriate adaptations for different audiences. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 7: Develop interpersonal skills to lead individuals and organizations from culturally diverse backgrounds either in person or through the use of technology;

Outcome 8: Articulate insights effectively and empathically to individuals and groups.

Goal 5: Personal and professional development: Individuals with a master's degree in psychology are able to apply their knowledge and skills to achieve personal growth and professional success. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 9: Exhibit continuous self-reflection and improvement of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities for authentic development and growth in personal and professional leader identity;

Outcome 10: Evaluate the attitudes, skill sets, and strategies for being a transformational leader in a variety of organizational settings.

Goal 6: Advanced skills for organizational and leadership expertise: Graduates of the MSP with a concentration in Organizational Leadership will demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills in organizational, human resource, project, and team management. Graduate will be able to

Outcome 11: Demonstrate ability to manage organizational change initiatives ensuring positive transformations;

Outcome 12: Apply human resource management principles to attract and develop talent and foster flourishing and transformation.

MSP: Pastoral and Spiritual Care Concentration

Overview

The Master of Science in Psychology's Pastoral and Spiritual Care concentration is a 33 credit program that prepares students to serve the Church and help heal the culture through career fields in pastoral and spiritual care in a variety of ministry and professional environments. Examples of career options are chaplaincy, spiritual care coordinator in healthcare/hospice or corporate settings, pastoral associate/youth pastor, or directors of marriage and family apostolates. Students gain a deeper, holistic understanding of the person and develop applied skills essential for effective spiritual care that promotes the flourishing of individuals, families, and/or parish communities. The concentration also provides an ideal opportunity for ordained clergy to gain extensive pastoral care skills to flourish in their ministries. The Pastoral and Spiritual Care concentration fulfills the educational requirements of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) to become a board certified chaplain (BCC) for Catholic clergy and laity.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

Goal 1: The master's program in psychology demonstrates a broad knowledge of psychology's core domains, knowledge of psychology as a science, and advanced knowledge in the area of pastoral and spiritual care. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 1: Analyze and deepen knowledge of the major concepts, theories, and methodologies in psychology for applied pastoral and spiritual care;

Outcome 2: Develop a holistic, Catholic Christian understanding of the flourishing person that permeates all aspects of psychological and pastoral and spiritual care study;

Outcome 3: Synthesize the Catholic Christian vision with contemporary philosophical, theological, and psychological theories, research, and interventions.

Goal 2: Scientific mindedness for evidence based approaches to compassionate care: Graduates apply appropriate techniques to make informed decisions as knowledgeable consumers of the research literature to identify factors related to spiritual, emotional, and relational well-being . Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 4: Utilize psychological literacy and scientific methodology and mindedness to formulate plausible psychological explanations for behavior and employ culturally appropriate, innovative approaches to pastoral and spiritual care in diverse settings.

Goal 3: Ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world: Graduates of the MSP program recognize and embrace the ethical standards of the discipline. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 5: Evaluate critically their own biases, assumptions, attitudes, etc., and their effect on decision-making, planning, interpersonal communication, and working in teams;

Outcome 6: Engage in behavior that is in accordance with the ethical standards of ethical pastoral and spiritual care and the dignity of the person in order to bring about flourishing.

Goal 4: Communication: Graduates demonstrate competence in written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills in multiple formats and contexts. They express psychological concepts clearly and with culturally appropriate adaptations for different audiences. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 7: Develop interpersonal skills for working with individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds either in person or through the use of technology;

Outcome 8: Articulate insights effectively and empathically to individuals and groups.

Goal 5: Personal and professional development: Individuals with a master's degree in psychology are able to apply their knowledge and skills to achieve personal growth and professional success. Graduates will be able to

Outcome 9: Exhibit continuous self-reflection and improvement of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities for authentic development and growth in personal and professional identity;

Outcome 10: Evaluate the attitudes, skill sets, and strategies for being a transformational leader in a variety of pastoral and spiritual settings.

Goal 6: Advanced skills for compassionate pastoral and spiritual care: Graduates of the MSP with a concentration in pastoral and spiritual care will demonstrate extensive pastoral care skills to aid the spiritual, emotional, and relational flourishing of individuals and groups. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 11: Demonstrate a range of relevant care skills including listening/attending, empathic reflection, conflict resolution/ transformation, crisis management, and appropriate use of religious/spiritual resources.

MSP: Bioethics Concentration

Overview

The Master of Science in Psychology's Bioethics concentration is a 33 credit program intended for individuals who work in areas such as healthcare, mental health, chaplaincy, and others, who are guiding and caring for those facing challenging ethical situations. Built on a Catholic-Christian vision of the flourishing person, the program helps students to evaluate complex ethical issues that arise in healthcare and other settings, while also developing empathetic relating skills and a deep vision of the flourishing person. Students complete their studies in bioethics through the National Catholic Bioethics Center's certificate program, which grants nine graduate credits towards the Master's in Psychology program.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

Goal 1: The master's program in psychology demonstrates a broad knowledge of psychology's core domains, knowledge of psychology as a science, and advanced knowledge in the area of ethical guidance and care. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 1: Analyze and deepen knowledge of the major concepts, theories, and methodologies in psychology for applied pastoral and spiritual care;

Outcome 2: Develop a holistic, Catholic Christian understanding of the flourishing person that permeates all aspects of psychological study;

Outcome 3: Synthesize the Catholic Christian vision with contemporary philosophical, theological, and psychological theories, research, and interventions.

Goal 2: Scientific mindedness for evidence based approaches to compassionate care: Graduates apply appropriate techniques to make informed decisions as knowledgeable consumers of the research literature to identify factors related to spiritual, emotional, and relational well-being. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 4: Utilize psychological literacy and scientific methodology and mindedness to formulate plausible psychological explanations for behavior and employ culturally appropriate, innovative approaches to ethical discernment and care in diverse settings.

Goal 3: Ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world: Graduates of the MSP program recognize and embrace the ethical standards of the discipline. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 5: Evaluate critically their own biases, assumptions, attitudes, etc., and their effect on decision-making, planning, interpersonal communication, and working in teams;

Outcome 6: Engage in behavior that is in accordance with the ethical standards of ethical pastoral and spiritual care and the dignity of the person in order to bring about flourishing.

Goal 4: Communication: Graduates demonstrate competence in written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills in multiple formats and contexts. They express psychological concepts clearly and with culturally appropriate adaptations for different audiences. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 7: Develop interpersonal skills for working with individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds either in person or through the use of technology;

Outcome 8: Articulate insights effectively and empathically to individuals and groups.

Goal 5: Personal and professional development: Individuals with a master's degree in psychology are able to apply their knowledge and skills to achieve personal growth and professional success. Graduates will be able to

Outcome 9: Exhibit continuous self-reflection and improvement of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities for authentic development and growth in personal and professional identity;

Outcome 10: Evaluate the attitudes, skill sets, and strategies for being a transformational leader in a variety of settings.

Goal 6: Advanced skills to articulate the Catholic Church's understanding of the inherent dignity of the human person and recognize the theological, moral, and medical dimensions of modern day challenges in health care and bioethics.. Graduates of the MSP with a concentration in bioethics will demonstrate extensive skills to aid the spiritual, emotional, and relational flourishing of individuals struggling with ethically difficult situations. Graduates will be able to:

Outcome 11: Apply Catholic moral teaching and the Church's authoritative guidance to resolve complex ethical dilemmas encountered in clinical education, medical practice, and research.

Organizational Leadership Concentration

Courses and Sequence

M.S. in Psychology Core Curriculum

PSY 550 Helping People Flourish: A Catholic-Christian Approach to Psychology (3 credits; required)

PSY 515 Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation (3 credits; required)

PSY 575 Social Psychology, Groups, and Diversity (3 credits; required)

PHT 508 The Catholic-Christian Vision of Flourishing: Vocations & Virtues (3 credits; required)

PSY 586 Research and Evaluation (3 credits; required)

PSY 560 Human Growth & Development Across the Lifespan (3 credits)

PSY 581 Theories and Models of Counseling and Personality (3 credits)

PSY 620.1-620.3 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)

PSY 620.4-620.6 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)

PSY 640 Advanced Statistical Analysis for Psychology and the Social Sciences (3 credits)

PSY 599 Academic Writing for Psychological Research (1 credit, as needed)

Organizational Leadership Courses

1. PSY 590 Leading People, Programs, and Organizations
2. PSY 595 Transformational Leadership
3. PSY 615 Applied Leadership Skills and Conflict Management
4. PSY 635 Organizational Financial Management and Resource Development

Career Information

Administrative Services and Facilities Manager	Nonprofit Executive Director	Human Resource Manager	Human Resource Specialist
Median income \$106,880	Median income \$103,840	Median income \$140,030	Median income \$72,910
6% growth	6% growth	6% growth expected	8% growth expected
Projected growth of 23,400 jobs from 2023-2033	Projected growth of 227,600 jobs from 2023-2033	Projected growth of 13,500 jobs from 2023-2033	Projected growth of 74,200 jobs from 2023-2033*
		<i>Should seek SHRM certification</i>	<i>Should seek SHRM certification</i>
Administrative services and facilities managers plan, direct, and coordinate activities that help an organization run efficiently.	Top executives plan strategies and policies to ensure that an organization meets its goals.	Human resources managers plan, coordinate, and direct the administrative functions of an organization. Handle compensation and benefits, training, and employee relations.	Human resources specialists recruit, screen, and interview job applicants and place newly hired workers in jobs.

*Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Human Resources Specialists, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/human-resources-specialists.htm> (visited April 18, 2025).

Pastoral and Spiritual Care Concentration

Courses and Sequence

M.S. in Psychology Core Curriculum

PSY 550 Helping People Flourish: A Catholic-Christian Approach to Psychology (3 credits; required)
 PSY 515 Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation (3 credits; required)
 PSY 575 Social Psychology, Groups, and Diversity (3 credits; required)
 PHT 508 The Catholic-Christian Vision of Flourishing: Vocations & Virtues (3 credits; required)
 PSY 586 Research and Evaluation (3 credits; required)
 PSY 560 Human Growth & Development Across the Lifespan (3 credits)
 PSY 581 Theories and Models of Counseling and Personality (3 credits)
 PSY 620.1-620.3 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)
 PSY 620.4-620.6 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)
 PSY 640 Advanced Statistical Analysis for Psychology and the Social Sciences (3 credits)
 PSY 599 Academic Writing for Psychological Research (1 credit, as needed)

Pastoral and Spiritual Care Courses (4 courses, 12 credits)

1. PHT 510 Spiritual Growth and Discernment
2. PHT 543 Catholic Christian Marriage and Human Sexuality
3. PSY 556 Helping Skills for Pastoral and Spiritual Care
4. PSY 577 Grief and Bereavement Across the Lifespan

Career Information

Chaplain	Pastoral Associate; Youth Minister	Director of Marriage and Family Life	Spiritual Care Coordinator
Median income 61,810	Median income \$51,245	Median income \$60,000-70,000	Median income \$63,242 - \$73,000
6% growth	18% growth for pastoral counselors		8% expected growth
<i>Should seek certification through NACC or BCCI</i>	<i>Undergraduate degree in theology or philosophy, etc. helpful</i>	<i>Undergraduate degree in theology or philosophy, might be helpful</i>	<i>Provide and coordinate spiritual care for individuals and their families in health care and other settings</i>
23,400 Jobs by 2022-2023	227,600 Jobs by 2022-2033	13,500 Jobs by 2022-2033	74,200 Jobs by 2022-2033

Bioethics Concentration

Courses and Sequence

M.S. in Psychology Core Curriculum

1. PHT 508 The Catholic-Christian Vision of Flourishing: Vocations & Virtues (3 credits)
2. PSY 515 Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation (3 credits)
3. PSY 550 Helping People Flourish: A Catholic-Christian Approach to Psychology (3 credits)
4. PSY 560 Human Growth & Development Across the Lifespan (3 credits)
5. PSY 575 Social Psychology, Groups, and Diversity (3 credits)
6. PSY 581 Theories and Models of Counseling and Personality (3 credits)
7. PSY 586 Research and Evaluation (3 credits)
8. PSY 620.1-620.3 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)
9. PSY 620.4-620.6 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)
10. PSY 640 Advanced Statistical Analysis for Psychology and the Social Sciences (3 credits)
11. PSY 599 Academic Writing for Psychological Research (1 credit, as needed)

Bioethics Courses NCBC Certification Program in Bioethics (9 credits)

- Foundations of Catholic Health Care
- Ethical Challenges at the Beginning of Life
- Ethics Committees, Research, Vaccines, and Gender
- Ethical Challenges at the End of Life

Certifications

The Organizational Leadership degree provides an in-depth knowledge base for HR Management for individuals who wish to seek certification by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). SHRM certification is exam-based. Individuals who are interested will sign up for the exam directly with SHRM. MSP courses include optional assignments to prepare students for the SHRM certification exam.

[Learn more about SHRM certification](#)

The Pastoral and Spiritual Care degree fulfills the educational requirements of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) to become a board-certified chaplain (BCC) for clergy and laity. The Board Certified Chaplain (BCC) certification is the highest level of certification in chaplaincy. It signifies to employers and colleagues the completion of a rigorous course of study and preparation, demonstrated professional competence, and are committed to continuous education and professional development. Board certification is required for most full-time chaplain positions. Students will still need to complete Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) hours for certification

[Learn More about Board Certified Chaplain \(BCC\)](#)

Postgraduate Certificate in Catholic Christian Psychology and Bioethics

This postgraduate certificate is meant to provide supplemental training for individuals, such as healthcare providers, mental health professionals, chaplains, and others, who are guiding and caring for those facing challenging ethical situations. Built on a Catholic Christian vision of the flourishing person, the certificate program helps students to evaluate complex ethical issues that arise in healthcare and other settings, while also developing empathetic relating skills. Students complete their studies in bioethics through the National Catholic Bioethics Center's certificate program, which grants nine graduate credits towards the postgraduate certificate program at Divine Mercy, and take the remaining 10 credits as part of the Master's in Psychology program.

Core:

- PSY 550 Helping People Flourish: A Catholic Christian Approach to Psychology
- PHT 508 The Catholic Christian Vision of Flourishing: Vocations & Virtues
- PSY 556 Helping Skills for Pastoral and Spiritual Care
- PSY 599 Capstone Writing Course

Electives:

- NCBC Certification Program in Bioethics (9 credits)
 - o Foundations of Catholic Health Care
 - o Ethical Challenges at the Beginning of Life
 - o Ethics Committees, Research, Vaccines, and Gender
 - o Ethical Challenges at the End of Life

Note: Electives are not offered every term.

In accordance with institutional policies and in alignment with the standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the University will discontinue offering the following academic concentrations for new student enrollment, effective Fall, 2025.

Students who are currently enrolled in these concentrations will be permitted to complete their program of study in accordance with the approved curriculum and within the standard time frame for degree completion. Appropriate academic support and course availability will be maintained to ensure timely graduation.

Currently enrolled students may request to change their concentration to one of the continuing or newly approved concentrations, subject to academic advising and degree progression review. Students interested in changing concentrations should consult with their academic advisor or program director to evaluate eligibility, discuss curricular implications, and submit any required documentation.

Master's Graduate Program Study

Coursework at the graduate level requires a substantive commitment to independent study with active engagement in group work and professional development. Students are expected to demonstrate attitudes, knowledge, and skills appropriate to the study of and training in the selected discipline. Students in the MSP program are expected to exceed minimum requirements and assume responsibility in pursuing lifelong learning that will meet their professional goals. In addition to the assimilation and synthesis of content, we expect students to develop and grow both emotionally and spiritually during their course of study at DMU. To that end, we encourage students to maintain

balance of their own personal and spiritual life, and to participate in activities, events, and practices that renew and refresh their heart, soul and mind.

Financial Information

Refer to the DMU Catalog for the following:

Financial Policies

Tuition and Fees for the 2025-2026 Academic Year

Expenses

Payment of Student Account

Payment Plans

Withdrawal Refund

Delinquent Accounts

Cost of Attendance

Financial Aid Overview

Types of Financial Aid

Financial Aid Resources

Applying for Financial Aid

Financial Aid Application Deadlines

Financial Aid for International Student

Award Letters

Federal Loan Eligibility Policies

Admission Requirements and Process

The baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited academic institution with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. To be competitive, students should have at least a 2.75 GPA. Less competitive students may wish to submit GRE scores as well.

- International applicants must have completed the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's level degree. Applicants holding degrees from outside the United States must submit any international transcript(s) to a NACES approved evaluation service for a course-by-course evaluation of their transcripts. For more information, please visit the NACES website at: www.naces.org
- Students with a lower GPA may document their ability to succeed in a graduate program in one of the following ways:
 - Score above the 50th percentile on the GRE (verbal reasoning, quantitative reason, and analytic writing)
 - Complete a minimum of nine (9) graduate-level credit hours from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education with a minimum overall 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale and a minimum 2.5 (B-) grade in each course.
 - Have completed a master's degree from an accredited college or university with a minimum overall 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale

The same admissions requirements apply for individuals pursuing the post graduate certificate in “Catholic Christian Psychology and Bioethics”.

Transfer Policies

Criteria for transfer of credit: Students admitted to the online M.S. in Psychology (MSP) may transfer a maximum of nine (9) credit hours coming from a graduate program of an institution of higher education accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or a maximum of eighteen (18) credit hours from another DMU graduate program ***if the other program has not been completed***. Students can transfer up to 9 credits from a completed program at DMU. Courses considered for transfer must have been completed within a period of six years prior to acceptance into the M.S. program. Exceptions to this time limit may be granted for applicants who have been actively involved in the field in which the degree was earned on a continuous basis prior to admission. Extension, continuing education, or in-service courses that are not intended by the institution offering the courses as part of a degree program are not acceptable for transfer credit to Divine Mercy University. No graduate credit can be awarded for undergraduate-level courses. The transfer of graduate credits earned at other institutions is not automatic. Only graduate credit for courses determined to be equivalent to courses offered in the MSP (also in terms of faculty credentials and topics covered, etc.) are eligible to be transferred for course credit. In addition, only courses for which a grade of B (3.0) or better is obtained will be considered for transfer. DMU also reserves the right to limit the number of credits that are transferred for a given course, to only those components that are consistent with the applicable course offered here.

Applicants should note that, given the unique mission of the DMU and the integrated nature of the online MSP program, certain courses completed at other academic institutions may differ significantly in content, although a similar title is given to the course at both institutions. If transfer credit is granted for a foundational course, it does not exempt the student from completing the required capstone project components that are in the MSP program’s course. It should be noted that the capstone topic is declared in the first core course (PSY 550) and that parts of the capstone project are completed in four subsequent core courses of the MSP program (PSY 575; PSY 515; PSY 586; PHT 508). If transfer credit is granted for an MSP core course with a capstone component, the student must register for and complete PSY 599 - Academic Writing for Psychological Research course (1-credit) in which the student will successfully complete missing capstone papers. The student is responsible to enroll in this course with the registrar. In addition, the following courses typically are not eligible for transfer from another institution:

- PSY 550: Helping People Flourish: A Catholic Christian Approach to Psychology
- PHT 508: The Catholic Christian Vision of Flourishing-Vocations and Virtues (students who have successfully completed PHT 513 and PHT 523 in DMU’s Counseling program or PHT 506 in DMU’s Psy.D. program may petition to take a one credit hour independent study to complete their integrative capstone assignment instead of PHT 508)

Students wishing to apply for transfer of credit must be enrolled in the online MSP degree program and must submit the appropriate transfer of credit form (in Populi). This request will be reviewed

by the M.S. Psychology program director who will notify the student of the decision regarding the request.

Program Requirements

General Degree Requirements

To earn the Master of Science in Psychology degree, students must complete 33 credit hours as outlined in the curriculum, with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students in the Organizational Leadership or Pastoral and Spiritual Care concentration must complete seven (7) core courses (21 credits) and four (4) elective courses (12 credits). For the Bioethics concentration, students must complete eight (8) required core courses (24 credits) and three (3) elective courses (9 credits). Students should consult with their academic advisors as to what core courses would best support their academic and professional goals. PSY 550 Helping People Flourish: A Catholic Christian Approach to Psychology is the required first course in the program.

Curriculum

M.S. in Psychology Core Curriculum

1. PHT 508 The Catholic-Christian Vision of Flourishing: Vocations & Virtues (3 credits)
2. PSY 515 Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation (3 credits)
3. PSY 550 Helping People Flourish: A Catholic-Christian Approach to Psychology (3 credits)
4. PSY 560 Human Growth & Development Across the Lifespan (3 credits)
5. PSY 575 Social Psychology, Groups, and Diversity (3 credits)
6. PSY 581 Theories and Models of Counseling and Personality (3 credits)
7. PSY 586 Research and Evaluation (3 credits)
8. PSY 620.1-620.3 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)
9. PSY 620.4-620.6 Psychological Research and Writing (3 credits)
10. PSY 640 Advanced Statistical Analysis for Psychology and the Social Sciences (3 credits)
11. PSY 599 Academic Writing for Psychological Research (1 credit, as needed)

Capstone Project Courses in the MSP Curriculum

The Master of Science in Psychology (MSP) program at Divine Mercy University includes a required capstone project that is woven throughout the core curriculum to promote cumulative, mission-aligned scholarship. Students begin the capstone process in their first course (PSY 550) by identifying an issue or problem of interest relevant to their work or ministry and progressively develop their project through a series of required academic components.

The following courses incorporate the required capstone assignments for all students:

- **PSY 550** Helping People Flourish: A Catholic Christian Approach to Psychology
 - *Capstone Introduction Paper*
- **PHT 508** The Catholic Christian Vision of Flourishing: Vocations and Virtues
 - *Integrative Literature Review Paper*
- **PSY 515** Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation
 - *Decision-making and Motivation Paper*
- **PSY 575** Social Psychology, Groups, and Diversity

- *Target Population and Cultural Perspective Paper*
- **PSY 586** Research and Evaluation
 - *Psychological Literature Review, Implementation, and Evaluation Paper*

Capstone development is a required and graded element in each of these courses. Students who received a grade below a B- in any of their Capstone papers will need to rewrite their paper and will be required to take PSY 599 as a 1-credit course. The capstone process ensures that students demonstrate not only academic and professional competence but also values-driven insight applicable to diverse psychological contexts.

Organizational Leadership Concentration Courses (12 credits)

1. PSY 590 Leading People, Programs, and Organizations
2. PSY 595 Transformational Leadership
3. PSY 615 Applied Leadership Skills and Conflict Management
4. PSY 635 Organizational Financial Management and Resource Development

Pastoral and Spiritual Care Concentration (12 credits)

1. PHT 510 Spiritual Growth and Discernment
2. PHT 543 Catholic Christian Marriage and Human Sexuality
3. PSY 556 Helping Skills for Pastoral and Spiritual Care
4. PSY 577 Grief and Bereavement Across the Lifespan

Bioethics Concentration (9 credits)

NCBC Certification Program in Bioethics (9 credits)

- Foundations of Catholic Health Care
- Ethical Challenges at the Beginning of Life
- Ethics Committees, Research, Vaccines, and Gender
- Ethical Challenges at the End of Life

MSP Graduation Requirements

To qualify for graduation, all coursework and curriculum requirements must be completed and all degree requirements met within the degree time limit and by the official graduation date. It is the responsibility of each student to successfully fulfill all of their degree requirements, as detailed in each respective program section of the catalog published at the time of their enrollment in the degree which they seek. In addition to the academic requirements, it is necessary for students to be cleared of all library obligations and to present a satisfactory clearance of financial accounts prior to graduation. Students who have not made satisfactory financial arrangements will not have access to any student services, including transcripts, diploma verifications, transfer credits, or enrollment in courses or for another program. A 3.0 cumulative grade point average is required to graduate.

The University confers degrees upon the recommendation of the faculty and by the authority of the Board of Directors 12 times a year (monthly). Graduates will need to complete their graduation applications in Populi in their last term. Graduation applicants must meet all graduation requirements, including any financial obligations, and be approved by the program director and registrar. Generally, degrees will then be conferred on the 15th of the month after final grades of the student's last term are submitted. Degree conferral and commencement dates are posted in the academic calendar. All graduates are encouraged to participate in the annual May commencement exercises. Students who will complete graduation requirements by the end of the summer semester may participate in the preceding May ceremony. The graduation fee covers all aspects of the degree completion process and will be applied to all student accounts of degree candidates, regardless of participation in the commencement ceremony. The graduation fee will be applied to the student account upon approval.

Leave of Absence

Students enrolled in a degree program of the University might find it necessary to interrupt active pursuit of their degree. A leave of absence is granted only for good cause. Generally, a leave of absence is granted for a minimum of two consecutive terms for online programs, and for a maximum of one academic year (five 8-week terms). Requests will be considered prior to the beginning of an academic semester. For any request made during the academic semester, the final grade in any course will be assigned following the University's withdrawal policy.

Students seeking a leave of absence should discuss the need with their academic advisor and must petition the program director. A leave of absence must be approved in writing by the program director.

The student who discontinues active enrollment in courses without being granted a leave of absence, or a student granted a leave of absence who does not return to active enrollment in courses at the close of the approved period of time will be considered withdrawn, and must apply for readmission to the degree program, subject to the regulations and requirements then in force. In such cases, acceptance into the program is not guaranteed, and any courses taken prior to the interruption of enrollment may not count toward graduation if they were not completed within the time allowed for degree completion.

Students receiving federal financial aid are required to seek consultation from the Financial Aid Office prior to being granted a leave of absence. While DMU policy may allow students a leave of absence of up to one calendar year, students who take advantage of this policy may be required to begin repayment of Title IV federal loans. Students who are participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs may be granted a leave of absence of up to 180 days in a calendar year without entering repayment.

Academic Guidelines

Grading Policy

Grades are based on faculty formative and summative evaluation of student performance as described in each course. See the DMU Catalog for the University grading policy. Grading scales can be found in each course's syllabus.

Grade	Grade Point Value
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.3
F	0
INC (Incomplete)	None
IP (In-Process)	None
W (Withdrawal)	None
W-P (Withdrawal - Passing)	None
W-F (Withdrawal - Failing)	None

Passing Grade Requirement

For M.S. Psychology, any course in which a student receives a grade below B- (80%) must be retaken.

See the specific academic program policy section for any additional criteria regarding minimum grades for successful course completion. Depending upon these requirements, students may be obliged to repeat and/or remediate a specific course.

Retaking Courses

Students may repeat certain courses in order to improve their cumulative grade point average. In such cases where a course is retaken both grades will be reported on their transcript, but the higher of the two will be used for the purpose of calculating the cumulative grade point average.

Grade Consideration for Full Time Students

Students may complete the MSP program in as little as 16 months. The academic year in the MSP consists of five 8-week terms. Taking 2 courses per 8-week term is time intensive (15- 20 hrs/week of study per course) and academically challenging. All students begin with PSY 550 taken by itself (the single course in 1 term) Students who have a grade below B in PSY 550 are encouraged to visit with a faculty advisor to discuss proceeding in the program as a full time or as a part time student. Part time students take 1 course per term, therefore requiring more time to complete the program while easing the time and academic demands of a full time course load.

Academic Good Standing

To remain in good academic standing, students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0. A 3.0 cumulative grade point average is also required to graduate. In addition, students must receive a grade of B- or higher on all their capstone papers. The status of all students will be reviewed at the end of each semester by the registrar, who will update student status accordingly.

Academic progress is also reviewed by the appropriate University offices for compliance with the distinct eligibility requirements for financial aid, veterans benefits, and student visa status. See the respective sections for additional information.

Academic Probation

In the event of failure to meet the above standard for academic good standing, students will be placed on academic probation and receive notification regarding their academic standing. The registrar refers students on academic probation to the program director to develop a plan for remediation.

Remediation

Students may be placed on a remediation plan for two reasons:

1. The cumulative GPA is below a 3.0
2. A capstone project paper has received a grade lower than a B-

Since academic writing is an essential part of succeeding in a graduate psychology program, students who have received a grade below B- in a capstone paper will automatically be enrolled in PSY 599, the 1-credit capstone writing course, in order to receive additional support for their academic writing and research skills. Students must complete this course with a grade of B- or above. Students who receive a grade below B- in PSY 599 must retake the course in the following term. Students who fail PSY 599 or any other course three times may be dismissed from the program.

Academic Dismissal

Students placed on academic probation for two semesters or who have received a grade below B- (80%) in PSY 599 three times and failing to resolve the academic deficiency may face academic dismissal.

Add/Drop Policy

Students are permitted to add or drop courses without incurring an academic record of the course throughout the published registration period and during the published Add/Drop Period. The Add/Drop Period is six calendar days for eight-week courses. Please note that classes meeting in an intensive format or on a shortened semester calendar follow adjusted add/drop and refund schedules.

Course enrollment changes made after the published Add/Drop Period will be recorded in the student's academic record (as described in the following paragraph) and require the approval of the instructor, academic advisor, and registrar. Course registration changes other than as described above, require the signature of the instructor, academic advisor, and registrar. All registration changes are subject to the registration change fee (add/drop fee) and the refund policy of their respective program.

A student who follows the published course change procedures may drop or withdraw from courses after the published Add/Drop Period and prior to the published last day to withdraw and receive a W and receive a final grade of withdrawal (W). After the published last date to withdraw and receive a W each academic semester, a student who withdraws from a course will be assigned a final grade of either withdrawal passing (WP) or withdrawal failing (WF) by the instructor based upon actual work completed at the time of the withdrawal. A W or WP will not affect the student's cumulative grade point average. A WF is treated as a failing grade for grade point average computation.

Academic Integrity

The University is first and foremost an academic community. Students and faculty together engage in the discovery, analysis, application, development, and transmission of knowledge as it pertains to psychological and clinical mental health theory and practice. In order for this honorable pursuit to progress successfully, a firm commitment to academic integrity is required from all members of the intellectual community.

Academic integrity entails a respect and reverence for knowledge as a human good and for the whole academic process, by which that knowledge is pursued and transmitted.

Specifically, it entails honesty in all one's academic dealings. Students at Divine Mercy University therefore shall not engage in or tolerate acts of academic dishonesty. These acts include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act or attempt to commit an act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment).

Students shall acknowledge in appropriate fashion the contributions of others to their work where such acknowledgment is due. The submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own and that the work has been completed in accordance with the standards of his or her course or assigned project. At the beginning of each course, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide students with a statement clarifying the application of the University academic integrity policy to their course.

In cases where a violation of academic integrity has been verified, the faculty member has the responsibility for determining the academic consequences, which may include assigning a failing grade for the assignment, exam, or course, or non-acceptance of the thesis or dissertation. Consequences can include probation from the University for a designated period of time, and in extreme cases, permanent dismissal from the University.

Students accused of a violation of academic integrity have the right to appeal the accusation and/or the imposed penalty. All such appeals are handled through the DMU student grievance Process. The grievance policy is published in the Academic Catalog.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unethical and is considered academic dishonesty. According to the American Psychological Association (2016) plagiarism is described as follows:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the words, ideas, or images of another as one's own. It violates ethical standards of accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in scholarship.

Self-plagiarism is the act of presenting one's own previously published work as original. It misleads readers and falsely inflates the number of publications on a topic.

Plagiarism occurs when writers fail to give proper credit to their sources. Some kinds of plagiarism are deliberate—for example, copying an entry—or a substantial part of one—from Wikipedia or any other source, academic or popular, and submitting it as one's own work. All instances of direct wording from another source need to be in quotation marks and cited appropriately with the author's last name, the publication date, and the page number.

Some obvious examples of plagiarism include:

- copying someone else's paper
- taking short or long quotations from a source without identifying the source
- turning in a paper one has obtained over the Internet

Some less-obvious examples include:

- changing a few words around from a book or article and pretending those words are one's own
- rearranging the order of ideas in a list and making the reader think that one has produced the list oneself
- borrowing ideas from a source and not giving proper credit to the source
- turning in a paper from another class; Whether this is plagiarism or not depends on one's instructor—ask first!
- using information from an interview or an online chat or email, etc., without properly citing the source of the information
- using words that were quoted in one source, and acting and citing the original source as though one has written it oneself

AI Generated Materials

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Writing

The AI landscape is evolving rapidly. DMU does not consider the use of AI (e.g., ChatGPT) as a primary or secondary source (unless the topic under study is AI text output). At this time, it is unclear

- where an AI bot is drawing its information from,
- if the AI provides citations, whether the information is accurate, and
- whether any given content generated is plagiarized.

Students are permitted to utilize AI in their written work under the following conditions:

- Students may use AI for brainstorming purposes or to explore topics, but any text created from AI is not considered to be scholarship. Students are responsible for finding the primary sources where the information was derived. They must locate and read the original source of the AI output and must paraphrase and appropriately cite the original source content.
- Students are not permitted to turn in work for essays and assignments created by AI even if they paraphrase the AI generated content and cite the AI software as the source. An exception would be if AI generated content was being used as an example of AI text generation. In such a case, the AI would be cited as the source of the material.

Possible Consequences of Plagiarism

In cases where a violation of plagiarism has been verified, the faculty member and the program director have the responsibility for determining the academic consequences which are determined by the degree of plagiarism and the frequency. (Source: California Lutheran University)

For all cases of plagiarism the student is subject to the program's remediation policies. The table below provides examples of types of offenses and possible consequences.

Degree of Plagiarism	Description of Violation	Possible Consequences
Minimal	• Did the student insert verbatim phrases of several distinctive words without attribution? • Did the student substitute synonyms into the original sentence without attribution rather than rewriting the complete sentence? • Did the student reorder the clauses of a sentence without attribution? • Did the student use the source's line of logic, thesis, or ideas without attribution?	• Instructor should educate the student about plagiarism and/or refer them to the program director or dean's office • The student may be allowed to rework and resubmit the assignment. Instructors would need to determine and communicate if their assignment grade is penalized or not. • The student receives a reduced grade on the assignment. • The student would be informed that faculty in their program would be told of the infraction to know whether any student's plagiarism is a first time or one of multiple offenses.

Substantial	• Did the student insert verbatim sentences or longer passages from a source without attribution? • Did the student combine paraphrasing with verbatim sentences to create a paragraph or more of text without attribution? • Did the student repeatedly and pervasively engage in minimal plagiarism?	First offense in first course at DMU • The student may be allowed to rework and resubmit the assignment • The student receives a reduced grade on the assignment With subsequent offenses: • The student receives a failing grade on the assignment • The Instructor submits an Academic Dishonesty Report to the program director and/or dean in which the course resides. Third Offense • The student may be recommended for expulsion from the university. Action is taken at the discretion of the Dean or VPAA.
Complete	• Did the student submit or present someone's complete published or unpublished work (paper, article, or chapter)? • Did the student submit another student's work for an assignment, with or without that person's knowledge or assent? • Did the student download or purchase a paper from a website or other source? • Did the student reuse or modify a previously submitted paper (e.g. from another course) for a present assignment without obtaining • prior approval from the instructors?	• The student receives a failing grade on the assignment and the instructor submits an Academic Dishonesty Report to the program director and/or dean in which the course resides. • The student receives a failing grade in the course and an Academic Dishonesty report is submitted to the program director and/or dean in which the course resides. • The student is expelled from the university. Action is taken at the discretion of the Dean or VPAA.

(Source: Columbia International University)

Late Assignment Policy

Timely submission of assignments is essential to ensure student success and the development of high professional standards. Therefore, no late work without deductions will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. All requests and approvals for extensions must be documented via email at least one day prior to the due date for the work.

Unless otherwise noted, all online assigned work is due at 11:59 pm Eastern USA Time on the date due. The majority of assignments are due Tuesday at 11:59 pm EST. NOTE: Initial discussion posts are due Saturday at 12 noon EST and responses to peers Monday (11:59 pm EST). No discussion responses will be graded after the due date. Without prior agreement with the instructor as noted above, late assignments receive a 5% deduction for each day they are late.

Technological issues are generally not considered valid grounds for late assignment submission. In the event of a DMU or personal server outage, students should submit assignments to the instructor via email, and when systems are restored, submit those assignments in the Canvas platform.

Exceptions and Special Circumstances

Some exceptions and special circumstances warrant consideration. In these instances, contact the instructor immediately or as soon as reasonably possible. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Death of an immediate or close family member requiring one's full attention
- Serious illness (i.e., illness that would impede one's ability to complete an assignment on time)
- Unexpected natural events (i.e., natural disaster, severe weather phenomenon, etc.)
- Accidental injury to oneself or a close family member that constrains one's ability to complete assignments on time
- Military duty that impedes one's ability to complete assignments on time

Retreats, Conferences, and Vacations

Students should notify faculty at the beginning of a course if there is a planned retreat, conference, or vacation occurring during the term, and request approval to post assignments in advance. Students are obligated to complete assignments, including initial discussion posts, prior to leaving. Students should anticipate the coursework required and prepare without expectation of special consideration. Posting to the cohort for discussions can still occur during most absences. Vacation time should be planned per the course schedules. When traveling during a term, students should plan ahead and connect to the Internet to complete assignments during a trip.

Incomplete Policy

Incompletes are to be seen as an academic exception for emergency situations that are granted on a case by case basis. Should students have experienced unforeseen, extraordinary circumstances

during the latter half of a course that have made finishing the course material unlikely by the end of the term, they may fill out and submit an Incomplete petition form in Populi. If granted, an Incomplete will allow **up to 28 days from the last day of the term** to finish the outstanding assignments.

In order to be eligible for an Incomplete grade, students

- Must have participated actively the entire first five weeks of the course
- Must have a minimum grade of B- (80%) for the first five weeks of the course
- Must have experienced an unforeseen, extraordinary circumstance during the latter half of the course that makes finishing course work unlikely

Students who have been granted an incomplete based on the policies above, will receive a grade based upon work completed at the end of the incomplete time limit (Tuesday, four weeks after the last day of the term at 11:59pm EST). Depending on what was completed / not completed this could be an F or a higher grade. If a grade change is not completed at the end of the time limit, the Office of the Registrar will turn the grade into an F.

Students who receive financial aid and who carry a grade of incomplete into a subsequent semester risk loss of financial aid for that semester. Carrying an incomplete course grade reduces the student's overall grade point average and lowers the credit hours attempted-to-completed ratio – either or both factors can create a failure to meet the financial aid requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress. Students who have two incompletes are not eligible to begin the next term until the incomplete grades have been submitted.

Extra Credit

There are no extra credit options available in this program.

Academic/Grade Appeal

All grades recorded become a permanent part of the student's academic history. A student who believes a final grade has been miscalculated should email the instructor and request a review of the matter. If a grade change is warranted, the instructor should report this to the registrar. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's response, the student may submit a written request to the academic dean. The dean or their designee will then meet with the student and instructor, and will attempt to resolve the dispute about the grade. Failing such a resolution, the instructor's grade will stand. No grade change will be accepted after 30 days from the end of the semester unless authorized by the academic dean. However, requests for a grade change that will affect eligibility for graduation or academic honors or dismissal from the University must be made prior to these events respectively.

Student Evaluation of Courses

At the end of each term, students are expected to complete an evaluation of each course completed. All evaluations are confidential and privacy is maintained. Extensive precautions are taken to prevent student comments from being identified as coming from a particular student. It is an

important responsibility of DMU students to participate in the instructor and course evaluation process. Students will be asked to reflect upon what they have learned in the course, the extent to which they have invested the necessary effort to maximize learning, and the role the instructor has played in the learning process. It is very important that students complete the online evaluations with thoughtful comments. Course grades are not visible to students until the course evaluation has been completed.

DMU takes instructor and course evaluations seriously as an important means of gathering information for the enhancement of learning opportunities for its students. Student honesty in evaluation of the courses is critical, since the results contribute to improving course design and presentation and are an integral component in the DMU programmatic assessment process.

New Student Orientation

The MSP programs are designed with a focus on growth in professional, personal, and spiritual domains. In order to become oriented to the program, new students will participate in the MSP Program Orientation course (zero credit, zero cost). This course provides an introduction to the MSP program and its faculty, the program catalog and handbook, as well as an introduction to online learning including the Canvas learning platform, weekly discussion posts, the Capstone project, Zoom, and other important information about the program.

In addition, students should use this Student Program Handbook as a guide for relevant information. This handbook covers topics such as program vision and mission, program goals and outcomes, expectations for students, financial information, program and graduation requirements, information on library resources as well as other important information.

Contacts: Global Campus - MSP Program

By Phone/Voice Mail Message/Email

Main Number: (703) 416-1441

Dean of the Global Campus: Stephen Sharp, Ph.D. ssharp@divinemeracy.edu

Program Director: Julia Klausli, Ph.D. jklausli.ips@divinemeracy.edu

Program Assistant: Jennifer Duthie jduthie.ips@divinemeracy.edu

V.P. of Academic Affairs for Digital Learning: Harvey Payne, Psy.D. hpayne@divinemeracy.edu

Disability Support Services: dss@divinemeracy.edu

By Mail

Divine Mercy University
MSP Program
45154 Underwood Lane
Sterling, VA 20166

Website: www.divinemeracy.edu.

Tech Support

Support for the Canvas Learning Management system is provided to students 7 days a week to ensure access to learning, teaching and research. Students and faculty may contact tech support via live chat or by phone:

Tech Support phone: 1-855-976-9659

Live Chat: Click on the Help link (question mark in circle) in the lower left-hand corner of the Canvas classroom to access a variety of help options, including a live chat function with Canvas support personnel.

support@divinemeracy.edu

Additional Email Addresses

Business Office: businessoffice@divinemeracy.edu.

Financial Aid Office: financialaid@divinemeracy.edu

Admissions Office: admissions@divinemeracy.edu

Library: library@divinemeracy.edu

Procedures for Disseminating Information

In addition to the DMU Policy for Distribution of Materials in the DMU Catalog, students in the MSP program should be aligned with the policies and procedures described in the Student Handbook. To ensure that students are aware of current professional and academic events, learning and research opportunities, and/or programmatic adjustments or changes, students may receive information through mass emails, faculty announcements in class, and in the electronic discussion forums within the online learning system. In addition, the dean, directors, DMU administration, and/or faculty advisors may visit the online classroom and the residency activities to deliver information or to keep students abreast of DMU activities. The Student Program Handbook may experience periodic updates and revisions. It is the responsibility of each student to frequently check their DMU email and Canvas course announcements to ensure receipt of important updates.

Part II: MSP Faculty

Arisukwu, Fr. Vincent Ezeoma, Ph.D. (Marriage and Family Therapy), Eastern University, adjunct faculty

DeBroeck, Ximena, Ph.D. (Systematic Theology), Duquesne University, adjunct faculty

Derby, Kevin, Ph.D. (Leadership) University of the Cumberland, Adjunct Faculty

Ewing, Christopher, Ph.D. (Educational Psychology), Capella University, Adjunct Faculty

Klausli, Julia, Ph.D. (Human Development and Communication Sciences), University of Texas at Dallas, Assistant Professor, Director of the M.S. Psychology Program

Pecoraro, Anna, Psy.D. (Clinical Psychology), Widener University, Associate Professor

Sadewo, Giovanni, Ph.D. (Social Psychology), La Trobe University, Adjunct Faculty

Treptow, Robin, Ph.D. (Clinical Psychology), University of Nebraska-Lincoln; (Infant and Early Childhood Development with Emphasis in Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities), Fielding Graduate University, Assistant Professor

Webb, Stacie, Psy.D. (Clinical Psychology), Divine Mercy University, Adjunct Faculty

Part III: Course Descriptions

MSP 500 Program Orientation

In this course students are given an introduction to DMUs handbooks and catalog, information on the Capstone Project, DMU's integrative approach to psychology, MSP faculty, information regarding the different concentrations, and other information relevant to the MSP. (0 credits)

PHT 508 The Catholic Christian Vision of Flourishing: Virtues & Vocations

This course develops the Catholic Christian vision of personal and interpersonal flourishing in terms of virtues and vocations. First, students explore how the cultivation of virtue leads to personal awareness and development, increased freedom, and growth in the spiritual life. Second, students consider three levels of vocation and their discernment: (1) a call to goodness and holiness; (2) a call to being single, married, ordained or religious (consecrated); and (3) a call to work and service to one's neighbors. Students examine how the virtues can help persons flourish in areas or phases of their life where they are languishing and, in turn, live out their vocational commitments well. Lastly, the course will identify concepts from positive psychology as well as evidence and interventions that support this vision of human flourishing, which consists of a life of virtue and committed vocations. (3 credit hrs)

PHT 510 Spiritual Growth and Discernment (Pastoral and Spiritual Care)

This course examines the human person through the integrated lens of Catholic Christian anthropology and psychological science, emphasizing the inherent dignity, relational nature, moral agency, and spiritual vocation of every individual. Students explore God's plan for human flourishing as revealed in Scripture and tradition, including the effects of grace, sin, virtue, and vice on psychological and spiritual development. The course introduces the theological and psychological foundations of spiritual accompaniment, including the identity and role of the spiritual director, the history of the practice, and the dynamics of discernment. Particular attention is given to recognizing the movements of the Holy Spirit and distinguishing them from psychological or emotional phenomena. Designed for psychology students preparing to support others in their

interior and relational growth, this course fosters a holistic understanding of the person oriented toward healing, integration, and communion with God and others. (3 credit hours)

PHT 543 Catholic Christian Marriage and Human Sexuality

PHT 543 Flourishing in Relationships introduces students to the nature and discernment of vocational states of being single, married, ordained, or religious (consecrated). Emphasis is placed on courtship and on marriage, which is understood as a natural and divine institution that serves to support and protect individuals, families, and society. Students will examine the continuity and development of Catholic Christian teaching on marriage and family in a historical, bio-psycho-social-cultural, philosophical, and theological context. Students will analyze several issues that are especially pertinent to clinical mental health counseling, including not only disorders and difficulties related to singleness, romance, marriage, and family life, but also supporting strengths and practices. (3 credit hrs)

PSY 515 Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation

The Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation course introduces a basic understanding of the terminology, foundation, theory, and research of cognitive psychology and the neurosciences. Emphasis is on the interrelatedness of cognition, emotion, behavior, and motivation across the lifespan. Students evaluate concepts of self-agency and morality through a neuroscience lens integrated with the Catholic Christian vision of the human person. Students focus on developing an awareness of the complexities of cognitions, emotions, and motivations in themselves and others. Students will be able to appraise interventions that address these complexities informed by the Catholic Christian vision of the human person.

PSY 550 Helping People Flourish: A Catholic Christian Approach to Psychology

In this course, students explore the richness of understanding behaviors, emotions, and thoughts through the study of psychology—informed by philosophy and theology—to aid self and others in flourishing. Students engage in exercises in reflection and practical application using resources that are present throughout their graduate study of psychology, and work toward building a foundation for academic and professional success as scholar-practitioners and agents of positive change. Students also learn to integrate a Catholic Christian vision of the person with best practices in psychological theory, research, and intervention. This holistic view affirms the person as possessing intrinsic dignity, as free and able to make responsible choices, relational and connected to others and society, and as seeking psychological well-being, moral character, and spiritual growth. Finally, students assess the benefits of the graduate study of psychology for their personal and professional goals through creating a professional development plan. The course includes a 2-day mandatory synchronous online residency to deepen students' understanding of foundational concepts together as a virtual learning community. The online residency takes place Friday and Saturday of week four of the course. (3 credit hrs)

PSY 556 Helping Skills for Pastoral and Spiritual Care

This course prepares students to develop the core competencies necessary for effective pastoral and spiritual care within a variety of ministry and caregiving contexts. Emphasis is placed on cultivating essential interpersonal skills such as active listening, empathic presence, trust-building, and spiritual discernment. Students will practice skills in spiritual conversation, pastoral assessment, intervention planning, and accompaniment of individuals and groups through life challenges, crises, and transitions. Topics include ethical decision-making grounded in Christian moral theology, multicultural and interfaith sensitivity, and appropriate referral and case management practices. The course also addresses practical skills in de-escalation, conflict resolution, and ministering in emotionally intense situations. Throughout, students are encouraged to integrate theological understanding, psychological insight, and pastoral wisdom in fostering healing, dignity, and spiritual growth in those they serve.

PSY 560 Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan

Students in this course explore the biological, psychological, and social factors of human growth and development through the lifespan from conception through aging and end of life. Students examine basic processes and theories, and evaluate the developmental milestones that occur across the lifespan. Topics covered include emotional, cognitive, interpersonal, moral, and spiritual development. This course presents a special focus on flourishing across the lifespan and the application of developmental insights to practical issues that arise within the helping professions. (3 credit hrs)

PSY 577 Grief and Bereavement Across the Lifespan

This course explores the psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of grief and bereavement with particular emphasis on responses to death and loss across the lifespan. Grounded in a Catholic-Christian understanding of the human person, students examine the meaning of suffering, death, and hope in the context of eternal life and human dignity. The course addresses developmental differences in how loss is experienced, cultural and familial influences on mourning, and the impact of sudden, traumatic, and anticipated death. Special attention is given to fostering resilience and adaptive coping, as well as the role of faith, ritual, and community in supporting those who grieve. Students will develop clinically and pastorally sensitive approaches to accompany individuals and families through experiences of loss, integrating psychological theory with theological and pastoral insight.

PSY 575 Social Psychology, Groups, and Diversity

In this course, students use the lens of social psychology and human diversity to examine both social perceptions/thoughts and social behavior—phenomena that pertain to the individual in society. Students explore the topics of forming impressions, stereotyping, social influence, attitude development and change, bias and discrimination, antisocial and prosocial behaviors, affiliation and attraction, and sex role behaviors, and consider how knowledge of these topics can be used to promote positive social change. The course also emphasizes how the various types of diversity impact the helping professionals and interventions chosen to assist clients. Areas of diversity

include but are not limited to: culture, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, age, and those who are differently enabled. (3 credit hrs)

PSY 581 Theories and Models of Counseling and Personality

Theories and Models of Counseling and Personality introduces students to the primary theoretical models of personality theory and counseling practice, including psychodynamic, affective, cognitive, behavioral, humanistic, existential, interpersonal, multicultural, integrative, and systems theory. A focus on evidence-based practices that incorporate diversity issues with population-specific approaches is a significant feature of this course. Emphasis is on the importance of students recognizing belief systems that accurately reflect their own personal style and to recognize strategies and approaches likely to be most successful with a particular client population. Students will utilize case conceptualization to demonstrate their understanding of theoretical foundations as the basis of pastoral counseling practice and to evaluate and assess clinical situations for implementation of therapeutic interventions that are appropriate with diverse individuals, groups, and families. (3 credits)

PSY 586 Research and Evaluation

This course introduces students to foundational research methods and designs, including reliability, validity, evidence-based practice, needs assessment, and critical evaluation of published studies. Students will explore scales of measurement, descriptive statistics, and basic univariate inferential statistics commonly used in organizational, leadership, and pastoral care settings. Emphasis is placed on the use of ethical and culturally relevant strategies for conducting, interpreting, and reporting research results. Students will also learn how to develop and apply outcome measures to assess effectiveness in leadership initiatives and spiritual care programs.

PSY 590 Leading People, Programs, and Organizations

This course covers two key areas: (1) leading teams, programs, and organizations and (2) the psychology of organizational leadership. Students examine the core competencies that leaders need to address the challenges they face to make a greater difference in the communities they serve. A broad range of skills and approaches are discussed: autonomy, supporting work environments, human dignity in the workplace, leading with empathy, Tuckman stages of group formation, relationship between performance and pressure as well as the supervision of staff and volunteers. Finally, students learn the framework, theories, and processes of program planning and execution and analyze approaches to assess organizational needs and how to address those effectively (3 credit hrs)

PSY 595 Transformational Leadership

In this course students appraise the principles and the scholarly foundation of transformational leadership from a Catholic Christian perspective. Students (1) evaluate the utility of transformational leadership for visioning and then accomplishing an organizational mission; (2) develop strategies for managing stressful situations; (3) discern the importance of being a role model and developing the skills required to be a transformational leader; (4) analyze various

motivational techniques for influencing individuals and groups; and (5) develop strategies for building a learning organization, celebrating successes, and fostering personal and professional growth in others. (3 credit hrs)

PSY 599 Academic Writing for Psychological Research

In this course students follow an individualized plan of study focused on the rigor of writing the Capstone/Thesis project. Students who transferred into the program or students who require additional time and support for the writing of the different parts of their Capstone/Thesis project will receive support in this course. In depth instruction on APA format and mastery of academic writing as applied to the Capstone/Thesis project will be the focus of this course. Students who received a grade below a B- in any of their major Capstone sections (introduction, integrative literature review, psychological literature review, decision making and motivation paper, implementation and evaluation plan; and target population papers) will be required to take PSY 599 as a 1-credit course. Students receiving a grade below a B or desiring to improve their academic writing towards excellence are strongly encouraged to enroll in the course.

PSY 615 Applied Leadership Skills

In this course students appraise tenets of self leadership by examining personal biases, using critical self reflection, and evaluating self-regulatory behaviors affirming the fundamental goodness and innate dignity of the person. Students learn interpersonal skills relevant to a variety of leadership settings. Students analyze ethical principles and models of decision making related to the self, group, and organizational leadership. Students identify diversity issues especially relevant to leadership settings. The course emphasizes the value of leading with humility, authenticity, and self-sacrificial behaviors to promote flourishing in others. (3 credit hrs)

PSY 620.1-3 Psychological Research and Writing

This three-term sequence course guides students through the development of a graduate-level research paper that emphasizes applied science and is informed by the Catholic-Christian vision of the person. Through this research work students have the unique opportunity to scientifically explore a topic related to an area of interest, work, or ministry. Students will select a research topic, develop a full research proposal, and defend their research proposal to a faculty committee provided by the department. Students who wish to write a full thesis will submit an IRB application during the last segment of this course. The topic may, but is not required to, build on prior capstone work. *(1 credit per term, total 3 credits)*

PSY 620.4-6 Psychological Research and Writing

This three-term sequence is available as a core course for students interested in exploring research writing at a deeper level and builds on the prior PSY 620.1-3 course sequence. It guides the student through all the phases of planning and executing a scientific project that results in a master's thesis. Building on the work done in 620.1-3 students learn to collect and analyze their own data. The thesis must have an applied science emphasis informed by the Catholic Christian vision of the person with the overarching goal of supporting the flourishing of the whole person. Through this thesis work students have the unique opportunity to make a contribution to the psychological

research literature. Students will generate research knowledge that can be shared professionally with others through their thesis, conference presentations, or peer-reviewed published articles to engage with the scientific and broader community. *(1 credit per term, total 3 credits)*

PSY 635 Organizational Financial Management and Resource Development

This course equips students with foundational knowledge and practical skills in financial planning, budgeting, fundraising, and grant writing within non-profit agencies and organizations.

Emphasizing ethical stewardship and strategic resource development, students will learn to interpret financial statements, develop program budgets, and align funding strategies with mission-driven goals. Special attention is given to the financial responsibilities of leaders in non-profit agencies and organizations. Case studies and applied projects prepare students to manage limited resources effectively, pursue sustainable funding opportunities, and support long-term organizational impact. (3 credit hrs)