

MOVING HUMANITY FORWARD



Doctor of Philosophy
in Transpersonal Psychology

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Transpersonal Psychology (On-Campus)

The PhD in Transpersonal Psychology offers a unique and exciting opportunity to study the theories and practices of transpersonal psychology. It is a three-year course of study designed for adult learners with a qualifying master's degree who seek an exceptional educational environment for personal growth, enhanced relationships, and career development. Education in the program includes mastery of scholarship and research as well as the ability to apply transpersonal skills and practices in a variety of settings. The central goal is to enhance positive individual, professional, and social transformation. The program fosters diverse and novel professional applications of transpersonal principles. The blended learning formats support students from a variety of fields of interest and experience to gather together in pursuit of doctoral-level research and scholarship.

Learning Communities

Courses are designed as a transformative process that includes experiential learning, integration, transformation, spiritual disciplines, embodiment, and application of transpersonal education. Faculty members facilitate person-centered instruction in a dynamic classroom format. There is a high level of group sharing, participatory learning, and shared experiences. The students and faculty in the learning community support one another's education and growth. Students move into their specialization classes knowing that the faculty have been carefully selected for their outstanding expertise and professional contributions.

Faculty and Academic Advisors

Students work closely with members of the Sofia University and the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology's outstanding faculty. Our faculty is especially qualified to teach and facilitate transpersonal learning and personal processes, to encourage social and emotional learning, cultivate mindfulness, and provide authentic responses to assignments. Faculty members have advanced degrees in transpersonal studies based in a multidisciplinary pursuit to understand the nuances of experiential, whole-person learning. Our faculty guides students to integrate transpersonal experiences and practices into their personal and professional lives.

Students are assigned an academic advisor who guides them through their educational journey, helps them to complete the PhD program in a timely manner, and select courses that enhance their academic goals. The academic advisor will help guide course selections and the formation of a dissertation committee.

Program Learning Outcomes

- **Knowledge:** Develop a working knowledge of transpersonal psychology's content domain.

- **Application:** Explain behavior using current theory and research in the affective, social, individual differences, and cognitive areas of psychology.
- **Written Communication:** Demonstrate effective writing for transpersonal psychology research and communications.
- **Research:** Interpret, design, and conduct advanced psychological research.
- **Critical Thinking:** Engage in innovative and integrative critical thinking and problem-solving.
- **Information Literacy:** Describe experiences and perspectives of diverse populations including but not limited to race, culture, socioeconomics, age, gender, sexual relation orientation, and disability.
- **Professional development:** Articulate the general history of transpersonal psychology by explaining the depth and breadth of the field from the perspective of a future educator and/or researcher.

Curriculum Requirements (75 Units)

8 Required Core Courses (29 units/32 units w Internship)

- PHD 7000: Intensive Retreat Seminar (2 credits x 4 seminars in Spring and Fall)
 - PHD 6218: Advanced Seminar in Transpersonal Psychology
 - PHD 9610: Integral Research Skills
 - PHD 6205: Critical Thinking and Academic Writing
 - PHD 6103: Qualitative Research Methods
 - PHD 6104: Quantitative Research Methods and Basic Statistics
 - PHD 7804: The Psychology of Cognition, Affect, and Consciousness
 - PHD 8997 – Introduction to Dissertation Proposal Writing (“mini proposal”)
-
- Internship (3 units) (Note: Can be waived with Program Chair’s approval and replaced with elective)

Electives (28 Units without Internship)

Dissertation Courses (18 units)

Program Concentrations (Optional, 15 units per concentration from core and electives)

- Transpersonal Education and Research
- Applied Transpersonal Psychology
- Whole Systems Approach to Health and Wellbeing
- Consciousness and Creativity Studies
- Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience

Core Course Descriptions (29 units)

PHD 6103 – Qualitative Research Methods (3)

This course explores similarities and differences between various ideographic, qualitative research methods. During this course, students will identify the phenomenology and epistemology of different qualitative methods, design “mock” studies based on these methods using appropriate research questions, and finally, design, conduct, and analyze interviews with people outside of the class. This course introduces both theoretical background and practical skills application within QRM.

PHD 6104 – Quantitative Research Methods and Basic Statistics (3)

This course examines how the choice of an appropriate research method (quantitative versus qualitative) is determined by the nature and type of the research question under study. We will explore how qualitative concepts may be operationalized into viable research variables and studied scientifically. We will also examine the limitations of this approach in understanding subjective psychological and psycho-spiritual phenomena, as well as how quantitative components may be included as part of mixed designs to enhance or complement certain aspects of qualitative research.

PHD 6205 – Critical Thinking and Scholarly Writing (3)

This course is designed to enhance students' critical thinking skills and scholarly writing ability. Students will be asked to read about and reflect on strategies that enhance critical thinking and analyze scholarly papers and methods using these skills. The course also supports initial planning for the Transpersonal Application and Integration Paper. This course will help the student write more authentically, and, hopefully, to develop a love for the writing process. Students will participate in a daily writing practice.

PHD 6218 – Advanced Seminar In Transpersonal Psychology (3)

This seminar will explore the participatory turn in spirituality, mysticism, and religious studies with attention to the work of Jorge Ferrer’s Previsioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality and commentaries upon it.

PHD 7000 – Intensive Transpersonal Practices Retreat Seminar (2 credits x 4 seminars)

Our seminars provide students with opportunities to get to know classmates, faculty, and staff, and learn about key aspects of the program. Presentations by transpersonal speakers are interspersed with meditation, movement, body awareness processes, group interaction, creative expressions and ritual. Courses begin at the seminar. These intensives take place at retreat centers in California that deeply support our learning

objectives. Attendance at the seminars is required. Successful completion of the seminar is a prerequisite for entering the first year of study.

PHD 7804 – Psychology of Cognition, Affect, and Consciousness (3)

This core course examines emotion and cognition and their interrelationship from biological, developmental, phenomenological and transpersonal perspectives. There will be an emphasis on exploring students' direct experiences of emotion and cognition and relating that to various theoretical and empirical views. The psychology of well-being and optimal functioning of cognition, affect and consciousness will be discussed and explored.

PHD 9610 – Integral Research Skills: Advanced Topics in Transpersonal Psychology (3)

In this course, students will learn to apply integral research skills derived from mindfulness practices (including working with intentions, quieting and slowing, direct knowing and intuition, focusing attention, auditory skills, visual skills, kinesthetic skills, proprioceptive skills, and accessing unconscious processes) to research. Students are expected to evaluate their own means of integral knowing and exploring applications of the skills with a selected research topic.

PHD 8997 – Introduction to Dissertation Proposal Writing (“mini proposal”) (3)

The student learns about the dissertation process, the "inner and outer dissertations," and the expected content and format of proposals and dissertations. The student focuses the research topic, questions, hypotheses, and methods, and prepares a preliminary proposal ("mini proposal"). Extensive structure, support, and feedback are provided for this work.

PHD 3000 Internship (3 units) (Note: Can be waived with Program Chair's approval)

PHD 3001 Internship (3 units) (Note: Can be waived with Program Chair's approval)

PHD Dissertation courses (18 units)

Elective Course Descriptions

PHD 6201 – History and Systems of Psychology (3)

This course on the history and systems of psychology explores historical, methodological, and topical issues in psychology. The course will present an overview of psychology from a historical perspective (how psychology as a discipline has “evolved” or “changed” over a period of time), explain different systems or schools of psychology,

and consider some sociological and philosophical paradigms—for instance Renaissance, positivism, or rationalism—that have impacted the development of psychology and its various schools. Transpersonal psychology stands on the shoulders of all previous schools of psychology. As we explore the development of transpersonal psychology, we will construct frameworks in which we situate and integrate the various schools.

PHD 6203 – Introduction to Transpersonal Therapies

Today there are several main approaches to transpersonal psychotherapy with key differences in their foundations and therapeutic processes; however, they all place central emphasis on the spiritual dimension in human life and its interaction with physical, emotional, and mental dimensions covered by traditional psychotherapies. This course provides a basic introduction to the fundamental features of these diverse approaches as well as their relationship with other Western schools of psychotherapy and traditional Eastern and indigenous healing practices influencing the field.

PHD 6206 – Transpersonal Finance

This course explores resource management from two angles: personal and philosophic. Given that spending and saving habits reflect true priorities, students will be asked to track their money behaviors as a means to gain greater alignment with their values. Students will also be required to imagine their post-graduate income opportunities and develop a sustainable plan to meet lifestyle obligations and goals. Philosophically, the course will investigate the metaphysical meaning of money, examine the United States' wealth paradigm, and explore alternative perspectives. Students will be asked to examine their personal wealth worldviews and reveal how these are culturally supported or negated. The course will uncover the relationship between ecology and the economy with the ultimate goal of facilitating financial awareness and empowering students to take charge of their lives.

PHD 6207 – Psychology of Cognition & Emotion

This course will examine emotion and cognition, and their interrelationship, from biological, developmental, phenomenological and transpersonal perspectives. There will be an emphasis on exploring students' direct experience of emotion and cognition and relating that to various theoretical and empirical views. The psychology of well-being and optimal functioning of emotion and cognition also will be discussed and explored.

PHD 6210 – The Entrepreneurial Mind

Through biographies, interviews, and case studies, this course explores the essential qualities and characteristics of the entrepreneurial mind and a call to the transpersonal impulse. We will hear from leaders who have brought intuition, empathy, servant leadership, worldview, social emotional learning, cognitive biases, and other aspects of transpersonal psychology that inform business.

PHD 6211 – Psychology of Anomalous Dreams

In this course, we study how organized religious and spiritual practices in a variety of traditions reveals certain archetypal consistencies, and how these patterns may be effectively encountered during the dream state. Topics include dream interpretation, the physiology of sleep and dreams, daydreams, and nightmares.

PHD 6212 – The Tao of Aging: Individuation & Wholeness across the Lifespan

With profound demographic changes in the world, our aging population is the fastest growing subgroup in America. With this change comes the need for transpersonal psychology and psycho-spiritual development. This course will explore aging as a transformational process that involves shifts in identity, growth mindset, resilience, and meaning. Students are to apply these theories to their own lives, research topics, and professional goals.

PHD 6214 – Anomalous States of Consciousness

An altered state of consciousness may be defined as any state of consciousness that deviates from normal waking consciousness in terms of marked differences in the level of awareness, perception, memory, thought, emotion, behavior, and the way we experience time, place, and self-control. In this course we explore ways these states may be induced by meditation, psychoactive medicines, fever, psychosis, sleep, and religious experiences. We will be particularly interested in the ways altered state experiences may inform and transform ordinary, day-to-day life.

PHD 6216 – Psychology of Meditation & Mindfulness

This course offers an experiential and theoretical introduction of meditation and mindfulness practices from a variety of scientific, spiritual, and cultural traditions. We will study the psychology of attention and question how and why the untrained mind is prone to wander.

PHD 6220 – The Principles and History of Psychedelic Science

This course explores therapeutic issues involving the use of psychedelic substances. It covers clinical research on psychedelic drugs as adjuncts to psychotherapy for the treatment of addiction, PTSD, and existential distress at the end of life, as well as how to address psychedelic experiences that clients bring into psychotherapy. Ancient, shamanic, and modern uses of psychedelics will be examined to provide broad cultural perspectives.

PHD 6221 – Self, Gender & Contemporary Psychology

This course introduces contemporary psychological research into the ways gender shapes self-conceptions and social interactions in households, schools, and workplaces. We explore how attitudes toward the opposite gender are often ambivalent and examine ways even positive gender stereotypes result in social disapproval for gender deviance (as in backlash toward powerful women) and explores how gendered attitudes play out in romantic relationships. With attention to queer theory, we explore how gender aims to “normalize” people by categorizing them.

PHD 6223 – Topics In Life Narrative Studies

This is a course in narrative psychology with attention to the storied nature of our changing lives. Jerome Bruner, a founding figure in this psychological subfield, recognized two ways of ordering experience and “constructing reality”: one is a paradigmatic or logico-scientific approach; another is the way of narrative. These modes are irreducible to one another, which is an interesting problem in and of itself, a problem at the root of the invention of the human sciences at the turn of the 20th century. What is the fate of narrative self-knowledge in the Age of the Internet, when everything happens NOW?

PHD 6225 – Cultural Psychology and Religion

Psychological research on religion has been pursued from a number of perspectives, but cultural psychology has played a surprisingly minor role in understanding religious life and thought. How does culture shape religious practice and belief, and what is the relation of culture and claims to religious truth? How does culture constitute, facilitate, and regulate subjective religious experience? Is a rapprochement between cultural psychology of religion and cultural psychology possible? This course offers an introduction to basic clinical skills in psychotherapy, such as interviewing skills, reflective listening, and establishing rapport. The core of this class consists of students practicing their skills with each other, as well as an orientation to humanistic and existential methods of psychotherapy. The student will gain experience as therapist, client, and observer, and will examine and discuss these experiences.

PHD 6304 – Topics In Consciousness Studies

Philosophers, scientists, and artists for millennia have studied the psychological unconscious. In recent years, thanks to rapid advances in the neurosciences, many unconscious phenomena have been studied experimentally and revealed to us. These empirical studies, when combined with the theoretical work of previous generations, offer sharp insights into how the psychological unconscious works in relation to thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors.

PHD 6305 – Critical Hermeneutical Thinking (MBA 2010) (3)

This course presents critical hermeneutical theory as a discourse-based mode of inquiry (leading to understanding) that is more proper of the human sciences, in contrast to the explanatory method of the natural sciences. It also discusses the interpretation process that places explanation and understanding in a dialectical relation and, thus, offers a methodological reconciliation in the two sciences. Students will address problem-solving and decision-making for practical situations using a trans-disciplinary perspective that brings together key concepts from interpretive philosophy, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, history, ethics, language, literature, and critical thinking itself.

PHD 6415 – Advanced Quantitative Research Methods

This course explores the following: theoretical, methodological, experimental, and statistics issues in consciousness research; Course participants will be designing a small meditation experiment, collect their own data using Muse EEG headset which be loaned/shipped to them by Sofia and learn to analyze that data using the publicly available EEGLAB software. The curriculum details experimental design, data acquisition, data analysis and statistics, data reporting and interpretation. This course will also discuss Neurofeedback protocols and methodology. Although the course will include mathematical and statistical concepts inherent to modern EEG processing, they will be approached in a simple and intuitive manner. No students will be left behind. A general interest for how brainwave technology and the scientific method can benefit the field of transpersonal psychology is needed to attend this course. The final report will be in the form of a group journal article draft.

PHD 7402 – Contemplative Practices: Paths toward Conscious Evolution

This highly experiential course with a mind/body/heart orientation, is designed to explore practices that increase your capacity to spontaneously embody mindfulness, gratitude, compassion, discernment, and love, in order to thrive as you go forward in

your life's path and bring your gifts into the world. In this course we will examine life narratives, spiritual inclinations, and philosophies while exploring a wide spectrum of contemplative traditions, practices, and pathways. These experiences can serve as a touchstone for future contemplative direction.

PHD 6310 – Consciousness and Healing: Integral Perspectives

This course takes an integral approach to the psychology of health and well-being. By drawing on various studies, concepts, and techniques of the world's healing traditions, we explore behaviors that enhance psychological, social, physical, ecological and spiritual health. We will explore various factors that contribute to self-efficacy, resilience, personal achievement, mindfulness, and spirituality.

PHD 6865 – Parapsychology

This course offers an overview of the history, experimental approaches, case studies and theoretical basis for the study of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis.

PHD 1061 – 1062, 63– Creative Expression in Clinical Practice I, II, and III

This year-long sequence of courses reviews the contributions of creative expression to psychosocial development and the healing processes. The student will engage with a variety of media including poetry, expressive and creative writing, music, and movement. The course offers opportunities to study the theory and evidence for specific practices, as well as opportunities to apply these practices to self-practice, clinical role-plays, and research protocols.

PHD 6021 – Scientific Scholarly Writing

This course will assist the student in the selection of research topics, formulation of research questions, use of APA writing style, drafting of a scholarly perspective, and organization of scientific concepts relevant to spiritually oriented clinical psychology. Lecture, discussion, writing exercises, and sharing of personal work will be used to develop and sustain creative interest, personal growth, and scholarly development.

PHD 6001 – Human Development A

This course offers study of the lifespan psychology perspective, with special attention to life transition interventions and developmental autobiography. Traditional child psychology is enhanced with units on prenatal/birth as well as transpersonal aspects of human development.

PHD 6002 - Human Development B

This course offers advanced study of the lifespan psychology perspective, with special attention to life transition interventions and developmental autobiography. Focus on later phases of life and death, as well as transpersonal aspects of human development. The student will examine psychological content, context, skills, and applications as they apply to the lifespan perspective.

PHD 2080 – Biological Basis of Behavior Part A

This course introduces research and theory surrounding the biological bases of behavior. Neuropsychological and neurophysiological principles underlying cognition, language, memory, emotion, and personality will be explored and linked to clinical practice. The student will explore new technologies including EEG, fMRI, and PET scans. In addition to exploring clinical issues, the student will be encouraged to explore transpersonal dimensions of neuropsychology such as the neural correlates of spirituality and consciousness.

PHD 2081 – Biological Basis of Behavior Part B

Continuing development of neuropsychological and neurophysiological principles underlying cognition, language, memory, emotion, and personality will be explored and linked to clinical practice. Application of these principles to trauma work, health psychology, and psychopharmacology will be examined. Basic models of the pharmacologic actions of allopathic drugs and homeopathic remedies will be investigated, as well as clinical indicators that suggest the use and value of medication. In addition, the student will be encouraged to explore transpersonal dimensions of neuropsychology such as alternatives to medication.

PHD 7216 – Social Psychology: Transpersonal Bases of Behavior

This course outlines a transpersonal and integrative approach to social psychology. The student will examine the behavioral approach to the social aspects of the person, as well as cultural psychology, the constructivist, consciousness-oriented perspectives on the topic. Emphasis will be placed on how an integration of these two approaches may bridge the sociocultural view on the human self with explorations of the mind beyond the ego, thus forging a potential creative alliance between social psychology and transpersonal psychology.

PHD 2010 – Human Sexuality

This course will present psychological and transpersonal aspects of human sexuality. Topics will include male and female sexuality, sexual communication, sexual orientations, relationships, sexual attitudes and behaviors (i.e., sexuality and spiritual practices), and commonly seen sexual problems. Coverage will also include material from the DSM on sex and gender; laws pertaining to the practice of psychotherapy with respect to human sexuality; and ethical principles from the primary professional organizations.

PHD 5130 – Positive Psychology – Gratitude, Compassion, and Forgiveness

This course is designed to introduce students to the latest thinking in the study of positive psychology. In this class, gratitude, appreciation, compassion, and forgiveness as practices will be highlighted. We will explore the use of positive emotion throughout the full cycle of successful therapy – from creating rapport through assessment and goal setting to intervention and feedback. Finally, students will be expected to understand the use of positive psychology in their own relationships, work, and lives.

PHD X907– Religious and Spiritual Diversity in Clinical Practice

An advanced class that focuses on the wide range of spiritual and religious client values and concerns. This course invites students to explore their own attitudes and viewpoints related to the topic of spiritual and religious identity, both personal and cultural. Postmodern schools of thought continue to underscore the socially constructed nature of identity and the importance of making visible the fluid nature of power, privilege, and the cultural context in which we all live, as individuals and communities. Through group dialogues, readings, and applied learning exercises, the course is designed to create an environment in which all students may broaden and deepen awareness and appreciation of personal differences and commonalities as related to clinical practice.

PHD 7615– Advanced Research in Ecopsychology

This course offers a bridge between ecological and spiritual approaches to nature within the context of transpersonal psychology. It considers the human embeddedness in nature and will explore the dynamics of eco-trauma.

Courses that Apply to the Concentrations

1. Transpersonal Studies

PHD 6218 Advanced Seminar in Transpersonal Psychology

PHD 9610 Integral Research Skills: Advanced Topics in Transpersonal Psychology

PHD 6103 Qualitative Research Methods
PHD 6104 Quantitative Research Methods and Basic Statistics
PHD 6303 Theories of Self-Transformation
PHD 6305 Critical Hermeneutical Thinking
PHD 6201 History and Systems of Psychology
PHD 6223 Topics In Life Narrative Studies
PHD 6865 Parapsychology
PHD 7402 Contemplative Practices: Paths Toward Conscious Evolution
PHD 7203 History and Systems of Psychology

2. Applied Transpersonal Psychology

PHD 6205 Critical Thinking and Academic Writing
PHD 6206 Transpersonal Finance
PHD 6210 The Entrepreneurial Mind
PHD 6212 The Tao of Aging: Individuation & Wholeness across the Lifespan
PHD 8207 Topics in Media Literacy
PHD 8990 Creativity and Critical Reflection
PHD 7229 Spiritual Competencies

3. Health and Well-being

PHD 6203 Introduction to Transpersonal Therapies
PHD 6216 Psychology of Meditation & Mindfulness
PHD 6221 Self, Gender & Contemporary Psychology
PHD 6310 Consciousness and Healing: Integral Approaches
PHD 6001-6002 Class on Human Development A and B
PHD 2010 Human Sexuality
PHD 5130 Positive Psychology
PHD 6223 Topics In Life Narrative Studies

4. PHD Consciousness, Culture and Creativity

PHD 6304 Topics In Consciousness Studies
PHD 6211 Psychology of Anomalous Dreams
PHD 6212 The Tao of Aging: Individuation & Wholeness across the Lifespan
PHD 6214 Anomalous States of Consciousness
PHD 6220 The Principles and History of Psychedelic Science
PHD 6225 Cultural Psychology and Religion
PHD 1061-63 Creative Expression Class 1, 2, 3
PHD 7804 The Psychology of Cognition, Affect and Consciousness
PHD 7402 Contemplative Practices: Paths Toward Conscious Evolution

5. Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience

PHD 6304 Topics In Consciousness Studies

PHD 6207 Psychology of Cognition & Emotion
PHD 2080 - 2081 Biological Basis A and B
PHD 7804 The Psychology of Cognition and Affect
PhD 6415 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods

Advancement to Candidacy

Advancement to Candidacy is a process in which students are required to fulfill certain requirements as an indication of their level of academic writing and critical thinking skills in order to do research at the graduate level and complete a dissertation according to the University's standards. To complete the Advancement to Candidacy process, students must do the following:

- Complete coursework
- Complete the mini-proposal

It is expected that candidacy will occur for most students at the end of their second year. Please see the Sofia University Dissertation Handbook for more details about the dissertation process. Failure to complete any step of the dissertation process may result in the student being required to exit the doctoral program. Students are expected to make continuous academic progress throughout their enrollment at the University, even while completing their dissertation work.

Withdrawal in Good Standing

Once doctorate-level students are advanced to candidacy, they are required to make continuous progress in completing their dissertation. If a student anticipates a gap in completion of their dissertation work, they may be required to withdraw from the program until it becomes possible to complete their dissertation. For further details on Withdrawal in Good Standing, see the Enrollment and Graduation section of the catalog.

Graduation Requirements

Upon completion, degrees will be recorded on an official transcript of record and each graduate receives a diploma. To complete the PhD in Transpersonal Psychology, a student must:

- Successfully complete all core course requirements.
- Successfully complete a minimum of 57 units of coursework.
- Be granted Advancement to Candidacy.
- Complete 18 units for dissertation research.
- Complete an approved dissertation.
- Pay all tuition and fees.