

Forensic Mental Health

Forensic Mental Health Degrees and Certificates

Forensic Mental Health (M.S.)

Forensic Mental Health is one of the fastest growing areas of specialization in mental health and criminal justice. As jurisdictions increasingly recognize the expanding demand for programs, services, planning, and supervision of clients who have both mental health needs and criminal justice involvement, educated personnel will be sought to address these needs. These new professionals, known as "boundary spanners," provide specialized expertise across the many social systems utilized by these clients. These systems include the criminal justice, mental health, substance abuse and social service systems.

In response to societal need, Russell Sage College offers an interdisciplinary M.S. program in Forensic Mental Health. This 39-credit non-clinical program prepares students to become effective professionals in an area of specialization by providing substantive knowledge of legal and social systems, mental health diagnoses, developmental disabilities, victimology, therapeutic jurisprudence, clinical assessment of court-involved youth and adult offenders, and substance abuse vulnerabilities and interventions. Disciplinary content is delivered through the lens of cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and evidence-based practice. Students learn about the many issues facing agencies, individuals and families who are affected by forensic mental health system, and will explore rational and effective solutions to these complex issues.

Our graduates have successfully entered the career fields of criminal justice, law, and psychology. They have been offered employment as social science researchers and policy makers; case managers and counselors in residential re-entry programs, juvenile treatment facilities, adult correctional institutions, and specialized court settings; probation and parole officers; law enforcement officers; employment specialists; and victim advocates. Many continue their education, entering doctoral programs and/or law school.

Admission

In addition to the general admission requirements for the Sage Graduate School, applicants must have:

- a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 for regular admission to the program
- satisfactory completion of undergraduate or graduate coursework in statistics
- satisfactory completion of two (2) courses in social and behavioral sciences
- completion of the FMH application form
- two (2) letters of recommendation, including at least one academic reference

Program: Forensic Mental Health

Type: M.S.

Degree Program Requirements

Item #	Title	Credits
FMH/PSY 505	Introduction to Forensic Mental Health	
FMH/PSY 510	Victimology & Victim Services	
FMH/PSY 515	Evaluation & Treatment of Adult Offenders	
FMH/PSY 520	Evaluation & Treatment of Court Involved Youth	
FMH 525	Introduction to U.S. Law for FMH	
FMH 527	Family and Juvenile Law	
FMH 535	Mental Health Law	
FMH 540	Externship in FMH	
FMH 592	Alcoholism/Drug Addiction: Vulnerabilities, Dynamics, and Problems	
PSY 575C	Abnormal Psychology for FMH	
	FMH Elective	3
	FMH Elective	3

Methods Course

- Select one of the following:

Item #	Title	Credits
HSA 578	Analytic Methods	
SOC 550	Research Methods in the Social Sciences	
PSY 563	Behavioral Research: Methods & Analysis	

Health Sciences Concentration

In order to prepare graduates to be familiar with health care systems and policies, an **optional concentration** in Health Services Administration is offered. Upon graduation, these students will have a broader disciplinary knowledge and enhanced skill sets to work more effectively in public and private sector agencies related to behavioral health homes, substance abuse management and treatment, prerelease planning for correctional clients, and Medicaid Redesign Teams (MRT).

- Two courses could be used as FMH electives.

Item #	Title	Credits
HSA 553	Health Systems & Policy	
HSA 557	Legal Aspects of Health Service Administration	
HSA 558	Budgeting and Finance for Government, Nonprofits, and Health Care	
HSA 572	Program Planning, Analysis, & Evaluation	

Additional Information

In addition to the above program and course requirements, students are expected to:

- achieve a grade of B or better in all courses
- maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or better
- demonstrate effective professional behavior, including effective interpersonal skills, sound judgment, and ethical behavior

Forensic Mental Health Certificate

If you already have a Bachelor's or Master's degree in a field such as criminal justice, psychology or law, and would like to complement that knowledge by adding a specialized focus, you may elect to complete the 18-credit Certificate in Forensic Mental Health. This certificate may be pursued as a stand-alone curriculum or may be easily combined with the 60-credit M.A. in Counseling and Community Psychology offered by the Psychology Department.

Graduates of master's level non-clinical Forensic Mental Health programs are typically not permitted to engage in the practice of psychology except in agencies that have obtained specific exemptions in law. Thus, graduates of appropriate non-clinical M.S. programs may serve in clinical capacities in these agencies. Current NYS law extends provisions establishing an exemption from licensure as a psychologist or mental health counselor for individuals employed in certain programs that are operated, regulated, funded or approved by specified forensic mental health agencies. Pursuant to the policies of Chapters 130 and 132 of the Laws of 2010, exempt NYS agencies include:

- Department of Health (DOH)
- Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)
- Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)
- Office of Mental Health (OMH)
- Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
- State Office for the Aging (SOFA)
- Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS)

Program: Forensic Mental Health

Type: Certificate

Certificate Program Requirements

Item #	Title	Credits
FMH/PSY 505	Introduction to Forensic Mental Health	
PSY 575	Abnormal Psychology	
FMH/PSY 515	Evaluation & Treatment of Adult Offenders	
FMH/PSY 520	Evaluation & Treatment of Court Involved Youth	
FMH 527	Family and Juvenile Law	
	FMH/LAW/PSY elective by advisement	3
Total credits:		18

Forensic Mental Health Classes

FMH/PSY 505: Introduction to Forensic Mental Health

This course examines the forensic mental health system, the professionals within this system, and its consumers, or persons with mental disorders who also have legal troubles. Students will be introduced to the pathways for persons with mental disorders into and out of the criminal justice, mental health, social service, and juvenile justice systems. An overview of policies and outcomes of the FMH systems is also examined.

Program: Forensic Mental Health
Psychology

FMH/PSY 510: Victimology & Victim Services

This course examines four important topics pertaining to victimology and victim services. These include the nature and scope of victim's rights; the nature and incidence of victimization, especially pertaining to the victimization of women, children and the elderly; the construction of victim services to respond to victims with special needs, including disabilities, substance abuse, mental health issues, HIV/AIDS; and ethical, mental health, media relations, and training needs to victim service providers.

Prerequisites:

CRM 599 or equivalent; FMH/PSY 505

Program: Forensic Mental Health
Psychology

FMH/PSY 515: Evaluation & Treatment of Adult Offenders

This course has two emphases: evaluation and treatment. The student will be introduced to the assumptions, theories, methods and instrumentation used in the psychosocial and psycholegal evaluation of adults involved in the judicial and correctional systems. The special ethical issues presented by practice in forensic settings are emphasized. Students will learn how to appreciate relevant clinical and legal issues, and how to communicate findings to courts and social policymakers. Additionally, systems and clinical approaches to treating mentally disordered offenders will be addressed, with particular attention to the dual role of the forensic mental health professional in providing treatment and assuring public safety. Treatment and intervention methods will be examined from both individual and societal perspectives.

Prerequisites:

PSY 575, PSY/FMH 505

Program: Forensic Mental Health
Psychology

FMH/PSY 520: Evaluation & Treatment of Court Involved Youth

This course has two emphases: evaluation and treatment. The student will be introduced to the assumptions, theories, methods and instrumentation used in the psychosocial and psycholegal evaluation of court-involved youth. Evaluation questions pertaining to child welfare, child custody, and juvenile offenders will be considered. The special ethical issues presented by practice in forensic settings are emphasized. Students will learn how to appreciate relevant clinical and legal issues, and how to communicate findings to courts and social policymakers. Additionally, students will explore treatment and intervention models for court involved youth, in both community and institutional settings. Treatment of child victims as well as youthful offenders will be addressed. Treatment and intervention models will be examined from both individual and societal perspectives.

Prerequisites:

PSY 575, FMH/PSY 505

Program: Forensic Mental Health
Psychology

FMH 500: FMH Independent Study

Program: Forensic Mental Health

FMH 525: Introduction to U.S. Law for FMH

This course acts as an introduction to the contemporary legal system in the United States. Major areas of law as well as precedent-setting cases, developing trends, and legal terminology will be discussed.

Program: Forensic Mental Health

FMH 527: Family and Juvenile Law

This course examines state regulation of and intrusion into the family. Topics include the nature of marriage, definition of a family, courtship, rights and duties of husbands and wives, family breakdown, family after divorce, and the legal relationship between parent and child.

Program: Forensic Mental Health

FMH 533: Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Postvention

This course examines sociological, psychological and legal aspects of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. In addition to lecture, students participate in a two day suicide intervention skills training, known as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Upon completion of the training, students receive an ASIST certificate, which serves as a valuable resource in the professional world.

Program: Forensic Mental Health

FMH 535: Mental Health Law

This course examines constitutional provisions, statutes, regulations and case law relating to the interaction of mentally ill persons with the civil and criminal justice systems. In the civil realm, topics include the standards/procedures for commitment of civil patients to mental health facilities, the right to treatment, informed consent/the refusal of medication and assisted outpatient treatment. Criminal law topics include standards for determining competency to stand trial, the insanity defense, the post-conviction civil management of sex offenders and sex offender registration requirements.

Prerequisites:

FMH-505

Program: Forensic Mental Health

FMH 540: Externship in FMH

With the approval of the instructor, students in the Externship in Forensic Mental Health will select a field placement setting that is part of the extended local, county, state, or federal forensic mental health system. The student will work a minimum of 240 unpaid hours under site supervision and will also be supervised by a SGS faculty member. Performance in the placement is accompanied by reduced seat-time class sessions.

Prerequisites:

Completion of all program courses except Victimology (FMH 510) & a law elective; good academic standing

Program: Forensic Mental Health

FMH 592: Alcoholism/Drug Addiction: Vulnerabilities, Dynamics, and Problems

The course explores the biopsychosocial vulnerabilities and motivations for substance abuse. Signs and symptoms of substance related disorders, as well as social, psychological and physiological consequences of substance dependence are explored. Prevention and treatment models are also presented.

Program: Forensic Mental Health

FMH 599: Selected Topics

Program: Forensic Mental Health