

# Integrative Psychology Training and Emphasis Area

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## California School of Professional Psychology Psy.D. Alliant International University, San Diego

Psychology in the postmodern era requires a willingness to see “truth” in different psychological traditions, different value systems, different perceptions of reality, different forms of relationships, different spiritual paths--and to see this diversity as enhancing all our lives. A study of interdependent systems inclusive of these diverse ideas about identity, values, and health, and psychological practice describes an Integrative Psychology. The Clinical Psy.D. Program in San Diego provides innovative ways of knowing and training for psychological practice. All our candidates take two required Integrative Psychology courses, ensuring, for one thing, that all our graduates have pondered and written a *credo* to consider personal and professional moral agency. They will have considered the clinical implications of an Integrative philosophy, which proposes that multiple selves discourse multiple realities, with all systems interdependent.

### Integrative Psychology in the Training Program

An Integrative approach to well-being, as described in our Alliant International University catalog, ensures that practitioners attend not only to clients' cognitions and behaviors, but also to their diverse cultural and spiritual pathways. Since a psychologist's own perceptions profoundly influence intervention outcomes, studies and credits in Integrative Psychology intend that professionals-in-training refine mindfulness and values along with clinical skills.

Integrative Psychology recognizes the self as imbedded in systems, in a global culture. In many ways, it re-focuses attention on traditional healing practices acknowledging the complex ways in which socio-cultural context, body, mind and emotions continually interact and influence well-being. Integrative Psychology includes the often-marginalized study of spirituality, intentional consciousness, meditation, biofeedback, imagery, somatic practices, creativity and expressive arts, human ecology, postmodern gender and cultural psychologies--and their application in clinical settings. At the same time, the field values mainstream psychological models and emphasizes research based on systems theory, human sciences, and integrated methods.

In addition to two required courses (*Intro to Integrative Psychology* and an elective), all candidates are encouraged to elect others from the seminars designed for the Integrative Psychology Emphasis. Course descriptions of these seminars are included in the attached **Curriculum** file. Candidates who are enrolled in the Integrative Psychology Emphasis sequence are required to take a minimum of four others, ending with the “exit” course in *Integrative Psychotherapies*.

**“Integrative psychology emphasizes understanding humankind's various cultures, and the spiritual dimension that universally underlies them. It integrates the empirical paradigms of psychology with alternative traditions of healing. It explores new-physics science's assumptions in relation to a pluralistic and ecological framework, seeking integrated personal and social wellness.” –DE**

Candidates with a declared Integrative Emphasis (14 of 45 in this Fall's entering Psy.D. cohort) are active in mentoring, academic and social support, and monthly discussion topics at the **Center for Integrative Psychology** (described below). Faculty and peer-group recommend supervision at practicum and internship sites related to integrative practices, and assist in integrative dissertation research. For example, an existential study with therapists who work long-term with survivors of torture recently won CSPP's "Best Research" award. From 16 projects presented at the *Integrative Research Fair* in Spring 2006, five of the candidates have professionally published or presented on their research topics through mentoring within the CIP network.

Integrative Psychology addresses a shortage of qualified psychologists skilled in holistic balancing of health, suffering and death issues, psychospiritual counseling, and conflicts in cultural and social systems. For individuals, organizations, and communities, integrative psychologists may provide pathways rather than treat pathologies. Researchers and clinicians who are qualified to apply and assess multidisciplinary healing practices are now implementing integrative medicine in Hospitals and traditional, complementary, and alternative medical settings.

## **Some History**

The PsyD Program in Clinical Psychology at CSPP-AIU in San Diego offers doctoral education and training in clinical psychology consistent with a Practitioner model. Its central goal is to prepare graduates for the practice of professional psychology. CSPP was established in 1969, in partnership with the California Psychological Association. The Clinical PsyD Program opened in the Fall of 1991 and was quickly accredited by the APA in May of 1994, and re-accredited in 1997 and 2000.

About the time that CSPP first received APA accreditation, the burgeoning of schools like CSPP resulted in a National Conference for Schools of Professional Psychology and a follow-up (1986) publication *Quality in Professional Psychology Training*. Julian Meltzoff described the ideal training for professional psychologists as a five-sided pyramid (p.24). It included **practice, theoretical principles, research skills, culture and society**, "which deals with knowledge of customs, minority subgroups, attitudes and values, social forces, environmental impact, and the like". The fifth side of the pyramid called for "a broad background in the **humanities**-literature, drama, philosophy, art, music, history—a base of knowledge that identifies professionals as educated men and women and brings depth and perspective to their professional world . . ."

Meltzoff, while being San Diego's enforcer of rigorous quantitative research, reified our program's philosophy, that "[One] who practices without some genuine understanding of culture/society and humanities will be a narrow technician . . ." Perhaps, because of its humanistic founding, CSPP-San Diego's Psy.D. Program maintained this inclusion through APA accreditations. Research from our graduates (a representative  $n$  of over 300), with 83% recommended, often eloquently, that future trainees continue with the same (or more) humanistic/integrative studies that had been required of them (a course every year).

Forward to 1996 (when spirituality and psychology could not be named in the same sentence), the Provost of our campus convened community gatherings to expand the real-life usefulness of psychology in personal and community meaning making, to include spirituality as an aspect of attention in professional psychology. An Integrative Psychology emphasis was written into the Psy.D. Curriculum. These meetings also resulted in funding and faculty support for a Center for Integrative Psychology, a unique entity.

## **The Center for Integrative Psychology**

The Center for Integrative Psychology functions as community and web based think-tank for assessing current needs and supporting a future-directed psychology. The Center is "housed" in CSPP's clinical Psy.D. Program, which provides doctoral candidates the opportunity to pursue Integrative interests within an APA accredited graduate training program.

Collaboration between CSPP/AIU and the Center intends the best of both worlds. A traditional, rigorous APA accredited clinical study and training, supplemented with an Integrative curriculum, designed and taught by members of the Center, enables graduates to function in both traditional and integrative oriented settings. Candidates gain real-world professional experience and contacts through the Center's community events and networking. The Center's resources provide faculty, internship sites, and a place to dialogue and envision.

The Center of Integrative Psychology intends to participate in, and contribute significantly to, current interdisciplinary paradigm shifts occurring in medicine, community and social health services, worldview perceptions, and global mind change.

For example, with several Native American leaders in the Center, one of the first action-oriented projects recognized that in 18 reservations and 4 Indian Health Centers in San Diego County, no licensed mental health practitioner was Native American. The Center successfully applied for a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to set up an MFT program for Native Americans, supported by Cultural Advisory Council representing all 18 reservations. Today, graduates from this program serve as Directors at two of the Indian Health Centers, and hold positions of leadership in several states. Two are finishing Ph.D's. *Meet one of the candidates:*

Juana Dixon, working to bring over 300 tribal leaders into national coalition, helped write a new Violence Against Women Act that was signed into law January 2006. This law included a Title IX that apportions "54 million dollars to Indian country." She is executive board member of the National Congress of American Indians and president of a nonprofit domestic violence coalition Strong Hearted Native Women. She serves as the advisory board of a Research and Policy Center based in DC "to assist tribal governments and the US congress."

Besides monthly Center for Integrative Psychology gatherings for stimulating exchange between candidates and the psychological community, recent public Events include workshops with a Toltec anthropologist/psychologist, an Energy Psychology demonstration and debate, and a Ralph Metzner workshop on Ecopsychology. In Fall 2007, the Center will sponsor an Integrative Psychology Conference for a national audience.

In addition, at the national level, **Director Don Eulert** has presented the Integrative model to the Board of Directors of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology and the Association for Humanistic Psychology. Under the Integrative umbrella, the Boards have met jointly, have begun collaborations, and are sponsoring a re-unification event at the 2007 APA convention featuring Integrative CEC workshops.

## Integrative Theory, Learning, and Research

### Theory

What is an Integrative Psychology? Recently we have been using Ken Wilber's *Integral Psychology* (2000) as a teaching text. His "all-quadrant" model provides a map for integrations necessary for whole human well-being: self as consciousness, self in belief systems and relationships, self embedded in institutions, and self as organism. "Cripple one quadrant and all four tend to hemorrhage" (p. 113). From his prodigious reading, Wilber has summarized evolutionary lines of development in each of the quadrants. Most orientations of therapy overlook that the individual actually proceeds in multiple lines of development--cognitive, affective, moral, psychological, spiritual and other. Add in a dozen or so sub personalities, which may all be quite separate.

**What's  
"Integral"?  
It simply means  
more balanced,  
comprehensive,  
interconnected,  
and  
whole.**

The Integrative Psychology model also differs from the usual in emphasizing psychology's agency in social contexts. The Preface to *Doing Psychology Critically* (Prilleltensky 2002) suggests:

Psychology is not, and cannot be, a neutral endeavor conducted by scientists and practitioners detached from social and political circumstances. It is a human and social endeavor. Psychologists live in specific social contexts. They are influenced by differing interests and complex power dynamics. Mainstream psychologists too often shy away from the resulting moral, social, and political implications.

### Learning

Whole-person learning and practice builds on the best of psychological science, such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, adding Eastern traditions such as Mindfulness Meditation. The integrative program applies traditional and cutting edge models to clinical and health settings; building on research such as that conducted by the National Institute of Health's Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (<http://nccam.nih.gov/>).

Integrative approaches apply to all aspects of graduate training and practice: (1) clinical theory and research, (2) clinical training, (3) student's experiential practice & personal development, and (4) community application. The first two components—clinical and research course work and training—includes all APA requirements, from Psychopathology to *Advanced Research Methods*. Whole-person learning contextualizes that material in an integrative frame.

The third component, which makes it quite rare, includes professional development (e.g., options to work with transpersonal, archetypal, somatic professionals) and experiential practices. From free meditation training to expressive arts to invitations to sweat lodges, we explicitly aim to provide our candidates with first hand experience in multi-cultural practices explicitly aimed towards personal and spiritual development, beyond academic or clinical skills.

The fourth component emphasizes applications to both clinical settings and the community, to make a difference in the field and in our culture. First, at hand, candidates serve in diverse clinical internship placements and volunteer work in the community.

### **Research**

Using the *Action Research* model, candidates are empowering politically persecuted Albanians, 12-step participants, exiting gang members, HIV-positives, parents suffering SIDS, troubled adolescent girls, East African refugees, women in the workplace, and so on. Automatically enrolled as members in the **Center for Integrative Psychology** (with its mission “to make a difference world-wide”)—candidates not only set up monthly discussions with local professionals of vision, but also execute workshops and conferences to bring in and interact with internationally recognized agents of change in psychology. Through email and the website [integrativepsychology.net](http://integrativepsychology.net), candidates are involved in making a difference in psychology’s role in culture.

**Advanced study allows graduates to define their own focus area through Advanced Seminars and Independent Study, as well as Doctoral scholarship and research.**

## **Research Assessment of the Integrative Model**

Matt Weiskopf, A 2004 graduate, used APA listserves to study psychologists’ attitudes towards complementary and alternative medicine. Embedded in the study were items that describe Integrative Psychology. The majority of 132 responses came from psychologists who reported their orientation as cognitive/behavioral.

1. More than 90% of respondents reported that they “mildly agree” to “strongly agree” that “It is important to develop a holistic model of psychology (mind/body/spirit) that can be incorporated into mainstream psychology.”
2. More than 91% of respondents reported that they “mildly agree” to “strongly agree” that “It is important for psychology to draw upon multiple disciplines (e.g., history, the arts, medicine, philosophy, spirituality, culture, ecology) in order to establish a more integrated model of psychology.”
3. More than 90% of respondents reported that they “mildly agree” to “strongly agree” that “It is important to integrate multiple schools of psychological thought (cognitive/behavioral, psychodynamic, humanistic/existential, narrative, transpersonal, integral, Eastern, cultural psychologies) in order to establish a more inclusive model of psychology.”
4. More than 59% of respondents reported that they “mildly agree” to “strongly agree” that “Psychologists should function as moral agents of social change.”

**The program honors diversity by integrating ecological, philosophical, spiritual, aesthetic, cultural and scientific ways of knowing.**

## Assessment from Learners and Practitioners

Perhaps the most telling description and assessment of Integrative Psychology, as a unique and valued aspect of training in our clinical Psy.D. Program, comes from statements volunteered by current doctoral candidates and graduate professionals.

In the following **Statements**, a recent graduate describes her integrative approach in work as mental health coordinator and psychologist for asylum-seekers and refugees in Istanbul as a part of Helsinki Citizen's Assembly Refugee Legal Aid Program, and in creating an Integrative training program with Turkish psychologists.

**Personal development is furthered by experiential practice, learning-community Center events, emphasis on mentoring, and practicum experiences that include diverse healing traditions.**

### Statements

*I have gained significant educational outcomes of the Integrative Emphasis:*

1. *A broader understanding and application of psychological concepts within a different cultural setting (Turkey), with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds (asylum-seekers and refugees). Understanding of how psychologists are moral agents of change.*

2. *Putting traditional psychological concepts within an integrative framework: A deeper understanding of a variety of psychological theories, clinical evaluation, diagnosis and treatment, identifying the limitations of each theory while appreciating the use of each. Identification of the relevance and applicability of each theory while taking into consideration a given client's presenting problems, history,*

*developmental history, culture, biology, genetics, age, gender, sexual orientation, family background assessing their strengths and weaknesses in line with major theoretical backgrounds.*

3. *Increased empathy, understanding, and decreased defensiveness in communicating with other mental health professionals with varying theoretical orientations. After graduating in May 2004, I have been practicing as the mental health coordinator and psychologist of asylum-seekers and refugees in Istanbul as a part of Helsinki Citizen's Assembly's Refugee Legal Aid Program. After doing this work for more than a year on a voluntary basis, I applied and received funds from several organizations. I also apply the integral model in work with clients, in communicating with other professionals in the field, and in training legal advisors of asylum seekers.*

*Opening a private practice, "Integral Psychological Counseling" in 2005, I have been using an integral model with my clients. I use the integral model with supervisees in private practice and in a MA Clinical Psychology Program in Istanbul. I conduct trainings on the Integral approach to other psychologists, counselors, coaches, and apply the integral model in the courses I teach at undergraduate level (such as adolescent psychology and lifespan development). –MG*

*Integrative approaches have innumerable implications in the workforce. As a research analyst working on a presidential initiative for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, I continually bring to the table an integrative approach that has actually changed the government culture in one program. When writing reports, I work to integrate subjective forms of truth (qualitative data) and objective forms of truth (quantitative data) into a time-bound framework. The combination of the two forms of data integrated into one higher meaning has changed the way that the agency is reporting outcomes and measures on its grant portfolio. The report templates are concise (eliminating lengthy and burdensome reports), meaningful, evaluative in nature, and interdisciplinary—they treat the entire program as an integrated whole including the system level, the group level, outcomes, processes, and individual client stories—they even track changes over time so that the reports themselves feel “alive”.*

*After seeing the response to the reports from monitoring agencies such as White House offices, OMB, and the Office for National Drug Control Policy, a decision was made to have the entire Division of Services Improvement use the same approach to understanding, analyzing, and reporting data. I directly attribute the success of these reports to my training in integrative psychology and find that the workforce community is receptive to such approaches especially because they **eliminate fragmentation of thought/ideas**, provide **meaning** and **purpose** to any professional mission, and are an avenue for developing interventions that **promote psychological and organizational health**.—RS*

### **Integrative psychotherapy may be regarded as a comprehensive system of theory, assessment, and treatment.**

*Being an Alumni of CSPP/AIU with an Integrative Emphasis has given me many advantages as an entry-level professional psychologist. Since graduating, I have been able to find work at a psychiatric rehabilitation program that utilizes a vast set of approaches for treating patients with severe psychiatric disorders in a semi-independent setting. I am certain that my successful progress at this program (starting as an intern and recently hired as a full time licensed psychologist) had much to do with the diverse exposure I received in the Integrative program. This exposure allows me to apply both traditional interventions (ex: cognitive and family therapy) as well as innovative interventions (such as body-based approaches for management of psychological symptoms and incorporation of spiritual ceremonies in group settings). The Integrative Emphasis not only allowed me to learn about a wide range of psychological approaches, but also provided me with critical tools to understand the benefits and shortcomings of each approach based on their historical and cultural origins.—YP*

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*The Integrative Model has allowed me to go beyond psychological theory. It has helped me view my clients as a whole person--body, mind, and spirit. Incorporating traditional Freudian psychoanalytic theory and using the Cognitive Behavioral Model is only the tip of the iceberg. The Integrative Psy.D. Program has introduced the idea that each theory, model, and method is all integral facets of the same remarkable jewel. I have thus been able to truly meet my clients where they are at, customizing each treatment plan to the client's worldview. Each client's culture, tradition, spirituality, sexual orientation, past experiences, somatic symptoms, as well as psychological distress are all examined. This model fosters a safe therapeutic environment for my clients. I have the freedom to be a true healer in a space where intuition and creativity are powerful conduits to enhance the foundation of knowledge, skill and experience I have gained throughout my training in the program.—KS*

*When I began searching for APA accredited Psy.D. programs, I began with the desire to find not only one that matched my professional interests, but also one that illustrated a commitment to the history of psychology combined with the current zeitgeist of an integrated approach to treatment. For me, this meant that a program had to be open to traditional modalities of treatment combined with alternative approaches to wellness and conceptualization of my patients. The Integrative Emphasis at CSPP at AIU was the ONLY accredited program at the time of my application that offered such a comprehensive and innovative program. As a result, the only program to which I applied was CSPP at AIU. After I gained acceptance, I became deeply involved in my studies and in the Center for Integrative Psychology because I strongly believed that I needed to become a part of this newer approach to assessment and treatment, as well as creating opportunity to share the ever-growing knowledge base to the community.—CZ*

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*I searched for years to find an Integrative approach to psychology within an accredited program. CSPP's Integrative emphasis strikes the ideal balance between core Western training and alternative healing for a comprehensive education, a caliber of education essentially unrivaled in the field. Besides the curriculum, the Center for Integrative Psychology offers support and ongoing education for students, alumni, and the larger community. I feel lucky to be part of something that is actually influencing the direction of psychology.—JK*

**Beginning studies prepare the candidate with systemic, reflective, critical and creative tools to assess socially constructed assumptions about healing.**

*Clinical graduate studies were less relevant than Integrative Studies in the curriculum, with the Arts and Creativity especially significant. Learning to honor the creative process, I came to see it as identical to the healing process. “Something” within the individual customizes the way through the process. These studies also reminded me to avoid taking a stance of superiority in relation to clients. We all are wounded in some way. Mastering the results of our wounds is an invitation we all have in common. Expressive Arts Therapies are ideal for externalizing traumatic material, in which the pre-verbal and the unspeakable can be represented without flooding or shaming.*

*About Systems Theories: Although trauma was not itself featured, I now see that Systems Theories offered an explanation for how people recover from profound trauma. All organisms, and all systems, are “hard-wired” to evolve into increasingly complex levels. Thus, trauma is not all bad. When properly metabolized, intense emotional experiences cause the individual to become re-organized at a higher level of unique complexity. This universal law from systems theories in physics and biology applies to the body as well as the personality.—KH*

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*The Integrative Psychology program at CSPP not only gives us the opportunity to examine psychology in new and interesting ways; it also provides us with the education, training, and experience to do so competently. As we become increasingly aware of the intersection of psychology and all the various aspects of our lives, so it becomes more and more important for us to make thoughtful, organized explorations of the interactions between psychological practice and such areas as culture, language, art, law, and spirituality. In the context of what is becoming a significantly compartmentalized field, in which students are encouraged to define their orientation as either cognitive/behavioral, psychodynamic/psychoanalytic, or existential humanistic--among others--the need for a synthetic approach becomes more pressing. The integrative program is not just about exploring strange new dimensions of psychology; it is also about cultivating the compatibility of the extant areas of research and finding common ground.—WZ*

*Integrative classes have given me the tools to see outside of the box and to find innovative ways to provide treatment for long standing disorders. One of my successful uses of an integrative class was using interventions from an Ecopsychology course. I was working with a depressed client who had chronic pain. She reported being motivated for improvement, but had participated in several years of therapy with little movement. She was not responding to the typical "Get out of the house and do something", as many folks do not. I gave her a "Place Bonding" activity from Ecopsychology that not only gets someone out, but helps them to focus on their connection to the greater Earth. This activity became a cornerstone of our treatment and was adapted to her going to place bond where animals were present, and eventually where more people were around. At the end of treatment, she stated she felt the most important intervention of the year was getting her out of her house, which helped her to realize she was not as unlike others as she had thought. She also felt reconnected to nature, which was an important aspect of her life prior to a major accident.—DC*

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*Studying the practice of psychology from an integrative perspective at CSPP has provided me with an invaluable perspective on the way that I think about my clients and approach treatment planning. Working with acute populations and with children, I have seen that psychological interventions are not "cookie cutters." While traditional psychotherapy may work for some people, I have found that many people and populations need more creative, hands-on, outside of the box strategies to obtain self-awareness and personal growth. In particular, I have used the Integrative program to apply nature and outdoor activities with traditional psychotherapy principles. I have found this combination to work particularly well with children and adolescents who developmentally do not have the insight or language skills to engage in traditional talk therapy. Instead of being told of your strengths and weaknesses, using nature and outdoor adventures provides a first hand perspective to learn how you interact with others, patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaviors, and a novel environment to facilitate change. I am grateful that my training has provided the opportunity to combine alternative, integrated approaches to my clinical work with traditional psychotherapy theories.—SR*

**We propose a practical psychology large enough to study human interactions in whole systems, to address disassociations of identity, and to promote a healthy and sustainable society.**

*The Integrative Psychology emphasis at AIU represents what I see as a shockingly under-represented perspective toward the theory and practice of our field. The Integrative approach seeks to understand and synthesize efficacious means across both the mainstream of psychological theory and technique, while also seeking to include perspectives and practices from wisdom and spiritual traditions that have sought to enhance well-being throughout human history. Treating clients is not a strictly scientific endeavor, but also a creative one. The Integrative approach seeks to use the widest possible pallet in designing appropriate and individualized treatment, while also acknowledging that the individual is part of the greater systems in communities of family, ethnic, national and global cultures. I'm surprised to see just how uncommon this approach seems to be in accredited doctoral programs, as it seems clearly to be the future of our field. —NB*