

MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY: CONTEMPLATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY 2010–11

"Buddhist psychology is based on the notion that human beings are fundamentally good. Their most basic qualities are positive ones: openness, intelligence and warmth."

—Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, founder of Naropa University

Program Description

The Contemplative Counseling Psychology Department offers a Master of Arts in Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy. This degree is designed for students who are inspired to work in the clinical setting and who are ready for the challenging personal work, which can prepare them to be fully present and available to their clients. Many students recognize in the program the opportunity to join their personal values with their livelihood.

Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy is a three-year program, which may only be done on a full-time basis. This means the sequence of classes must be followed and one travels through the program as a member of one's class. (See the program requirements for each semester to get an idea of how much time you will spend in each class.)

Many psychologists have identified the ability to truly "be with" one another as the most important gift a psychotherapist has to offer to a client in psychological pain. The ability to be with others comes from being able to be with oneself no matter what state of mind one may be experiencing: vivid emotions, confusing thoughts, quiet peacefulness.

Contemplative psychotherapy may be said to have two parents: the 2,500-year-old wisdom tradition of Buddhism and the clinical traditions of Western psychology, especially the Humanistic school. Like all offspring it has much in common with both of its parents and yet is uniquely itself at the same time. From Buddhism comes the practice of mindfulness/awareness meditation, together with a highly sophisticated understanding of the functioning of the mind in sanity and in confusion. From Western psychology comes the investigation of the stages of human development, a precise language for discussing mental disturbance and the intimate method of working with others known as "psychotherapy." All course work in the program combines intellectual and experiential components.

Being a student of contemplative psychotherapy is a very personal experience. For many it is a time of intense emotional and philosophical exploration. It is not, however, a substitute for psychotherapy. Applicants who are in psychotherapy are encouraged to explore their readiness for this kind of challenging work with their psychotherapist before applying.

The training of contemplative psychotherapists begins by providing students with opportunities to become intimately familiar with both sanity and confusion in their own experience. In the first semester, they also examine the foundational ideas of contemplative psychotherapy and the nature of transition. In this semester, as elsewhere in the program, students' current experiences provide much of the raw material of their

studies. Through the practice of sitting meditation, the Maitri program and through formal study of the mind in sanity and disturbance, students become more "at home" with the varieties of psychological experience.

This increasing ability to be with oneself and others provides the ground for studying and practicing the clinical skills necessary for entering into genuine therapeutic relationships with clients. In the second year of the program, students focus on developing these skills. In the third year, students do a nine-month internship in community agencies while participating in small group clinical tutorials with department faculty. Throughout the program students participate in process groups with class members. These groups provide the opportunity for students to discuss and explore their experience as they journey through the program.

Hallmarks of the Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy Training Program

1. "Brilliant Sanity"

The root teaching of the program is the notion of "brilliant sanity." This means that we all have within us a natural dignity and wisdom. Our basic nature is characterized by clarity, openness and compassion. This wisdom may be temporarily covered over, but nonetheless, it is there and may be cultivated. Practitioners of contemplative psychotherapy become experts at recognizing sanity within even the most confused and distorted states of mind and are trained to nurture this sanity in themselves and in their clients.

2. Community

By going through the program together with their classmates, students have the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills, identify their own issues, and learn to offer and receive support and encouragement. Being a member of the community requires one to relate on an ongoing basis with the same support group of people for three years. This can be delightful: students find that they can relax and be accepted for who they truly are. It can also be very irritating: those same people are there again and again and they know all about each other.

3. The Maitri Programs

Students spend a total of about ten weeks during the program living together as a learning community. Held in a scenic setting away from Boulder, the three separate maitri programs include intensive sitting and walking meditation, the introduction of tonglen practice study (a Mahayana meditation designed to cultivate a compassionate heart), and the maitri space awareness practice. Space awareness practice is done in five rooms. Each room is a different color and tends to intensify different emotional and psychological states: both their "wisdom" aspects and their confused aspects. By doing maitri space awareness practice in the context of both personal awareness meditation and also of community, students come to recognize their own patterns, to become friendly toward themselves in different states of mind and to develop genuine humor and compassion toward

themselves and others. This often leads to relaxation and fearlessness in working with others. Students spend about a month at maitri in each of the first two years of the program and approximately a week during the third year. During the third year, students examine the teachings on the bardo (the time between death and rebirth) from *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which provide a powerful metaphor for the ending of their Naropa journey.

4. Clinical Tutorial Groups

During the internship year, students participate in weekly tutorial groups made up of three students and two clinical faculty members. Using a specially designed contemplative practice called "Body, Speech and Mind," students foster the ability to fearlessly and gently touch another's pain. When combined with ongoing meditation practice, these groups cultivate compassion and the ability to be present with others in genuine relationship.

5. Contemplative Practice

Since the ground of working with others is taken to be familiarity with one's own experience, the program places great emphasis on meditation practice and body/mind awareness disciplines. There are meditation practicum classes each semester of the program. During the second and third year, these classes provide formal support for students' sitting practices as well as cultivate the community aspect of the program. Students are encouraged to develop a daily sitting practice and are required to sit at least five hours a week. They may work up to this gradually during the first semester. Each semester the program conducts an intensive practice week during which students practice sitting and walking meditation during their class times. Students are also strongly encouraged to engage in body awareness practices such as t'ai chi, yoga, aikido and other mind-body synchronization practices. Each student also works with an individual meditation instructor throughout the program. People who are new to meditation practice are encouraged to try it out before applying to the program.

6. Dynamic Approach to Curriculum Planning

Over its more than thirty years of existence, the MA Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy program has changed many of its classes and requirements. The root teachings—meditation, the maitri program, the nine-month internship and tutorial groups—have remained much the same. At the same time, we are always re-evaluating, and often changing, other elements of the training. The department's curriculum committee evaluates and redesigns the program under the supervision of the program director. Two students are full members of this committee, and it is often in response to students' suggestions that the program continues to improve. Learning to tolerate "groundlessness" is regarded as an essential quality in a therapist, so we sometimes say, "Chaos is good news." Examples of changes include course work devoted to diversity awareness.

Preparation for Clinical Work:

Licensing and Other Matters

The counseling programs of the Graduate School of Psychology convey the subject matter of their respective disciplines within a framework of training and education so that graduates may serve as professional counselors. Naropa University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Thus, graduates of our program are able to inform licensing boards and potential employers that they graduated from a regionally accredited program.

Learners are strongly encouraged to carefully research the educational requirements for the intended licensure or certification in the state(s) where they will seek licensure or certification. The programs of the Graduate School of Psychology have not sought approval by the Council

for Accreditation and Other Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Nevertheless, the faculty has developed the curricula with CACREP requirements, as well as other recognized professional and national standards, including the state of Colorado, in mind. Please note that the licensure requirements of state boards and licensing agencies vary from state to state and change over time. Consequently, successful completion of degree requirements does not guarantee that a state board or licensing agency will accept a graduate's application for licensure. It is important that learners are aware of their responsibilities regarding licensure and certification; advisors are available to discuss professional and career matters with learners and graduates.

Naropa graduates have a history of success in receiving licensure/certification across the United States; faculty and advising staff will assist students in this regard, recognizing that some state requirements may include additional course work not covered in a single graduate program. Learners should monitor developments in their intended states for licensure/certification, and work with their faculty and advising staff to explore options for meeting their requirements.

Our students are thoroughly trained in clinical skills and understandings. Students are trained in both individual and group psychotherapy techniques in the second year. The nine-month internship in the third year provides the opportunity for students to experience work in specialized areas (see list of internship placements).

The culmination of the internship is the writing of the master's paper. Students choose areas that interest them and explore both contemplative and Western approaches to their topics, using clinical material from the internship to illustrate their ideas. A high point in the program is the master's paper weekend when the students present their work to groups of classmates and clinical faculty.

Since the program prepares students to do the personally challenging work of psychotherapy with clients, students are evaluated on an ongoing basis to assess their readiness to go on to maitri retreats, to internship or to continue in the program altogether. The department may deny a student permission to progress in the program. Although grades are one indication of progress in the program, other criteria for evaluation include how students interact with each other, with faculty and with the administration, as well as how they handle obstacles that arise, and how they receive and work with feedback.

Upon completion of the program, graduates will have developed confidence in themselves and in their clinical abilities and will be ready to make a meaningful contribution to the well-being of others. Over the years our graduates have been recognized for their self-confidence and their ability to be with clients without demanding that the clients change to meet the therapists' private needs and agendas.

Some Questions That Are Often Asked

1. "I know that this program places strong emphasis on the Buddhist understanding of mind and on meditation practice; do I have to be a Buddhist to do this program? Do you expect me to become one?"
Not at all! Actually very few of our students are Buddhist. Of those who are, many different traditions are represented. Students from other spiritual traditions and those who feel no special connection with any tradition are part of our community.
2. "Can I do this program part-time?" Unfortunately, no. One of the most powerful aspects of the program is the community of classmates who journey together for three years. One's classmates provide support and challenge. This continuity provides a reference point as one goes through the many changes of working with oneself and others. The restructuring of the curriculum makes the program accessible to some students who could have not have participated in it before.

3. **“What if I have children?”** The program tries to be responsive to the needs of parents, but it is more difficult for parents to do this program. At the same time, many parents have done it. Generally the problem area is leaving for the maitri programs. We try to arrange for parents to visit their children. Occasionally, a parent is allowed to bring a child to maitri. In that case, a parent must provide for a full-time “nanny.”

4. **“Are there prerequisites for this program? I haven’t studied psychology before.”** We do not have any specific prerequisites for the program. We have found that some of our most successful students have come from backgrounds other than psychology. Significant life experience seems to be the most valuable prior “work” one can have done. However many internship placements will not accept students who have not had some experience in the field. For this reason we strongly encourage those without such experience to do volunteer work either before they come or during the first two years of the program. A background or some reading in psychology can, of course, be very useful before entering the program.

List of Internship Placements

The following are some of the agencies in the Boulder-Denver area currently participating in the field placement program. Available placements change slightly from year to year; our internship coordinators add placements each year while others are discontinued.

1. Access Counseling
2. Arapahoe/Douglas Mental Health Center
3. Boulder Alcohol Education Center
4. Boulder County Safehouse
5. Catholic Charities
6. Centennial Mental Health Center
7. Center for Alternatives to Family Violence
8. Center for Behavioral Health – Porter Care Hospital, The
9. Centura Home Health Care and Hospice
10. Colorado AIDS Project
11. Health Department of Boulder County:
Outpatient Substance Abuse Program
Prevention and Intervention Program
12. Jewish Family Services
13. Maria Droste Services of Colorado, Inc.
14. Mental Health Center of Boulder County:
Adolescent Treatment Center
Adult Treatment Team
Broomfield Clinic
Child, Adolescent, and Family Services
Community Support System Team
Elementary Day Treatment
Emergency Psychiatric Services
Geriatrics
Inpatient
Lafayette Clinic
Multicultural Consolation Office
Outpatient Drug Treatment Team
Rape Crisis Team
School Based Services
Summit
15. Mental Health Corporation of Denver, The
16. Naropa Counseling Center
17. Noeticus
18. Pastoral Care Services
19. Rape Awareness and Assistance Program
20. University of Colorado: Counseling and Career Services:
A Multicultural Center
Employee Assistance Program
21. Veteran’s Center

MA PSYCHOLOGY: CONTEMPLATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY REQUIREMENTS*

First year, fall

PSYC 600	Opening Retreat (noncredit)
PSYC 608	Introduction to Buddhist Psychology (2)
PSYC 609	Group Process I (1)
PSYC 618	Human Growth and Development: Contemplative View (2)
PSYC 718	Community (2)
PSYC 778	Transitions, Lifestyles and Career Development (2)
SUBTOTAL	9

First year, spring

PSYC 619	Group Process II (1)
PSYC 628	Evolution of Concepts in Western Psychotherapy (2)
PSYC 650	Diversity Awareness and Multicultural Competence (2)
PSYC 658	Buddhist Psychology II: Abhidharma and the Psychology of Confusion (2)
PSYC 678	Psychopathology I: Sanity and Neurosis (2)
PSYC 689	Maitri I (2)
SUBTOTAL	11

Second year, fall

PSYC 629	Group Process III (1)
PSYC 669	Buddhist Psychology III: Compassion and the Heart of Emptiness (2)
PSYC 700	Research and Statistics (2)
PSYC 728	Therapeutic Relationships I (2)
PSYC 798	Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy (2)
PSYC 864	Contemplative Psychotherapy Practicum (3)
SUBTOTAL	12

Second year, spring

PSYC 605	Large Group Process I (0.5)
PSYC 639	Group Process IV (0.5)
PSYC 668	Family Process (2)
PSYC 708	Buddhist Psychology IV: The Practice of Psychotherapy and the Path of the Bodhisattva (2)
PSYC 738	Psychopathology II: Psychosis (2)
PSYC 758	Therapeutic Relationships II (2)
PSYC 789	Maitri II (2)
SUBTOTAL	11

Third year, fall

PSYC 625	Large Group Process II (0.5)
PSYC 702	Assessment and Appraisal (2)
PSYC 709	Buddhist Psychology V: Mandala and Clinical Applications (0.5)
PSYC 719	Group Process V (1)
PSYC 788	Therapeutic Relationships III (2)
PSYC 808	Field Placement I (3–5)
PSYC 818	Clinical Tutorial I (2)
SUBTOTAL	11

Third year, spring

PSYC 635	Large Group Process III (0.5)
PSYC 729	Group Process VI (1)
PSYC 739	Buddhist Psychology VI: Review of Buddhist Psychology and Clinical Applications (0.5)
PSYC 858	Field Placement II (3–5)
PSYC 868	Clinical Tutorial II (2)
PSYC 888	Master’s Paper Seminar (1.5)
PSYC 889	Maitri III (0.5)
SUBTOTAL	9

TOTAL CREDITS 63

*This fact sheet describes the 2009–10 curriculum for the MA in Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy. Naropa University faculty and staff are committed to regular review and revision of the curriculum, to reflect new findings and understandings in the field, feedback from alumni and the professional community, and faculty expertise. Please inquire with the Office of Admissions and/or the Contemplative Counseling Psychology Department for any curricular changes that are being considered for future academic years.

Careers

Recent alumni from the MA Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy program are pursuing the following careers:

- Therapist, Rape Assistance & Awareness Program, Denver, CO
- Family attachment counselor, South Sound Attachment Clinic, Olympia, WA
- Child & family psychotherapist, Child Guidance Clinic, Springfield, MA
- Residential counselor, DePaul Treatment Center, Portland, OR
- Mobile & outpatient therapist, St. Anthony's Point, Hermitage, PA
- Grief counselor, Denver Hospice, Denver, CO
- Contemplative psychotherapist, Qi Integrated Health, Vancouver, BC, Canada
- Psychotherapist, private practice, Bumsville, NC
- Family & youth psychotherapist, New York, NY
- Assistant program director, AIM House, Boulder, CO
- Team counselor, Windhorse Associates, Northampton, MA
- Therapist, Cooper-Riis Healing Farm Community, Mill Spring, NC
- Child crisis therapist, Boulder County Mental Health, Boulder, CO
- Substance abuse services coordinator, University of Colorado Counseling & Psychological Services, Boulder, CO

Contemplative Counseling Psychology Department Ranked Faculty

Lauren Casalino, Chair

BA, Rutgers College; MA, The Naropa Institute; LPC.

Lauren Casalino is department chair and a member of the Department Leadership Team. In private practice for the past sixteen years, Lauren specializes in working with issues of infertility and with people who are grieving and who are dying. She is also a founder of Windhorse Family and Elder Services, which specializes in intensive home-based treatment. She is the former managing editor of the Journal of Contemplative Psychotherapy and a licensed professional counselor in Colorado.

MacAndrew Jack, PhD

**BA, Tufts University; MA, University of Tulsa;
PhD, Temple University; LP.**

MacAndrew Jack brings experience in both empirical research and individual psychotherapy. MacAndrew's research has explored psychophysiological processes involved in panic, breathing and the parasympathetic nervous system. A licensed psychologist in private practice, MacAndrew's therapeutic training has included cognitive behavioral and modern psychoanalytic orientations. Before coming to Naropa, MacAndrew was a clinical fellow at Harvard Medical School where he specialized in mind/body approaches to the treatment of anxiety, respiratory disorders and trauma.

Susan Nimmanheminda, PhD

MSW, University of Denver; PhD, University of Denver; Professional Certification, National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis.

Susan Nimmanheminda has been a faculty member in the Contemplative Psychotherapy Department since 1996, leading Group Process classes. Together with others, she is developing a model that integrates Buddhist mindfulness orientation and group dynamics principles. She has presented on Buddhism and groups at the American Group Psychotherapy Association annual meeting several times and co-authored an article on the subject.

Karen Kissel Wegela, PhD

**BA, University of Rochester; MA, Boston University;
MA, University of Denver; PhD, Union Institute; LP.**

Karen Kissel Wegela directed the Contemplative Counseling Psychology Department for many years and continues to be a member of the Department Leadership Team. She holds master's degrees in English language and literature and in counseling. A licensed psychologist in private practice since 1977, she also has been involved in work in the public sector. Her book, *How to Be a Help Instead of a Nuisance*, presents basic principles of contemplative psychotherapy for professional and nonprofessional helpers.

Ranked Faculty from Other Departments

Zoë Avstreich (Somatic Counseling Psychology)

Adjunct Faculty

Jackie Ashley, Susan Barbieri, Paul Bialek, Jane Bryant, Sharon Conlin, William Coppersmith, Gretchen Kahre, Francis Kaklauskas, Ryan Lane, Jeremy Lowry, Dolly Muzer, Elizabeth Olson, Judith Partin, Pat Patton, Jeff Price, Alexandra Shenpen, Helena Unger, Robert Unger, Ernie Zullo

PSYCHOLOGY: CONTEMPLATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

You are strongly encouraged to visit Naropa University. Events for prospective students are scheduled every fall and spring. See www.naropa.edu/admissions/grad_events.cfm for more information. The visitation coordinator will be happy to arrange for you to meet with an admissions counselor or a member of our faculty, visit a class or take a campus tour. Arapahoe Campus tours are offered Monday through Friday at 2 p.m. in the main lobby of the Administration Building. Tours of the Paramita Campus (MA Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy, MA Somatic Counseling Psychology and MA Transpersonal Counseling Psychology) are offered Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 3:30 p.m. by reservation only. The visitation coordinator can be contacted at 303-546-3548 or 1-800-772-6951 (within North America) or at admissions@naropa.edu. You can also use the online Visitation Request form or view our campus from the online tour.

If you decide you would like to apply for admission, we prefer that you do so electronically via www.naropa.edu/apply.

Suggested Deadline

Naropa University uses a rolling admission policy. Applicants may apply as early as September for summer and fall admission. Applications received between September 1 and the suggested deadline will be given equal consideration. Applications received after the suggested deadline will be reviewed on a space-available basis.

- January 15 for fall semester admission

GRADUATE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution is required for admission to all graduate programs.

A completed graduate application for Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy consists of the following:

1. Completed application form.
2. A \$60 nonrefundable application fee in the form of a check or money order, payable to "Naropa University." Applicant's name must be clearly indicated on the check.
3. Three-to-five-page typed, double-spaced statement of interest.
4. Resumé.
5. Three letters of recommendation (all must be on the forms provided and not from family members or current therapists). At least two of the letters must be submitted by individuals who are in a position to comment upon your professional and/or academic pursuits. These letters should come from supervisors of your work or volunteer experiences and/or from former college professors.
6. Official transcripts of all previous college-level study that reflect the completion of a bachelor's degree, sent directly to Naropa's Admissions Office from the registrar of previous institutions or in a sealed envelope with the application.
7. Applicants must show considerable maturity and strong motivation for working with others.
8. Some prior work experience in a clinical setting, either paid or volunteer, is strongly recommended. First-year students who do not have such experience will be encouraged to perform four hours per week of volunteer work in a mental health agency during the fall and spring semesters in preparation for the internship.
9. Supplemental application (attached).
10. Selected applicants will be required to come to Naropa to participate in both a small group and individual interview.

Supplemental Application

The suggested deadline is January 15; however, we continue to accept applications beyond that date as space allows.

The MA Psychology: Contemplative Psychotherapy program is a professional training program designed to prepare its graduates to work in the psychotherapy field. We consider it highly desirable that our students come to the program with some prior experience related to the process of psychotherapy, either as a client of psychotherapy or as a volunteer in a mental health agency.

The program is challenging mentally and emotionally. In particular, the practice environment of the Maitri Space Awareness retreats is quite intensive. While the underlying focus of all of the retreats is on extending kindness to self and others, their highly structured schedule (for example, extensive periods of sitting meditation) can be especially difficult for some individuals. *At times people who are struggling with certain psychiatric/psychological disabilities have found that they are not able to meet the program's demands.*

Please note that in addition to tuition and fees posted in the course catalog, there are some other fees associated with this program. Currently, first- and second-year students pay approximately \$1,600 for maitri retreat room and board each year. Third-year students pay \$500 for maitri retreat room and board. Also, there is a \$25 per semester fee for meditation instruction throughout the entire program. These fees are subject to change.

In order to help us assess your suitability to commence with this course of training, please provide an answer to each of the following questions and submit them along with your completed Naropa University application for graduate admission. These may also be useful tools for self-evaluation and introspection, which will be part of the interview process. Each answer may be up to one page in length.

1. Describe what you have learned from working in service to others, as a professional or as a volunteer, in a mental health or comparable setting.
2. Describe how you have engaged in working with your own personal process. How have these experiences prepared you for completing the Contemplative Psychotherapy program and entering the psychotherapy profession?
3. Briefly describe your experiences living or working in a community environment. What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses in this area and what have you learned about yourself through working with others?
4. Describe your experience with sitting meditation and/or other body/mind awareness disciplines. What inspires you to commit to practicing sitting meditation in this program?