The Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology at USF is committed to the clinical-scientist training mentor model, and this commitment is reflected in our membership in the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science. We are also accredited by the American Psychological Association and the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System. Graduate students are actively involved in research throughout their residency in the program. Therefore, it is important for applicants to consider the research opportunities available at USF to ensure that there is a good match between their interests and the research programs of the Clinical faculty.

The research interests of the Clinical faculty are described below. Our faculty members have diverse interests within clinical psychology, and we urge applicants to read the descriptions carefully before deciding whether to apply to our program. In addition to the research foci of the individual faculty members, we’d like to highlight a few general areas that cut across faculty, and are therefore particular strengths of the clinical training program at USF. Please note, however, that these general themes do not represent all of the areas of research carried out by our faculty and students.

Health Psychology
This is the fastest-growing area within the field of clinical psychology, and it is a clear strength of our department. Areas of health psychology studied by our faculty include behavioral oncology and risk factors for cancer (Brandon, Jacobsen), addictive disorders (Bornovalova, Brandon, Goldman, Drobes), neuropsychology (Cimino), eating disorders (Thompson), and psychosocial aspects of diabetes (Sacco). Research in health psychology is enhanced by the presence of a medical school and large medical center on campus. Among the hospitals in the medical center are the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute and the James A. Haley Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Both of these facilities often serve as sites of clinical research and practicum placements for our students.

Addictive Behaviors
Substance abuse is one of the most prevalent behavioral problems today, impacting society in a multitude of ways. It is also an area that has benefited greatly from psychological research. Although mentioned above as a sub area within health psychology, addictive behaviors can also be considered a strength of our department in its own right. Clinical faculty conducting research in this area include Mark Goldman (alcohol expectancies), Thomas Brandon (tobacco use and cessation), Marina Bornovalova (drug use disorders and comorbidity with Borderline Personality Disorder), and David Drobes (drug addiction and craving).

Clinical Child Psychology
Clinical child psychology has been one of the most popular and expanding areas of study over the past decade. Department research spans the prevention-treatment continuum from studies of etiology, assessment, and treatment of child/adolescent disorders to primary and secondary prevention efforts to reduce rates of disorder and promote healthy functioning. Clinical faculty conducting research in this area include Vicky Phares (developmental psychopathology, parenting), Marc Karver (treatment processes and suicidal adolescents), Ellis Gesten (prevention, bullying/victimization, and resilience), Bill Sacco (psychosocial risk factors in childhood disorders), and Eric Storch (childhood anxiety disorders). Research and practicum sites include the USF Psychological Services Center, three local school districts, and the Rothman Center for Pediatric Neuropsychiatry in the USF Department of Pediatrics.

Psychopathology
The study of mental illness and disordered behaviors continues to serve as a foundation for much of clinical psychology. Faculty whose research falls in this area include Marina Bornovalova (externalizing disorders and behaviors), Marc Karver (self harm and suicidal behavior), Vicky Phares (developmental psychopathology), Jon Rottenberg (individual differences in the experience of emotions, especially depression), Bill Sacco (Depression and Diabetes), Kevin Thompson (Eating disorders), and Eric Storch (childhood anxiety disorders).

Clinical Neuropsychology
Clinical neuropsychology represents one of the more biologically-oriented areas within psychology. Areas of clinical neuropsychology studied by our faculty include recovery of function and neuropsychological effects of alcohol use (Goldman) and degenerative dementias and neuroanatomic substrates of emotion and memory (Cimino). Students seeking training in neuropsychology research have available specified
courses and training opportunities in addition to the clinical area core. Research and training sites include the Memory Disorders Clinic at the USF Health Sciences Center, and clinics at the Tampa VA Medical Center, Tampa General Hospital, and the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center. USF meets the APA Division 40/INS guidelines for training in clinical neuropsychology.

Clinical Faculty

Marina A. Bornovalova
(University of Maryland-College Park)
Assistant Professor

Research Interests:
In general, my research focuses on externalizing psychopathology, substance use disorders, and their interrelationship. Additionally, a large part of my work focuses on borderline personality disorder (BPD). I am especially interested in how problems with emotion regulation and inhibitory control (a.k.a. “impulsivity”) underlie the development of these phenomena, and how these vulnerabilities interact with environmental stressors (i.e., childhood trauma). In my research, I use several methods of examining etiology and causal influences. Specifically, I use a) correlational studies in clinical populations to identify risk factors associated with externalizing behaviors, substance use, and BPD; b) Laboratory analogue studies to further “tease out” the nature of underlying vulnerabilities (e.g., tasks tapping emotion dysregulation); c) treatment development studies to try to alter these vulnerabilities; and d) investigations of the genetic and environmental contributions to these phenomena (via twin studies, in collaboration with the Minnesota Twin and Family Study).

Representative Publications:
Bornovalova, M. A., Hicks, B., Iacono, W., & McGue, M. (In Press). Genetic and Environmental Influences on the Co-occurrence of Borderline Personality Traits And Substance Misuse From Middle To Late Adolescence. Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment.

Thomas H. Brandon, Ph.D.
(University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Professor

Research Interests:
My general research interest is in health psychology with a focus on addictive behaviors. Tobacco use has the greatest total negative health and economic impact of any addictive substance, so it is the primary focus of our research. Our laboratory uses two convergent research approaches. One is human laboratory research on addiction motivation, focusing on affective and cognitive variables involved in drug use
and relapse. Variables studied include affective state, outcome expectancies, task persistence, cue reactivity, and self-efficacy. The second approach involves large-scale treatment-outcome studies in which basic theory and research are applied to smoking cessation and relapse prevention. Treatment strategies investigated include: cue exposure, coping skills training, supportive counseling, cognitive mood-management therapies, and pharmacotherapies. Recently, we have also been investigating cost-effective minimal interventions for relapse-prevention. We have developed a series of Forever Free booklets that have been found to produce substantial reductions in smoking relapse, and consequently have been adopted by the National Cancer Institute and various health organizations throughout the country. We are now extending this research to special populations at risk for smoking relapse, such as pregnant/postpartum women, telephone quitline callers, and Hispanics.

Our laboratory is the Tobacco Research & Intervention Program at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. Our research has been funded by grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, and other foundations.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


Cynthia R. Cimino, Ph.D. (University of Florida) Associate Professor

Research Interests:
My research interests fall broadly within the area of human neuropsychology and in understanding how emotion and cognition are affected in various neurologic disorders. My research focuses on the neuropsychological and neuroanatomical underpinnings of emotion, attention and memory. I am particularly interested in how emotional states and affective stimuli influence cognitive processes such as attention and memory and what neuroanatomical systems subserve these influences. Recent interests include examination of how emotional stimuli and emotional states influence biases in memory and performance on incentive based tasks. Other research areas include investigation of the heterogeneity of cognitive symptomatology in degenerative dementias such as Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease and Alzheimer’s disease, the validity and utility of neuropsychological measures in assessing these disorders and the presence and influence of depression and other psychiatric symptomatology on manifestation of cognitive symptoms in these degenerative disorders.

Representative Publications and Presentations:


Ellis Gesten, Ph.D. (University of Rochester)
Professor

Research Interests:
Our Healthy Children Lab focuses broadly and primarily on prevention and health promotion in children and adolescents. Our work is done in close collaboration with the three large school districts in the Tampa Bay area whose concerns help to frame the focus of our research. We recently completed a longitudinal study of resilience in partnership with one district and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice that tracked one entire grade cohort through graduation and beyond. Two current thrusts center on: (1) the causes, assessment, and impact of bullying and victimization, including most recently cyber-bullying, and (2) the role of emotion and context (e.g. friends/bystanders) in children’s conflict resolution cognitive and behavioral strategies.

Representative Publications:


*Journal of Adolescence*, 32, 193-211.


Mark S. Goldman, Ph.D. (Rutgers University)
Distinguished Research Professor

Research Interests:
This laboratory investigates the influences of cognitive factors on behavior and physiological responses to addictive drugs. Our specific research area is alcohol expectancies and how they influence alcohol consumption and behavior while under the influence. To this end, we develop alcohol expectancy instruments, develop assessment techniques for alcohol related cognitions, and design preventive and therapeutic strategies for undermining the links between cognition and behavior. We are currently funded by grants from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Representative Publications:


Paul B. Jacobsen, Ph.D. (Michigan State University) Professor

Research Interests: My interest is in behavioral and psychosocial aspects of cancer and is conducted at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. The goal of this work is to demonstrate how an understanding of psychological principles can be used to reduce cancer-related morbidity and mortality. Over the past few years, my students and I have conducted a number of studies investigating the etiology and management of behavioral side effects of cancer treatment. With funding from the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, we demonstrated that a brief cognitive-behavioral intervention (stress management training) is effective in improving patients’ quality of life as they undergo cancer chemotherapy treatment. Based on these findings, we are near completion of a second randomized trial to examine the separate and combined effects of stress management training and exercise training on quality of life during chemotherapy treatment. Current work also focuses on investigating fatigue, one of the most common and distressing symptoms experienced by cancer patients. Our research has led to the development of tools to measure fatigue, estimates of the prevalence and intensity of fatigue during and following completion of cancer treatment, and identification of clinical and psychological factors that explain individual differences in fatigue severity. We are also involved in studying behavioral aspects of cancer prevention and detection. Along these lines, we are investigating ways to promote cancer screening and prevention behaviors among individuals who are at increased risk for cancer due to a family history of the disease.

Representative Publications:


Marc Karver, Ph.D. (Vanderbilt University) Associate Professor

Research Interests: My research interests include understanding core treatment processes (such as the therapeutic alliance) in mental health services research for children and adolescents and adolescent suicide risk assessment, prevention, and management. I take a close look at how mental health clinicians make decisions, what treatment techniques that they use, and how they form therapeutic relationships with their clients. I am interested in learning how to improve the work of experienced clinicians and to discover better ways to train novice clinicians. I am particularly interested in studying the provision of mental health services to “high risk” populations such as suicidal adolescents. I have been involved with several studies of adolescent suicidality. I examined mental health professionals’ ability to evaluate high risk adolescents and make placement decisions. I have also conducted a study looking at crisis line counselors’ ability to predict suicide related behaviors. I have also been involved in several studies looking at treatment processes related...
to engaging depressed and suicidal adolescents in treatment. I have had two SAMHSA grants to help develop and evaluate the suicide prevention program of the Albuquerque School district. I currently have a second large SAMHSA grant to help disseminate and evaluate suicide prevention efforts in the state of Florida.

Representative Publications:


Vicky Phares, Ph.D. (University of Vermont)
Professor and Director of Clinical Training

Research Interests:
My research group has explored a variety of issues related to child, adolescent, and family functioning. In particular, we have been interested in exploring the connections between psychopathology in fathers, mothers, and children. A focus of our work remains on gender in relation to parenting. Projects include measurement development (adolescents' perceptions of their parents, parents' emotional availability), multiple informant methodology (meta-analysis of fathers’ and mothers’ ratings of children's functioning, construct validation of interparental conflict), and exploration of racial/ethnic differences and similarities in families. Current work explores fathers’ participation in research and therapy as well as fathers’ and mothers’ involvement with their children.

Representative Publications:


Jonathan Rottenberg, Ph.D. (Stanford University)
Associate Professor

Research Interests:
Work in my laboratory is in the area of emotional pathology, particularly as it applies to Major Depressive Disorder. Using both experimental and naturalistic designs, we have been pursuing the hypothesis that a core dysfunction in depression involves a loss of the capacity to respond to changes in stimulus valence, a phenomenon we term emotion context insensitivity (ECI). Recent studies have examined ECI as a function of stimulus meaning in...
depressed individuals. Other projects in my laboratory examine biological markers of emotion dysregulation in depression, such as heart rate variability. Our work is funded by the National Institutes of Health. For more information, visit my laboratory website at: http://uweb.cas.usf.edu/mood/

Recent Publications:

William P. Sacco, Ph.D. (Florida State University) Professor

Research Interests:
My primary interests are in the area of clinical health psychology, especially the link between depression and health. Recent studies in our lab have focused on psychosocial aspects of diabetes. We have recently completed several studies examining factors contributing to depression in people with diabetes, including adherence, BMI, self-efficacy, medical symptoms and glycemic control. For additional information, please go to: http://psychology.usf.edu/faculty/index.aspx?name=w.sacco

Representative Publications and Presentations:

J. Kevin Thompson, Ph.D. (University of Georgia) Professor

Research Interests:
For the past 20 years, my research has focused largely in the area of body image disturbance. Recent interests include a variety of topics related to etiology, assessment and treatment. In addition, I have conducted research in a wide diversity of samples, including adolescents, adults, cosmetic surgery patients, and eating-disordered individuals. Recent interests include sociocultural pressures, especially media influences on body image, and the role of peer/parental feedback in the form of negative commentary, especially teasing, on the development of body satisfaction. Also, in collaboration with Dr. Paul Jacobsen, I have recently begun to explore body image issues involved in tanning behavior. We received a grant from the National Cancer Institute to investigate this area. Finally, we have recently completed a book on the “muscular ideal” and are exploring this issue in men, boys, and women.

Representative Publications and Presentations:


Affiliated Faculty

David J. Drobes, Ph.D. (Purdue University) Professor

Research Interests: Research in my lab examines affective and attentional processes in addiction by utilizing a range of cognitive and psychophysiological indices. In one area of research, we are examining cue-elicited drug craving in smoking behavior, as well as the interaction between smoking and alcohol use. Another line of research is exploring cognitive and affective features of nicotine withdrawal, with an emphasis on how these relate to genetic and other individual difference variables. A new area of research is concerned with the impact of physical activity on both motivation to smoke and nicotine withdrawal. A long-term goal is the translation of human laboratory findings into interventions for smoking cessation and other forms of drug addiction. My laboratory is located within the Moffitt Cancer Center. Our work has been funded continuously over the past fifteen years by federal and institutional grants.

Representative Publications:


Eric A. Storch, Ph.D. (Columbia University) All Children’s Hospital Guild Endowed Chair and Associate Professor

Research Interests: My primary research focus is on the treatment of childhood and adult OCD, and childhood anxiety, tic disorders, and trichotillomania. In particular, I am intrigued by the hypothesis that targeting specific neural receptors may facilitate extinction processes central to exposure-based psychotherapy. We are currently conducting an NIMH R01 with Massachusetts General Hospital to examine this possibility. In addition to this interest, there are a number of other ongoing projects: (1) We are conducting research on the dissemination of evidence-based child anxiety/OCD treatments, such as computer-assisted treatment for anxiety, stepped care for childhood PTSD (with my colleague Alison
Salloum, Ph.D.), and webcam delivered CBT for pediatric OCD. (2) We have several NIH and foundation funded studies examining cognitive-behavioral treatment of anxiety in youth with autism spectrum disorders. (3) We are conducting work examining services received by youth with tics, as well as behavioral interventions for pediatric tic disorders. (4) Finally, we have a number of ongoing treatment and phenomenology studies in OCD, including studies on the genetics of OCD (NIMH), psychosocial treatment for young children with OCD (USF Research Foundation), and neuropsychological predictors of treatment outcome (International OCD Foundation).

We are currently funded by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Child Health and Development, Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research, and Centers for Disease Control.

Representative Publications:


