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 would 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, addictive disorders (Bornovalova, Brandon, Goldman, Drobes, Verona), neuropsychology (Cimino), eating disorders and obesity (Rancourt, Thompson), autism spectrum disorders (Storch), and behavioral oncology and risk factors for cancer (Brandon). 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.

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, research on 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), Marina Bornovalova (drug use disorders and comorbidity with externalizing psychopathology), and Edelyn Verona (gender differences in pathways to drug use, drug use links to antisociality and psychopathy), Thomas Brandon (tobacco use and cessation), David Drobes (drug addiction and craving), and Robert Schlauch (individual differences in alcohol and drug use behavior).

**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, borderline personality disorder), Edelyn Verona (psychopathy, personality disorders, aggression/violence), Marc Karver (self-harm and suicidal behavior), Vicky Phares (developmental psychopathology), Jon Rottenberg (individual differences in the experience of emotions, especially depression), Diana Rancourt and Kevin Thompson (eating disorders), and Eric Storch (childhood anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, Tourette syndrome).

**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 general area include Vicky Phares (developmental psychopathology, parenting), Marc Karver (treatment processes and suicidal adolescents), Diana Rancourt (peer influence and adolescents’ weight-related behaviors), and Eric Storch (childhood anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, Tourette syndrome). 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.

Clinical Faculty

Marina A. Bornovalova
(University of Maryland-College Park)
Associate 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 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 (* 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 more specifically in understanding how emotion and cognition are affected in various neurologic disorders. I am particularly interested in how emotional states and affective stimuli influence cognitive processes such as attention and memory and what neuroanatomical systems underlie 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, apathy and other psychiatric symptomatology on manifestation of cognitive symptoms in these degenerative diseases.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


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 (* student authors):


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

Research Interests:

My research interests include understanding core treatment processes (e.g. therapeutic alliance) in mental health services research for youths and adolescent suicide risk assessment, prevention, and management. I look at how mental health clinicians make decisions, what treatment techniques they use, and how they form therapeutic relationships. 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 and young adult suicidality. I examined mental health professionals’ ability to evaluate high risk individuals and make placement decisions. I have examined 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. I have had two SAMHSA grants to help develop and evaluate the suicide prevention program of the Albuquerque School district. I currently am working on two large SAMHSA grants to help disseminate and evaluate suicide prevention efforts in the state of Florida. I also have received a SAMHSA grant to develop and implement a campus-wide suicide prevention program at USF.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


**Vicky Phares, Ph.D.**  
(University of Vermont)  
Professor

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, with particular interest in parenting in relation to anxious youth. Projects include the exploration of fathers’ and mothers’ involvement in therapy, mother-blaming, and racial/ethnic differences and similarities in families. We are in the beginning stages of exploring connections between parents’ and children’s prosocial behavior, with a specific focus on volunteerism.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


**Diana Rancourt**  
(University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)  
Assistant Professor

Research Interests:

My research integrates clinical, social, developmental, and health psychology. I am committed to integrating research on eating disorder and obesity risk factors by considering weight-related behaviors as a spectrum, with particular focus on these behaviors during adolescence and young adulthood. Given the salience of peers during these transitions, I am interested in understanding the interpersonal and psychosocial correlates that may be associated with adolescents’ effective weight control, unhealthy weight loss behaviors, muscle-gaining behaviors, and obesogenic...
behaviors. I am interested in understanding these processes in both clinical and non-clinical samples. My approach is multi-faceted and involves the identification of how peers and social context may be helpful or harmful to efforts to encourage a healthy approach to eating and body image, as well as the identification of important moderators of peer influence, using cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys, EMA and observational approaches, as well as experimental designs. Current topics of interest include “fat talk”, the role of peer popularity and victimization on weight-related behaviors, how athletes’ may differ from non-athletes in their weight-related attitudes and behaviors, and gender differences in the correlates, functions, and outcomes of these behaviors. Projects focused on clinical populations include collaborations with the USF Diabetes Center, Tampa General Hospital Healthy Weight Clinic, and the Tampa General Hospital Bariatric Group.

Representative publications (*student author):


Jonathan Rottenberg, Ph.D.
(Stanford University)
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 (*indicates student author).


Robert C. Schlauch
(Florida State University)
Assistant Professor

Research Interests:

My research interests focus broadly in understanding the role of individual differences in alcohol and drug use behavior. Specifically, I am interested in applying multidisciplinary approaches to the study of: a) processes associated with positive treatment outcomes for substance use disorders, with a particular emphasis on craving, b) risk factors for the development of substance use disorders (e.g., personality variables, comorbid disorders), including positive and negative reinforcement pathways to use, and c) the moderating role of individual difference variables in alcohol related disinhibited behaviors. Secondary interests include methodological issues in substance use research, including the impact of pretreatment changes in alcohol use (i.e., significant changes in alcohol use prior to the first treatment session) on treatment outcomes and mechanisms of change research.

Representative Publications (*indicates student author):


**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. Generally my interests include a variety of topics related to etiology, assessment and treatment of eating disorders and body image disturbance. More recent interests include “drunkorexia” (compensatory behaviors in response to alcohol use), gynecomastia, fitspiration, and the influence of “healthy weight” discourse on obesity stigma and related outcomes. However, I continue to be interested in 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.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


**Edelyn Verona, Ph.D.**
(Florida State University)
Associate Professor, Director of Clinical Training

Research Interests:

My research considers biological (e.g., genes, neurophysiology) and psychosocial factors (e.g., stress, early adversity) involved in the development and maintenance of externalizing and aggressive behaviors, substance use, personality disorders, as well as different facets of psychopathic personality. This work also involves behavioral and psychophysiological research (e.g., EEG, ERP, startle) conducted in the lab that helps uncover affective and/or cognitive mechanisms in aggressive behavior, externalizing syndromes, and psychopathy. Our lab has focused on using models from affective science to advance understanding of antisocial behavior and aggression and to identify subgroups of offenders. An especially novel feature of this work involves investigating the spectrum of emotional experience and expression at its two extremes in this population: 1) the classic psychopath, in whom emotional reactivity is believed to be blunted or deficient; and 2) highly antisocial individuals who may be at particular risk for affective violence and impulsive suicide, and are more likely to have a history of abuse or adversity. Recent work has dealt with gender differences in the development and expression of these syndromes, including identifying distinct genetic and environmental pathways to substance use and manifestations of violence.
and psychopathy in women and men.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


Affiliated and Courtesy Faculty

Thomas H. Brandon, Ph.D.
(Uiversity 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 pharmacotheerapies. 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, Spanish-speaking smokers, and e-cigarette users. 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):


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

Research Interests:

My laboratory is located within the Tobacco Research and Intervention Program of the Moffitt Cancer Center. Research in my lab examines affective and attentional processes in addiction, with a long-term goal of translating human laboratory findings into improved interventions for smoking cessation and other forms of drug addiction. Specific areas of research interest include cue-elicited drug craving among cigarette smokers, the interaction between smoking and alcohol use, cognitive and affective features of nicotine withdrawal, and the impact of physical activity on both motivation to smoke, nicotine withdrawal, and smoking cessation. A relatively new topic involves the role of nicotine level on ongoing smoking behavior, as well as utilizing very low nicotine content cigarettes in a smoking cessation context. Recent studies have been supported by grants from the NIH, the state of Florida, and the Moffitt Cancer Center.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


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 currently evaluating a version of this intervention transcreated for Hispanic/Latina patients receiving chemotherapy and developing a web-based version for English-speaking patients. 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 (* student authors):


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

Research Interests:

My primary research focus is on the treatment of childhood and adult OCD, and childhood anxiety, tic disorders, autism, 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, there are a number of other ongoing projects: (1) We are conducting federally funded research on the dissemination of evidence-based child anxiety/OCD treatments, such as computer-assisted treatment for anxiety and stepped care for childhood PTSD (with my colleague Alison Salloum, Ph.D.) (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 stepped care of OCD treatment (International OCD Foundation). We are currently funded by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Child Health and Development, and Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


