The past seven years of my life have transformed my personal values and beliefs. During this time as a member of the U.S. Army, I have worked my way through my undergraduate education, twice interrupted from deployments to Afghanistan. My time in the military has helped bring to light my desire to help others. Mentoring, counseling, and training my soldiers was always at the forefront of my mind and were always my most enjoyed duties. Helping soldiers through their personal issues and ensuring they had a positive outlet to express their frustrations was a task I took to heart. As I progressed through my tours, I witnessed, and truly began to understand the psychological impact war has on soldiers and their families. The difficulties I watched them face began to deeply affect me. I watched some of my best friends struggle to maintain their relationships, jobs, and self-control. They battled to find purpose and meaning in their lives. My defining moment came during a conversation with an old leader of mine. He spoke with me about one of our past missions in which a soldier had lost his life. He had placed responsibility and blame on himself, convincing himself he had not done enough to prevent the incident. I talked with him for hours, helping him to look at the issue from new angles, and helped him to realize that his excellent and effective leadership helped prevent events like this time and time again. I was greatly rewarded as I watched the burden slowly lift from his shoulders as his perspectives and psychologically state gradually changed. I knew then I wanted to ensure my education allowed me to help serve veterans and their families facing issues related to post-traumatic stress, mental health, and reintegration.

This is when I was turned towards the Bachelor of Individualized Studies degree. With this program, I have been able to tailor my college coursework towards my goals, allowing me
eligibility for an array of different post-baccalaureate programs of interest. My current goal is to be accepted into a clinical psychology doctoral program and work for the U.S. Army as a clinical psychologist. With the course selections I have made I will be a diverse candidate with an excellent set of varied skills. My coursework has helped me develop knowledge across a wide array of disciplines and helped me develop fundamentals skills necessary for success in research, psychological practice, and personal development.

The three areas of concentration I have chosen to complete my BIS degree are sociology of law, criminology, and deviance; psychology; and technical writing and communication. These concentrations have helped me to obtain the necessary coursework required in psychology, to obtain a deeper understanding of the study of individuals through sociological measures, and to obtain invaluable technical communication and writing skills.

**Sociology of Law, Criminology, and Deviance**

Sociology examines stability and change in social life by addressing the underlying patterns of social relations. The coursework in this program takes a direct look at relationships, mental health, and social behaviors of individuals. Understanding social background will enable me to more effectively work with individuals, teams, and different organizational cultures I encounter in future professional work. Integrated with the study of psychology, I have developed a much more complete understanding of how individuals develop and interact with one another.

*SOC 1T0RA: Introduction to the Criminal Justice System* provided me with a deeper understanding of the components and dynamics of the criminal justice system. It looked at the sociological factors leading individuals towards committing crimes and how the corrections
systems affect an individual’s future success reintegrating into society. As many individuals returning from war find their way into legal troubles, I feel this course has helped me develop a deeper understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of those individuals.

**SOC 2T001: Introduction to Criminal Behavior and Social Control** addresses the social and legal origins of crime and crime control. This course provided me with an understanding of the diverse types of crimes, and the impact of social inequality and divisions of race, class, and gender. These topics are critical for understanding social behavior based on the environment in which an individual has developed and will be extremely useful in regards to working with people from multiple backgrounds.

**SOC 4511: Sociology of Youth** helped me gain an understanding of the societal trends that shape adolescent experience during the transition into adulthood. It looked at the shifts in higher education, workforce, and the construction of families. I also learned how location, in regards to the availability of different resources, impacts the development of youth. A background in these topics has provided me an understanding of family structures and an understanding of the importance of a positive transition into adulthood.

**SOC 3701: Social Theory** provided a familiarization of fundamental social theories that have shaped our understanding of society. During this course I was able to use these sociological theories to shape my understanding of society, enabling the development of critical social thinking skills applicable to empirical research.

**SOC 3801: Sociological Research Methods** is an introductory guide for conducting empirically-based research in the social sciences in an effective and critical way. The primary focus is given to different research methods within the field of sociology. This course provided
me with an understanding of how to effectively conduct sociological research and provided me with critical skills for the assessment of these research methods.

**Psychology**

Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior. Human behavior has always been an interest of mine and has been my most enjoyed area of coursework. My main interest is in clinical psychology, aiming to work with members of the military transitioning from wartime service with post-traumatic stress disorder. Veterans are at an increased risk for suicide, homelessness, and experience many other issues reintegrating in to society. My dream is to help fix these issues by researching their root causes and by helping in the personal development of these veterans. My military service has guided me in to the field of psychology, and I believe the following coursework will set me up for a successful transition in to a post-baccalaureate program.

*PSY 3T008: Psychological Aspects of Drug Use and Abuse* examined legal and illegal psychoactive drugs affecting the lives of many people, including service members. This course emphasized the psychological, physiological, and behavioral effects of these drugs and problems regarding associated drug abuse.

*PSY 2T009: Abnormal Psychology* provided an overview of various types of psychological disorders. This course also provided me with an overview of basic descriptive psychopathology as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition*. Attention of the course was also given towards the diagnosis, etiology, and treatment according to prominent theoretical perspectives.
PSY 3031: Sensation and Perception Psychology was one of my favorite courses at the University of Minnesota. It provided an introduction of how the human body turns different physical stimuli into neural impulses and how the brain receives and interprets these impulses. The course covered basic concepts of neuroscience and vastly improved my knowledge of the human brain.

PSY 3001W: Research Methods introduces the basic concepts and procedures used to conduct and evaluate research in psychology. A strong emphasis is placed on traditional research methods, experimental techniques in order to produce interpretable results. This course is important for the development of sound American Psychological Association writing skills and culminates in the writing of an APA style report. Having a background in sociological and psychological research methods will be an important skill for my future studies.

PSY 3801: Introduction to Psychological Measurement and Data Analysis introduces skills necessary for the proper analysis of psychological data. The course covers topics in descriptive and inferential statistics including: frequency distributions, graphical data presentation, measures of central tendency and variability, probability, z-scores, and other areas of psychological measurement. Along with research methods these courses will be vital to have during my application process to post-baccalaureate programs.

Technical Writing and Communication

Possessing the skills to effectively write and communicate technical information is hard to come by and something every professional should attempt to master. I have been told this throughout many conversations with professors and professionals. This is why I added technical writing and communication as my third concentration area. I have already used the skills I
learned in this field to produce aesthetically pleasing and easy to understand reports and research. The increased ability to edit and proofread, present information, and create effective documents will be essential during graduate level coursework.

**WRIT 3562W: Technical and Professional Writing** provided me with a multitude of different technical document design skills, writing skills, and research gathering skills. This course has been most valuable to me during my time at the University of Minnesota. The final project of this course cumulated in an analytic report. Upon completion of this project my writing skills and research skills were immensely strengthened. The skills learned during that time will transfer directly in to any following career path I choose.

**WRIT 3257: Technical and Professional Presentations** encompasses the oral presentation aspects of technical topics. This advanced public speaking course will prepare me to present effective research in the future. The course encompasses topics of visual communication, audience analysis, and presentation organization.

**WRIT 4431W: Science, Technology, & the Law** will help develop my writing in regards to issues in science and technology with a specific emphasis on their affect towards the practice of law. This course will discuss topics of intellectual property, privacy, health law, and research practice. Critical writing skills developed in this course will be essential to my ability to effectively research and write during future graduate level coursework.

**WRIT 3671: Visual Rhetoric and Document Design** investigates current understanding of how visuals participate in and extend the rhetorical strategies associated with speech and writing. This course will help develop my critical skills in document design in turn helping make my research and presentations more effective.
WRIT 3441: Editing, Critique, and Style focuses on the style, correctness, and content of writing. This course will provide invaluable skills in grammar, punctuation, and copyediting. This course will help strengthen all aspects of my writing and provide me with an increased understanding of how language works.

**Conclusion**

The Bachelor of Individualized Studies program is an exciting program which made sense to me for many reasons. Having the opportunity to develop my own list of courses that link together my areas of interest was extremely valuable. My three areas of concentration: sociology of law, criminology, and deviance; psychology; and technical writing and communication have provided me with an excellent foundation to pursue my goal of becoming a military clinical psychologist. Most importantly they have given me a broad area of knowledge in multiple disciplines while providing me with the technical skills necessary to become successful. My military career has already been helped immensely by the increased sociological, psychological, and technical knowledge I have obtained. With this major, I truly feel my options are limitless in my pursuit towards further educational goals.
# BIS/IDIM Program Course Worksheet

Name: 
ID#: 

Total number of credits in proposed program: **50**
Total number 3/4/5xxx level credits in proposed program: 
Total credits in program left to complete: 

## IDIM Title:

### Concentration One

**[Sociology of Law, Criminology, and Deviance]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept.</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Complete: Credits (Grade)</th>
<th>Not Complete: Credits (Term)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>3701</td>
<td>Social Theory</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>3801</td>
<td>Sociological Research Methods (Possibly Summer 2015)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>1T0RA</td>
<td>Introduction to Criminal Justice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>4511</td>
<td>Sociology of Youth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>2T001</td>
<td>Introduction to Criminal Behavior and Social Control</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS:** 

3/4/5xxx level credits in area: **17**
Total credits in area (IDIM only): 

### Concentration Two

**[Technical Communication]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept.</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Complete: Credits (Grade)</th>
<th>Not Complete: Credits (Term)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRIT</td>
<td>4431W</td>
<td>Science, Technology, &amp; the Law</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT</td>
<td>3441</td>
<td>Editing Critique &amp; Style</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT</td>
<td>3257</td>
<td>Technical and Professional Presentations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT</td>
<td>3562W</td>
<td>Technical and Professional Writing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRIT</td>
<td>3671</td>
<td>Visual Rhetoric &amp; Document Design</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS:** 

3/4/5xxx level credits in area: **16**
Total credits in area (IDIM only): 

### Concentration Three

**[Psychology]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept.</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Complete: Credits (Grade)</th>
<th>Not Complete: Credits (Term)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY</td>
<td>3001W</td>
<td>Introduction to Research Methods</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY</td>
<td>3801</td>
<td>Introduction to Psychological Measurement and Data Analysis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY</td>
<td>3031</td>
<td>Introduction to Sensation/Perception</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY</td>
<td>2T009</td>
<td>Abnormal Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY</td>
<td>3T008</td>
<td>Psychological Aspects of Drug Use and Abuse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS:** 

3/4/5xxx level credits in area: **17**
Total credits in area (IDIM only): 

---

8