

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School Psychology Program
SPSY 671-001 3 credits
Role and Function of the School Psychologist
Fall 2020

Location: Center for Psychological Services 203N

Time: Wednesday 10:30-1:10

Instructor: Nicole Beadles, Ph.D., N.C.S.P.

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

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Course Prerequisites

Recommended corequisite SPSY 672

Catalog Description

Considers roles and functions of school psychologist in the educational environment, including all National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) practice standards. Includes certification process, relevant school law, ethical standards and practice, current and historical issues, and trends.

Notes: Open only to school psychology MA students, or by permission of instructor.

Course Overview

This three credit-hour course is designed to provide an overview of the history and development of school psychology; traditional and emerging roles of the school psychologist; direct and indirect service delivery; standards of practice, codes of conduct and ethical decision making; laws and legal issues that influence the practice of psychology; and applications of research to practice. The content of this course is directly linked to professional activities of the school psychologist in educational, clinical, and research settings.

Course Delivery

This course will be delivered face to face as well as synchronously online, using a lecture format and variety of instructional methods, including instructor presentations, group discussions, writing assignments, and student presentations. These instructional methods emphasize critical thinking, self-evaluation, and collaborative discussions intended to provide reflective analysis.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

The goal of this course is to establish a foundation of knowledge and skills relevant to the practice of school psychology.

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Communicate knowledge of the history of school psychology, current practice standards, and trends for the future.

2. Acquire comprehensive knowledge about the role of the school psychologist in educational and clinical settings.
3. Explain the direct and indirect services that school psychologists provide.
4. Understand the workings of general education, special education, and related services within a school setting.
5. Understand the intervention and evaluation process that operates in the public schools, the use of data in this process, and how a school psychologist fits into a school-based team.
6. Learn and apply codes of professional conduct, ethical principles, and laws that guide and govern the practice of school psychology.
7. Understand training standards and requirements necessary to obtain state certification to practice school psychology, as well as license to practice independently.
8. Gain awareness of the technologies available to the practice of school psychology.
9. Enhance understanding of and respect for individual differences in diverse communities.
10. Develop foundations of professional identity as a psychologist.
11. Understand how to access research that informs practice through exploration of professional literature.

Professional Standards

This course contributes to the development of knowledge and skills in the following NASP professional standards:

III. Consultation and Collaboration

V. Direct and Indirect Services: Systems level services – schools

VIII. Research, Program Evaluation, Legal, Ethical and Professional Practice

Element 8.2 Legal, Ethical and Professional Practice

Textbooks

Jacob, S., Decker, D. M., & Lugg, E. T. (2016). *Ethics and law for school psychologists* (7th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Merrell, K. W., Ervin, R. A., & Peacock, G. G. (2012). *School psychology for the 21st century: Foundations and practices*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 9781433805615

Supplemental Reading Materials

In addition to the texts above, students are expected to complete readings that are posted on Blackboard. The syllabus, course materials, citations, and web links for resources referenced in class are also posted on Blackboard. Students can access lecture notes at the site. Blackboard can be accessed from any computer at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.

Technology Requirements

- Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband,

etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher. You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this website.)

- Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use web-conferencing software (Blackboard Collaborate / Zoom). In addition to the requirements above, students are required to have a device with a functional camera and microphone. In an emergency, students can connect through a telephone call, but video connection is the expected norm.

Course Materials and Student Privacy

- All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.
- Video recordings of class meetings that include audio or visual information from other students are private and must not be shared
- Live Video Conference Meetings (e.g. Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household.

Course Recordings

- Some/All of our synchronous meetings in this class may be recorded to provide necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Blackboard [or other secure site] and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester.

Safe Return to Campus Requirements

- **Safe Return to Campus:** All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to take Safe Return to Campus Training prior to visiting campus. Training is available in Blackboard (<https://mymason.gmu.edu>). Students are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-plan). Similarly, all students in face to face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive either a Green, Yellow, or Red email response. Only students who receive a "green" notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Course Performance Evaluation

The requirements of this course are designed to build and enhance competence in core skills that are routinely used by school psychologists. Students are expected to fulfill the following requirements and to demonstrate attainment of the stated goals and objectives of this course.

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

General requirements:

- Come to class prepared, having read assigned material and completed any assignments due.
- Complete written assignments and submit by stated deadlines.

Specific requirements:

- **Attendance and Participation:** Attend all classes (in person, or online). Actively participate in class activities and discussions. This will prepare you for your role as team leaders, facilitators, presenters, and experts. You will become accustomed to organizing your thoughts, planning responses, and speaking eloquently and succinctly.
- **Reaction Bullets:** Each week students will submit on a Blackboard discussion forum two reaction bullets to the readings. This activity encourages students to reflect on the readings, think broadly about the field of school psychology, and to develop their professional identity. Reaction bullets can include something you've learned from the readings or a new insight, how you relate the readings to prior knowledge and/or experiences, an issue you've identified for the practice of psychology or, ideally, for YOUR future practice. Additionally, for each reaction bullet, pose a question to the class for discussion. You must post your reaction bullets at least 24 hours prior to class. Over the next week, you will provide a response to two reaction bullets/questions posted by your peers.
- **Article Share:** School psychologists are life-long learners and must stay abreast of trends, updates, and changes in the field. Research informs our practice. Students will choose an article from a peer reviewed journal prominent in the field (such as School Psychology Review, Journal of School Psychology, School Psychology Quarterly, Psychology in the Schools) and briefly summarize and review the article, considering its implications for the field of school psychology and education, and the daily practice of our discipline. The topic of the article should reflect the content of assigned reading on the same due date.

Students must email the article to the instructor one week prior to the class in which it will be presented. After approval, students post the article and at least five discussion points to the blackboard article share discussion thread the Monday prior to class. In class (in person or online), students will present a brief summary of the article to a small group and lead a discussion. Presenters turn in a brief summary/ critique of the article (2 pages double spaced) which is due on the day of the presentation. Students who are not presenting are to read the article and discussion questions ahead of time and come prepared to discuss the article with their group.

- **Ethics Case Presentation and Class Discussion:** Students will demonstrate understanding of ethics/codes of conduct and problem-solving skills with the analysis and discussion of an ethics case. This activity mimics the process that school psychologists face on a daily basis regarding ethical dilemmas. A case vignette will be provided by the instructor. Students will work in small groups to analyze, identify, and problem-solve the ethical dilemma. An informal, written summary of the group's discussion will be created. Groups will briefly present their analysis and recommended course of action. Grade will be determined by the group's demonstrated skill to explain the conflicts in the ethical dilemma clearly and come to an acceptable resolution of the dilemma.
- **Paper and Presentation:** Students will complete a 10-page paper (excluding title page and references), APA style, on a current topic in the field that is directly related to one of the ten domains of competence detailed in the NASP Practice Standards. This is a broad document with plenty to choose from; please meet with the instructor a few weeks ahead of time to ensure

that your paper and presentation cover the appropriate breadth and depth of topic. You may need to narrow down a topic to one or two aspects that are interesting, controversial, or timely. The paper should include an introduction to your topic, a synopsis of the relevant literature, compare/contrast issues on the topic, your point of view, as well as relevance/implications to the practice of school psychology. See rubric for grading. A 10-15 minute power point presentation will be made regarding key points in your paper. Additionally, the class will submit feedback on the presentation using a provided rubric.

- **Mid-term and Final Exam:** Two exams will be administered; these are take home exams. These may consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay.

Grading

- **Attendance and Participation:** 5 points
- **Reaction Bullets:** 8 points
- **Article Share:** 10 points
- **Ethics Case Presentation:** 12 points
- **Paper (20 pts) and Presentation (5pts):** 25 points total
- **Mid-term:** 20 points
- **Final:** 20 points
- **TOTAL = 100**

Grading Scale (Please note: A course grade less than B- requires that you retake the course. A grade of “F” does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 [B average] to remain in good academic standing.)

A+ = 99-100; A = 93-98; A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = below 60

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Schedule of Classes

Week #	Topics	Required Readings/Assignments
1 8/26	Welcome, Overview of course and requirements, GMU school psychology program, program handbook. The field of school psychology, historical foundations and development of school psychology	Merrell, Ervin & Peacock: 1&2; GMU School Psychology Handbook Lay (2011)
2 9/2	School Psychology today: Challenges, Opportunities Employment contexts Roles and Functions - overview	Merrell: 3 Fagan & Wise (F&W): 3 & 4 Reaction Bullets due
3 9/9	Becoming a School Psychologist – Standards of Training, Credentialing, Licensure, PRAXIS	Merrell: 4 F&W: 5 NASP (2009)

	Job expectations - professional performance, accountability, and evaluations.	APA task force (2018) Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
4 9/16	NASP Practice Model: Domains of Practice 1-2 1) Data based decisions and accountability 2) Consultation and collaboration	NASP (2020b) Part I (pgs. 1-10) Merrell: 7, 8, Sheridan & Cowan (2004) Article Share Presentations: Reaction Bullets due
5 9/23	Roles and Functions, continued NASP Practice Model: Domains of Practice 3-6 Student Level Services: 3) Academic interventions and instructional supports 4) Mental and behavioral health services and interventions Systems level services: 5) School-wide practices to promote learning 6) Services to support safe and supportive schools	3) Merrell: 9; 4) Merrell: 10; 5) NASP (2020a) 6) Cohen (2013) Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
6 9/30	Roles and Functions, continued NASP Practice Model: Domains of Practice 7-10 7) Family, school and community collaboration services 8) Equitable practices for diverse student populations 9) Research and evidence-based practice 10) Legal, ethical, and professional practice	7) Epstein (2010); 8) Proctor et.al. (2017) 9) Floyd & Norfolk (2014) 10) Goforth & Hayter (2010) Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
7 10/7	Professional Identity (state, local, national, international associations) Review of NASP Principles for Professional Ethics <i>Groups will be assigned sections of the ethics code to present to the class</i> BRING BOOK TO CLASS	Jacob, Decker & Lugg (JD&L): 1 JD&L: Appendix A (NASP ethical code) – prepare assigned section for informal presentation Dailor & Jacob (2011) Reaction Bullets due Meet/email instructor re: paper topic
8 10/14	MID TERM EXAM – class will not meet	Midterm will be available 10/9 at 8:00 am to 10/16 at 11:59 pm

9 10/21	Legal Foundations and Principles (informed consent, confidentiality, privilege, record-keeping, duty to report) Laws and Regulations (FERPA, ADA and Section 504, NCLB, HIPAA, FOIA)	JD&L: 2-3 JD&L: 5 Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
10 10/28	Ethical and legal issues in practice – special education: case laws, IDEA, special education eligibility process, assessment	JD&L: 4, 6 Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
11 11/4	Ethical and legal issues in practice – school-based interventions (individual, small group, school), FBA/BIP, counseling, crisis interventions/risk assessment, RTI	JD&L: 7 Lasser et. al., 2013 Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
12 11/11	Ethical and legal issues in practice – teacher and parent consultation, discipline and MDRs, mediation, due process hearings Ethics case presentations and class discussions	JD&L: 8-9 Review NASP Ethics Code for case presentations
13 11/18	Paper presentations	Papers Due
14 11/25	No Class Thanksgiving Break	
15 12/2	Paper presentations Course evaluations	
	FINAL EXAM	Final exam will be available 12/4 8:00 am to 12/11 11:59 pm

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .

Blackboard Readings

Cowan, K. C., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., & Pollitt, K. (2013). A framework for safe and successful schools [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Dailor, N.A., & Jacob, S. (2011). Ethically challenging situations reported by school psychologists: Implications for training. *Psychology in the Schools* 48 (6), 619-631.

Epstein, J. (2010). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92 (3) 81-96.

Fagan, T.K., & Wise, P.S. (2007). *School psychology: Past, present, and future* (3rd ed.). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

- Floyd, R. & Norfolk, P. (2014). Best practices in identifying, evaluating and communicating research evidence. In P. L. Harrison & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology, 6th Edition*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Goforth, A., & Hayter, C. (2010). Ethical dilemmas during training: Students' perspectives. *NASP Communique, 38* (7), 35.
- Lasser, J., Klose, L. M., & Robillard, R. (2013). Context-sensitive ethics in school psychology. *Contemporary School Psychology, 17* (1), 119-128.
- Lay, M. (2011). Securing a place at the table: School psychologists as educational leaders. *NASP Communique, 39* (3), 12.
- National Association of School Psychologists (2009). Advocating for school psychologists in response to the APA's proposed model act for state licensure of psychologists. *NASP Communique, 37* (7) 1.
- National Association of School Psychologists. (2020a). Framework for effective school discipline. Author. <http://www.nasponline.org/discipline-framework>
- National Association of School Psychologists (2020b). Model for comprehensive and integrated school psychological services. Retrieved from <https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/nasp-2020-professional-standards-adopted>
- Proctor, S., Williams, B., Scherr, T. & Lee, K. (2017). Intersectionality and school psychology: Implications for practice. Retrieved from <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity-and-social-justice/social-justice/intersectionality-and-school-psychology-implications-for-practice>
- Sheridan, S., & Cowan, R. (2004). Consultation with school personnel. *Educational Psychology Papers and Publications, paper 32*, 599-616.

Rubric for scoring paper:

CRITERIA	A+, A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	D, F
Composition	<p>Use of correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p> <p>Sentences are clear, complete and of varying lengths.</p> <p>Words used are striking but natural, varied and vivid.</p>	<p>A few errors to fix, but general use of correct conventions.</p> <p>Well-constructed sentences; essay “marches” along but it doesn’t “dance.”</p> <p>Some fine and some routine word choices.</p>	<p>Enough errors to distract a reader.</p> <p>Sentences are often awkward, run-ons, or fragments.</p> <p>Words used are often common. Writing could use some “color.”</p>	<p>Numerous errors which make the work difficult to read.</p> <p>Many run-on sentences & paragraphs; sentence fragmentation.</p> <p>Same words used over and over again; confusing.</p>
Critical Thinking/ Persuasion of Argument	<p>An argument is stated and explanation provided as to why it is controversial.</p> <p>Clear and accurate reasons are provided in support of the claim/argument.</p> <p>Discussion of reasons against the claim/argument; explanation of why argument remains valid.</p> <p>Writing has a compelling opening, an informative middle, and a satisfying conclusion.</p> <p>Personal engagement with the material shows that the writer cares about argument.</p>	<p>An argument is made, but no explanation made as to why it is controversial.</p> <p>Reasons are provided in support of the argument, but some are overlooked.</p> <p>Reasons against the argument are discussed, but some are neglected; no explanation as to why the argument still stands.</p> <p>Writing has a beginning, middle and end.</p> <p>Tone of writing gets the message across, but could have been written by anyone.</p>	<p>Claim/argument is buried, confused, and/or unclear.</p> <p>A few weak reasons are provided that don’t support the claim/argument, or are irrelevant or confusing.</p> <p>Mention that there are reasons against the claim/argument, but reasons not discussed.</p> <p>Organization is rough but workable. Thought sometimes gets off topic.</p> <p>Writing is too formal; no hint of personal engagement.</p>	<p>Claim/argument is not stated.</p> <p>Reasons are not provided in support of the claim/argument.</p> <p>Reasons against the claim/argument are not acknowledged or discussed.</p> <p>Writing needs direction and organization.</p> <p>Writing is either too formal or informal; clear indication of disinterest in the work.</p>
Use of Course Resources	<p>Arguments and examples demonstrate thorough familiarity with course materials.</p> <p>Recognition of, and distinction between, domain and supporting arguments in the course materials.</p>	<p>Arguments and examples demonstrate basic familiarity with course materials.</p> <p>Identification of the key arguments in the course material.</p>	<p>Arguments and examples demonstrate some familiarity with course materials.</p> <p>Recognition of arguments in the course material, but difficulty in distinguishing arguments.</p>	<p>Limited demonstrated familiarity with course materials.</p> <p>Limited recognition of arguments; difficulty in discerning differences between arguments and evidence, commentary, etc.</p>

		Grade Breakdown	
Composition	/5		
Critical Thinking	/10		
Use of Resources	/5		
Total	/20	Total	/20% (of final grade)