

**George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School Psychology Program**

**Role and Function of the School Psychologist
SPSY 671-001 3 credits
Fall 2022/Wednesday/10:30-1:10
10340 Democracy Lane, Center for Psychological Services, 203N
Fairfax Campus**

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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 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 **all** of the NASP domains/professional standards/practices, but more specifically:

1. Data Based Decision Making
2. Consultation and Collaboration
5. School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning
8. Equitable Practices for Diverse Populations
10. Legal, Ethical and Professional Practice

Textbooks

Jacob, S., Decker, D. M., Lugg, E. T. & Diamond, E. (2022). *Ethics and law for school psychologists* (8th ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Merrell, K. W., Ervin, R. A., Peacock, G. G. & Renshaw, T. (2022). *School psychology for the 21st century: Foundations and practices*. The Guilford Press.

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). 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>.

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, VIA, 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. 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 one reaction bullet 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, as part of your reaction bullet, pose a question to the class for discussion. You must post your reaction bullet 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 the assigned reading on the same due date, as well as the concept of equity and social justice within that topic.*

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, 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 Analysis 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 provides the opportunity to learn and practice ethical problem solving, and

it is similar to the process that school psychologists utilize 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. A written summary of the group's discussion/work will be submitted. Groups will present their analysis and recommended course of action in class. 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 practice 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 to 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 8/24	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 & Renshaw: Chs.1&2 Lay (2011) Prus & Swerdlick (2022) GMU School Psychology Handbook
2 8/31	School Psychology today: Culturally responsive practice Roles and Functions - overview	Merrell, et. al.: 3 Fagan & Wise (F&W): 3 & 4 Reaction Bullets due
3 9/7	Becoming a School Psychologist – Standards of Training, Credentialing, Licensure, PRAXIS Job expectations - professional performance, accountability, and evaluations.	Merrell, et. al.: 5 F&W: 5 NASP (2009) APA task force (2018) Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
4 9/14	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, et. al.: 3, 8 Sheridan & Cowan (2004) Article Share Presentations: Reaction Bullets due
5 9/21	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, et. al.: 9; 4) Merrell, et. al.: 10; 5) NASP (2020a) 6) Cohen (2013) Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
6 9/28	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) Wilcox, et. al. (2021) 10) Goforth & Hayter (2010) Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
7 10/5	NASP Principles for Professional Ethics <i>Groups will be assigned sections of the ethics code to present to the class</i>	Jacob, Decker, Lugg & Diamond (JDL&D): 1

	BRING JDL&D BOOK TO CLASS	JDL&D: Appendix A (NASP ethical code) – prepare assigned section for informal presentation Dailor & Jacob (2011) Reaction Bullets due Meet/email instructor re: paper topic
8 10/12	MID TERM EXAM – class will not meet	Midterm will be available 10/12 at 8:00 am to 10/19 at 11:59 pm
9 10/19	Legal Foundations and Principles (informed consent, confidentiality, privilege, record-keeping, duty to report) Laws and Regulations (FERPA, ADA and Section 504, ESSA, HIPAA, FOIA)	JDL&D: 2-3 JDL&D: 5 Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
10 10/26	Ethical and legal issues in practice – special education: case laws, IDEA, special education eligibility process, assessment	JDL&D: 4, 6 Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
11 11/2	Ethical and legal issues in practice – direct services/school-based interventions (MTSS and RTI, therapeutic interventions, crisis interventions/risk assessment)	JDL&D: 7 Lasser et. al., 2013 Article Share presentations: Reaction Bullets due
12 11/9	Ethical and legal issues in practice – indirect services (teacher and parent consultation, diverse clients); indirect services within systems (discipline and MDRs, mediation, due process hearings) Ethics case presentations and class discussions	JDL&D: 8-9 Review NASP Ethics Code for case presentations Ethics group project due 10:00 am
13 11/16	Paper presentations	Papers Due 10:00 am
14 11/23	No Class Thanksgiving Break	
15 11/30	Paper presentations Course evaluations	
	FINAL EXAM	Final exam will be available 11/30 5:00 pm and is due 12/7 at 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 <https://ds.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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- 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]. 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.). 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.
- Wilcox, G., Chatlos, S., McClure, E., Flowers, J. & Makarenko, E. (2021). De-implementation: A missing piece in bridging the research to practice gap in school psychology. *Contemporary School Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-021-00399-w>

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	<p>A claim/position/opinion is stated and explanation provided as to why it is important, timely, controversial, etc.</p> <p>Clear and accurate reasons are provided in support of the position.</p> <p>Discussion of reasons against the claim/position/opinion, and of why the position 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>A claim/position/opinion is made, but no explanation made as to why it is important, timely, controversial.</p> <p>Reasons are provided in support of the position, but some are overlooked.</p> <p>Reasons against the position 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/position/opinion is buried, confused, and/or unclear.</p> <p>A few weak reasons are provided that don’t support the position, or are irrelevant or confusing.</p> <p>Mention that there are reasons against the position, 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/position/opinion is not stated.</p> <p>Reasons are not provided in support of the position.</p> <p>Reasons against the position 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>examples demonstrate thorough familiarity with course material and content.</p> <p>Strong ability to recognize and link paper ideas with themes of course.</p>	<p>examples demonstrate basic but accurate familiarity with course material and content.</p> <p>Basic ability to recognize and link paper ideas with themes of course</p>	<p>examples demonstrate some familiarity with course material and content.</p> <p>Themes of course not well recognized or linked</p>	<p>Limited or inaccurate familiarity with course material and content.</p> <p>Inaccurate or limited linkage/recognition of themes of course</p>

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