

# **Grand Valley State University**

## **Introduction to School Psychology**

### **PSY 500**

#### **Instructor Information:**

Jennifer James, Ph.D.  
Office: 2140 ASH  
Email: [jamesje1@gvsu.edu](mailto:jamesje1@gvsu.edu)  
Phone: 616-331-2406  
Office Hours: Tuesdays from 1 pm to 3 pm or by appointment.

#### **Course Information**

CRN: 22540  
Location: D2311 Mackinac Hall  
Tuesdays 10:00 am-12:45 pm

#### **Course Description:**

This course will present an introduction to the theory, role, and function of school psychology as an academic and scientific discipline, as well as a professional field. Emphasis will be placed on understanding a behaviorally-oriented, intervention-focused, and empirically driven view of school psychology.

#### **Pre-requisites:**

Admission to the school psychology program or instructor permission.

#### **Required Textbook:**

Merrell, K., Ervin, R., & Gimpel, G. (2012). School Psychology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. New York: Guilford Press.

Kauffman, J.M. (2010). The Tragicomedy of Public Education. Verona, WI: Attainment Company, Inc. [This book is available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) in either paperback (\$19.99) or kindle edition (\$9.99).]

Best Practices in School Psychology - NASP

Additional Readings will be placed on blackboard.

#### **Grading:**

94% and above	A
90% - 92%	A-
87% - 89%	B+
83% - 86%	B
80% - 82%	B-
77% - 79%	C+
73% - 76%	C
70% - 72%	C-
67% - 69%	D+
60% - 67%	D
60% and below	F

Note: You must earn a B or better in the course to remain in good standing in the School Psychology program

## **Course Objectives**

1. Describe the profession of School Psychology, including roles, functions, responsibilities, and historical development.
2. Demonstrate their knowledge of, and ability to evaluate, empirically driven practices in school psychology and contemporary models of professional service delivery in schools.
3. Describe and apply ethical and legal standards in the field of School Psychology.
4. Demonstrate their ability to think and solve problems consistent with the scientist-practitioner model of training.

## **Course Requirements: 310 Points Possible**

### **Participation and professionalism: 30 pts**

Discussion and peer feedback are an integral part of this course. Seminar courses should encourage candidates to actively engage in an exploration of issues in a particular area and the exchange of ideas and information. While random discourse and discussion can be interesting, the goal of this course is to begin the process of critically examining the nature of schools and the provision of psychological services to children, families and school personnel. Class time will be devoted to discussing issues, concerns and ideas raised by the assigned readings. Possible implications for school psychologists and school personnel will be emphasized. Candidates are encouraged to share their perceptions, personal experiences or other information they come across that relates to various issues and trends presented in the books selected. It is hoped that by having an honest, thought provoking discussion about the issues related to children, families and education, all will be enriched, challenged and enlightened by the process. Remember: active intellectual discourse is necessary for continued growth within any chosen profession. All candidates are expected to come to class weekly, arrive on time and be prepared to actively participate in all discussions. Various viewpoints, experiences and questions are encouraged and will be respected by all class members. Disagreement, while welcome, should be framed within the context of respectful dialogue, a positive exchange of ideas and constructive and supportive feedback will enhance skills develop among each class member. If a candidate repeatedly arrives late for class or displays unprofessional/disrespectful behavior during class (including, but not limited to: texting, reading and/or sending email or Instagram, or Facebook posts, etc.) that candidate's participation grade will be reduced by 50%. Candidates who exhibit exemplar participation across the semester will be given special consideration in cases of a final borderline grade.

### **Reading Summaries: 60 pts (12 summaries @ 5pts/summary)**

To assist you in developing skills that are critical for graduate school, this course will require weekly reading summaries. Although this may seem like "busy" work, being able to read a large amount of material (in a short period of time), outline the main points, and integrate information into your growing body of knowledge is a critical skill for school psychologists. To assist you in mastering this skill, I am assigning brief reading summaries from the course content. Each week (beginning week 3), you must provide a 1-page (single-spaced) reading summary. Your summary should identify the main points of the chapter/article, and summarize critical points. If there are multiple chapters/articles

assigned for a week, you must select 1 to summarize and turn in. Because these reading summaries are designed to assist you in learning, you do not need to use APA format, and these may be formatted in a way that you find useful (bulleted list, paragraph, etc.). Please submit these on Blackboard. *Note: The Kauffman chapters may not be used for reading summaries.*

**Concept Quizzes: 40 pts (2 @ 20pts each):**

You will have 2 quizzes during the semester that will assess your knowledge of key concepts covered in course readings, discussion, and lecture. Each quiz will contain 2-3 essay questions. On the day of the quiz, please bring a laptop to class. If you are unable to do so, I will make arrangement and provide one for your use. You will be given 1-hour to respond to the questions. You will type your responses into Blackboard.

**Michigan Association of School Psychologists Conference Attendance and Reflection: 20 pts**

During week 10, we will attend the annual conference of the Michigan Association of School Psychologists in Grand Rapids. We will not meet on November 1 (but you WILL be meeting with your assessment class that day- Stay tuned for more information). The conference is on November 3 and 4. This a great opportunity to interact with other school psychologists, see talks from national presenters, and become involved in the profession. You must submit a 2-3 page reflection that includes the sessions that you attended, what information you found most interesting/beneficial, and areas that you would like more information or clarification. As the conference is local, it is expected that you attend and represent our program.

**In-depth Research and Team-taught class session: 80 pts**

An integral part of your training in school psychology will come from information gathered through independent research and study relevant to the discipline. The goal is to expand a candidate's knowledgebase beyond the information provided in the texts for this class by exploring computer-based data bases, blogs and Internet sites that might be useful in areas that relate to school psychology specifically and education in general.

The American public is involved in an ongoing debate revolving around how to fix/reform education and how to best education our children. This year we will examine some of the issues and practices that policymakers and the general public believe about public education and how to improve it. During the last 5 weeks of the semester we will focus our discussion around some of the issues central to the discussion of public education and school reform. As a springboard for discussion we will be reading the supplemental book *Tragicomedy: Laughing and Crying, Thinking and Fixing*. Candidates will be paired to create 5 teams. Each team will conduct their own updated research into the issues/problems presented in a preselected chapter from *Tragicomedy*. The team's assignment is to expand on the information presented in their assigned chapter. Special attention should be given to presenting updated evidence-based facts about the education polices and practices presented each assigned chapter. As relevant, focus on how school psychological services fit/don't fit into the issues discussed. Although skills in research and

information gathering are beneficial, the effective sharing of the knowledge gathered is a skill being required more and more. To begin your skill development in effectively sharing evidence-based information with others in group settings, each team is required to develop and give a presentation based upon of their research.

**Requirements:**

1. Each Team must develop and lead a 60 minute presentation/discussion of the public education issue examined. Each team member is responsible for determining which issues presented in their assigned chapter to highlight/focus on during their presentation. Team members will be graded separately for their overall contribution to the research and classroom led presentation. Each team member is expected to actively participate in the presentation and team led discussion session. Classmates and the professor will evaluate the quality of the information presented using a rubric. Each team will prepare a 1-hour presentation on their topic, followed by 15-20 minutes of a team led structured discussion related to their topic.
2. Each Team must select at least 2 readings related to their discussion topic: one from any relevant journal and one from popular media (i.e., newspaper, blog, magazine, etc.). These readings will serve as the assigned readings for the class. These readings must be selected and shared with peers and professor via email two (2) weeks prior to the date assigned for the team to lead the class.
3. Use of Information Technology Systems and Computers in Research and Presentation. The ability to use technology to share information is an increasingly valuable skill for school psychologists to possess. To begin your development in effectively using technology to present and share information, Teams are required to use PowerPoint to prepare and present their research findings to their classmates. Through collaboration and cooperation team, members must decide how best to develop, format and use PowerPoint slides to facilitate the presentation of information on their topic. There should be only one set of slides for the team, with both members providing content. During the presentation, team members must supplement the information on their PowerPoint slides and may not simply read the slides as written. A few video clips may be embedded and used to enhance the presentation, but clips must not run more than 15-minutes in total and no more than two (2) clips can be used by the team.
4. Each Team must develop an annotated bibliography and abstract of their research findings (See requirements below). The team will provide class members with a copy of their abstract and bibliography on the day they lead the class. Any additional handouts to be used during the discussion period should directly link to the topic under discussion. It is not necessary to provide classmates with copies of your PowerPoint slides however you may want to provide an outline of information to be discussed to facilitate note taking.

**Annotated Bibliography Requirements:**

- a. Minimum of 10 references: 8 must be from journals, the remainder may be from websites, books, or popular press sources.

b. Citations are to be typed and formatted using the most recent edition of the APA's Publication Manual.

c. Each reference is to include a short 1-2 paragraph annotation providing an overview of the journal article or the type of information available from the website.

d. All journal citations must be recent (e.g., nothing earlier than 2009).

e. Include a cover sheet and brief 1-page abstract about your topic area.

5. Each Team will develop four (4) essay questions based on their research and presentation. These questions will be used to develop the final exam. The team should steer away from questions that require peers to simply memorize isolated facts/information presented and develop questions that require critical thinking, analysis and integration of the information presented. (Questions with optimal answers are to be emailed to the profession the day your team presents. Questions are not to be distributed to or discussed with peers.)

### **Philosophy and Vision of School Psychology Paper: (30 pts)**

Each student will write a 3-5 page paper on their philosophy of school psychology and their vision of our field's future. Students should demonstrate critical thinking on the knowledge that they have acquired throughout the quarter, i.e., integrate class lectures, discussions, and readings. This paper will be submitted as a part of your annual review portfolio, and will continue to be updated and revised during the program.

### **Systems Level Project: Ecological Approach (50 points)**

You will work with the other school psychology student(s) at your practicum school district to construct an ecological appraisal of the school/district. This activity involves interviewing school personnel and gather information about the school from other sources as well (e.g., school board meetings, websites). Information will include the characteristics of the population served by the school, the nature of services provided, how schools cooperate with community agencies, restructuring efforts, and how families are involved in their children's educational programs. Each team of students will report findings in class. Presentations should be limited to 10 min. for each individual on your team, with a minimum of a 15 min. presentation (for those with one person in the district). More information will be given to you in class.

### **Course Website**

Many course materials (e.g., syllabus, presentation slides, readings, assignment rubrics, and additional supplemental materials) will be made available through Blackboard, an online course management system. You can access the materials by going to the following website: <https://mybb.gvsu.edu/>, and providing your GVSU username and password. If you have problems accessing materials through this system, you can call the IT Help Desk at 855-435-7488 or E-mail [bbadmin@gvsu.edu](mailto:bbadmin@gvsu.edu) for assistance.

## **Policies and Procedures**

You are expected to abide by the GVSU student code (<http://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/>) and the ethical principles of the National Association of School Psychologists (<http://www.nasponline.org/standards/ethics/ethical-conduct-professional-practices.aspx>). These principles serve as a guide to students' behavior both on and off-campus. This includes (1) arriving on time, (2) leaving at the scheduled time and not before, (3) appropriately engaging during courses and practicum activities, and (4) respecting confidentiality. When in the schools, you represent the School Psychology program as well as the University and we expect your behavior to be professional, respectful, and responsible. Violations of the ethical and professional standards may result in a lowered grade and may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

### **Attendance:**

You are expected to attend and participate in all classes. It is expected that you will be on time for the start of class and stay for the duration of class (i.e., not leave early). Please contact me in advance if you anticipate missing a class or have a legitimate reason for coming late or leaving early. As this class only meets once per week, missing a class will involve missing a *significant* amount of course content. If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining any information missed through a classmate and meeting with me to go over any questions you have.

Student absences due to religious holidays will be accommodated per the GVSU policies on inclusion. If a conflict exists between the course and a religious observance, students must request a religious accommodation from me within the first two weeks of the semester or as soon as possible so alternative arrangements can be made.

### **Assignments and Late Work:**

The work to be done for this class includes completing the assigned readings, participating in class discussion, presentations, and writing papers/reflections. All written assignments should be turned in via Blackboard by the start of class on the due date unless otherwise noted. Professional writing is an important part of your training as a psychologist and your writing will be evaluated in all assignments. Professional writing is clear, well-organized, uses sentence and paragraph structure to convey content, avoids passive voice, and is free from typographical error, misspellings, and grammatical errors. Further, professional writing balances critical reflection with strengths of the material or information. All work for the course MUST be completed in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch page margins (note that often times the default is 1.25-inch margins and must be changed). Papers should use APA style when citing sources within text as well as in preparing the reference list. Refer to the publication manual for specific guidelines: American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Washington, D.C.: Author.

Late work is strongly discouraged and I recommend that you avoid late work as much as possible. Assignments turned in after the deadline will be penalized by 25% of the original point value. After three days, assignments will not be graded and be assigned a "0."

### Computer Use:

Laptops/tablets may be used during class time for taking notes, or other class-related activities (doing research for an in-class activity, etc.). Please refrain from engaging in non-class related activities during lecture. It is distracting to me and your fellow classmates. If computer use becomes problematic during lecture, I may implement a “no electronics” policy. In addition, please turn off cell phones during class, unless you are the primary caregiver for another individual (turn to vibrate).

### Lecture Notes:

Lecture notes will be posted on Blackboard before class starts. Please be aware that this may not occur until the morning before class starts. I will make every effort to post notes the evening before class, but it is likely that they will not become available until the morning before class. Lecture notes are a privilege, not a right. Also, the lecture notes do not contain all of the relevant information – please take additional notes.

### Canceled Classes:

If I have to cancel a class, I will notify you ASAP via email. If classes are canceled at the university, this class will not meet. Please check your university email regularly, as I may have directions for an alternative activity.

### Classroom Expectations:

Please engage in respectful behavior while in this class. This includes: arriving on-time, engaging with the content, and waiting to pack up your items until after I have completed the lecture. In addition, please refrain from sidebar conversations, and remain on-task during small group activities.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact me or Disability Support Services (DSS) at 331-2490. Although students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as all other students, accommodations will be provided for you, as appropriate. Where warranted, accommodations will also be provided to students without a diagnosed disability if that student discusses the specific need with me and the accommodation appears to be justified. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency situation, please make me aware so I can develop a plan to assist you.

### Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

It is your responsibility as a student to maintain academic integrity and not give any appearance of a violation. You will do original work and will not take or receive the efforts of another person on any test or assignment, use unauthorized resources on quizzes or


tests, plagiarize, or give/sell other students papers or assignments not authorized by me. You are responsible for making yourself aware of and for understanding the policies and procedures that pertain to academic integrity. To that end, be sure to familiarize yourself with the GVSU Student Code [Section 223.01] related to academic integrity. Furthermore, be sure to reference sources at all times. If you are uncertain about such an issue prior to submission of an assignment, project, or test, please see me so we can eliminate that uncertainty.

If you have questions regarding the appropriate use of citations and plagiarism, please contact the instructor BEFORE turning the assignment in. Please note that taking extensive content word-for-word from a journal, book or website is considered plagiarism.



## Course Schedule

Readings are due the date of the lecture topic. It is possible that this schedule will change, as some weeks we will move more rapidly, and some more slowly. However, general deadlines will remain the same unless otherwise indicated by the professor.

Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: 8/30	Introductions and Program Information	Merrell Chapter 1	
Week 2: 9/6	No Class – Labor Day		
Week 3: 9/13	A Brief History	Merrell Chapter 2	Reading Summary 1
Week 4: 9/20	Training and Employment Trends	Merrell Ch. 4, 5 Kauffman Ch. 1 & 2	Reading Summary 2
Week 5: 9/27	Legal Foundations for Practice	Merrell Ch. 6 MARSE rules	Reading Summary 3
Week 6: 10/4	Problem-solving NASP Practice Model	Merrell Ch. 7 NASP Practice Model (on bb) Kauffman Ch. 3, 4	<b>Concept Quiz</b> Reading Summary 4
Week 7: 10/11	Responding effectively to diversity	Merrell Ch. 3	Reading Summary 5
Week 8: 10/18	School Psychologists role in assessment	Merrell Ch. 8 Kauffman Ch 5, 6	Reading Summary 6
Week 9: 10/25	School Psychologists role in prevention/intervention: academic skills	Merrell Ch. 9 Kauffman Ch. 7	Conference reflection (or alternative assignment) Group 1 Presentation Reading Summary 7
Week 10: 11/1  VOTE	ASSESSMENT CLASS- Due to MASP on 11/3, you will be having your assessment class with Dr. Schrauben this week. Meet in our usual location.		ELECTION DAY
Week 11: 11/8	School Psychologists role in prevention/intervention: social-emotional behavior	Merrell Ch. 10 Kauffman Ch. 8	Group 2 Presentation Reading Summary 8
Week 12: 11/15	School Psychologists role in systems change	Merrell Ch. 11 Kauffman Ch. 9	<b>Concept quiz</b> Group 3 Presentation Reading Summary 9
Week 13: 11/22	School Psychologists role in research	Merrell Ch. 12 Kauffman Ch. 10	Group 4 Presentation Reading Summary 10

Week 14: 11/29	Ethics	NASP and APA ethical guidelines Kauffman Ch. 11	Group 5 Presentation Reading Summary 11
Week 15: 12/6	Systems Level Presentations	Kauffman Ch. 12	Reading Summary 12 <b>Systems Level Project Due &amp; Presentations</b>
Finals Week: Wednesday 12/14 @ 8:00 AM	Wednesday 12/14 @ 8:00 AM		<b>Philosophy of School Psychology paper due by Wednesday at 8:00 AM</b>