



## Introduction to School Psychology

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### Course Information:

CRN: 22540  
Location: Au Sable 1117  
Tuesdays 8:30 am-11:15 am

### Instructor Information:

Jen James, Ph.D., NCSP  
Pronouns: she/her/hers  
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Phone: 616-331-2406  
Office Hours: T/H 11:30-12:30 am or by appointment through email.

### What Students Say...

“The conversations and content were intellectually stimulating. I think it required less effort outside of class compared to other classes, but I really appreciated that it was a discussion-based class because the content we discussed always brought up lots of additional questions. We dealt with a lot of real-life scenarios we will come across in our career, so it did stretch my thinking and helped me discover the kind of school psychologist I want to be. “

“Learning about law and policy in a way that was interactive and thought-provoking. Those are things we need to learn but are probably the least exciting things to learn, and Jen approached them in very easily understandable, interactive ways. I also always felt comfortable asking any questions I had!”

“The assignments within the practicum placement were very helpful to gaining a greater understanding of how schools operate and issues we will face as school psychologists. The reading summaries, though they felt like busy work in the moment, were helpful for making the information we cover in homework stick so that we can go deeper than reviewing the same content in class.”

[Dr. Jen James](#)



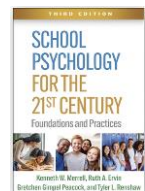
[Blackboard](#)



[Activity Folder](#)



[Textbook](#)



# Course Information

## 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.

## 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.

## Pre-requisites:

Admission to the school psychology program or instructor permission.

## Required Textbook:

- 1) Merrell, K.W., Ervin, R.A., & Gimpel Peacock, G.A., Renshaw, T.L. (2022). *School Psychology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Third Edition*. New York, NY: Guilford.

\*E-book available on GVSU library website. [Click here to view](#).

- 2) Harrison, P.L., & Thomas, A. (Eds.) (2014), *Best Practices in School Psychology V*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

\*Available in the graduate office.

- 3) Shalaby, C. (2017). [Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School](#).

- 4) Additional articles/chapter will be placed on Blackboard in weekly content.

## Grading:

93% 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. According to Graduate School Policy, a grade of C- or lower is considered not passing and the course must be retaken and passed to earn your degree.

## Seminar Engagement:

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.

Our weekly meetings will be devoted to discussing issues, concerns and ideas raised by the assigned readings. **You 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.

I urge all students to be self-reflexive about behaviors or comments that have been identified as racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, etc. This self-reflection applies to be as well. **We are all in the process of learning and unlearning these logics that dominate our society.** There is no expectation here that anyone is perfect- all I ask is that you are mindful of how what you think, say, and/or the way in which you interact with others is circumscribed by these forces.

## Assignments

### **Reading Summaries: 50 pts (10 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 format in a way that you find useful (bulleted list, paragraph, etc.). Please submit these on Blackboard.

### **Book Discussion and Responses: 10pts (5 points each- due dates below)**

As a class, we will read a book that is focused a topic related to serving diverse populations in educational settings. [Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School, by Carla Shalaby](#). During the semester, we will read and discuss the book and how it applies to practice in the schools. As you read the book, you will respond to discussion questions in a journal format. Use the additional readings as you reflect. The responses will be divided into 2 parts and discussions:

- 1) October 18: Reflection of First Part of the book
- 2) November 15: Second Part Reflection and cross cohort discussion

### **Application Items: 35 pts**

Throughout the semester, there will be small assignments related to our synchronous class meetings. These may include completing application problems, delivering a brief (5-min) talk to a small group on an assigned topic, or other activities. Activities will be completed in class.

**Michigan Association of School Psychologists Conference**

**Attendance and Reflection: 5 pts**

***Conference is October 20-21. Paper is due November 22***

During the semester, you will attend a conference of the Michigan Association of School Psychologists. The conference this year is on October 20 and 21 in Mount Pleasant, MI. The expectation is that you attend this during your first year, but we understand that this can be cost prohibitive, and schedules may not allow. If you cannot attend this, you will choose at least 1 MASP or NASP workshop to attend (at least 3 hrs). These are great opportunities to interact with other school psychologists, see talks from national presenters, and become involved in the profession. You must submit a 1–2-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. It is expected that you attend and represent our program well during these conferences. Information on the conference can be found on

<https://masp.wildapricot.org>

**Team Presentation: Ecological Approach (20 points)**

***Due November 1***

You will work with the other school psychology student(s) at your practicum school 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 via a presentation. If you are the only student at the site, you will complete this project independently. You will use Power Point or another presentation format to present your findings. More information will be provided in class at on Blackboard.

**Attend a Team Meeting and Reflect**  
**(5 points)**

***Due November 8***

For this assignment you need to attend at least 1 entire team meeting at your school. You will coordinate this through your teacher, administrator, or school psychologist. It can be any type of meeting that a school psychologist would typically attend, including but not limited to: Child Study Team Meeting, Student Success Team Meeting, Data Benchmark/Progress Monitoring Meeting, MTSS/PBIS Meeting, School Improvement Team Meeting, etc. After attending the meeting, you will write a 1-2-page reflection summarizing what the type of meeting, content of the meeting, and how the meeting went.

**Best Practices Chapter**

**Presentation: 40pts**

***Due November 29***

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. You will select a topic based on one chapter out of *Best Practices in School Psychology*. After reviewing the chapter, you must find additional resources related to the topic. After completing a brief literature review, you will develop and deliver a 15-minute presentation to the class. The presentation should be developed and delivered as if you were presenting the information to a school staff. You must also develop a 1–2-page handout for the presentation.

**Philosophy and Vision of School**

**Psychology Paper: (30 pts)**

***Due December 13 at 11:59 PM***

Each student will write a 3–4-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.

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** Attendance is required at all class sessions, unless excused by the instructor. I have great respect for students who are balancing their pursuit of education with the responsibilities of caring for children or other family members. If you run into challenges that require you to miss class or are interfering with your ability to engage in class, please contact me. There may be instances we can offer flexibility to support your learning.

**Assignments:** All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus. Please submit an electronic copy on Blackboard and turn in a hard copy to me in class. I understand that life gets busy, sickness happens, and extensions may be needed. **Late assignments will receive a 15% reduction and will be accepted up to 3 days late unless approved by the instructor prior to the due date.**

**Posting Presentation:** Presentation slides will be posted on Blackboard before class starts when applicable. 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. Also, the lecture notes do not contain all the relevant information – please take additional notes.

**Canceled Classes:** If I must 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.

### **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, please make me aware so I can develop a plan to assist you.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to the university's policies on Academic Honesty. These policies are described in the catalog and in the Student Code. Cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with as per the procedures described in the Student Code.

**Plagiarism:** As described in Section 223.01 of the Student Code, "any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches, or the writings of other students ... Any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism." In sum, copying the work of any other individual, whether that of another student, researcher, author, or editor is considered plagiarism. This is not acceptable and will be dealt with according to the policies set forth in the

Student Code, which may include receiving a 0 on the assignment, failing the course, and/or other university consequences. 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.

### **University Policies**

Please follow this link to the University's policies: [www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies](http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies).

Instructional Policies:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/policy.htm?policyId=AD248F32-B518-70C6-98F1C451D2CBF2E1&search=SG+3.04>

Religious Inclusion Policy:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/policy.htm?policyId=129535EB-9F42-2683-61E9033594C870D2&search=PC+9.6>



## **Title IX, Sexual Misconduct**

### **Policy, and Gender- and Sexual-**

**Based Harassment Policy:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition also protects students from discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. If you or someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or denied services on the basis of sex or gender, you can find the appropriate resources at [www.gvsu.edu/titleix](http://www.gvsu.edu/titleix) or contact the University's Interim Director and Title IX Coordinator, Ann James at (616) 331-9530 or [v\\_jameann@gvsu.edu](mailto:v_jameann@gvsu.edu).

**Disabilities Support Resources:** If you have special needs because of a learning, physical or other disability, please contact the instructor as well as Disability Support Resources (DSR) at (616) 331-2490 for assistance as soon as possible. Even if you have already

documented your disability with DSR, please make an appointment with your faculty member to discuss your specific needs. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating the classroom and/or building in an emergency during in-person meetings, please make your instructor aware so that the university can develop a plan to assist you. You may also access resources at <https://www.gvsu.edu/dsr>. The university is eager to work with you to meet your learning goals. All discussions related to disabilities will remain confidential.

## **Gender Expression and**

### **Identity:** At Grand Valley State

University we recognize that an individual may wish to be identified by a professional, personal, preferred, display or use name without making an official legal name change. Students, faculty, and staff may use the myName process to update Banner and some related systems with such a name. The myName process will allow students, faculty, and staff to have the chosen name appear anywhere a legal name is not required.

**Bias Incidents or Harassment:**

Anytime you or anyone in the GVSU community feels belittled, disrespected, threatened, or unsafe because of who you are, the entire university community is diminished. That's why it's important to report all bias incidents--even those intended as jokes. While Grand Valley safeguards individuals' constitutional rights and protected speech, the university is also committed to inclusion and equity. Grand Valley exercises the right to engage in educational dialogue and seeks constructive responses to address bias incidents. Go to [https://gvsu-advocate.symphlicity.com/public\\_report/index.php](https://gvsu-advocate.symphlicity.com/public_report/index.php) to report bias incidents or for more information. In addition, for faculty/staff related complaints, you can file an informal complaint with the Division of Inclusion and Equity at [inclusion@gvsu.edu](mailto:inclusion@gvsu.edu) or (616) 331-3296. For student related complaints, you can also contact the Dean of Students office at (616) 331-3585.

**Student Well-Being:** As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can negatively impact your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence,

difficulty eating or sleeping, loss/grief, and/or alcohol/drug problems. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and affect your ability to participate in day-to-day activities. In order to support you during such challenging times, GVSU provides a number of confidential resources to all enrolled students, including the University Counseling Center (<https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/> or (616) 331-3266) and the Student Ombuds, Takeelia Garrett ([garrettt@gvsu.edu](mailto:garrettt@gvsu.edu)).

## 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.

### Reading Abbreviations:

Best Practices: Data-based and Collaborative Decision Making (BP:DM)

Best Practices: Foundations (BP: F)

Best Practices: Student Level Services (BP: ST)

Best Practices: System Level Services (BP:SY)

Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: 8/30	Introductions Program information	Program handbook	
Week 2: 9/6	What is school psychology?	BP:DM Ch. 1 NASP standards p1 – 14 <b>Merrell, et al, Ch. 1</b>	Reading Summary
Week 3: 9/13	Historical context, training credentialing	BP:DM Ch. 4 BP: F Ch 29 <b>Merrell, et al, Ch. 2</b>	Reading Summary

Week 4: 9/20	Working as a School Psychologist; Trends, Opportunities, Challenges Guest Speaker Panel	<b>Merrell, Ch 6</b>	Reading Summary  Come with Questions for the speakers!
Week 5: 9/27	Problem-solving, MTSS, and alternative models  Guest Speaker: Carl Brown, speech lab	BP: DB Ch 2 & 3  <b>Merrell, Ch 3</b>	Reading Summary
Week 6: 10/4	Legal Foundations	<b>Merrell, Ch 7</b>  BP: F Ch 31	Reading Summary
Week 7: 10/11	School Psychology and Social Justice  Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students in School	BP: F Ch 2  BP: F Ch 15  BP: f Ch 16	Reading Summary

<p>Week 8: 10/18</p> <p><b>MASP Conference in Mt. Pleasant 10/20 &amp; 21</b></p>	<p>School Psychology and Social Justice, continued</p> <p>No in person class this week due to MASP conference.</p>	<p>BP: F Ch 3</p> <p><b>Merrell Ch 4</b></p>	<p>Troublemakers Book Written</p> <p>Reflection Part 1 Due</p>
<p>Week 9: 10/25</p>	<p>Fall Break- NO CLASS</p>		
<p>Week 10: 11/1</p>	<p>Special Education Process</p> <p>+</p> <p>Ecological Assessment Presentations</p>	<p>MARSE Rules and Regulations</p> <p>Articles on Bb</p>	<p>Reading Summary</p> <p>Ecological Assessment Due 11/1</p>
<p>Week 11: 11/8</p>	<p>Prevention and Intervention: Academics</p> <p>+</p> <p>Team Meeting Discussion</p>	<p><b>Merrell, Ch 9</b></p> <p>Articles on Bb</p> <p><b>Best practices presentations</b></p>	<p>Reading Summary</p> <p>Team Meeting Reflection due 11/8</p>

Week 12: 11/15	Prevention and Intervention: Social Behavior Troublemakers Discussion Part 2 <b>Time TBD</b>	<b>Merrell, Ch 10</b> Articles on Bb <b>Best practices presentations</b>	Reading Summary + Troublemakers Book Reflection Part 2 and Cross Cohort Discussion
Week 13: 11/22	School Psychologist Role in Systems Change	<b>Merrell, Ch 11</b> <b>Best practices presentations</b>	MASP Conference Reflection due 11/22
Week 14: 11/29	State of the field and future of the field	<b>Merrell, Ch 13</b> <b>Best practice presentations</b>	Reading Summary  BP Presentation due 11/29
Week 15: 12/6	Contemporary Issues: Intellectual Testing- Views and Controversial Issues	Radio Lab + Documentary Discussion	No Reading Summary- work on your final papers
Final Paper			School Psychology Vision and Self Reflection papers due 12/13