



Introduction to School Psychology

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Course Information:

CRN: 22540
Location: Au Sable 1115
Tuesdays 8:30 am-11:15 am

Instructor Information:

Jen James, Ph.D., NCSP
Pronouns: she/her/hers
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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](#)



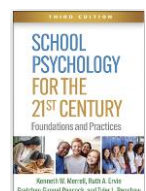
[Blackboard](#)



[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 21st Century – Third Edition*. New York, NY: Guilford.

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

- 2) Harrison, P.L., Proctor, S.L. & Thomas, A. (Eds.) (2023), *Best Practices in School Psychology 7*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

*Available in the graduate office.

- 3) 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, 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.

Interprofessional Education Events

Assignment details and due date TBA

You will be required to attend 2 IPE events on **October 8 from 4-7 and October 15 from 5:30-7:30 pm**. October 8 will be held virtually and when you receive the information on the topic. October 15 will be held in person in the Interprofessional Health

building downtown. You will be working collaboratively with students from special education, occupational therapy, social work, nursing, and more to learn about and apply IEP related topics. There will be a homework assignment that corresponds with the trainings. More information is forthcoming.

Team Presentation: Ecological Approach (20 points)

Due October 14

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 recorded presentation. If you are the only student at the site, you will complete this project independently. More information will be provided in class at on Blackboard.

You will have until October 29 to view all group's ecological assessments. You will have Discussion Board prompts to respond to with your assigned group on the week of October 29 instead of coming to class (see below).

Michigan Association of School Psychologists Conference Attendance and Reflection: 5 pts

Conference is October 23-24. Reflection Paper is due November 4

During the semester, you will attend a conference of the Michigan Association of School Psychologists. The conference this year is on October 23-24 in Traverse City. This is a great opportunity 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>

Best Practices Chapter Presentation: 40pts

Due November 25

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.

Intervention Inventory (10 points)

Due December 2

You will be working with your teacher and school administrators, school psychologist, interventionists, etc. to develop an inventory of academic interventions available in your school district. Then you will complete a template outlining the evidence base, materials, cost, training, etc. involved in those interventions. More info in assignment description. This assignment may be conducted individually or in a group if you are at the same school as other cohort members.

School Psychology Exposure Presentation due December 3 (5 points)

[https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy/national-school-psychology-week-\(nspw\)](https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy/national-school-psychology-week-(nspw))

School Psychology Awareness Week occurs every November. We have a responsibility to promote the field of School Psychology as a field. The NASP African American subcommittee of the Multicultural Affairs Committee invites you to participate in the Exposure Project (#NASPEP) to expose high school students and undergraduates, especially those of diverse backgrounds, to school psychology as a career. This is a

requirement each year. All materials for your presentation have been prepared for you. These materials are adaptable and available [via Dropbox](#).

You will be seeking out high school students/classrooms OR university classes/clubs to promote the field to. This presentation may be done in person or virtually. More details will be shared during the first week of class.

School Based Intervention Annotated Bibliography: (30 pts)

Due December 9 at 11:59 PM

This assignment will help you become aware of how writers and researchers review and become familiar with previous work on a topic before they begin additional research. You will be choosing an academic or behavioral intervention area to research. Your topic will be approved by the instructor prior to beginning your research. This project will help you with the literature review you will be completing during your winter semester. More information and expectations will be given in the assignment description.

- **Skills:** This assignment will help you practice skills essential to success in and beyond this course
Locate a variety of scholarly print and digital sources that represent multiple perspectives on a topic.
Analyze sources by critically reading, annotating, engaging, comparing, and drawing implications.
- **Knowledge:** This assignment will help you become familiar with the following important knowledge:
 - Methods for conducting research
 - Analytical reading and writing strategies

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.

AI Policy: We treat AI-based assistance, such as ChatGPT and Copilot, the same way we treat collaboration with other people: you are welcome to talk about your ideas and work with other people, both inside and outside the class, as well as with AI-based assistants.

However, all work you submit must be your own. You should never include in your assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper citation (including quotation marks and in-line citation for direct quotes).

Including anything you did not write in your assignment without proper citation will be treated as an academic misconduct case. If you are unsure where the line is between collaborating with AI and copying from AI, we recommend the following:

1. Never hit "Copy" within your conversation with an AI assistant. You can copy your own work into your conversation, but do not copy anything from the conversation back into your assignment. Instead, use your interaction with the AI assistant as a learning experience, then let your assignment reflect your improved understanding.
2. Do not have your assignment and the AI agent open at the same time. Similar to above, use your conversation with the AI as a learning experience, then close the interaction down, open your assignment, and let your assignment reflect your revised knowledge. This includes avoiding using AI directly integrated into your composition environment: just as you should not let a classmate write content directly into your submission, so also avoid using tools that directly add content to your submission.

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 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.

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 or contact the University's

Interim Director and Title IX Coordinator, Ann James at (616) 331-9530 or 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.symplcity.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 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).

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.

Best Practice Readings are from the most recent version of Best Practices

Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: 8/26	Introductions Program information	Program handbook	
Week 2: 9/2	What is school psychology? Mandated reporter training	BP Vol 1, Chapter 1: The 2020 NASP Model Merrell, et al, Ch. 1	Reading Summary
Week 3: 9/9	Historical context, training credentialing <i>Guest Speaker: University Librarian (meeting in the library lab 001)</i>	Merrell, et al, Ch. 2	Reading Summary
Week 4: 9/16	Working as a School Psychologist; Trends, Opportunities, Challenges <i>Guest Speaker Panel: Current School Psychologists</i>	Merrell, Ch 6	Reading Summary Come with Questions for the speakers!

Week 5: 9/23	Problem-solving, MTSS, and alternative models	Merrell, Ch 3 BP Vol 1, Chapter 3: MTSS Principles for School Psychologists	Reading Summary
Week 6: 9/30	Topic: Legal Foundations	Merrell, Ch 7 BP Vol 3, Chapter 18: Addressing Legal Considerations for Professional Practice	Reading Summary
Week 7: 10/7 No regular class this week- make note training is 10/8	Interprofessional Education Events- The Individual Education Program <i>10/8 from 4-7 pm virtual</i>	Readings on collaboration posted in Bb	IPE Homework TBA

Week 8: 10/14	Michigan Special Education Rules 10/15 IPE Training session 2 in person 5:30-7:30 PM	MARSE Rules and Regulations <i>Skim and be ready to discuss in class (No reading summary)</i>	Ecological Assessment Posted by 10/14
Week 9: 10/21	Fall Break- NO CLASS on Tuesday		Watch Ecological Assessment Presentations
Week 10: October 23 & 24	MASP Conference in Traverse City <i>Attendance expected</i>		Watch Ecological Assessment Presentations – complete assignment by 10/24

Week 11: 11/4	<p>School Psychologists role working with 2S-LGBTQIA+ students</p> <p>Best practices presentations</p>	<p>Merrell Ch 4</p> <p>BP Vol 3, Chapter 1: Intersectionality</p> <p>Additional Resources posted on Blackboard</p>	<p>Reading Summary and MASP Conference Reflection due</p>
Week 12: 11/11	<p>Cultural Responsiveness in School Psychology</p> <p>Best practices presentations</p>	<p>BP Vol 3, Chapter 4: Systematic Racism & Oppression</p>	<p>Reading Summary Due</p> <p>Annotated Bibliography Rough Draft Due</p>

Week 13: 11/18	School Psychologist Role in Academic MTSS Best practice presentations	Merrell, Ch 9	Reading Summary due Annotated Bibliography Peer Review Due
Week 14: 11/25	Selecting Evidence Based Interventions AFIRM Module (no in person class)	No Readings	Complete the AFIRM module and submit by 12/2
Week 15: 12/2	School Psychologist Role in Social-Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health	Merrell, Ch 10	Intervention Inventory Assignment Due
Final Paper	<i>Due by 12/9 at 8:30 am</i>		Annotated Bibliography due SP Exposure Project evidence due