

**PSYCHOLOGY 525**  
**ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST**  
**FALL, 2008**

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Office Hours: by appointment

**Class Time:** Monday 3:30-6:00

**Location:** Miller G031

*Course Description:* This course is designed to familiarize students with the role(s) and function(s) of the school psychologist in a variety of settings, including: schools, clinics, vocational rehabilitation agencies, private practice settings, post secondary education settings, and other alternative service delivery systems. Issues that impact the role and function of school psychologists will be the focus of this course. These include: history and foundation of school psychology, ethics and standards, public policy (including legislation and regulations), legal issues, professional trends, quality of practice, and the organization and operation of schools. General topics areas addressed are: assessment, consultation, intervention, special education, research, emergent technology and computer applications, systems change, reform movement in education, multiculturalism and diversity, and the future of education and school psychology. The course also includes an introductory practicum experience designed to familiarize students with specific settings and professionals most often associated with the role and function of a school psychologist.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To assist students in understanding the history of school psychology, it's development as a profession, and trends toward the future.
2. To provide students with an overview of the American educational system and the ways in which its organizations and operational policies impact learning.
3. To acquaint students with information regarding the contributions of scientific psychology to school psychology.
4. To assist students in developing an understanding of the varying dimensions of the practice of school psychology.

5. To provide students with information regarding ethical and legal issues in school psychology and to have students demonstrate understanding in the application of ethical standards as published by NASP and APA.
6. To involve students in discussions regarding public policy issues regarding child advocacy and changing expectations in school psychology.
7. To assist students in understanding the ways in which the issues of cultural, minority status, socioeconomic levels and other areas of diversity impact the practice and profession of school psychology.
8. To introduce students to the similarities and differences regarding training and role of school psychologists and other school-based personnel and applied psychologists while emphasizing the collaborative professional relationship.
9. To provide students with practical introductory experiences within the educational setting through observations, discussions, and interviews.

**Required Texts:**

Merrell, K., Ervin, R., & Gimpel, G. (2006). *School Psychology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Foundation and Practice*. New York: Guilford Press.

Jacob-Timm, S. & Hartshorne, T.S. (2003). *Ethics and Law for School Psychologists, Fourth Ed.* New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Frisby, C. L., & Reynolds, C.R. (Eds) (2005), *Comprehensive Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition*

Other readings for the course may be on reserve in Carrier Library or in PARC located in Cleveland Hall. Additional reading lists and handouts may be provided by the instructors as the course proceeds and/or provided on Blackboard.

You are encouraged to review the major journals in the area of school psychology including: *The Journal of School Psychology*, *School Psychology Review*, *School Psychology International*, and *School Psychology Quarterly*. Effective school psychologists engage in professional reading throughout their careers, so begin this now!

Informative Web Sites:

<http://psyc.jmu.edu/school/> (JMU School Psychology Program)  
[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org) (National Association of School Psychologists)  
[www.ispaweb.org](http://www.ispaweb.org) (International School Psychology Association)  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org) (American Psychological Association)  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) (US Department of Education)  
[www.pen.k12.va.us](http://www.pen.k12.va.us) (Virginia Department of Education)  
[www.vapsych.org](http://www.vapsych.org) (Virginia Psychological Association)  
[www.vaspweb.org](http://www.vaspweb.org) (Virginia Academy of School Psychologists)  
[www.parentingresources.ncjrs.org](http://www.parentingresources.ncjrs.org) (parenting resources)  
[www.schoolpsychology.net](http://www.schoolpsychology.net) (school psychology resources online)  
[www.ideapractices.org](http://www.ideapractices.org) (IDEA Practices)  
[www.nrcl.org](http://www.nrcl.org) (National Research Center on Learning Disabilities)  
[www.http://education.indiana.edu/~futures/](http://www.http://education.indiana.edu/~futures/) NASP Futures' website

**Course Requirements:**

1. You are expected to attend all class lectures and to actively participate in the class activities and discussions. Graduate courses thrive on student involvement – so take the time to prepare for class each week and be alert during our time together! We will work together to create a supportive learning environment.

If you must miss a class period due to emergency or illness, please notify the course instructor **prior** to class. Any unexcused absence may result in a grade reduction. Also, late assignments may be penalized.

2. The reading expectation for this course is moderate to heavy. You are expected to have read **all** assigned readings **prior** to class with some degree of understanding. (At times, we will provide you with “prompts” on Blackboard for certain readings to assist your comprehension of the material). Do your best to stay on track with the reading assignments as to not fall behind. As with many graduate courses, we may not cover all of the reading during class time, however, you are still responsible for that material. Similarly, we may cover information in class that is not covered in your readings. Plan ahead and you should be fine with the reading. We will have several guest speakers during the semester. You also are responsible for the information presented by our guests.
3. The mid-term exam will be in-class, short answer and essay format. The final exam will be essay, open-book, take-home format. However, you are expected to work individually on both exams (Honor system). The final exam will be due during exam week.

4. Student pairs (as assigned by the instructors) are expected to prepare a presentation/workshop on an area of research and/or practice critical to the field of school psychology. A list of possible topics will be presented during a class meeting, and we will be available outside of class-time for further development of your ideas. You will be given approximately 1 hour to present. This presentation/workshop should include the following:
  - An 8-10 page paper in the form of a research review (APA format) to be handed in at the time of the presentation (individual papers required). This paper is an exercise geared towards making a contribution to the reader's knowledge of your topic based on current theories and research findings. Speculations, feelings, and personal philosophies are important and valuable in their own right, but your paper should demonstrate your capacity for disciplined inquiry, critical thinking, and scholarly writing. We will talk more about how to write an APA style paper if you are not familiar with this style of writing.
  - Power Point presentation (Send this to course instructors in advance of presentation to be posted on Blackboard)
  - Useful handouts to accompany the presentations
  - Evaluation/Feedback component
  
5. Each student is expected to complete an Introductory Practicum Experience consisting of to 20 to 25 hours in a surrounding school district as assigned by the instructor. This practicum includes assignments for both Psyc 525 and Psyc 674. (Specific assignments will be made by instructors). Students are expected to maintain a journal highlighting the activity and personal reactions to the experience. This journal will be due at semester end. Students will also maintain a formal log of the practicum using a spreadsheet format (e.g., Excel). Logs must be signed by appropriate instructor and filed in the student program file at semester end. Guidelines for these activities are in the Introductory Practicum Guidelines packet. The specific activity requirements for this course include:
  - Observation of one regular education classroom.
  - Shadowing/interview of a school psychologist for one day.
  - Interview one professional within a school system with a focus on the role and function of the professional and the collaboration of that professional with school psychologists. Potential interviewees include: guidance/school counselor, speech therapist/pathologist, occupational or physical therapist, reading specialist, special education teacher or coordinator, and building administrator. (The interviews may be conducted by telephone only if absolutely necessary.)
  - Attendance at one school related meeting (e.g., local board meeting, PTA meeting, or faculty meeting.)

6. You will develop a Portfolio Identity Statement detailing your perceptions, expectations, and goals for your personal development and role as a school psychologist. This is due at the end of the semester. We will provide guidelines for this statement. We will create an “identity bag” as a class during our final meeting time together. (More about that as the semester proceeds.) Also, you will begin to develop your PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO in this course. A rubric to assist you is located in your program handbook.

7. “Taking it with You”: As you move through this course you will undoubtedly come across both practice and research areas that naturally appeal to and intrigue you. Please make a listing of these areas/ideas. These ideas will be yours to take with you into other course and practicum. Plan to creatively share your aspirations with the class at the end of the semester.

8. Diversity Discussion: You will work in pairs to summarize/introduce the main ideas and topics of one chapter from the Frisby text. You will have some class time to do some planning for this peer led discussion. Plan to incorporate some experiential learning in this discussion.

9. You are required to join at least one professional association during the semester (e.g., Virginia Academy of School Psychologists or National Association of School Psychologists.) We ask that you are a student member of both VASP and NASP by your second year of training.

**Grading Criteria:**

Mid-Term Exam	25 points
Final Exam	25 points
Presentation Project	35 points
(paper 20 points, presentation 15 points)	
Class Participation	5 points
Diversity Discussion	10

Introductory Practicum and journal (satisfactory performance for course completion)

“Taking it with You” (satisfactory performance for course completion)

Portfolio Identity Statement (satisfactory performance for course completion)

Total Points – 100

A = 90% > = 90- 100 pts >

B+ = 85-89% = 85- 89 pts

B = 80-84% = 80- 84 pts

C = 70-79% = 70-79 pts

F = <70%

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Aug 25	Course Introduction Discovering and Sharing Strengths	
Sept 1	History of School Psychology Understanding Multicultural School Psychology	J&H 1 & 2 F&R 1,2,&3 MEG 1,2
Sept 8	Overview of Roles/Dimensions of Practice	MEG 3,4,5 Blueprint for Training and Practice (on Blackboard) J&H Appedix D Review and Bring Program Handbook
Sept 15	Ethical Principles, Standards and Ethical Decision Making	J&H Appendices A, B,& C J&H 3 MEG 6 Explore the NASP website
Sept 22	Understanding the School Psychologist's Role in Special Education Introduction to IDEA 97	J&H 4 & 5 F&R 38 MEG 7,8 Explore the Educational Law website
Sept 29	Diversity and the School Psychologist Student Led Discussions	<i>Guest Speakers</i> F&R 6-10
Oct 6	Continue: Diversity and the School Psychologist Student Led Discussions	F&R 6-10
Oct 13	Understanding the School Psychologist's Role in Regular Education State Accountability Issues	J&H 6 F&R 11,12,13 MEG 9 Explore the VA DOE website
Oct 20	Consultation in the School, Home and Community School Psychologist as a Leader	J&H 8,9 F&R 34 MEG 11 <i>Guest Speaker ( Terri Sisson, VASP Pres.)</i>
Oct 27	<b>MIDTERM</b>	
Nov 3	Intervention in the School, Home and Community Peer Led Presentation/Workshop	J&H 7 F&R 27 &28 MEG 10
Nov 10	Emergent Technology/Computer Applications in School Psychology Assessment for Intervention – Peer Led Workshop	<i>Guest Speaker(CarolWiegler-T/TAC)</i> Explore VASP website J&H 4
Nov 17	Research/Evaluation and the School Psychologist Peer Led Presentation/Workshop	J&H 10 MEG 12
Nov 24	Thanksgiving HOLIDAY	BE THANKFUL
Dec 1	Future Trends in School Psychology Sharing of Practicum Experiences	Explore Futures' website MEG 13 <b>Journals/Logs Due</b> <b>Identity Statement Due</b>
Dec 8	<b>TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE</b>	

- Class schedule is tentative and may alter slightly as the course proceeds
- Students with special learning needs should notify instructors immediately