

## PSYC 381: Mental Illness and Criminal Justice (3 credits)

Spring 2024

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Office hours: All available appointments can be viewed and made by logging on to the following website: <https://meetme.so/JustinRamsdell>

### Course Description

Follows the journey of five individuals diagnosed with severe mental illnesses from the day they commit a crime until one year after their final court date. The trajectory of each individual is unique and, taken together, encompasses, arrest, law enforcement response, post-booking options, jail mental health treatment, navigating legal options, correctional mental health treatment, trial, adjudication, and incarceration and release options in addition to establish other means through which the criminal justice system diverts and responds to the needs of individuals with severe mental illnesses.

### Blackboard Login Instructions

Access to [MyMason](#) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check [the IT Support Center](#) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](#) for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

### Required Textbooks

- None – All material available online via the Blackboard website for the course.

### Course Learning Outcomes

1. Define the symptoms of the severe mental illnesses in question and use that knowledge to illustrate how these symptoms impact the daily functioning of the individual.
2. Explain and categorize the paths through which an individual diagnosed with a mental illness may enter the criminal justice system.
3. Describe and explain the range of arrest, correctional, treatment, and release options available to individuals diagnosed with mental illness within the criminal justice system with a particular focus on diverting these individuals from the criminal justice system for treatment.
4. Identify the types of professionals employed in the criminal justice system who have direct contact with, and affect the dispositional outcome of, individuals diagnosed with mental

illnesses and distinguish the roles and responsibilities of each of these professionals with respect to diversion to treatment.

5. Practice the observational, diagnostic, and assessment-related skills used by mental health professionals in the criminal justice system.

## Technology Requirements

**Hardware:** You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to [Patriot Tech](http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel_dataPageID_4609=6233) [http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel\\_dataPageID\\_4609=6233](http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel_dataPageID_4609=6233) to see recommendations.

**Software:** Many courses use Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](#), [Flash](#), [Java](#), and [Windows Media Player](#), [QuickTime](#) and/or [Real Media Player](#). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free [here](#).

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch [this video](#) about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Module 1: Dave – Police Response			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
1/15	No Class	No In-person Class session	N/A
1/17	Class	In-person class session	Course Introduction
1/22	Class	In-person class session	Dave and the Police
1/24	Class	In-person class session	Dave and the Police
1/28	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 1 Quiz due

Module 2: Marcus and Pablo – Police Response			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
1/29	Class	In-person class session	Marcus – Police Response
1/31	Class	In-person class session	Pablo – Police Response
2/4	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 2 Quiz due

Module 3: Pablo’s Emergency Custody Order			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
2/5	Class	In-person class session	Pablo’s Emergency Custody Order
2/7	No Class	No In-person class session	N/A
2/11	Quiz	Module 3 Quiz	Module 3 Quiz
2/11	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #1 – “Background Information and Instant Offense” due

Module 4: Susan – Police Response			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
2/12	Class	In-person class session	Susan – Police Response
2/14	Class	In-person class session	Susan – Police Response
2/18	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 4 Quiz due
2/18	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #1 – “Background Information and Instant Offense” peer-grading due

Module 5: Betty – Police Response			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
2/19	Class	In-person class session	Betty – Police Response
2/21	Class	In-person class session	Betty – Police Response
2/25	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 5 Quiz due
2/25	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #2 – “Behavioral Observations” due

Module 6: The Basics of Jail and Initial Court Hearings			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
2/26	Class	In-person class session	Initial Assessment and Booking
2/28	<b>No Class</b>	<b>No In-person class session</b>	Basics of Jail Video Posted on Blackboard
3/3	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 6 Quiz due
3/3	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #2 – “Behavioral Observations” peer-grading due

Spring Break			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
3/4 – 3/10	<b>No Class</b>	<b>No In-person class session</b>	No assignments due, no quiz due

Module 7: Bail/The Role of Correctional Officers in Mental Health			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
3/11	Class	In-person class session	Bail
3/13	Class	In-person class session	The Role of Correctional Officers in MH
3/17	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 7 Quiz due
3/17	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #3 – “Diagnosis” due

Module 8: Psychological Assessment and Treatment in Jail			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
3/18	Class	In-person class session	Psychological Assessment in Jail
3/20	Class	In-person class session	Treatment in Jail
3/24	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 8 Quiz due
3/24	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #3 – “Diagnosis” peer-grading due

Module 9: Suicide in Jail			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
3/25	Class	In-person class session	Suicide in Jail
3/27	Class	In-person class session	Suicide in Jail
3/31	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 9 Quiz due
3/31	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #4 – “Jail Treatment Plan” due

Module 10: Competency to Stand Trial			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
4/1	Class	In-person class session	Competency to Stand Trial
4/3	Class	In-person class session	Competency to Stand Trial
4/7	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 10 Quiz due
4/7	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #4 – “Jail Treatment Plan” peer-grading due

Module 11: Specialty Courts			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
4/8	Class	In-person class session	Specialty Courts
4/10	Class	In-person class session	Specialty Courts
4/14	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 11 Quiz due
4/14	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #5 – “Competency Evaluation” due

Module 12: Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
4/15	Class	In-person class session	The Insanity Defense
4/17	Class	In-person class session	The Insanity Defense/Writing Paper #6
4/21	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 12 Quiz due
4/21	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #5 – “Competency Evaluation” peer-grading due

Module 13: Community Corrections/Risk-Needs-Responsivity Model			
Date	Task	Format	Topic
4/22	Class	In-person class session	Community Corrections
4/24	Class	In-person class session	Community Corrections/Risk-Needs-Responsivity Model
4/28	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #6 – “Criminal Responsibility Evaluation” due
4/29	Class	In-person class session	Risk-Needs-Responsivity Model
5/5	Quiz	Blackboard	Module 13 Quiz due
5/5	Paper	Blackboard	Paper #6 – “Criminal Responsibility Evaluation” due

## Assignments Description

**Weekly Quizzes (50% total):** There are 13 weekly quizzes during the course of the semester.

- Online quizzes must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm each week. Quizzes that are submitted late will have a penalty of 5% points per day until the score on the quiz drops to zero (after 20 days). Extensions and/or changes to the structure of the late penalties on quizzes can be given under unique circumstances at the discretion of the instructor.
- These quizzes are untimed, and you may use whatever resources you wish to answer the questions, including online content from the Blackboard site and the posted PowerPoint presentations. However, you must complete the quizzes alone.
- Some quizzes have information about the next week's case material. These questions are easy, you just need to look up the correct case material.
- Each quiz is worth 3.84% of your overall grade in the course.

**Papers (50% total):** There will be six papers required for the course. They are:

- Paper #1 - Background Information/Instant Offense (6%)
- Paper #2 - Behavioral Observations (7%)
- Paper #3 - Diagnosis (8%)
- Paper #4 - Jail Treatment Plan (9%)
- Paper #5 - Competency Evaluation (10%)
- Paper #6 - Criminal Responsibility Evaluation (10%)

Every paper has a "template" on the Blackboard site for the course that you are to use when writing the paper. Additionally, there are a couple of other things to keep in mind about the papers:

1. Each paper has a grading rubric that is posted on the Blackboard site for the course and is available before you write the paper.
  - a. The grading rubric is specific and will outline exactly what needs to be done for each step of the paper so that you can ensure you get a good grade.
  - b. Use the rubric to write the paper.
2. Every paper will be peer graded.
  - a. You must turn in your paper on time in order to participate in peer grading. Late papers will not be able to participate.
  - b. If you do not participate in peer grading, your paper will automatically have a 10 point penalty.
  - c. Peer grading points may also be deducted if you "phone in" the peer grading and do not do an adequate job. The instructor will check all the peer grading after each paper.
3. Everything you need to know about each paper will be covered in class and the lecture slides will be posted to Blackboard.

## Course Policies

- **Late Assignments:** Late work will be penalized at 5 percent per day. If an assignment is worth 100 points, and is 5 days late, 25 points will be automatically deducted and grading will start at 75. If there is a legitimate emergency, non-penalty extensions will be considered.
- **Make-up Policy:** Make-up exams will only be administered in special circumstances. Prior approval should be obtained if circumstances allow. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are unable to take an exam at the scheduled time.
- **Extra-Credit Assignments:** There will be no extra credit assignments in this course. Please complete assignments and quizzes accordingly
- **Instructor-Student Communication:** I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than one day, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder. Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is of a personal nature: 1) Syllabus, 2) "Ask the Professor Forum," (feel free to respond to other students in the Ask Professor forum if you know the answer) or 3) On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features, and Technical Requirements.
- **Technology.** You will need a reliable computer and internet access to view course materials in Blackboard. You will need to video record your two role-plays and you can do that with a smartphone or other video camera, such as Kaltura CaptureSpace in Blackboard.

## Grading Criteria

Assignment	Grade Percentage
Papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Background Information/Instant Offense</li><li>• Behavioral Observations</li><li>• Diagnosis</li><li>• Jail Treatment Plan</li><li>• Competency Evaluation</li><li>• Criminal Responsibility Evaluation</li></ul>	50% <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6%</li><li>• 7%</li><li>• 8%</li><li>• 9%</li><li>• 10%</li><li>• 10%</li></ul>
Weekly Quizzes	50%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Grading Scale

A+	97-100%
A	93-97%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D	65-69%
F	Less than 65%

## University Policies and Resources

- a. Academic Honesty: GMU seeks to foster a spirit of academic honesty and integrity. This is as important to your professional development as the knowledge you gain in your course work. Violations of academic integrity includes: cheating on exams or homework assignments (e.g. copying the work of others), passing off someone else's ideas as your own (plagiarism), and engaging in dishonesty of any kind with respect to your classroom participation and assignments. Failure to uphold these standards will result in immediate consequences (i.e. not a warning) commensurate with the violation, which may include a failing grade on the assignment and/or referral to the appropriate University resources. You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Honor Code. The Code can be found [here](#).
- b. Plagiarism: Any work submitted by a student must represent original work produced by that student. Any source used by a student must be documented through normal scholarly references and citations. The extent to which any sources have been used must be apparent to the reader. Everything used from other sources - ideas from other's or actual language - must be cited. This policy includes the use of materials from the World Wide Web. With respect to plagiarism, it is always best to err on the side of caution. If you are caught plagiarizing material, the assignment will receive a failing grade and you will not have the opportunity to re-submit the assignment. Additionally, depending on the severity of the violation, you may be referred to the appropriate University resources.
- c. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#)
- d. <http://summer.gmu.edu/registration/> Student services: The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).
- e. Privacy and Communication: Student privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). As a result, students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important information about this class, including any communication with the professor via digital communication. Please allow 24 hours (48 on weekends) for a response to email messages. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University 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.

- f. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380.
- g. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#). If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Room 4205; 703-993-2474) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me by the second week of class to discuss your accommodation needs. Accommodation can only be made in cases in which proper documentation has been provided through the Office of Disability Services.
- h. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- i. [The George Mason University Writing Center](#) staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.
- j. [Diversity](#): An emphasis on diversity and inclusion is essential to achieve our goals as a campus community. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds, and practices have the opportunity to be heard and respected. This commitment to diversity is included in all University settings. GMU promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment with respect to diversity and seeks to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group, and organization to make improvements as needed. If you feel, in any way, that any aspect of your personal characteristics, viewpoints, or perspectives are not being respected, please talk to me. I will listen.