**Psychology of the Victim Experience (PSYC 462-002)**

**Spring 2016**

**Lecturer:** Dr. Justin Ramsdell

**Office:** David King Hall – Room 2020

**Office Hours:** Tuesday – Thursday 12:00pm – 1:30pm

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**Lecture:** 1:30pm – 2:45pm, Tuesday and Thursday, Innovation Hall - 206

**Required Text:**

* Herman, J. (1997). Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. New York, NY: Basic Books.

**Required Reading** (Provided by Professor in PDF format):

1. Bracha, H. S., Ralston, T. C., Matsukawa, J. M., Williamsn, A. E., & Bracha A. S. (2004). Does fight or flight need updating? *Psychosomatics, 45,* 5.
2. Pickel, K. S., Ross, S. J., & Truelove, R. S. (2006). Do weapons automatically capture attention? *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 20,* 871-893.
3. The Family Astor. Available: <http://nymag.com/news/features/18860/index1.html>
4. Taylor, B. J., Killick, C., O’Brien, M., Begley, E., & Carter-Anand, J. (2014). Older people’s conceptualization of elder abuse and neglect. *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect, 26,* 223-243.
5. Korkodeilou, J. (2014). Dealing with the unknown: Learning from stalking victims’ experiences. *Crime Prevention and Community Safety, 16,* 253-268.
6. Cerulli, C., Poleshuk, E., Raimondi, C., Veale, S., &Chin, N. (2012). “What fresh hell is this?” Victims of intimate partner violence describe their experiences of abuse, pain, and depression. *Journal of Family Violence, 27,* 773-781.
7. Hamberger, K &Larsen, S. E. (2015). Men’s and women’s experience of intimate partner violence: A review of ten years of comparative studies in clinical samples; Part I. *Journal of Family Violence, 30,* 699-717.
8. Beitchman, J. H., Zucker, K. J., Hood, J. E., daCosta, G. A., & Akman, D. (1991). A review of the short-term effects of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 15,* 537-556.
9. Jong, R., Alink, L., Bijleveld, C., Finkenauer, C., & Hendriks, J. (2015). Transition into adulthood of child sexual abuse victims. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 24,*  175-187.

**Course Description:** Explores the immediate, short-term, and long-term psychological effects of crime on victims through interviews with survivors of childhood abduction, elder abuse, intimate partner violence, and child abuse. Draws links between the experiences of the individuals interviewed and victims of other, more common crimes in order to foster empathy. Describes the physiological and psychological reactions to victimization and evaluates treatment options for survivors. Evaluates the roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals and law enforcement officers when interacting with victims of crime.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe and understand the experience of the victims of various and differing crimes through in-depth interviews with survivors.
2. Understand the potential immediate, short-term, and long-term psychological ramifications of being a victim of crime.
3. Explore the similarities between victim experiences of crimes ranging from childhood abuse to burglary.
4. Critically evaluate the roles of professionals such as law enforcement officers and mental health professionals as they pertain to their interactions with victims of crimes and the treatment of the subsequent psychological issues.

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment Due** | **Reading** |
| 1 | 8/30 | Introduction/Syllabus |  |  |
| 9/1 | Defining Victim |  |  |
| 2 | 9/6 | Physiological Reaction to Crime | **Campus Treatment Options Paper** | 1 |
| 9/8 | Cognitive Processes During a Crime |  | 2 |
| 3 | 9/13 | PTSD |  |  |
| 9/15 | Societal Reactions to Victimization |  | Herman, Ch. 1 |
| 4 | 9/20 | **No Class Meeting** | **Listen - Captivity (Interview – Melissa Haviv)** | Herman, Ch. 4 |
| 9/22 | Captivity Discussion |  |  |
| 5 | 9/27 | Elder Abuse (Interview – Phillip Marshall) |  |  |
| 9/29 | Elder Abuse Discussion |  | 3 |
| 6 | 10/4 | Murder (Interview – Dionne Wilson) |  | 4 |
| 10/6 | Murder Discussion |  |  |
| 7 | 10/11 | **No Class Meeting** |  |  |
| 10/13 | Stalking |  | 5 |
| 8 | 10/18 | Guest Lecture – Stalking Resource Center (National Center for the Victims of Crime) |  |  |
| 10/20 | **Exam 1** |  |  |
| 9 | 10/25 | Assault (Interview – Anonymous) |  |  |
| 10/27 | Assault - Discussion |  |  |
| 10 | 11/1 | Intimate Partner Violence |  | 6 |
| 11/3 | Intimate Partner Violence (Cont.) |  | 7 |
| 11 | 11/8 | Child Abuse (Interview – Anonymous) |  | Herman, Ch. 5 |
| 11/10 | Child Abuse Discussion |  | 8 + 9 |
| 12 | 11/15 | Neighborhood Violence (Interview – Anonymous) |  |  |
| 11/17 | Neighborhood Violence Discussion | **Paper Due (if you choose the paper option)** |  |
| 13 | 11/22 | **No Class** |  |  |
| 11/24 | Multiple Incidence Victimization (Interview – Anonymous) |  |  |
| 14 | 11/29 | Complex Trauma |  |  |
| 12/1 | Lecture Series – Mai Fernandez, Executive Director, National Center for the Victims of Crime |  |  |
| 15 | 12/6 | Treatment Options | **Paper Due (if you choose the volunteer option)** | Herman, Ch. 9 |
| 12/8 | Treatment Options (Cont.) |  | Herman, Ch. 10 |
| 16 | 12/13 | **Exam 2** |  |  |
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**Disclaimer:** Due dates and assignment details are subject to change by the lecturer. The only way to stay current with respect to these aspects of the class is to ensure that you attend class. Failure to do so may result in missed announcements with respect to the details of class assignments and/or assignment due dates.

**Attendance:** Although weekly attendance will not be taken, coming to class is important. Material will be presented that is not included in the assigned readings, but will be included in tests. Missing class also means that you will miss discussions about assignments and difficult test material. You are responsible for all announcements made in lecture and lab regardless of whether or not you attend class.

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| **Grading Scale:** | | | | A+ | 98 - 100% |  |  | C | | 73 - 76% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | A | 93 - 97% |  |  | C- | | 70 - 72% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | A- | 90 - 92% |  |  | D | | 60 - 69% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | B+ | 87 - 89% |  |  | F | | Less than 60% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | B | 83 - 86% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | B- | 80 - 82% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | C+ | 77 - 79% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Grading Criteria:** | | | | **Assignment** | **Grade Percentage** |
|  |  |  |  | 2 Exams (2 x 30%) | 60% |
|  |  |  |  | Paper | 30% |
|  |  |  |  | Campus Resources for Treatment Paper | 10% |
|  |  |  |  | **Total Percentage:** | 100% |

**Assignments:**

* **Exams:**
  + There will be two exams that will be administered on the dates outlined in the schedule. Please bring a writing utensil (preferably a pencil to correct mistakes). The exam format will largely (if not entirely) be short answer question.
* **Paper:**
  + There are two options for this assignment: Volunteer for an organization that assists victims or write a paper. Options are further outlined below.
  + Volunteer assignment
    - Spend a minimum of ten hours volunteering at an organization that assists victims in some capacity. If you are unsure if the organization you are choosing qualifies, please ask the instructor.
    - You do not have to be directly helping victims, simply asking to “shadow” a professional in the field will be adequate.
    - Turn in a time sheet that outlines the hours you spent on site, signed by your supervisor, attesting to the fact that you have completed the required hours.
    - Write a 2-page paper outlining your experience, your job duties (or the duties of the individual you shadowed), and state what you learned from the experience about victim’s issues and yourself.
  + Paper assignment
    - Choose a crime we did not cover in class and outline the physiological and emotional experience of the victims of that particular crime in a 5-7 page paper.
    - Be sure to cover the following:
      * Immediate physiological and psychological consequences.
      * Short-term physiological and psychological consequences.
      * Long-term physiological and psychological consequences.
      * The impact the crime has on the family and friends of the victim.
      * The treatment options available for the relevant physiological and psychological issues related to the crime.
      * Please support your statements with evidence from the course readings and academic, peer-reviewed, literature on treatment outcomes when applicable. You must use at least 6 peer-reviewed academic articles. Information from websites, unless government statistics, should not be used.
* **Campus Treatment Options Paper:**
  + We will be discussing some difficult topics in this class and listening to some truly tragic stories as told by the people who have lived them. Due to this, you may find that you need to speak to a mental health professional as some point in the semester. Your first assignment is to make a list of the mental health treatment (and support) options available to you as a student. Please provide a list of all campus resources for mental health treatment and crisis de-escalation.
  + These resources should be broken down into two categories; Immediate help (crisis phone lines, etc.) and treatment options (counseling center, etc.).
  + Please provide the name, contact information, hours of operation, a brief description of the services provided, and how you can make an appointment.
  + This is due on the date listed on the syllabus.

**Late Work Policy:** In-class assignments cannot be accepted late (i.e. will receive a zero). These assignments will not necessarily be announced prior to their occurrence. All other 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.

**Academic Integrity:** 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.

**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.

**Accommodations:** 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 scan only be made in cases in which proper documentation has been provided through the Office of Disability Services.

**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 to 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 respect, please talk to me. I will listen.

**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.

**Electronic Devices and Computers:** The use of electronic devices, including tablets and computers, is allowed in class for note taking purposes. The use of cell phones or other communicative devices is not permitted during class. Please keep these devices silent and stowed away. Remember, placing a device on "vibrate" is not the same as it being silent.

**Extra-Credit Assignments:** There will be no extra credit assignments in this course. Please prepare for the tests and classroom assignments accordingly.

**Enrollment:** Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes (available from the Registrar - registrar.gmu.edu). Please contact the Registrar's Office with any specific questions.

**Cancelled Classes:** If classes are cancelled due to inclement weather or other unforeseeable reasons, you will all receive an email from the professor outlining the process and timeline for making up the missed material. Please sign up for “Mason Alerts” at <https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/> to receive timely notifications via email and directly to your cell phone.