**Special Topics in Forensic Psychology – Unique Victim Populations**

**(PSYC 462)**

**Fall 2018**

**Professor:** Dr. Justin Ramsdell

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

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

**Email:** jramsde2@gmu.edu

**Phone:** 703-993-2189

**Lecture:** Monday and Wednesday, 9:00am - 10:15am, Robinson B122

**Required Text:**

* None

**Suggested Reading**: Provided by Professor in PDF format on a weekly basis as needed

**Course Description:** Explores victimization in general including topics like human trafficking, stalking, and other crimes not covered in the “Psychology of Crime Victims” course. Other topics covered to be decided by the class.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe and understand the experience of the victims of stalking including the psychological toll the crime takes on the victim as well as interaction with law enforcement, and relevant legal statutes.
2. Explore, in totality, the experience of victims of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and create a formal plan to assist current victims while simultaneously preventing future instances of abuse through all relevant legal, legislative, and therapeutic means.
3. Explore the experience of human trafficking victims including the psychological toll the crime takes on the victim as well as interaction with law enforcement, and relevant legal statutes.
4. Describe and understand the victim experiences of unique populations as chosen by the class.

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment Due** |
| 1 | 8/27 | Introduction/Defining the Class |  |
| 8/29 | Special Guest – Elaina Roberts, National Center for Victims of Crime |  |
| 2 | 9/3 | **No Class** |  |
| 9/5 | Stalking Project |  |
| 3 | 9/10 | Stalking Project |  |
| 9/12 | Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project |  |
| 4 | 9/17 | Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project |  |
| 9/19 | Stalking Project |  |
| 5 | 9/24 | Stalking Project |  |
| 9/26 | Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project |  |
| 6 | 10/1 | Stalking Project |  |
| 10/3 | Stalking Project |  |
| 7 | 10/9 | Introduction of Third Project |  |
| 10/10 | Teaching Strategies for Third Project |  |
| 8 | 10/15 | Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project |  |
| 10/17 | Stalking Project |  |
| 9 | 10/22 | Stalking Project |  |
| 10/24 | Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project |  |
| 10 | 10/29 | Stalking Project | Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project due |
| 10/31 | Third Project |  |
| 11 | 11/5 | Third Project |  |
| 11/7 | Stalking Project |  |
| 12 | 11/12 | Third Project |  |
| 11/13 | Class Lessons | Third Project due |
| 13 | 11/19 | Class Lessons |  |
| 11/21 | **No Class** |  |
| 14 | 11/26 | Class Lessons |  |
| 11/28 | Class Lessons |  |
| 15 | 12/3 | Class Lessons |  |
| 12/5 | Final Trafficking Video Project Viewing | Final Stalking Video due |
| 16 | 12/17 | **No Final Exam** |  |
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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** |
|  |  |  |  | Class Video Project | 40% |
|  |  |  |  | Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project | 30% |
|  |  |  |  | Third Project | 30% |
|  |  |  |  | **Total Percentage:** | 100% |

**Assignments:**

* **Exams:**
  + There will be no exams.
* **Stalking Project**
  + We are tasked with creating a 45 minute - 1-hour video in which we explain everything a non-professional would need to know about the offender behavior, victim response, law enforcement response, and relevant legal issues related to stalking.
  + More details to be presented in class.
* **Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Project**
  + Your job is to create a memorandum directed towards the Pennsylvania State Legislator and the leadership of the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania (Region III, including all diocese) outlining your plan to accomplish the following two goals: 1) Make the victims of sexual abuse by leaders in the Catholic Church whole again and, 2) Put safeguards in place to prevent future abuse.
  + Step 1: Read the “40th Statewide Grand Jury Report” on Blackboard. The document is 1,356 pages (377 without exhibits), so be selective in your reading, but comprehensive in your information. The document outlines the history of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania, the “playbook” used by the Church to cover up instances of sexual abuse, and many other relevant topics.
  + Step 2: Research topics like “restorative justice,” “procedural justice,” and “retributive justice.” Don’t use google. It will probably give you the incorrect answer. We will discuss the proper way to research in class… So don’t fret. Some things to consider:
    - Don’t just search in the psychology literature… There are other disciplines that may have different, yet valuable (or better), information including criminology, social work, gender studies, and conflict resolution.
    - You will likely be using all of three of these concepts and will be combining ideas in your final memorandum.
  + Step 3: Create a memorandum (format available on Blackboard) that addresses questions presented in the assignment description on the BlackBoard site.
* **Third Project**
  + Create a week-long lesson, in whatever format you choose, that teaches the class about issues related to a specific and unique victim population like mass shooting victims, cult participants, etc.
  + Details to follow in class.

**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.