Mental Illness and Criminal Justice – PSYC 381

Spring 2019

Lecturer: 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: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00am – 10:15am, Music and Theater Building, room 1005

Required Text: None

Course Description: Follows the journey of four individuals diagnosed with severe mental illnesses from the day before 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 other means through which the criminal justice system responds to the needs of individuals with severe mental illnesses.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Explore the various mental disorders that are often encountered in the criminal justice system, and how those mental disorders affect the individual’s trajectory within the system.
2. Understand 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.
4. Critically evaluate the roles of professionals employed in the criminal justice system who have direct contact with, and affect the dispositional outcome of, individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Course Content</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Syllabus/Historical Context</td>
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<td>1/24</td>
<td>Historical Context</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/29</td>
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<td>Susan – Background Information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>Marcus/Bipolar Disorder Dave/Dementia</td>
<td>Marcus and Dave Background Information</td>
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<td>2/5</td>
<td>Betty – Borderline Personality Disorder</td>
<td>Betty – Background Information</td>
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<td>2/7</td>
<td>Sequential Intercept Model</td>
<td>Susan – Police Report Marcus – Police Report</td>
<td>Susan – Background Information and Instant Offense Sections of Report Due (Via Blackboard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>CIT Training for Police Officers</td>
<td>Dave – Police Report Betty – Police Report</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Guest – Dallas Leamon and Mike Keen Lead CIT Trainers – Arlington County</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Behavioral Observations/Report Writing</td>
<td>Susan – Jail Incident Reports</td>
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<td>2/21</td>
<td>Correctional Facilities, Correctional Officers, and Mental Illness in Correctional Settings</td>
<td>Marcus – Jail Incident Reports</td>
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<td>2/26</td>
<td>Jail Suicide</td>
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<td>Susan – Behavioral Observations Section of Report Due (Via Blackboard)</td>
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<td>2/28</td>
<td>Writing your Diagnosis Section and Women Specific Issues in Correctional Settings</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Sonia Shuhart and Aubrey Graham – Arlington County Detention Center Clinicians</td>
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<td>3/7</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td><strong>No Class – Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/19</td>
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<td>Susan – Diagnosis</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>3/21</td>
<td>Criminal Proceedings</td>
<td>Section of Report Due (Via Blackboard)</td>
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<td>3/26</td>
<td>Legal Issues - Competency</td>
<td>Optional video on Blackboard</td>
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<td>3/28</td>
<td>Legal Issues – Criminal Responsibility</td>
<td>Optional video on Blackboard</td>
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<td>4/2</td>
<td>Mac-CAT, R-CRAS, and Sequential Intercept Model Review</td>
<td>Susan – Treatment Section of Report Due (Via Blackboard)</td>
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<td>4/4</td>
<td>Guest – Lauren Brice – Attorney, Arlington County Public Defender’s Office</td>
<td>Susan – Competency Section of Report Due (Via Blackboard)</td>
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<td>4/9</td>
<td>Guest – Lisa Tingle, Prosecutor – Commonwealth Attorney’s Office</td>
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<td>4/11</td>
<td>Problem Solving Courts</td>
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<td>4/16</td>
<td>Guest – Evie Eastman – Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office – Drug Court Liaison</td>
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<td>4/18</td>
<td>Risk-Needs-Responsivity Model</td>
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<td>4/23</td>
<td>Community Corrections</td>
<td>Susan – Criminal Responsibility Section of Report Due (Via Blackboard)</td>
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<td>4/25</td>
<td>Guest – Community Corrections Officers</td>
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<td>4/30</td>
<td>Sequential Intercept Model – Wrap-up/Other Diversion Options</td>
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<td>5/2</td>
<td>Loose Ends/Catch up</td>
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<td>5/9</td>
<td>Exam 2 (Not Cumulative) – 9:00am</td>
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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.

**Grading Scale:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>98 - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79%</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73 - 76%</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 72%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60 - 69%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60%</td>
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**Grading Criteria:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2 x 20% points)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan – Background Information and Instant Offense</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan – Behavioral Observations</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan – Diagnosis</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Susan – Jail Treatment Plan</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan – Competency Evaluation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Susan – Criminal Responsibility Evaluation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td><strong>Total Percentage:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**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) and a green scantron sheet. The exam format will be multiple choice questions.

**Assignments**

- **NOTICE:**
  - All due dates listed in the syllabus are final. Please get things in on time. The papers are due at 11:59pm on the due date listed in the syllabus, but if you want to work until 3am... that is up to you. I’ll be checking for late papers early the following morning.
  - Please turn in all assignments under the “Assignments” tab on the Blackboard site for the class.
  - All papers must use the formatting template provided to you on Blackboard. It can be found in the “course content” section under “Report Template for All Papers.”
Susan – Background Information and Instant Offense

You are about to embark on the process of creating a full psycho-legal evaluation of Susan. As the semester progresses, you will write one section of the report after the other until you have created a full psycho-legal report. This is the first step in that process.

- Use the report format available on the Blackboard site for the class
- You are tasked with creating the first portion of your psychological report in this section. All subsequent reports will build off of this, so please make sure to follow these guidelines. Please include the following sections:
  - “Reason for Referral”
    - Follow guidelines in the report template.
    - This should just be one or two sentences outlining the reason you are writing the report.
    - Use “jail treatment plan” for your reason for referral for the first couple of reports as we get started... but change as necessary when the assignment changes.
  - “Non-Confidentiality Statement”
    - Leave as is... no editing necessary. Delete highlighted text.
  - “Background Information”
    - Add your own synopsis of Susan’s background information in this section.
    - Be sure to include all information you deem relevant.
    - Be concise but encompassing.
    - Do not cut and paste from the information available on Blackboard... summarize in your own words.
    - Be sure to include a list of current medications if available.
    - Be sure to include information from the jail incident reports since that is now part of her background information.
  - “Summary of the Instant Offense”
    - The “Summary of the Instant Offense” is exactly that. A summary of the police report. In this case, “instant offense” refers to the crime with which Susan is currently charged (the attempted murder of her sons).
    - Be sure to list the date, time, and location of the offense (that is important information).
    - Summarize the police report as best you can, in your own words, and include all relevant information.
    - Include direct quotes from Susan as well (quotes form the police report... do not make up any information in this section).
- **Susan – Behavioral Observations**

  o Please add this section to your previous report (background information and instant offense) as outlined below.
  
  o This is to be written as if you are a mental health professional in the jail in which Susan is currently incarcerated. Please write this as if you are meeting Susan in jail TWO WEEKS after she arrives in the jail.
  
  o This is a fictional account of a meeting that you have with Susan… which is going to require some creativity on your part. Think about the videos we watched of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia and try and describe those behaviors. Think about what your “fictional” Susan looks like and describe it. Ask her questions about the crime and the legal process and think about how she may respond. Get creative... but be realistic. Please do not add anything fantastical.
  
  o Seeing as how this interview would happen several weeks after she was incarcerated, Susan may be taking her medications... and she may not. That is all up to you. If she has been taking medication, it is not likely to have taken full effect yet... if she is refusing medication her behaviors should still be psychotic. Which direction you choose to take is up to you.
  
  o Use the information available in the “Mental Status Exam” form on the class website (and the PowerPoint presentation on Blackboard) to create behavioral observations that you think mimic how Susan may actually act and respond during an interview. You may also use direct quotes and comments made by correctional officers that you also interview (that you make up).
  
  o I can’t state this clearly enough... be objective and factual. You must provide behavioral observations that back up your claims. Do not simply state that the patient appeared anxious. Instead, state that they appeared anxious and then give an example of what you were “seeing” in the interview (her actual behavior) that made you think that. For example, “the patient appeared anxious as evidenced by the fact that she was constantly shifting in her seat and repeatedly asking when the interview would be done.”
  
  o Be sure to cover every category listed in the class PowerPoint... use that as a guide. For clarification... those are:

    - Appearance
    - Behavior
    - Mood
    - Speech
    - Cognition
    - Thought Processes
    - Insight and Judgment
    - Suicidality/Homicidality
  
  o One caveat, you do not need to comment on everything listed in the PowerPoint. If there was nothing remarkable (in your fictional scenario) about Susan’s appearance, then state what she looked like
(overall appearance) and leave it at that. The PowerPoint is a guide so you don’t forget anything.

- **Susan - Diagnosis**
  - What is Susan’s official diagnosis? Why is this the diagnosis? What symptoms from the DSM does Susan display?
  - Review the DSM criteria (provided on Blackboard) for schizophrenia in your paper and state which ways Susan does, or does not, meet the criteria. Provide concrete examples from your behavioral observations (things that you made up in your behavioral observations section) and the available police reports and jail incident reports.
  - Be logical. If you are going to diagnose Susan with schizophrenia (and you should) then be sure to explicitly state which criteria she meets and how she meets that criteria.
  - Take this process and repeat it for Susan’s (possible) substance abuse diagnosis. However, unlike her diagnosis of schizophrenia, whether or not she meets the criteria for a substance use disorder is up to you. As it currently stands, her diagnosis could go either way. If you have added information in your behavioral observations section that pushes her one way or the other with respect to this diagnosis, make the case.
  - Rinse and repeat this process for depression and anxiety disorders if you think it is applicable. Remember, Susan (if you decide that she has taken her medications) has realized that she has attempted to murder her young son…. That can do a number on anyone… so symptoms of depression may be warranted. The same is true for any anxiety related disorder. She is facing a possible life sentence (or the rest of her life in a maximum security mental hospital) so she may have some anxiety (but then again, so will almost anyone awaiting trial in jail). So it is up to you whether or not she actually meets the DSM criteria for anxiety disorders (as you have portrayed her in your behavioral observations section).

- **Susan - Jail Treatment Plan**
  - For this part of the paper, you are tasked with creating a jail treatment plan for Susan. This section should be added to the earlier information to create one full report.
  - Using peer-reviewed literature as a guide for what works... describe the treatment plan you would use for Susan. Individual therapy? Group Therapy? Medications? All of the above? What do you think would work best if there were no limitations on the available resources?
  - Back up all treatment recommendations with evidence from peer-reviewed literature. Provide examples of how the treatment you are
suggesting has been used and the effectiveness of that treatment
given the results of your research into the peer-reviewed literature.
Can you find a peer-reviewed article on treating schizophrenia in a jail
setting? If not, how can you use the literature on treating
schizophrenia in the community and amend that so that the same
process can reasonably work in a jail setting.
  o Remember, some things available in the community are not available
    in a secure jail setting.
  o Also remember, she is going to need medication, medication that you
    as a psychologist cannot provide since you are not a medical doctor.
    So you are going to have to refer her to a psychiatrist in the jail for
    medication (though this may already have occurred depending on
    how you portray the situation).
  o Make sure you treat every issue. If they are diagnosed with
    schizophrenia treat that... but if you diagnose Susan with a substance
    abuse disorder, treat that as well. Same holds true for depression and
    anxiety (if those matter to your specific description of the case and
    you gave her a formal diagnosis of these disorders in the “diagnosis”
    section of the report from before.

- **Competency Evaluation:**
  o For this part of the evaluation, you are going to conduct a mock
    competency evaluation on Susan. You will either find her competent
    to stand trial or not competent to stand trial. The choice is yours
    based on how you present Susan in your earlier versions of the report
    and how you have her answer the questions on the MacCAT.
  o That being said, your competency section should be added to your
    previous versions of the report (minus the treatment section you
    wrote earlier).
  o Your grade will not be based on whether or not you find Susan
    competent or not... there is no wrong answer since you are making up
    a lot of the material. Instead, your grade will be based on how logical
    and thorough you are in your evaluation.
  o You are to use the MacCAT (outlined in class) as a guide for
    determining competency and use the Dusky Standard as your legal
    framework (The MacCAT can be found on Blackboard).
  o Your report should contain the following section (in addition to the
    previous sections, minus the “treatment” section:
    o “MacCAT Results:”
      ▪ When using any assessment instrument, provide a brief
        description of the instrument (purpose and format). One to
        two sentences.
      ▪ Use the information you have learned about schizophrenia
        (and Susan’s case in particular) to guide how you think she
        may answer the questions on the MacCAT. You do not need to
        review each question and Susan’s answer to that question.
However, you need to provide a summary, complete with direct quotes from Susan (that you make up). The reader needs to get a sense of how the individual answered the questions. Be sure to note what the individual did well and what they struggled with.

- Use separate paragraphs for each section of the instrument (for example - Understanding, Appreciation, and Reasoning for the Mac-CAT). In these sections you should describe what the section measures (what is meant by "understanding?" Look to the questions in the section to help you frame a single sentence that sums it all up). List the individual's score and state what that means (are they impaired? on the fence?). Then provide a couple of examples that you think are indicative of their performance on that section ("for example, when Ian was asked about "X," he stated, "Y." Then summarize.
- If you do this, your papers will be logical and difficult to argue with. Write the papers as if I am going to be an expert helping the other side of the case. Make your points in a way so that I have nothing to use when I try and help the opposing attorney negate the case you are making.
- This is not going to be the most engaging reading on the planet. If you feel that the report is "boring" to read, you are probably doing it right. It should consist of facts and statements about psychological states backed up with observations that make the point.
  - "Opinion"
    - This is your ultimate opinion on the individual's competency. Use the results from the MacCAT (without going over everything twice) to state the case for, or against, competency.
    - Be sure to outline the Dusky Standard so the reader knows what criteria you are using. Then, review each relevant aspect of the Dusky Standard and provide your opinion, backed up with examples from earlier in the paper, on whether not the individual meets that criteria.
    - Be sure to provide an “ultimate opinion” with respect to competency as well... are they competent or not?

- **Criminal Responsibility Evaluation:**
  - The assignment is as follows: Use the data available to you in order to conduct an evaluation on the criminal responsibility of Susan’s actions the day of the instant offense. In order to conduct this evaluation, you will need the following materials (all available on the course’s Blackboard website):
    - Susan’s previous report (minus the jail treatment section and competency section).
The data from intelligence and personality testing provided in the “course content” section of the Blackboard website. This information is part of the template and should remain in your final report.

- The Rogers Criminal Responsibility Assessment Scale (R-CRAS).
- The Virginia legal standard for determining criminal responsibility.

- Your grade will not be based on your ultimate opinion on Susan’s criminal responsibility. Instead, your grade will be based on your ability to integrate the many sources of information into a cohesive whole and apply this information to the categories in the R-CRAS. The R-CRAS will aid you in determining Susan’s criminal responsibility based on the Virginia standard. Be sure to communicate your reasoning for your decision clearly and in detail.
- Your report should follow this format (with the notable exceptions of the “treatment” and “competency” sections... section headings in quotation marks):
  - “Psychological Testing” (to be left in from the report template document available on the Blackboard website). Use this data, (...and there is a lot of it) to help make your determination on criminal responsibility. You must incorporate this data into your overall opinion of Susan’s responsibility. You may have to research some of the test used or ask questions in class in order to understand it.

1. “R-CRAS Results”
   - When using any assessment instrument, provide a brief description of the instrument (purpose and format).
   - Please do not provide every answer to every question on the R-CRAS (though you will need to complete them to get the relevant information).
   - Remember, the R-CRAS is just a structured interview guide to help you consider everything... it’s not actually a psychological “test” that provides answers.
   - Instead, use the decision tree for the ALI standard in the back of the R-CRAS to outline this section (each question in the ALI decision tree can be a paragraph or you can combine questions when warranted). Provide specific examples from your behavioral observation section, the psychological testing section, and other relevant sections.
   - You should address the following things in separate paragraphs in your paper:
     - Malingering - Remember, one test states that she is malingering, another states that she is
not paying attention to the tests... and another states that her IQ is a 66. So how do you reconcile this? Are the meds having an effect on the test results? Are the hallucinations? Is she really malingering? What is happening?

- **Diagnosis** – Feel free to refer to your earlier diagnosis section.
- **Loss of behavioral and/or cognitive control**
- **Was the loss of behavioral or cognitive control due to the diagnosis?**

Each of these ideas should be at least one paragraph in this section with everything you have stated (background information, instant offense, diagnosis, behavioral observations, etc.) used as evidence.

If you do this, your papers will be logical and difficult to argue with. Write the papers as if I am going to be an expert helping the other side of the case. Make your points in a way so that I have nothing to use when I try and help the opposing attorney negate the case you are making.

This is not going to be the most engaging reading on the planet. If you feel that the report is "boring" to read, you are probably doing it right. It should consist of facts and statements about psychological states backed up with observations that make the point.

2. **Opinion**

- Review the Virginia standard for criminal insanity (available on the Blackboard site) so that the reader knows what the standard is... then go through the VA standard point by point stating whether or not Susan meets the criteria for criminal insanity providing examples you mentioned earlier in the paper (like in the behavioral observations section and the R-CRAS sections).
- Provide an "ultimate opinion" on legal insanity based on your review of the VA standard... outline why you think this is the case.
- There should be no new information in this section. This is the only section in the paper in which you should repeat information mentioned earlier in the paper.

**Late Work Policy:** All 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 can 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 an 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.

**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/](https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/) to receive timely notifications via email and directly to your cell phone.