# Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Across the Lifespan

## Course Information

**Course:** 461 – DL3

**Semester:** Fall, 2020

Online – Days/Hours

**Instructor:** Nicole Fettig

**Online Office Hours:** T/TH 12:00 – 1:00 PM or by appointment

**Phone:** 703-731-6636 (cell)

**Email:** [nfettig@gmu.edu](mailto:nfettig@gmu.edu)

## Course Description

This course will address the incidence of maltreatment throughout the lifespan. The course will begin with an overview of topics related to child maltreatment including differentiating abuse and neglect and defining specific maltreatment types (e.g. physical, sexual, psychological/emotional). Content will focus on defining child maltreatment, the incidence and prevalence of different types of child maltreatment, the risk factors associated with maltreatment, perpetrator characteristics, mandated reporting, outcomes related to maltreatment, and prevention and interventions for children and their families.

This course will also provide an understanding of adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation in its various forms, the signs and symptoms, reporting requirements, and how Adult Protective Services and other legal, medical, and community agencies deal with this issue.

**IMPORTANT.** Abuse, neglect, and exploitation are very common and there is a good chance that you, or someone you know, has experienced or is experiencing one or more forms of maltreatment. If you were abused as a child, or you are aware of a case of past or present abuse, I would like to request that you DO NOT share any details about it on the class discussion boards. The reason I ask you not to share is because the confidentiality of your postings cannot be guaranteed. In addition, you should know that as a mandated reporter, any report of maltreatment may legally require that I report the abuse to the authorities, even if you do not want the maltreatment reported.

If you have a question about past or present maltreatment, you can call or email me privately. However, please remember that I may become legally obligated to report the case to the authorities. Please think carefully about this before you contact me privately

## Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

* Describe and distinguish between various maltreatment types across the lifespan.
* Obtain a better understanding of the incidence and prevalence of child and adult maltreatment as reported to Child and Adult Protective Services.
* Recognize the range of biological, individual, social, and structural-level factors that put someone at risk for or protect an at-risk individual from maltreatment.
* Understand perpetrator characteristics associated with child and adult maltreatment.
* Identify outcomes associated with child and adult maltreatment.
* Describe prevention and treatment programs available to address the incidence of maltreatment.

## Course Format

This class will be held entirely online. The course will deliver content via PowerPoint slides and multi-media resources. These slides will all be available on Blackboard, and will include key terminology, important concepts, and more detailed explanations of difficult topics. Students are responsible for understanding all of the information presented in these slides as well as the notes sections of these slides (below each slide). Students should use the additional resources (e.g. articles, podcasts, etc..) to supplement their knowledge and understanding of the information presented in these slides. If students are unsure about a specific concept, they should first consult their resources for more information regarding this topic. If they are still unsure about a topic, they should email the instructor.

## Course Content

* Readings, online video and audio segments, and other materials (e.g. web pages) will be assigned each week. These will be organized by topic into the weekly “learning modules” and made available to you on BlackBoard.
* Each learning modules will include one or more lectures which will be a Power Point slide presentation with audio narration. Please make sure you are able to see and hear the lecture.
* For each module, you will be asked to discuss one or more questions on the group discussion forum. Each week I will assign you into one of the various roles including: starters, critics, connectors, and secretary. A description of these roles will be posted to BlackBoard.
* Two (timed) online cumulative exams – a midterm and a final exam. Each exam will be based on all the readings, lectures, and assignments. They will contain multiple choice questions. The exams are open book and open notes. Each exam is to be completed on your own – these are individual assessments, not group exercises.
* There will be two caseworker activities where you will be asked to play the role of a Child Protective Services caseworker and an Adult Protective Services caseworker. You will be given a case study and will need to complete an assignment related to the various parts of the intake, investigation, and case closure process. More information on this will be posted to Blackboard.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

**Assignment Points Possible**

Discussion (once a week for 15 weeks – 4 pts each) 60

Caseworker Activities (2 - 10 pts each) 20

Exams (2 – 10 pts each) 20

**Total points 100**

**EXTRA CREDIT – 5 pts**

To integrate and extend what you have learned in the course, you will write a 2-3 page paper (excluding references) on an area of ANE not covered in class. Your topic must be approved by me in advance. Feel free to touch base with me at any time during the semester to get approval for your proposed topic. Possible areas of interest are listed below (feel free to come up with your own!).

Abductions / Murder / Bullying / Hate crimes / Road rage / Terrorism / Cult behavior / Hazing / Workplace violence / Animal cruelty / Violence in sports / Suicide /School violence / School shootings Modern-day slavery / Prison violence / War crimes / Torture / Gender-based violence

## Evaluation

Grades will be calculated as follows:  
> 93% = A, 90 – 92 = A-

87 – 89 = B+, 83 – 86 = B, 80 – 82 = B-

77 – 79 = C+, 73 – 76 = C, 70 – 72 = C-

60 – 69 = D

< 60 = F

## Academic Integrity

Students in this course are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with the GMU Honor System and Code. (<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>). Students are encouraged to study together as much as possible throughout the course, however, no assistance, sharing of information, or discussion of exam items or answers between students may take place. For all work, the name that appears on the paper must be the author. Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated in this course and will be immediately reported according to GMU procedures. The instructor reserves the right to use software to determine the extent to which the work is the student’s. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

## Accommodations

It is the policy of the University and this instructor to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resources Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## Miscellaneous:

Official Communications via GMU Email: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason email account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. As a tip, please include your G-number and the course section in the subject of the email in all email correspondences with all instructors. Recording of classroom lectures is not allowed without explicit permission by the instructor.

Students may not reproduce (including uploading to the Internet) any portion of the exam. Students who attempt to photograph or in any way capture information about the exam for others’ use will be reported for an honor violation.

Life is stressful and we all need a little support sometimes. Students are encouraged to contact Counseling & Psychological Services (3129 Student Union Building I, http://caps.gmu.edu/) at 993-2380 for assistance with any kind of psychological/life problem or crisis situation. I can help with referrals for students with particular counseling needs so please feel free to talk with me for help with anything.

**Disclaimer**

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and its content. Any changes will be announced in writing. If you are confused about a deadline, please let me know.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *DATE* | *Readings/Assignments* | *What’s due?* | |
| **Introduction** | | | |
| **Week** 1  **8/24** | Lecture slides - Syllabus Review Presentation |  | |
|  | Lecture slides – What is maltreatment across the lifespan? |  | |
|  | Lecture slides – The Maltreatment of Children, Then and Now |  | |
|  | Read: Child Welfare Information Gateway Fact Sheet |  | |
|  | Read: Find adult maltreatment fact sheet |  | |
|  | **Discussion Assignment #1 –** Introductions | **8/28/2020** | |
| **Child Neglect (including physical, medical, education, and emotional)** | | | |
| **Week 2**  **8/31** | Lecture slides – The Family: Roles, Responsibilities, and Rights |  | |
|  | Lecture slides – Trauma and the developing child |  | |
|  | Lecture Slides – Identifying and defining child neglect. |  | |
|  | Watch “Not every parent wants to be a parent”  And,  Listen to “Orphans’ Lonely Beginning Reveal How Parents Shape A Child’s Brain”  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCeWr8OFuEs>  <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/02/20/280237833/orphans-lonely-beginnings-reveal-how-parents-shape-a-childs-brain> |  | |
|  | Listen to Unconditional Love  <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/317/unconditional-love> |  | |
|  | Read: Preventing Child Neglect – Harnessing Community Power through Conversation |  | |
|  | Additional Resources: The Science of Neglect: The Persistent Absence of Responsive Care Disrupts the Developing Brain |  | |
|  | **Discussion Assignment #2** – Using the conversation guide (in red text above) discuss ways we can prevent child neglect in our communities. |  | |
| **Child Physical Maltreatment** | | | |
| **Week 3**  **9/7** | Lecture Slides – Child Physical Maltreatment |  | |
|  | Watch: The Trials of Gabriel Fernandez\*  \*WARNING – CONTENT IS GRAPHIC\*  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvCyIocyEH4> |  | |
|  | Read: Gershoff, E. T., & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new meta-analyses. Journal of family psychology, 30(4), 453. |  | |
|  | **Discussion Assignment #3 -** Spanking. Identify evidence for or against this method of child discipline. What other methods have been identified as effective discipline? Summarize your findings and include your own personal views and/or reactions to other posts. |  | |
| **Child Sexual Maltreatment** | | | |
| **Week 4**  **9/14** | Lecture slides – Child Sexual Abuse – Definition, Prevalence, Perpetrators |  | |
|  | Murray, L. K., Nguyen, A., & Cohen, J. A. (2014). Child sexual abuse. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 23*(2), 321–337. [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2014.01.003](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/j.chc.2014.01.003) |  | |
|  | Watch: Out of Darkness, Into Light: Child Sexual Abuse\*  \*WARNING – CONTENT IS GRAPHIC\*  <https://www.pbs.org/video/wlrn-documentaries-out-darkness-light-child-sexual-abuse/> |  | |
|  | On repressed memories  Listen to “An Epidemic Created by Doctors”: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/215/ask-an-expert> |  | |
|  | **Discussion Assignment #4 –**  1. Do you agree with the statement that children never lie especially when it comes to sexual abuse? Why and why not?  2. Why is it so important how a caregiver reacts when a child discloses sexual abuse they have experienced? |  | |
| **Child Psychological Maltreatment** | | | |
| **Week 5**  **9/21** | Lecture slides – Child Psychological Maltreatment |  | |
|  | Read: Shapero, B. G., Black, S. K., Liu, R. T. Klugman, J., Bender, R. E. Abramson, L. Y., & Alloy, L. B. (2014). Stressful life events and depression symptoms: The effect of childhood emotional abuse on stress reactivity. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 70(3), 209–223. |  | |
|  | Watch: It's Time to Talk about Psychological and Verbal Abuse  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWqi9whHeKM> |  | |
|  | **Discussion Assignment #5 –**  1. How would you recognize psychological abuse?  2. What might be some of the reasons why parents psychologically abuse their children? |  | |
| **Intervention: Reporting, Investigation, and Assessment (Child Protective Services)** | | | |
| **Week 6**  **9/28** | Lecture Slides – Intervention and Child Protective Services |  | |
|  | Read: Case Study |  | |
|  | **Complete – Caseworker Activities**  (On intake, investigation, disposition, services) |  | |
|  | **Discussion Assignment #6 –**  1. If you were a protective services worker about to go out on your first home visit with a family, what would you guess might happen? What reactions might the family have? Are there cultural variations to these reactions?  2. What is meant by a team approach? Describe in brief the roles of professionals on that team and how they could work together effectively. Be specific. |  | |
| **Foster Care for Abused and Neglected Children** | | | |
| **Week 7**  **10/5** | Lecture Slides – Foster Care for Abused and Neglected Children |  | |
|  | Read: Working with Kinship Caregivers |  | |
|  | Read: Generations United. (2017). In loving arms: The protective role of grandparents and other relatives in raising children exposed to trauma. Retrieved from https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2018/05/Grandfamilies-Report- SOGF-2017.pdf |  | |
|  | Watch a former foster youth describe her story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yy9iQ50N3Bo> |  | |
|  | **Discussion #7 -**  1. Discuss the possible fears or concerns the children may have when they are separated from their birth parents for placement in foster care.  2. What are the potentials embedded in the foster care that could be therapeutic for the families involved in maltreatment. |  | |
| **Midterm** | | | |
| **Week 8**  **10/12** | MIDTERM STUDY GUIDE |  | |
|  | MIDTERM |  | |
|  | **Discussion #8 –**   1. What factors put children at risk for one or more types of abuse or neglect? 2. What factors protect children at risk from experiencing one or more types of abuse and neglect in families at risk? 3. What leads some individuals and families to benefit more or less from prevention and treatment programs? |  | |
| **Adults Abused as Children** | | | |
| **Week 9**  **10/19** | Lecture Slides – Adults Abused as Children |  | |
|  | Read: Cohen, J. R., Menon, S. V., Shorey, R. C., Vi, D. L., & Temple, J. R. (2017). The distal consequences of physical and emotional neglect in emerging adults: A person- centered, multi-wave, longitudinal study. Child Abuse and Neglect, 63, 151–161. |  | |
|  | Read: Widom, C. S. (2017). Long-term impact of childhood abuse and neglect on crime and violence. Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 24(2), 186–202. |  | |
|  | Poster: Young Maltreatment Perpetrators’ Past Experiences with Child Protective Services: Findings from NCANDS |  | |
|  | **Discussion #9 -** Discuss the similarities and differences between the residual effects of neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. |  | |
| **Maltreatment of adults with disabilities** | | | |
| **Week 10**  **10/26** | Lecture slides – Maltreatment of adults with disabilities |  | |
|  | Read: APS TARC Literature Review (2018) |  | |
|  | Listen “She can’t tell us what’s wrong”:  <https://www.npr.org/series/575502633/abused-and-betrayed> |  | |
|  | **Discussion # 10. –** What steps should be taken to intervene and prevent the maltreatment of individuals with disabilities? |  | |
| **Elder Maltreatment (by others)** | | | |
| **Week 11**  **11/2** | Lecture slides– Elder Maltreatment |  |  |
|  | Lecture slides– Elder Maltreatment Perpetrators |  |  |
|  | Read: Lachs MS, Pillemer KA. Elder Abuse. N Engl J Med. 2015;373(20):1947-1956. doi:10.1056/NEJMra1404688 |  |  |
|  | Watch: Signs of Elder Abuse  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcIhN7dgvFI> |  |  |
|  | **Discussion # 11 –** Discuss some of the signs and symptoms of elder maltreatment. How might we educate this population of their risk? |  |  |
| **Elder self-neglect** | | | |
| **Week**  **12**  **11/9** | Lecture slides – Elder self-neglect |  |  |
|  | Read: Dong X. (2017). Elder self-neglect: research and practice. Clinical interventions in aging, 12, 949–954. https://doi.org/10.2147/CIA.S103359 |  |  |
|  | Watch: |  |  |
|  | **Discussion # 12 –** Discuss the signs of self-neglect. How can we prevent and intervene? |  |  |
| **Adult Protective Services** | | | |
| **Week 13**  **11/16** | Lecture slides – Adult Protective Services (APS) |  |  |
|  | Lecture slides – APS Logic Model |  |  |
|  | Read: Mosqueda L, Burnight K, Gironda MW, Moore AA, Robinson J, Olsen B. The Abuse Intervention Model: A Pragmatic Approach to Intervention for Elder Mistreatment. J Am Geriatr Soc. 2016;64(9):1879-1883. doi:10.1111/jgs.14266 |  |  |
|  | Read Case Study |  |  |
|  | Complete APS Caseworker Activity  (On intake, investigation, disposition, services) |  |  |
|  | **Discussion # 13 –** What if you just have a “feeling” about a situation but can’t verify the details? |  |  |
| **Thanksgiving Break – No readings** | | | |
| **Week**  **14**  **11/23** | **Discussion # 14 -** Case studies will be provided. Discuss whether you agree with the APS assistance provided to victims and perpetrators of abuse. What would you have done differently? |  |  |
| **FINAL EXAM** | | | |
| **Week 15**  **11/30** | FINAL EXAM STUDY GUIDE |  |  |
|  | TAKE FINAL EXAM |  |  |
|  | **Discussion # 15. –** Course evaluation. |  |  |