

## PSYC 382: Psychology of Crime Victims (3 credits)

Spring 2021

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### Course Description

Follows the stories of 13 different victims of crime, through interviews conducted with each victim, in an effort to understand the victim's individual experiences of victimization. Psychological theory and research data are applied to the interviews to analyze and evaluate the unique and similar aspects of each victim's experience in areas including immediate, short-term, and long-term psychological and physiological impact of victimization, PTSD, depression, anxiety, the effects of childhood trauma on victim experiences, and other topics as necessary. The roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals, victim advocates, and law enforcement officers are also described and evaluated with respect to empathy, professional behavior, and best practices. The crimes covered in the course include murder, sexual assault, elder abuse, child abuse and exploitation, hate crimes, robbery, workplace harassment, and stalking.

### 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. 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 and physiological ramifications of being a victim of crime as well as topics including trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, survivor's guilt, shame, and self-blame.

3. Understand psychological theory and research related to victimization.
4. Critically evaluate the roles of professionals such as law enforcement officers, victim advocates, and mental health professionals as they pertain to their interactions with victims of crimes and the treatment of the subsequent psychological issues.
5. Foster and practice empathic responses to victims of crime including skills related to listening to victims and communicating with victims in an empathic and useful way.

## 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](#) 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 - Introduction

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Course Introduction
2	Watch	Crime: Popular to Watch
3	Watch	Your Mind's Defense Mechanisms
4	Watch	Understanding Empathy Blockers
5	Watch	How to Listen Without Taking Sides
6	Watch	Taking the Right Side
7	Optional	Watch: "Best Kept Secret in Radio" – Lulu Miller (NPR)
8	Take	Module 1 Quiz
9	Submit	Assignment: "Campus Treatment Options Paper"

## Module 2 - Joe

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Joe Gets Robbed
2	Watch	What Makes an Event Traumatic (Part 1)
3	Watch	What Makes an Event Traumatic (Part 2)
4	Watch	Joe – The Aftermath
5	Watch	Joe – Why He's Average Joe
6	Optional	Look over "Crime in Virginia – 2019" (pages 27-31 cover robbery)
7	Complete	Module 2 Quiz
8	Complete	Assignment: "Are They Likely to View the Event as Traumatic?"

## Module 3 - Dana

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Dana and His Wife Get Robbed
2	Watch	Dana – Police Interactions
3	Watch	Dana – Introduction to PTSD
4	Watch	Why Was the Robbery Traumatic for Dana?
5	Watch	The Effects of the Robbery on Dana’s Marriage
6	Watch	The Diathesis-Stress Model of PTSD
7	Optional	“Returning from Chaos: Treating PTSD” – Peter Tuerk – TED Talk
8	Complete	Module 3 Quiz
9	Complete	Assignment: “Brain Structures and Functions Quiz”

## Module 4 - Beth

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Models for PTSD Development (Part 2)
2	Watch	Beth Gets Robbed
3	Watch	Beth – A Different Experience
4	Watch	Beth – The Immediate Aftermath
5	Watch	“I Can’t Remember” (Part 1)
6	Watch	“I Can’t Remember” (Part 2)
7	Watch	Unhelpful Comments and Distorted Viewpoints
8	Complete	Module 4 Quiz
9	Submit	Assignment: “Chronic Stress, Your HPA Axis, and Covid-19”

## Module 5 - Kiera

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Necessary Definitions
2	Watch	Kiera's Home Life
3	Watch	Kiera Meets Her Abuser
4	Watch	Kiera – Looking for Connection
5	Watch	Kiera Changes Homes
6	Watch	Kiera and Depression (Part 1)
7	Watch	Kiera and Depression (Part 2)
8	Watch	Kiera – No One Says a Word
9	Optional	“Why Children Stay Silent Following Sexual Violence” – Kristen Jones
10	Watch	Kiera – The Offender's Wife/Finally Leaving
11	Watch	Kiera – One More Thing...
12	Complete	Module 5 Quiz
13	Submit	Assignment: “Kiera: On the Outside Looking In”

## Module 6 - Richard

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Male Victimization: Some Background Information
2	Watch	Raising Boys
3	Read	“Boys” – A chapter from the book “Untamed” by Glennon Doyle
4	Watch	Male Victimization: Some Evolution
5	Watch	Male Victimization: Strong Men
6	Watch	YouTube Video: “Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Assault Reveal and Important Truth”
7	Complete	Module 6 Quiz
8	Submit	What's Going on Around me

## Module 7 - Ayoola

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Ayoola – Little Vincent is Shot
2	Watch	Ayoola – Policing African American Victims of Crime
3	Watch	Ayoola – Secondary Victimization
4	Watch	Ayoola – The Role of Religion in Healing
5	Optional	YouTube video: “Grief and Casseroles” – Nadia Bolz-Weber
6	Watch	Ayoola – Denial and Anger
7	Watch	Ayoola – Bargaining and Depression
8	Watch	Ayoola - Acceptance
9	Watch	Ayoola – Forgiveness
10	Watch	YouTube video: “Forgive Assholes” – Nadia Bolz-Weber
11	Complete	Module 7 Quiz
12	Submit	Assignment: “Internet Scavenger Hunt”

## Module 8 – Cindy, Manuela, Carl, and Sarah

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Read	Instructions for the “Completing the Stalking Evidence Log” Assignment as you will need two days to complete the assignment this week.
2	Watch	Stalking – Relevant Laws
3	Watch	Stalking – The Beginning
4	Watch	Stalking – Offender Behaviors
5	Watch	TED Talk – Eva Galperin: “What You Need to Know About Stalkerware”
6	Watch	Stalking – This is Not Normal
7	Watch	Stalking – Offender Subtypes
8	Watch	Stalking – The Police are Involved
9	Watch	Stalking – Stalking Victim Response and Police Response
10	Watch	Stalking – Resolution
11	Watch	Stalking - Conclusion
12	Complete	Module 8 Quiz
13	Submit	Assignment: “Stalking Evidence Log”

## Module 9 - Patrick

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Patrick - Background
2	Watch	Patrick – The First Hate Crime
3	Watch	Patrick – The First Aftermath
4	Watch	Patrick – The Second Hate Crime
5	Watch	YouTube Video: “How Microaggressions are Like Mosquito Bites – Same Difference”
6	Watch	Patrick – The Hierarchy 1-4
7	Watch	Patrick – The Hierarchy 5-7
8	Watch	Patrick – Final Thoughts
9	Complete	Module 9 Quiz
10	Read	Vox Media Article – “Why the Policing Problem Isn’t About ‘a Few Bad Apples’” by Sean Illing
11	Submit	Assignment: “Systemic Racism and Policing”

## Module 10 - Brooke

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Brooke Part 1 – The Astor Family Introduction
2	Watch	Brooke Part 2 – Anthony
3	Watch	Brooke Part 3 – The Seeds of Abuse
4	Watch	Brooke Part 4 – The Abuse Starts
5	Watch	Brooke Part 5 – Philip Tries to Help
6	Watch	Brooke Part 6 – The Bubble Begins to Pop
7	Watch	Brooke Part 7 – The Resolution
8	Watch	YouTube Video: “Are Nursing Homes Above the Law?”
9	Complete	Module 10 Quiz
10	Submit	Assignment: “Similarities in Abusive Situations”

## Module 11 – Mass Shootings

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Listen	“Beautiful Anonymous: I Survived a Mass Shooting”
2	Watch	Mass Shootings – Part 1
3	Watch	Mass Shootings – Part 2
4	Complete	Module 11 Quiz
5	Submit	Assignment: “Gun Rights Statement”

## Module 12 - Lisa

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Lisa - Introduction
2	Watch	Traumatic Experiences are Inherently Complex
3	Watch	Traumatic Experiences Often Generate Secondary Problems
4	Watch	Family Systems Information
5	Watch	Connectedness and Differentiation
6	Watch	The Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma
7	Watch	Wrapping Things Up
8	Complete	Module 12 Quiz
9	Submit	Assignment: “Turning the Intergenerational Lens Toward Yourself”

## Module 13 - Nancy

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Nancy – Introduction
2	Watch	Nancy – Support and Assistance
3	Watch	Nancy – Services and Resources
4	Watch	Nancy – Victim Rights (Part 1)
5	Watch	Nancy – Victim Rights (Part 2)
6	Watch	Nancy – The Person and the Job
8	Complete	Module 13 Quiz
9	Submit	Assignment: “I Don’t Know What to Say...”

## Module 14 - Irving

**All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm**

Order	Task	Course Material
1	Watch	Irving – The Cycle of Abuse
2	Read	Irving – Interview Transcript #1
3	Watch	Irving – Setting Things Up
4	Read	Irving – Interview Transcript #2
5	Watch	Irving – Aversive Childhood Experiences
6	Read	Irving – Interview Transcript #3
7	Watch	Irving – Putting Things Together
8	Watch	Irving – Adult Victimization
9	Watch	Irving - Conclusion
10	Complete	Module 14 Quiz
11	Submit	Assignment: “Your Defense Mechanisms”

<b>Module 15 - Dionne</b>		
<b>All tasks must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm</b>		
<b>Order</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Course Material</b>
1	Watch	Dionne – Background
2	Watch	Dionne – The Night She Found Out
3	Watch	Dionne – Telling the Kids
4	Watch	Dionne – Cop’s Widow
5	Watch	Dionne – The Trial
6	Watch	Dionne – The Wheels Fly Off
7	Watch	Dionne – Finding Forgiveness
8	Watch	Dionne – Final Thoughts
9	Complete	Module 15 Quiz
10	Submit	Assignment: “Thank You Note”

**Weekly Quizzes:** There are 15 weekly quizzes during the course of the semester.

- a. Online quizzes must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm each week... after that, the quiz closes. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.
- b. 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.
- c. Each quiz is worth 3% of your overall grade in the course.

**Assignments**

**1. Campus Treatment Options Paper:**

- a. 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.
- b. Please provide a list of all campus resources for mental health treatment and immediate intervention/support. This list should include the following:
  - i. GMU Student Health Services
  - ii. GMU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  - iii. GMU Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC)
  - iv. GMU Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Crisis Line
  - v. GMU Police
  - vi. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline
  - vii. Crisis Text Line

- c. For each organization listed above, please provide the
  - i. Name
  - ii. A brief description of the services provided
  - iii. Contact information (website, phone number, etc.)
  - iv. Hours of operation
  - v. How you can make an appointment
- d. This list does not need to be in a narrative format. A bulleted list will suffice. I just need to know that you know where to get help if you find that you need it.

## 2. Are They Likely to View the Event as Traumatic?

- a. The first part of this assignment involves you reading the case vignettes in the module. There are five cases you will need to read:
  - i. Dannell
  - ii. Sophie
  - iii. Beatriz
  - iv. Jared
  - v. Chen
- b. For each case, you are to read the vignette and apply the criteria from the module for “what makes an event traumatic?” For reference, those criteria are:
  - i. Must have the potential for death or serious bodily injury
    - 1. Can happen directly to you
    - 2. Can happen in an area near you
    - 3. Can happen to someone you love
    - 4. Can be repeated events without the fear of death
  - ii. Must be viewed as uncontrollable
  - iii. Must challenge personal beliefs or concepts
- c. After you have read the vignettes, please take the online quiz titled “Are They Likely to View the Event as Traumatic?”
- d. This is a “low stakes” quiz. Don’t stress too much about it, just consider the criteria and the information you are provided then try and answer to the best of your abilities. The lowest grade you can possibly get on this quiz (if turned in on time) is a 75. If you choose an incorrect answer, you only lose 5 points (not 20). So, try your best, but realize this is just practice.

## 3. Brain Structures and Functions

- a. This assignment has two steps:
- b. Step one:
  - i. Watch the video on Youtube.com titled “Meet your Master – Getting to Know Your Brain”
  - ii. The video can be found [HERE](#) or by cutting and pasting the following link in your web browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHrmiy4W9C0>
- c. Step two
  - i. Complete the online quiz which consists of matching different parts of the brain to their functions.
  - ii. This quiz is graded, but you can take the quiz as many times as necessary in order for you to get a 100%. The system will only log your highest grade... so feel free to try as many attempts as you need.

## 4. Chronic Stress, Your HPA Axis, and Covid-19

- a. Covid-19 has upended our daily lives, our social interactions, and the way the world functions. It's stressful, relentless, and there is no clear date at which it will end. This combination of factors has an effect on everyone. I want you to explore the relationship between chronic stress, your HPA axis, and the Covid-19 pandemic in an assignment that has two parts:
  - i. Part 1: Watch "How Stress Affects Your Brain" by Madhumita Murgia (it is short... only about 4 minutes long). The link can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuyPuH9ojCE>
  - ii. Part 2: Answer the following questions in a one-page, single spaced paper. Covid-19 has not likely caused you to be diagnosed with PTSD. However, the chronic stress associated with Covid-19 has still likely had an effect on you. In reaction to the stress caused by Covid-19 your body has still produced cortisol and epinephrine, just at levels lower than those associated with an immediate "life or death" scenario. With this in mind, relate what you have learned about PTSD and the HPA axis from the lecture, and what you learned about stress in the video, to your own experience with Covid-19. Please be sure to consider the following things (not every one of these may be relevant to you):
    1. Avoidance of, or infatuation with, Covid-19 related news
    2. Your ability to concentrate
    3. Your ability to care about/plan for the future
    4. The potential for a negative emotional state
    5. Diminished interest in activities you once enjoyed
    6. Feeling detached from friends/loved ones
    7. Irritable mood/being "short" with people
    8. Difficulty sleeping
    9. Major changes in eating and/or exercise habits
  - iii. Additionally, answer the following question: How does this relate to Beth? In particular, her history of long-term sexual abuse and how the actions of her perpetrators immediately sent her back to believing that the world was an unsafe place where her body was always threatened. How might this compare to individuals with a history of trauma who are now dealing with Covid-19?

## 5. Kiera – On the Outside Looking In

- a. For this assignment, you are to pretend that you were the neighbor living next door to the house in Las Vegas where Kiera was being abused and exploited. In this fictional scenario, you are also a member of the same church that abusing family attends.
- b. You are to write an honest and self-exploratory letter to yourself (like a journal or diary entry) explaining why you did not report the abuse and exploitation despite having a sense that something was "off." You suspected the abuse, but you didn't say anything... now you need to explain why you did not act.
- c. Some things to consider when writing this assignment:
  - i. The name of Kiera's abuser was never mentioned in the interview. For the sake of consistency and clarity, use the name David Carter for the abuser and Cynthia Carter for his wife.
  - ii. Please feel free to write in the first person (i.e. "I suspected that something was off right away...")

- iii. Feel free to make up details of your own fictional life as a neighbor to explain (or attempt to explain) why you did not report the abuse. For example, you can state that your mother had cancer and required your help for treatment, that you were going through a divorce, that your children were having behavioral issues in school that required your attention, etc.
- d. I expect the paper will be about 1-2 single spaced pages. Although this is written as a diary entry, it should still contain the following academic information:
  - i. Potential defense mechanisms (from the beginning of the semester) as an explanation for justifying, excusing, or minimizing the abuse and exploitation and/or trivializing Kiera's experience or shifting blame to Kiera.
  - ii. Social embarrassment/breaching social norms
  - iii. Diffusion of responsibility
  - iv. Pluralistic ignorance
  - v. The difficulties individuals have discussing victimization (from the beginning of the semester)
- e. Failure to cover one of these topics will result in 7 points being deducted from your grade for each topic you fail to mention.

## 6. What's Going on Around Me

- a. This is simple, but important. I want you to look around you this week and identify at least two examples of men being emasculated by men or by women). This can be in the news, in your personal life (no names please), on tv, or on social media.
- b. Your completed assignment should be a least one single-spaced page (in total). Be sure to answer the following questions for each example:
  - i. What happened?
  - ii. In what context did this occur?
  - iii. What was the offending party trying to accomplish with their actions?
  - iv. How did the other person react?
  - v. Was the reaction stereotypically male?
  - vi. What could have/should have been done differently by both parties?

## 7. Internet Scavenger Hunt

- a. In the material on Ayoola, we discussed the differing ways the media can treat White perpetrators of shootings compared to Black victims of shootings. Now it's your turn to find examples.
- b. You are to go on an internet scavenger hunt for news headlines.
  - i. Find three news article headlines that emphasize the humanity of White perpetrators of violence as discussed in the lecture.
  - ii. Fine three news article headlines that de-emphasize the humanity of Black victims of violence (you may also include other minority groups).
- c. Once you have found 6 headlines in total:
  - i. Take a screen shot of each individual news headline and paste them into a single document that you turn into Blackboard.
  - ii. There is no explanation needed. The headlines should tell the story for you and be relatively clear.
  - iii. You may find it helpful to search for news headlines using google (or another search engine) and filtering results for "news headlines." This can

be done easily in google by clicking on the “news” tab in the search engine.

- iv. You get 10 points for turning in anything (even a blank document) and 15 points for each appropriate article that is cut and pasted into the document. Points will be deducted (in increments of 5) for articles that are unclear or do not meet the criteria.

## 8. Completing the Stalking Evidence Log

- a. **Important note:** This assignment is meant to be experiential. If you have been stalked in the past, are currently being stalked, or think you are being stalked, please do speak directly with me and you will not be penalized in any way. Additionally, you may consider contacting your local authorities or the “Victim Connect Resource Center” (Website: <https://victimconnect.org>, Phone: 855-484-2846), visit <https://www.stalkingawareness.org>.
- b. I do not wish for anyone to be a victim of stalking. However, it can be difficult to understand how disruptive stalking can be without experiencing it for one’s self. That being the case... Your assignment is to take the “Stalking Evidence Log” document and complete it over the course of 2 days this week (file located on Blackboard in the instructions for this assignment).
- c. You may be saying to yourself... “but I’m not currently being stalked.” That’s a good thing. The purpose of this assignment is to give you an idea of how laborious and tedious collecting the evidence in cases of stalking can be. So, this is what I want you to do
  - i. Pick one close friend (you may have to pick several depending on the frequency of communication).
  - ii. Pick two days this week to fill out the “Stalking Evidence Log”
  - iii. Every time you have an interaction with your friend(s) over the course of the two days you choose, answer the questions in the log truthfully.
  - iv. Log ALL contact with this individual(s). This includes text messages, emails, social media responses, phone calls, face to face meetings, etc. If they text... add it to the log. If they like your Instagram post... add it to the log. If they call, add it to the log. You get the idea.
  - v. Please complete the categories in the “Stalking Evidence Log” in the following manner:
    - 1. Name – Please use a made-up name for your friend(s). I don’t want to know.
    - 2. Date – use the actual date of contact
    - 3. Time – Use the actual time of contact and specify AM or PM (if more than 5 minutes passes between contacts, you should start a new entry).
    - 4. Location – Please input your physical location (if in person) or “phone,” “email,” name of social media platform, etc.
    - 5. Description of Incident – State the nature and topic of conversation with specifics (including direct quotes if relevant). Feel free to change and details you do not wish to share.
    - 6. Witnesses? – Names of anyone who witnessed the incident. This is particularly relevant to phone calls, in-person contacts, and text messages (if a group chat). If no witnesses, or for social media posts, write N/A.
    - 7. Police Called? – This is, obviously, going to be a “no.”

- 8. Emotional Impact – Obviously, if you were actually being stalked, this column would be incredibly important. However, since this is not the case, please just write a quick note that reads, “happy,” “confused,” “no significant emotional impact,” or whatever is true for that particular interaction.
- vi. Submit your completed log into Blackboard at the end of the week.
- d. Some things to consider:
  - i. If you have less than 5 entries after the first day of completing the log, add another friend or loved one and begin tracking their contacts as well. You need a minimum of 15 total entries in the Stalking Evidence Log.
  - ii. If you were really being stalked, you would be taking screen shots of all the emails, social media posts, text messages, etc. and finding a way to catalog and save all that information. You do not need to do this (and I don’t want to see it)... but know that if this were really happening, it would be much more labor intensive.

## 9. Systemic Racism and Policing

- a. Prior to completing this assignment, please be sure to read “Why the Policing Problem Isn’t About ‘a Few Bad Apples’” by Sean Illing (link available on Blackboard).
- b. After reading the article, please answer the following questions in a one-page, single spaced, paper:
  - i. What was one statement made by Professor Butler that you found to be “eye-opening” or made you perceive the state of racism in policing differently? Why? Was it a good analogy? A new way of looking at things?
  - ii. Provide one example of a statement made by Professor Butler that you disagree with (or maybe feel he “took too far”) and explain why you think this is the case. If you agree with everything Professor Butler stated, please identify a statement with which you believe others may have an issue.
  - iii. Can a “system” be racist without the individual members of that same system being overtly racist? Whichever way you answer (yes or no) back up your argument.

## 10. Similarities in Abusive Situations

- a. We have listened to the stories of Kiera and Brooke Astor. Your assignment involves identifying the ways that these two stories are similar in a 1-2 page, single spaced, paper.
- b. Please be sure to cover the following points (note: some of these may not apply):
  - i. The vulnerability of both victims
  - ii. Physical isolation of the victim
  - iii. Social isolation of the victim
  - iv. How Kiera and Brooke were used by the abusers for the personal gain of the abuser
  - v. Negative effects of the abuse on mental health (possibly including fear, depression, anxiety, and/or hopelessness)
  - vi. The failure of those who suspected or witness the abuse to actually report the abuse

- vii. Additionally, please include one final paragraph outlining what you think, based on these cases, is the “playbook” for offenders who abuse vulnerable populations (Can be found in the Kiera lectures under “Grooming Behaviors”).
- c. There is no need for a reference page since all of the information is taken directly from the interviews and from class. However, good note taking during the interviews will be helpful.

## 11. Gun Rights Statement

- a. Step one for this assignment is to look over the information on gun violence in the United States that is presented [HERE](#).
  - i. If the link does not work, the article can be found by copying and posting the following web address: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/10/2/16399418/us-gun-violence-statistics-maps-charts>
- b. Step two is to submit a 1-2 page, single spaced, paper outlining why (given what you have learned in this module and from the article) gun laws in the United States should NOT change from their current state.
  - i. Yes, you read that right. I want you to argue why the United States should NOT make gun laws stricter.
- c. Some things to consider:
  - i. I will not know whether this is your actual opinion or not. The point of the assignment is to show that once an individual takes a good look at the available data on gun violence, and removes political party affiliation from the equation, finding data to support why we should not change gun laws becomes incredibly difficult.
  - ii. This being the case, you may have to rely on arguments that are more cultural, political, or emotional in nature to try and make your point.
  - iii. This assignment is more about trying than about succeeding. It will largely be graded on whether or not it is completed and on perceived effort.

## 12. Turning the Intergenerational Lens Towards Yourself

- a. Regardless of the structure, we all come from a family... and that family, and the individuals in your family, have a history. We have spent this week learning about how Lisa’s experience of trauma transferred to her children. Now it is time to turn the lens around and explore your own family.
- b. You are to write a 1-2 page, single spaced paper turned in via Blackboard.
- c. Please feel free to share whatever information you feel comfortable sharing and leave out information that you do not feel comfortable sharing. The purpose of this assignment is to get you thinking... not for me to learn about your home life. So if you feel the need to be vague, please do so.
- d. Please discuss the following topics with respect to your own family.
  - i. What is the structure of your family? (define “family” however you want, just give me the basics of who is part of it and their roles).
  - ii. What is the hierarchy in your family? Who is (really) in charge? Does the individual in charge change based on the situation? Is one person in charge of the schedule but a different person is in charge of the finances? What about ethical and/or moral decisions?

- iii. What are the “boundaries” in your family? These are the unwritten/unspoken rules that everyone follows (please refer to the lecture PowerPoints for examples).
- iv. What is your family’s communication style (do you yell, talk things out, some combination of the two?) and what do you actually discuss? Do you discuss the issues or do you talk around the issues?
- v. Is there any member of your family that has a personal history that affects the previously mentioned topics? Things in this category may include trauma, mental illness, chronic physical health issues, etc.

### 13. I Don’t Know What to Say...

- a. Earlier in the semester we discussed how difficult it can be talking about victimization. This is especially true when discussing the events in-person with the victim. In this assignment you are to sort a list of statements people often make to victims of crime into three separate categories (the document with the statements is provided in the assignment link on Blackboard). The categories are:
  - vi. Helpful statements
  - vii. Statements that may be helpful, but may also backfire (these are situation/relationship dependent)
  - viii. Statements to avoid
- b. Use the Document provided (attached to the assignment on Blackboard) as a template and simply resave the document.
- c. In that document are headings for the three categories into which the statements must be sorted. The list of statements you need to sort is at the bottom of the page.
- d. Once you have decided which category a particular statement should be placed into, simply cut and paste the statement into the chosen category on the page. Continue this until you have successfully categorized every statement.
- e. For each statement that you place into a category, please include a brief explanation (1-2 sentences) of why you chose to put that particular statement in that category.
- f. When you choose the categories in which to place each statement, as well as the rationale for placing that statement in that category, consider whether or not the statement...
  - ix. Makes assumptions about the individual that may not be true.
  - x. Takes the focus off the victim and places the focus on the listener.
  - xi. May be viewed by the victim as victim-blaming.
  - xii. May implicitly deny whether the event occurred at all or question factual aspects of the event.
  - xiii. May shut down the possibility of continued conversation.
  - xiv. Could diminish the perceived severity of the crime.
  - xv. May bring up aspects of the crime that the victim does not want to think about.
  - xvi. May Assume emotional state on the part of the victim that the victim may not actually be experiencing.
  - xvii. Tells the victim to do something they cannot do at this time.
  - xviii. Could possibly make the victim feel like their particular situation is not unique, forcing them to compare their reaction to the reactions of others.

- g. The parts of the document that are highlighted in yellow should be deleted and the appropriate information should be added. These were simply added to give you a sense of how to complete the document.

#### **14. Your Defense Mechanisms**

- a. We have listened to quite a few stories in this course so far. That being the case, I want you to review the information on defense mechanisms that we covered at the beginning of the semester.
- b. Your task is to write a 1-2 page, single spaced, paper about your defense mechanisms covering the following things:
  - xix. When, in the course of listening to one of our interviews this semester, did you find that one of your defense mechanisms was triggered?
  - xx. Which Victim was it?
  - xxi. What was being communicated in the interview at the time?
  - xxii. What internal cues (feelings, thoughts, etc.) did you experience that let you know your defense mechanisms were kicking into action.
  - xxiii. What was it about that situation that you think triggered your defense mechanisms?
  - xxiv. How did you deal with it at the time?
  - xxv. What do you think of that reaction now?
  - xxvi. Why did this particular incident stick out in your mind?
- c. Some things to consider:
  - xxvii. Do not confuse your use of a defense mechanism with being “triggered.” These are different.
  - xxviii. If you do not feel like sharing anything personal... don’t. Instead feel free to write a brief one-page summary of the lawsuit involving Alex Jones and the surviving victims from the Sandy Hook shooting without penalty (but post that summary in the space for this journal entry).
  - xxix. This will largely be graded on perceived reflection, thoughtfulness, and effort.

#### **15. Thank You Note**

- d. All of the victims we have listened to this semester have been incredibly brave and selfless in sharing their stories with complete strangers. It is only fitting that we properly thank them for their generosity and vulnerability.
- e. Your task is to choose one of the victims that shared his or her story with us this semester and write them a personal thank you note.
- f. The thank you notes need to be uploaded to the Blackboard course shell by the due date in order to get full credit.
- g. Some thoughts on the thank you notes:
  - xxx. Address the letter to the individual and write their name at the top of the letter. I need to know who to send it to.
  - xxxi. Make them nice... These people deserve it.
  - xxxii. I’m not going to read them. Period. I simply take all the notes written to a specific person, print them, place the letters in a large envelope and send all the letters to the various people. So do not worry if you want to share something personal.
  - xxxiii. Add as many, or as few, personal detail as you would like. The point is to thank them. After that, what you write is up to you.

- xxxiv. By tuning in a note in the correct format and by the due date, you get full credit for the assignment.

## 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

Module	Assignment	Grade Percentage
1	Module 1 Quiz	3%
	Campus Treatment Options Paper	3%
2	Module 2 Quiz	3%
	Are They Likely to View the Event as Traumatic?	3%
3	Module 3 Quiz	3%
	Brain Structures and Functions Quiz	3%
4	Module 4 Quiz	3%
	Chronic Stress, Your HPA Axis, and Covid-19	4%
5	Module 5 Quiz	3%
	On the Outside Looking In	4%
6	Module 6 Quiz	3%
	What’s Going on Around Me	4%
7	Module 7 Quiz	3%
	Internet Scavenger Hunt	4%
8	Module 8 Quiz	3%

Module	Assignment	Grade Percentage
	Stalking Evidence Log	4%
9	Module 9 Quiz	3%
	Systemic Racism and Policing	4%
10	Module 10 Quiz	3%
	Similarities in Abusive Situations	4%
11	Module 11 Quiz	3%
	Gun Rights Statement	4%
12	Module 12 Quiz	3%
	Turning the Intergenerational Lens Towards Yourself	4%
13	Module 13 Quiz	3%
	I Don't Know What to Say...	4%
14	Module 14 Quiz	3%
	Your Defense Mechanisms	3%
15	Module 15 Quiz	3%
	Thank You Note	3%
	<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. **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 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.