**Introduction to Forensic Psychology - PSYC 380**

**Fall 2021**

**Lecturer:** Dr. Sybil Smith Gray

**Office:** David King Hall – Room 2044

##### Office Hours: By appointment. Please email me directly so that I can accommodate your request.

**Email:** [ssmithgra@gmu.edu](mailto:ssmithgra@gmu.edu) (preferred contact)

**Lecture:** Monday and Wednesday, 3:00-4:15, Enterprise Hall Room 276

**Recommended Text: The following are highly recommended but not required**

* Huss, Matthew-Forensic Psychology: Research, Clinical Practice, and Application (2nd edition). Wiley Press
* Hare, R. D. (1999). Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us. New York: Guilford Press.

**Course Description:** Explores the differing, yet varied facets of the field of forensic psychology. The course will cover landmark legal cases relevant to the field of forensic psychology, potential careers in forensic psychology, police psychology, expert testimony, legal consultation, forensic assessment in the justice system, psychological constructs of particular importance to forensic psychology, ethics, correctional psychology, and issues in working in the juvenile justice system.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Define and analyze landmark case law on the profession of forensic psychology.
2. Explore the varied roles forensic mental health professionals occupy within mental health, correctional, law enforcement, and legal systems.
3. Understand specific ethical principles as they apply to the practice of forensic psychology.
4. Define psychological constructs of primary interest to the field of forensic psychology.
5. Describe key processes and players within the legal system.

**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 on 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 regardless of whether or not you attend class.

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment Due** | **Chapter** |
| 1 | 8/23 | Introductions/Syllabus Review |  |  |
| 8/25 | Q & A Re: Presentations |  |  |
| 2 | 8/30 | What is Forensic Psychology? |  |  |
| 9/1 | Ethics in Forensic Psychology? |  |  |
| 3 | 9/6 | NO CLASS/Labor Day |  |  |
| 9/8 | Law Enforcement/Officer Selection  Correctional Psychology |  |  |
| 4 | 9/13 | Criminal Competency |  |  |
| 9/15 | Criminal Competency |  |  |
| 5 | 9/20 | Criminal Insanity |  |  |
| 9/22 | Criminal Insanity | Group creation due |  |
| 6 | 9/27 | Risk of Violence Assessment |  |  |
| 9/29 | Risk of Violence Continued |  |  |
| 7 | 10/4 | Child Custody |  |  |
| 10/6 | **Exam 1** |  |  |
| 8 | 10/11 | Fall Break Classes do not meet |  |  |
| 10/13 | Malingering and Lie Detection |  |  |
| 9 | 10/18 | Sex Offenders |  |  |
| 10/20 | Sex Offenders Continued |  |  |
| 10 | 10/25 | Psychopaths |  | Hare Chapters 1 and 2 |
| 10/27 | Psychopaths continued |  |  |
| 11 | 11/1 | Expert Testimony |  |  |
| 11/3 | Expert Testimony In-class activity |  |  |
| 12 | 11/8 | Threat Assessment |  |  |
| 11/10 | Homeland Security |  |  |
| 13 | 11/15 | Personal Injury |  |  |
| 11/17 | Presentations Begin | Right to receive psychiatric treatment, Right to refuse psychiatric treatment, Informed consent, Confidentiality |  |
| 14 | 11/22  11/24 | NO On-Campus Class/ ZOOM Lecture  NO CLASS / THANKSGIVING BREAK |  |  |
| 11/29 | Presentations | Domestic violence/stalking, Discrimination law, Duty to protect  Sexual Harassment |  |
| 15 | 12/1 | Presentations | Prisoner’s Rights, Civil Commitment  Diminished Capacity, Psychology and the death penalty, |  |
| 12/6 | **NO CLASS/ READING DAY** |  |  |
| 16 | 12/8 | **Exam 2**  **Only Covers Content Beginning with Week 8, Malingering/Lie Detection, through Week 13, Personal Injury.** |  |  |
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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.

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| **Grading Scale:** | | | | A+ | 98 - 100% |  |  | C | | 73 - 76% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | A | 93 - 97% |  |  | C- | | 70 - 72% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | A- | 90 - 92% |  |  | D | | 65- 69% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | B+ | 87 - 89% |  |  | F | | Less than 65% | | | |
|  |  |  |  | B | 83 - 86% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | B- | 80 - 82% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | C+ | 77 - 79% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Grading Criteria:** | | | | **Assignment** | **Grade Percentage** |
|  |  |  |  | 2 Exams (2 x 35%) | 70% |
|  |  |  |  | Group Presentation | 30% |
|  |  |  |  | **Total Percentage:** | 100% |
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**Assignments:**

* **Exams:**
  + There will be two 50 item multiple choice exams that will be administered on the dates outlined in the schedule. Please bring a pencil and a **green** Scantron sheet to class.
* **Group Presentation**
  + You are to create your own group consisting of 4-6 people from your classmates. The groups are yours to create. I’m out of this… but you must ensure that you are part of a group. Yes, your group has to have between 4-6 members. Three is too few, seven is too many.
    - Groups (with a list of group members), along with your preferred topic, must be emailed to me no later than the date noted in the syllabus.
  + Your group will get to choose one of the topics below from the “Landmark Legal Cases” list for the group presentation. The first people to form a group get first dibs on the topics. You choose the topic… The court cases you must cover in your presentation are listed for you.
  + The group must create a **very concise presentation** for the class, on their assigned topic. Everyone in the group will be required to participate in the presentation in some way. The presentations CANNOT use PowerPoint at all. They must be interesting and engaging. Get creative.
  + For each of the three cases presented to the class, you must cover the following topics:
    - Background Information
      * Title of case
      * Date of case
      * Court(s) in which the case was ultimately decided
      * Type of case
    - Facts of the case
    - Legal issue to be decided
    - Contentions of BOTH parties in the case
    - Decision of the court and reasoning behind that decision
    - Implications for psychology/practice/ life in general following the verdict
  + You must translate the “legalese” present in each case to a format in which a first-time listener can understand **WITHOUT** dumbing the case down. How would a regular person need the information communicated in order to understand it? A word of warning… In order to do this effectively, you must really understand the three legal cases you are asked to review for the class. If you try and cram this project into a weekend, it will show in your presentation and your grade.
  + As previously stated… the presentations must be interesting, informative, and engaging. Without the use of PowerPoint, you have to get creative. Here is a list of ideas to get you started, but feel free to come up with your own ideas. The more creative the better.
    - * A mock live news broadcast
      * A photo slide show with narration
      * A mock forensic interview or other mock forensic activity
      * Narrated play (no acting experience required)
      * Interpretive dance
      * Making a video that is played in class.
      * Making a music video
      * Writing and performing an original song (rap, “message” music, spoken word, are all acceptable, free speech is encouraged, hate speech or speech that incites violence will not be allowed)
      * Museum type exhibition of artwork (sculpture, painting, photography, etc.) with presenters interpreting the work and its relevance to the topic chosen
    - Not everyone is a natural born presenter (and they may be deathly afraid of speaking in public). Use your group members in a way that plays to individual strengths. Everyone has to participate, but not everyone has to be the star of the show.
    - Above all, the presentations need to teach your classmates the material. If the presentation is all fun, and no information, that will be a big problem. So find a way to walk that line effectively.
  + Presentations will be graded by the following criteria:
    - Information provided (the six bullet points above) 60%
    - Creativity of the presentation – 20%
    - Preparation (i.e. not reading off sheets of paper, appearing as though you have your act together, etc.) – 20%
  + You only get one shot at the presentation, so it needs to be good. This is NOT an easy “A.” If you do not fully understand the legal cases presented, it will show.
  + If, for some reason, one of the group members is not participating in the process, the group is able to “fire” this individual from the group by a simple majority vote up to a week before the presentations are scheduled to begin. Dr. Gray must be notified of any impending vote so that she may meet with the group to attempt to solve the issue. Those individuals who are voted out of their group will receive a separate assignment to be completed on their own.

**Landmark Legal Cases:**

* Right to receive psychiatric treatment
  + Rouse v. Cameron
  + Wyatt v. Stickney
  + Youngberg v. Romeo
* Right to refuse psychiatric treatment
  + Application of the President and Directors of Georgetown College Incorporated
  + Rennie v. Klein
  + Sell v. United States
* Informed consent
  + Natanson v. Kline
  + Canterbury v. Spence
  + Kaimowitz v. Michigan DMH
* Domestic Violence/Stalking
  + Baker v. City of New York
  + Thurman v. City of Torrington
  + United States of America v. Matusiewicz
* Discrimination law
  + Brown v. Board of Education
  + Loving v. Virginia
  + Regents of the University of California v. Bakke
* Duty to protect
  + Tarasoff v. Regents of University of California
  + Jablonski v. United States
  + Naidu v. Laird
* Confidentiality
  + In re Lifschutz
  + Doe v. Roe
  + Jaffe v. Redmond
* Prisoner’s rights
  + Baxstrom v. Herold
  + Estelle v. Gamble
  + Farmer v. Brennan
* Civil commitment
  + Lake v. Cameron
  + Fasulo v. Arafeh
  + Addington v. Texas
* Diminished capacity
  + People v. Patterson
  + Ibn-Tamas v. United States
  + Montana v. Engelhoff
* Psychology and the death penalty
  + Estelle V. Smith
  + Barefoot v. Estelle
  + Atkins v. Virginia
* Sexual harassment
  + Meritor Savings Bank FSB v. Vinson
  + Harris v. Forklift Systems Inc.
  + Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services Inc.

**Course Policies**

**Late Work Policy:** Late work will not be accepted. If there is a legitimate emergency, non-penalty extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**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.

**Hate Speech**: The University setting fosters and supports free speech and the civil expression of differing viewpoints. However, hate speech, speech that incites violence, intimidating speech that foster fear and disrupts the educational process will not be tolerated. Individuals who violate this course policy, verbally or in writing, will be reported to the appropriate authorities for incident review, determination of whether consequences are warranted, and disciplinary action if deemed necessary.

**University Policies and Resources**

**Academic Integrity:** GMU seeks to foster a spirit of academic honesty and integrity. This is as important to your professional development as the knowledge you gain in your course work. Violations of academic integrity includes: cheating on exams or homework assignments (e.g. copying the work of others), passing off someone else's ideas as your own (plagiarism), and engaging in dishonesty of any kind with respect to your classroom participation and assignments. Failure to uphold these standards will result in immediate consequences (i.e. not a warning) commensurate with the violation, which may include a failing grade on the assignment and/or referral to the appropriate University resources.

**Plagiarism:** Any work submitted by a student must represent original work produced by that student. Any source used by a student must be documented through normal scholarly references and citations. The extent to which any sources have been used must be apparent to the reader. Everything used from other sources - ideas from other's or actual language - must be cited. This policy includes the use of materials from the World Wide Web. With respect to plagiarism, it is always best to err on the side of caution. If you are caught plagiarizing material, the assignment will receive a failing grade and you will not have the opportunity to re-submit the assignment. Additionally, depending on the severity of the violation, you may be referred to the appropriate University resources.

**Accommodations:** If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Room 4205; 703-993-2474) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me by the second week of class to discuss your accommodation needs. Accommodation scan only be made in cases in which proper documentation has been provided through the Office of Disability Services.

**Diversity:** An emphasis on diversity and inclusion is essential to achieve our goals as a campus community. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds, and practices have to opportunity to be heard and respected. This commitment to diversity is included in all University settings. GMU promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment with respect to diversity and seeks to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group, and organization to make improvements as needed. If you feel, in any way, that any aspect of your personal characteristics, viewpoints, or perspectives are not being respect, please talk to me. I will listen.

**Privacy and Communication:** Student privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). As a result, students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important information about this class, including any communication with the professor via digital communication. Please allow 24 hours (48 on weekends) for a response to email messages.

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

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

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

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