SYLLABUS*

PSYCHOLOGY 405
Mystery, Madness, and Murder
Summer 2012

Instructor: Rebecca Morse, Ph.D. (rmorse@gmu.edu)
Assistant Instructors: TBA
TA office hours: TBA

Class Hours & Location:
(405-B01) June 4th- July 26th Tuesdays/Thursdays 4:30PM – 7:10PM / West 1004
(405-B02) Mondays/Wednesdays 4:30PM – 7:10PM / Robinson Hall A101

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30- 4:30 (right before class)
Also available by appointment.

Office Location: David King Hall 1027
Office Phone during hours: 703.993.4065

REQUIRED TEXT:

**Please note that some in-class and homework assignments are based on the textbook, ergo it is recommended that you have the book to succeed in the course, but as we do not have exams it is not absolutely required. Older editions are acceptable as well.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:
The purpose of the synthesis course is to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the general education curriculum. Synthesis courses strive to expand students' ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across the disciplines. Assigned readings and the independent research required for engaged participation will utilize and expand on research, communication, and writing skills acquired in other courses.

TECHNOLOGY:
Students will be expected to access and use Blackboard on a regular basis (https://courses.gmu.edu/). Important class information, such as the syllabus and weekly practicum assignments, will be posted here. To access Blackboard, students should use their George Mason email ID and password.

In addition, students should check their GMU email account regularly. Be sure to check that new messages can be received and that you are not over the message limit. You also have the option for your GMU account to be forwarded to another email address. If anything important occurs (such as information about assignments, class cancellation, etc.) you will be notified via your GMU email.
**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:**
You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and apply the material. In order to make the most out of your learning experience, it is imperative that you are not only present at each class meeting, but are alert, attentive, and ready to learn. Students are required to read (before class) any texts that may be assigned for that week. Class reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

Throughout the semester we will have class discussions. You are responsible for being prepared to discuss the material, and are expected to actively participate in discussion with your classmates about the material.

**IN-CLASS PRACTICE DEBATES:**
Throughout the semester, you will meet with 4 classmates (which will eventually be your debate group) to practice debating. You will be provided a summary of a real-life case or a current topic of interest to review (e.g. gun control, capital punishment, etc.), and will argue how the prosecution and defense would handle the case, or why individuals would be for/against a topic of interest. These practice debates will be held in class, and will be worth 5 points each (25 points total).

**ARTICLE SEARCHES FOR CHAPTER TOPICS:**
Throughout the semester, you will choose 5 weeks/chapters to find a relevant case study/article/video (2 points each). There will be a place on Blackboard to upload the links for these. You will have to submit a brief synopsis/description (one paragraph long). I will go through them to pick and choose which ones I share with the class. Because I need time to review them, I would need them posted by Midnight on Sunday of the proceeding week. These will be worth 10 points of your total grade.

**DEBATE ASSIGNMENTS:**
Each student will take a turn as primary presenter in one of the main debates, which will require independent research and written work. The main debate presentation grade will be composed of two parts: your written preparation of your argument and the debate itself.

*Written preparation:*

- **Synopsis** (15 points): 3-5 pages, will be graded on: 1 page outlining of your role in the group and how the parts fit into the whole group, 1 page detailing how your part of the debate fulfills all three modes of persuasion, and 1 to 3 pages demonstrating the direction of their research to support your debate (which must include at least 5 references)
- **Research paper** (30 points total): 8-10 pages, will be graded on: research of the topic of interest (should cover an explanation of issues, the context of the topic/position you are presenting, research evidence for support, and conclusion; 20 points), cross-examination prep (5 points), and a reference list in APA format (5 points).

*Debate itself* (20 points): will be graded on: modes of persuasion (6 points, up to 2 points each), and the debate performance (10 points for being prepared for cohesive performance, which includes your ability to represent your research, the breadth of said research, and your ability to respond if cross-examined; 4 points for professionalism,
which includes your appearance, your ability to interact respectfully with your team mates, and your ability to pick up on your cues (meaning not needing another team member to remind you what you are supposed to be saying/doing!)

*An additional 5 points extra credit is available for groups (each student would earn their own 5 points) who demonstrate creativity in their assignment.
*Attendance at all debates is expected. You will serve as jury for your classmates’ debates, and you will be casting votes. Although this is not a graded exercise, for those with borderline grades, I will be collecting attendance on those days, and if you are only a point from the next highest grade, I will round up if you are present for all debate days.
**The above are the only extra-credit opportunities, so it is strongly recommended that you take full advantage of both.

**GRADES:**
In-class practice debates = 5 debates x 5 points per debate = 25 points
Article searches = 5 posts with synopses x 2 points per search = 10 points
Debate assignment = 15-pt synopsis + 30-pt research paper + 20-pt debate = 65 points
Total Possible Points: 100 points (not including any extra credit points earned)

**GRADE CALCULATION:**
For simplicity, the points have been assigned such that a student can track their own grade without any confusing arithmetic acrobatics (hence the even 100 points). I round to the second decimal, so a grade of 91.49 is considered a 92 (A-), and a grade of 96.03 is a 96 (A).

Grade Breakdown:
A+ 101 and up    B+  89 – 87    C+  79 – 77    D  69 - 60
A    93 – 100     B  86 – 83    C  76 – 73    F  59 and below
A-  92 – 90       B-  82 – 80    C-  72 - 70

**HONOR CODE:**
All provisions of the GMU Honor Code will be followed in this class. Information regarding the Honor Code and what constitutes academic dishonesty can be found in the 2011-201 University Catalog or online at the following website: http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/.

**DISABILITY HELP:**
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:**
*Topics subject to change as needed to ensure that the majority of students are comfortable with material covered prior to moving to the next topic.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction to Criminal behavior&lt;br&gt;Three modes of persuasion (AI)</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Developmental factors &amp; Juvenile delinquency</td>
<td>Chapters 2 &amp; 6</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Biological factors&lt;br&gt;PRACTICE DEBATE #1 (Grant proposal)</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Learning and situational factors</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Human aggression and violence</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Psychology of Terrorism&lt;br&gt;PRACTICE DEBATE #2</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Criminal psychopathy</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Criminal psychopathy cont.&lt;br&gt;PRACTICE DEBATE # 3&lt;br&gt;SYNOPSIS DUE BY MIDNIGHT 06/28/12</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Crime &amp; mental disorders</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Homicide, Assault, and Family Violence&lt;br&gt;July 5th Guest Speaker Detective Shusko&lt;br&gt;<strong>check Blackboard announcements for Guest speaker room assignment!</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Crime &amp; mental disorders cont.</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>PRACTICE DEBATE # 4</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Multiple Murder, School, Workplace Violence&lt;br&gt;PRACTICE DEBATE # 5</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>DEBATES TBA (Groups 1 &amp; 2)</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>DEBATES TBA (Groups 3 &amp; 4)</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>DEBATES TBA (Groups 5 &amp; 6)</td>
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As this is a debate/writing intensive course, there is not a traditional final exam. The debates are the emphasis for that component, as you will be utilizing knowledge gained through your research, and the course.

*Syllabus subject to change.*
Important Dates

Important Dates (please see the website for full details http://summer.gmu.edu/registration/):
First/Last Day Class: June 4 though July 26
Last Day to Add: June 8
Last Day to Drop with No Tuition Liability: June 8
Final Drop Deadline (50% Tuition liability): June 15
100% Tuition Liability: June 16