



## *ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST*

### **Syllabus**

Fall 2010

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#### **Course**

Title: Role and Function of the School Psychologist  
Catalog Number: PSYC 671 – 001  
Location: GMU Center for Psychological Services Classroom  
Time: Monday 12:00 – 2:40 p.m.

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#### **Instructor**

Instructor: Grover C. Foehlinger, Jr., Ph.D., NCSP, Associate Professor  
Office: 202 G, GMU Center for Psychological Services  
Office Hours: Monday, 8:00 – 10:00; Tuesday, 8:00 – 10:00; Thursday, 12:00 – 2:00; & by appointment

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#### **Course Description**

This three-credit-hour course provides an overview of the history and development of school psychology; traditional and emerging roles of the school psychologist; ethical and legal issues that influence the practice of psychology in school and clinical settings; and links between applied research and practice. In addition, it is designed to expose students to the delivery of psychological services in schools through experiential learning.

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#### **Goal and Objectives**

The goal of this course is to establish a foundation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions relevant to the practice of psychology in school settings. Student acquire comprehensive knowledge about roles and functions of the school psychologist in educational environments, exposure to essential skills required to practice, an introduction to professional ethics and school law, information about scope of practice, licensure, and certification; and introduction to professional resources and applied research; and an overview of the history of the field, current standards of practice, and possible trends for the future. Students will attain the goal of this course by demonstrating competence in the following objectives:

- Identify and understand basic concepts associated with major theories of psychology that are relevant to the practice of school psychology
- Communicate knowledge of the history of school psychology, current standards of practice, and possible trends for the future
- Develop and apply knowledge of school laws relevant to the practice of psychology in schools
- Know and apply the code of professional conduct and the ethical principles of psychologists
- Identify and understand roles and functions of school psychologists including clinician, consultant, and researcher
- Develop understanding of and appreciation for school culture, organization, and administration



Academic integrity is an expectation and obligation. By enrolling in this course, students are bound by the [University's Honor Code](#). They must also be mindful of ethical principles established by the [National Association of School Psychologists](#) and the [American Psychological Association](#).

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474 and to notify the instructor of any requests for accommodations. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

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## Requirements and Assessment

This course provides foundational knowledge and skills that are essential to the practice of school psychology. As such, attendance at class is expected; and active participation in all activities is strongly encouraged. Each requirement is designed to build or enhance competence in core skills that are routinely employed by school psychologists, and fulfillment of all assignments is essential.

Students are expected to fulfill the following requirements to demonstrate attainment of the stated goal and objectives of this course:

- Read and understand assigned materials.
- Attend class, participate in discussions and activities, and complete written assignments.
- Prepare and present a 20-to-30 minute workshop to other students on a topic assigned during the first class session. Methods and materials should be appropriate for the content and the audience.
- Prepare an annotated bibliography of four articles, limited to two typed pages each, from peer-reviewed research journals on topics relevant to the practice of school psychology. Citations must conform to APA style.
- Conduct two classroom observations – one in general education and one in special education – for a minimum of one hour (or one class period) each and prepare a brief written summary of both observations (limited to two pages each). Describe content and methods of instruction, and identify strategies employed by the teacher to motivate learning, assess performance, and manage behavior.
- Shadow a practicing school psychologist for a minimum of one day (to be scheduled at the convenience of the participating psychologist). As part of this activity, conduct a semi-structured interview with the psychologist to learn about role and function of the psychologist in the school, preferred modalities for delivery of services, the value ascribed to mental health services, and unique opportunities and challenges of working in a school setting. Upon completion of the shadowing activity and interview, prepare a written summary of activities observed and provide a critique of professional services delivered to students, teachers, parents, or other clients by citing evidence to support your claims.
- Demonstrate knowledge of course content on cumulative mid-term and final exams.

A final grade will be derived from cumulative assessments of performance on assignments during the semester and on a final criterion-referenced exam. Details about classroom presentations and the literature review or journal reviews will be presented in class. Assignments must be submitted on or

before dates prescribed on the calendar. The earned grade will be reduced by 5% if the assignment is submitted after the due date but within one week. Thereafter, the assignment will not be accepted for credit, unless special arrangements have been approved by the instructor in advance. The final course grade is based on aggregation of weighted scores for the following measures of performance:

Class attendance, participation, & assignments	5%
Class presentation	15%
2 classroom observations & written summaries (5 points each)	10%
Shadowing activity & written summary	15%
4 journal reviews (5 points each)	20%
Mid-term exam	15%
Final exam	20%

University course work is measured in terms of quantity and quality. A credit normally represents one hour per week of lecture throughout a semester. The number of credits is a measure of quantity. The grade is a measure of quality. The university-wide grading system for graduate courses is as follows:

A+	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A	4.00	Satisfactory/Passing
A-	3.67	Satisfactory/Passing
B+	3.33	Satisfactory/Passing
B	3.00	Satisfactory/Passing
B-	2.67	Satisfactory*/Passing
C	2.00	Unsatisfactory/Passing
F	0.00	Unsatisfactory/Failing

## Schedule of Classes

Date	Topic	Readings
08/30	Welcome; overview of course & requirements; introduction to school psychology; learning the lexicon	1:1
09/06	No class	
09/13	History & systems; introduction to professional ethics & standards of practice; frameworks for practice	1:2, AppC&D; 2:1
09/20	Employment context; school organization, systems, culture, and accountability; models of service delivery; school-based mental health services; introduction to role & functions	1:3,4; 3
09/27	Scope of practice; employment; performance evaluation	1:5
10/04	Training; clinical & administrative competencies; supervision; practica & internship	1:6,8
10/12	Credentialing: licensure, certification, national certification; PRAXIS II; continuing education	1:7
10/18	Introduction to statutes, case law, & regulations	2:2; 3
10/25	Statutes, case law, & regulations (cont): NCLB, IDEA, ADA, Section 504, FERPA	3
10/28-31	Mid-term exam	
11/01	Clinical, administrative, ethical, & legal issues pertaining to practice: informed consent, confidentiality, privilege, record-keeping, duty to report	2:3; 3
11/08	Clinical, administrative, ethical, & legal issues pertaining to practice: psychological & educational assessment, interventions, teacher & parent consultation, special education eligibility	2:4,7,8; 3
11/15	Clinical, administrative, ethical, & legal issues pertaining to practice (cont): consultation, problem-solving teams, universal screening, FBA/BIP, Manifestation Determination Reviews, due process hearings	2:9; 3
11/22	Clinical, administrative, ethical, & legal issues pertaining to practice (cont): research, supervision, program evaluation	2:10,11
11/29	Professional identity; local, state, national, and international associations; technical resources	1:10, AppA; 3
12/06	Special topics: cultural competence, diversity, non-traditional roles, technology in practice, linking research to practice	1: AppB; 2: AppD
12/13	Final exam	

<sup>1</sup> Fagan, T. K., Wise, P. S. (2007). *School Psychology: Past, Present, and Future (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob, S., & Hartshorne, T. S. (2007). *Ethics and Law for School Psychologists (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Son, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> Supplemental materials referenced on Blackboard