

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**School Psychology Program**

SPSY 672-001 Schools as Systems Practicum  
3 Credits, Fall, 2020  
Thursday 2-4:40 Synchronous Online

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### **Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Recommended corequisite: SPSY 671.

### **University Catalog Course Description**

Provides contextual understanding of how districts, schools and classrooms operate; job responsibilities of the school psychologist; role of colleagues in the schools; special education process; various team structures and functioning; MTSS implementation; systems-level initiatives; organizational change; program evaluation; and use of data for school/student improvement. Requires semester-long practicum in the schools shadowing a school psychologist, and weekly class meetings.

### **Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered synchronously online using a seminar and practicum format. Students spend 6-8 hours per week in the schools (virtual and/or in person) and attend seminar online weekly.

**Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.**

### *Technical Requirements*

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:

[https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support#supported-browsers](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers)

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

[https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems)

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students are recommended to use a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool. Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
  - Apple Quick Time Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

### *Expectations*

- Course Week:  
Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- Log-in Frequency:  
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.
- Participation:  
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:  
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:  
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:  
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:

Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

- Netiquette:

The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- Accommodations:

Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

### **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Learn about the various roles school psychologists have in schools
2. Understand how school psychologists collaborate with others as parts of teams.
3. Become familiar with roles and responsibilities of other people who work closely with the school psychologist (e.g. administrators, department chairs, reading specialists, speech language pathologists, OTs, behavior specialists)
4. Articulate and describe MTSS and how schools implement services at each level, particularly prevention efforts/tier 1 services for academics and behavior.
5. Become familiar with how schools use data to monitor and measure educational outcomes
6. Identify and understand school-wide practices to promote learning
7. Identify and understand preventative and responsive services in school
8. Learn about the special education eligibility process
9. Become familiar with leadership, system change and program evaluation issues in education

### **Professional Standards**

This course contributes to the development of knowledge and skills in the following National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) professional standards/domains:

Domain 1. Data Based Decision Making

Domain 3. Academic Interventions and Instructional Supports

Domain 4. Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Interventions

Domain 5. School Wide Practices to Promote Learning

Domain 6. Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools

Domain 7. Family, School and Community Collaboration

Domain 8. Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations

Domain 10. Legal and Ethical and Professional Practice

## **Required Texts**

Fullan, M. (2020). *Leading in a culture of change* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.

Brown-Chidsey, R. & Bickford, R. (2016). *Practical handbook of multi-tiered systems of support: building academic and behavioral success in schools*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press. ISBN: 9781462522484

Blackboard articles as assigned.

## **Recommended Text**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 9781433805615

## **Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor.

- **Log:** Students are expected to spend 6 to 8 hours each week virtually shadowing a school psychologist. The 6-8 hours do not have to be completed in one day. A log will be turned in documenting your experience, signed by the supervising psychologist and the student. The log should include an entry for each day in the school, including the date, arrival/departure time, total hours in the school that day, and a brief summary of your activities. Total hours overall must be included. You may create an excel sheet to document your activities and calculate your hours. 30 points.
- **Shadowing journal:** Students are expected to complete a journal entry based on their school experiences that week. There are suggested topics for the journal entry in the class schedule each week. However, going with a topic that is out of sequence for your journal entry is acceptable. Your journal entry should include a brief summary of what you did and a response to the topic prompt for that week. The journal entry should be about two pages, double spaced, regular margins, 12 pt font. For the response to the topic prompt, think about how you sought the information (e.g. who did you speak to?), what you found out, how it relates to your personal experiences and readings, and your reaction to what you learned. 8 write-ups, 6.25 points each, for a total of 50 points.
- **Discussion Leader:** Each week student(s) will lead small group discussion of that day's reading. Students will sign up on the first day of class for dates to lead discussion. On that date, discussion leaders will provide a list of discussion points to the group. 10 points total.
- **Final Reflection:** Students will choose a topic related to a school or district-wide issue they've become aware of at their practicum site (e.g. truancy, bullying, school climate, behavior problems, suicide prevention, parent involvement, reading scores, implementation of a new initiative, etc.). The goal of this reflection is to think about how your school or district has approached this issue, what they have done or attempted to do to address it, and

if the approach is working (or not). Students are to relate their reflection to readings and class discussion. Three to five pages, double spaced. 10 points.

**Other expectations**

- As this is a seminar, students are expected to attend all classes, come on time, remain throughout class, and contribute regularly and thoughtfully to class discussions.
- Complete readings prior to class and come prepared to discuss the reading as well as your experience in the schools thus far. This is the time to participate fully in related activities, ask questions, engage with your peers, and discover how things are done across schools and school systems.
- Professional dispositions are to be displayed at all times while interacting with the instructor and other students. **Cell phones are not to be used during class. Laptops are to be used for instructional purposes only.**

Log of school hours = 20 pts

Shadowing journal (8 entries, 6 pts each) = 48 pts

Discussion lead = 10 pts

Final reflection = 22 pts

Total = 100 pts

**Grading Scale** (Please note: A course grade less than B- requires that you retake the course. A grade of “F” does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 [B average] to remain in good academic standing.)

A+ = 99-100; A = 93-98; A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = below 70

**Professional Dispositions**

As you will be spending time in a school building, it is expected that you will follow NASP ethical standards, all applicable procedures relevant to your school district, and laws regarding school practice.

See also <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

**Class Schedule**

| <b>Class/Date</b> | <b>Topics</b>   | <b>Readings/Assignment Due</b> |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1<br>8/27         | Introduction to course, syllabus, shadowing expectations and assignments, discussion lead sign up |                                |

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|------------|--|--|
| 2<br>9/3   | Leadership and change  | Fullan Chs. 1 & 2<br>Discussion Leader:<br>Nicole  |
| 3<br>9/10  | Leadership and change  | Fullan Ch. 3<br>Discussion Leader:   |
| 4<br>9/17  | Leadership and change<br><br>Describe your practicum placement   | Fullan Ch. 4<br>Discussion Leader:   |
| 5<br>9/24  | Leadership and change<br><br>Role of the school psychologist<br><br>What is the role of your school psychologist? What is the balance of job responsibilities?<br><br>Allies for the school psychologist<br><br>With whom does the school psychologist work closely? Interview that person, and/or social worker and school counselor and describe collaboration and relationship, why it's important. | Fullan Ch. 5<br>Discussion Leader:   |
| 6<br>10/1  | Leadership and change<br><br>Administration<br><br>Interview an administrator, what is their understanding of school psychology/SP role?<br><br>How do they work with the school psychologist?<br><br>What is easy, what is difficult about being a leader?<br><br>What lessons did you learn, and what ideas can you adopt as a school psychologist?  | Fullan Chs. 6 & 7<br>Discussion Leader:<br><br>Shadowing journal (from 9/24)                     |
| 7<br>10/8  | Prevention in the schools<br>What types of prevention efforts exist in your school?<br>What initiatives/programs support learning and behavior for all students?<br>Think about academic, mental health, behavioral.   | Brown-Chidsey & Bickford Chs. 1, 2, 3<br>Discussion Leader:<br><br>Shadowing journal (from 10/1) |
| 8<br>10/15 | Risk factors, community partnerships   | Brown-Chidsey & Bickford Chs. 4, 5<br>Discussion Leader:   |

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|------------------------------|--|--|
|                              | <p>Core instruction and learning standards (learning goals)<br/>         What are the risk factors that affect your school's population? How does your school address this? How does your school build relationships in the community?</p> <p>Describe some of the learning objectives that have been targeted for improvement in the school.</p>              | <p>Shadowing journal<br/>         (from 10/8)</p>  |
| <p>9<br/>         10/22</p>  | <p>Teams in schools</p> <p>Use of data<br/>         What teams exist in your school? (e.g. grade level, content specific, local screening, school improvement)<br/>         How is data managed and used by your school teams?</p>   | <p>Brown-Chidsey &amp;<br/>         Bickford Chs. 6, 7, 8<br/>         Discussion Leader:</p> <p>Shadowing journal (from<br/>         10/15)</p>         |
| <p>10<br/>         10/29</p> | <p>Effective instruction for all students</p> <p>Observe a class and interview a gen ed teacher<br/>         Describe the method(s) of instruction that you observe.</p>   | <p>Brown-Chidsey &amp;<br/>         Bickford Chs.14, 15<br/>         Discussion Leader:</p> <p>Shadowing journal (from<br/>         10/22)</p>           |
| <p>11<br/>         11/5</p>  | <p>ELLs<br/>         How does your school support ELLs?</p> <p>Reaching critical mass<br/>         Does the data in your school suggest 80% success at Tier 1?<br/>         Why or why not?</p>  | <p>Brown-Chidsey &amp;<br/>         Bickford Chs.16, 17, 18<br/>         Discussion Leaders (2):</p> <p>Shadowing journal (from<br/>         10/29)</p>  |
| <p>12<br/>         11/12</p> | <p>Universal screening and problem solving</p> <p>Describe the universal screening that is used in your school.<br/>         How are children identified if not succeeding?<br/>         What is the problem-solving process in your school?</p>   | <p>Brown-Chidsey &amp;<br/>         Bickford Chs. 19, 20<br/>         Discussion Leader:</p> <p>Shadowing journal (from<br/>         11/5)</p>           |
| <p>13<br/>         11/19</p> | <p>Progress monitoring, using data, and Tier 3</p> <p>Describe your school's process from screening to sped eligibility. How do children move across tiers, and how are these decisions made? What services are provided at these tiers?</p> <p>What are your district's goals for school psychology, how are they communicated, implemented and measured?</p> | <p>Brown-Chidsey &amp;<br/>         Bickford Chs. 21, 22, 23<br/>         Discussion Leaders (2):</p> <p>Shadowing journal<br/>         (from 11/12)</p> |

|            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| 11/26      | NO CLASS<br>THANKSGIVING BREAK                        |  |
| 14<br>12/3 | Wrap up, final thoughts and discussion of experiences | <b>Final reflection due 12/10</b><br><br><b>Logs due 12/16</b> |

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

### **Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

#### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

#### *Campus Resources*



- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .**