

**PSYCHOLOGY 405: Mystery, Madness, and Murder
Summer 2013**

Instructor: Jessica Dunn

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Office Hours: David King Hall, 1004G M 11:00am-12:00pm or by appointment

Class Times/Location: 405-C02 Robinson Hall A101

REQUIRED TEXT:

Bartol & Bartol. (2011). *Criminal Behavior: A Psychological Approach* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN-10: 0135050502 | ISBN-13: 9780135050507.

(Please note that some in-class assignments may use the textbook. 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 assignments, will be posted here.

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS VIA GMU EMAIL:

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and apply the material. Students are required to read any texts that may be assigned for that week. Class reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard. You are responsible for being prepared to discuss the material, and are expected to actively participate in discussion with your classmates about the material. Participation in class discussion will impact your final course grade (2%).

IN-CLASS PRACTICE DEBATES:

Throughout the semester, you will meet with 4-5 classmates to practice presenting. You will be provided a summary of a real-life case or a current topic of interest to review (e.g. insanity defense, serial killers, 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 5 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 find a relevant case study/article/video and write a brief summary each week (2 points each) based on topics we've discussed in class. You will have to submit a brief synopsis/description (one paragraph long), followed by a brief description of the case's relevancy to the topic (one paragraph long). Summaries need to be turned in hard copy every Thursday at the beginning of class. These will be worth 10 points of your total grade.

FINAL PROJECT:

Each student will take a turn as primary presenter in a group "mock trial," but this project will also require independent research and written work. The final 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 debate 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 (acknowledgement of the other stances on the issue) (5 points), and a reference list in APA format (5 points).

Debate itself (20 points): will be graded on: 3 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.

**Attendance at all debates is expected. You will serve as jury for your classmates' debates, and you will be casting votes. An unexcused absence from a final debate class period will result in a one-point deduction from your own presentation grade.

**An additional 5 points extra credit is available for groups (each student would earn their own 5 points) who demonstrate creativity in their assignment.

**The above are the only extra-credit opportunities, so it is *strongly* recommended that you take full advantage of both.

GRADES:

General participation: 2pts

In-class practice debates = 5 debates x 5 points per debate = 25 points

Article searches = 4 assignments x 2 points per search = 8 points

Final project = 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	

RETENTION OF MATERIAL:

It is the student's responsibility to retain a copy of all work given to the instructor (as well as returned materials) should the student wish to appeal or correct a grade.

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 disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 709-993-2474. 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.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS (for the week)
Week 1	July 1: Review of course; Introduction to criminal behavior July 2: Risk factors – Developmental July 3: Risk factors – Biological Modes of persuasion	Chapter 1, 2, 3 Rank top 3 project scenarios
Week 2	July 8: Learning and Situational Factors to Crime July 9: Human Aggression and Violence July 10: Juvenile Delinquency July 11: Psychopathy – Children	Chapter 4, 5, 6
Week 3	July 15: Psychopathy – Adults July 16: Psychopathy – Adults July 17: Crime and Mental Disorders July 18: Crime and Mental Disorders	Synopsis is due on Monday, July 15th at the beginning of class. Chapter 7, 8
Week 4	July 22: Homicide and Multiple Murder July 23: No class – group preparation day July 24: Two Final group trials July 25: Three Final group trials	Chapter 9, 10 Research papers due Research papers due
Week 5	July 29: Two Final group trials Course evaluations	Research papers due
RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS DURING WHICH YOUR GROUP PRESENTS! 5 points will be deducted for every day the paper is late; papers will not be accepted after July 30th, 2013.		

Important dates: Last day to add and drop: July 8th (No penalty)
Last day to drop: July 15th (50% penalty)