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Introduction to School Psychology
Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology
Fall 2025



*"Education is not just about filling a mind, but freeing it from fear, anxiety, and trauma. Only then can it reach its full potential."
-unknown*

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Wednesdays from 2:00-4:45 pm
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Course Description: This course is designed to familiarize students with the role(s) and function(s) of a **doctoral level** school psychologist. This preliminary School Psychology course introduces some of the cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic variables that impact service delivery in school settings. It focuses on approaches to the application of culturally competent school psychology practice. These include: the medical, ecological, RtI and problem-solving models of school psychology. Topic areas addressed are as follows:

- culturally competent practice within a socio political context
- assessment
- consultation
- prevention, (RTI) and intervention
- special education
- systems change
- reform movements in education

Course Goals

1. To provide students with the history of school psychology, its development as a profession, and trends toward the future.
2. To assist students in developing an understanding of NASP standards and the domains of school psychology practice.
3. To provide students with an overview of federal legislation and litigation which guide the practice of school psychology. By the end of the course, students will be able to describe major case law and legislative mandates that have influenced the practice and philosophy of the profession.
4. To introduce students to the workings of the American educational system and the ways in which its organizational and operational policies affect children's academic and social/emotional functioning.
5. To provide students with information regarding ethical and legal issues in school psychology.
6. To facilitate students' appreciation for the role of the school psychologist within multidisciplinary teams pertaining to both regular education and special education domains.
7. To provide students with an understanding of the recent paradigm shift in the schools (Response to Intervention) that has changed the use of traditional models of assessment and consultation.
8. To provide students with a rationale for the use of a systematic data collection process that defines best practice among today's school psychologists.
9. To demonstrate to students how a school psychologist can play a key role in the development, selection, implementation, and assessment of the effectiveness of various prevention programs and interventions in the schools
10. To demonstrate how to apply sensitive service delivery by helping students develop an understanding of the importance of working with family and community members as part of a multidisciplinary service delivery model.
11. To assist students in understanding the ways in which the issues of multiculturalism, minority status, socioeconomic levels and other areas of diversity impact the practice and profession of school psychology.

PROFESSION-WIDE COMPETENCIES & DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE:

School Psychology Profession-Wide Competency (SP-PWC) Elements

2.1 Demonstrates knowledge of and adherence to APA Ethical Principles, Code of Conduct and relevant laws, professional standards and guidelines governing psychological practice.

2.2 Recognizes ethical dilemmas as they arise and applies ethical decision-making processes in order to resolve those dilemmas.

2.3 Conducts self in an ethical manner across professional activities.

3.1: Displays an awareness of how personal bias and cultural history, attitudes, and biases affect understanding and interactions with people different from themselves.

3.2: Demonstrates knowledge of current theoretical and empirical models to support human diversity across core professional roles.

3.3: Demonstrates the ability to consider and integrate cultural and diversity concepts in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs, products, and services.

3.4: Works effectively with diverse individuals and groups, including those whose group membership, demographic characteristics, or world.

4.1: Behaves in ways that reflect the values and attitudes of psychology, including integrity, deportment, professional identity, accountability, lifelong learning, and concern for the welfare of others.

10.2: Demonstrates an understanding of schools and other service delivery settings, including knowledge of principles of quality instruction, the profession of teaching, and regular and special education policy.

Discipline-Specific Knowledge (DSK)

Affective Aspects of Behavior, including topics such as affect, mood, and emotion. Psychopathology and mood disorders do not by themselves fulfill this category.

Biological Aspects of Behavior, including multiple biological underpinnings of behavior, such as neural, physiological, anatomical, and genetic aspects of behavior. Although neuropsychological assessment and psychopharmacology can be included in this category, they do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.

Cognitive Aspects of Behavior, including topics such as learning, memory, thought processes, and decision-making. Cognitive testing and cognitive therapy do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.

Developmental Aspects of Behavior, including transitions, growth, and development across an individual's life. A coverage limited to one developmental period (e.g., infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, or late life) is not sufficient.

Social Aspects of Behavior, including topics such as group processes, attributions, discrimination, and attitudes. Individual and cultural diversity and group or family therapy do not, by themselves, fulfill this category.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this course, each student will be able to:

1. Describe the historical profession of the practice of school psychology.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of models of school psychology practice.
3. Recognize and continually evaluate own attitudes toward diversity, including gender, race, religion, ethnic, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of laws and ethics governing school psychology practice.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the domains of school psychology practice.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the roles and functions of school psychologists.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. In- Class Reading Applications (3)
2. Ecological School Psychologist Interview

CLASSROOM FORMAT AND CULTURE:

This course is in-person. Masks **may** be worn during classes.

COLLABORATION AND SAFETY:

Part of group membership involves members assuming responsibility for making the group “work.” This includes making the group a safe environment for others to speak without fear of criticism. Differences among group members will sometimes occur. However, learning to work collaboratively, especially in groups, is essential training for your future employment as doctoral level school psychologists and group supervision provides an opportunity to enhance these skills. Part of the instructor’s role involves making the group a safe place to talk. The instructor can be most effective in making this a good training experience if students share thoughts and goals regarding the group experience.

SELF-AWARENESS:

Because self-awareness is integral to psychologists’ professional development, understanding the use of self as a mediating variable in our work, as psychologists, will be a focus of supervision. All psychologists, regardless of theoretical orientation, need to examine their own reactions, behavior and decisions in a non-defensive manner in order to grow as professionals. This may also include discussion of the group supervision. However, supervision is not synonymous with therapy, and you will not be required to disclose anything in group that you believe violates your privacy.

Self-reflection is also integral to developing one’s own style as a future supervisor. As such, students will be asked to develop some personal goals for the supervision group, and each instructor will ask students to set and share their intention for what they hope to gain from supervision as a process. It is also recommended that students give thought to the issues that arise in practicum each week and come with an agenda for each supervision session. Students will also be asked to lead part of a supervision group. This is an opportunity to integrate issues that have been read about and discussed pertaining to various models of supervision.

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University's academic integrity policy, to which this class will adhere, can be reviewed at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

NAMES AND PRONOUNS:

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY:

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES:

Although multitasking is an important part of our everyday lives, in class, monotasking is the goal and allows us to be more present with each other. There is no use of any technological devices (i.e., phones, laptops, tablets) in class. Phones should be put away and all laptops, iPads, etc. closed during class. If a student is experiencing a personal/family situation/emergency, please let the instructor know that you may need to step out of the classroom in order to receive/make a call.

NASP Domains of Training and Practice addressed by this Course:

- Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability (NASP Domain 2.1)
- Consultation and Collaboration (NASP Domain 2.2)
- Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills (NASP Domain 2.3)
- School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning (NASP Domain 2.5)
- Preventive and Responsive Services (NASP Domain 2.6)
- Family–School Collaboration Services (NASP Domain 2.7)
- Diversity in Development and Learning (NASP Domain 2.8)
- Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice (NASP Domain 2.10)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Dessen, S. (2008). *Just Listen*. Penguin Random House

Draper, S. M. (2003). *The battle of Jericho*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers

Gutkin, T. and Reynolds (Eds.) (2009). *The Handbook of School Psychology, Fourth Edition*, John Wiley and Sons.

Shriberg, D., Song, S., Miranda, A., and Radcliff, K. (Eds.) (2013). *School Psychology and Social Justice: Conceptual Foundations and Tools for Practice*, New York: Routledge.

ARTICLES:

Beresin, E. V., Guerrero, A. P., Morreale, M. K., Thomas, L. A., Castillo, E. G., Aggarwal, R., ... & Brenner, A. M. (2024). Addressing the Youth Mental Health Epidemic. *Academic Psychiatry*, 1-5.

Castro-Ramirez, F., Al-Suwaidi, M., Garcia, P., Rankin, O., Ricard, J. R., & Nock, M. K. (2021). Racism and poverty are barriers to the treatment of youth mental health concerns. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 50(4), 534-546.

Durham, J. (2012), Examining the achievement gap through a psychodynamic lens: Implications for practice. *Journal of Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy* 11:3. 217 -228

Kaka, S. J., Kessner, T., Francis, A. T., Littenberg-Tobias, J., & Kennett, K. (2024). "Divisive Issues" and Collateral Damage: The Evolving Needs of Teachers Entrenched in the Culture War. *Journal of Education*, 00220574241231695.

Leath, S., Mathews, C., Harrison, A., & Chavous, T. (2019). Racial identity, racial discrimination, and classroom engagement outcomes among Black girls and boys in predominantly Black and predominantly White school districts. *American*

Educational Research Journal, 56(4), 1318-1352.

Logan, J. R., Minca, E., & Adar, S. (2012). The geography of inequality: Why separate means unequal in American public schools. *Sociology of education*, 85(3), 287-301.

McGorry, P. D., & Mei, C. (2018). Early intervention in youth mental health: progress and future directions. *BMJ Ment Health*, 21(4), 182-184.

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). (2011). *Service Delivery Model*. Bethesda, MD: Author. www.nasponline.org

Nguyen, T. D., Redding, C., Gilmour, A. F., & Bettini, E. (2024). No child left behind and the individuals with disabilities education act: examining special educators' outcomes. *Remedial and Special Education*, 45(3), 139-151.

Sapountzis, I. (2012), Creating continuities and reversing perspectives: Psychoanalytic contributions in school psychology. *Journal of Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*.

Sorter, M., Stark, L. J., Glauser, T., McClure, J., Pestian, J., Junger, K., & Cheng, T. L. (2024). Addressing the pediatric mental health crisis: Moving from a reactive to a proactive system of care. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 265.

Additional Readings

Thomas, A and Grimes, J (Eds.) (2008) *Best Practices in School Psychology V* Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Additional reading lists and handouts may be provided by the professor. You are encouraged to review (find location in library or online, become familiar with) the major journals in the area of school psychology including:

- *The Journal of School Psychology*
- *School Psychology Review*
- *School Psychology International*
- *School Psychology Quarterly*

Informative Web Sites:

www.naspweb.org (National Association of School Psychologists)

www.apa.org (American Psychological Association)

www.ed.gov (US Department of Education)

www.edlaw.net (Educational Law)

www.parentingresources.ncjrs.org (parenting resources)

www.schoolpsychology.net (school psychology resources online)

www.ideapractices.org (IDEA Practices)

www.nrcld.org (National Research Center on Learning Disabilities)
www.http://education.indiana.edu/~futures/ NASP Futures' website

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. You are expected to attend all class lectures and to actively participate in the class activities and discussions. Graduate courses thrive on student involvement. We will work together to create a supportive learning environment. If you must miss a class period due to emergency or illness, please notify me prior to class if at all possible. Any unexcused absence may result in a grade reduction. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per class period.
2. The reading expectation for this course is heavy. You are expected to have read all assigned readings prior to class with some degree of understanding. As with many graduate courses, we may not cover all of the reading during class time, however, you are still responsible for that material. Similarly, we may cover information in class that is not covered in your readings.
3. In-Class Reading Applications. Three reading applications are required to be submitted on designated dates. They should reflect an integrated analysis and application of chosen reading assignments. Each essay must include a clear thesis statement or main idea that is supported by arguments derived from your assigned texts and/or articles. **Due Dates:**
 - **September 24, 2025**
 - **October 22, 2025**
 - **November 12, 2025**
4. An Ecological School Psychology Assessment assignment is required. Students will examine and explore the domains of school psychology, ethical practice, and cultural competence within the context of a school setting. **Due on December 3, 2025.**

Grading Criteria:

Ecological School Psychology Assessment: 50%
In-Class Reading Applications: 50%

A = 94 – 100

A- = 89 - 93

B+ = 85-88

B = 80-84

C = 70-79

F = 69 and Below

Communication Policy

- All email should have student's class and name in the subject line and be sent from your Rutgers account
- Please allow for a 48 hour response time on all phone calls and email

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPAION:

- student attends every scheduled class (in person). If you are not physically in the class, you will be considered absent. If you are unable to attend a class due to illness or will be late, please email me prior to class. Students are excused from class when observing religious holidays, in accordance with Rutgers University policy. An excused absence can also occur if the student is ill, and/or the student has been told to quarantine, and/or are experiencing symptoms of any transmittable disease. Students will be responsible for all material covered during their absence. Credit will be given if no more than 2 classes are missed, all written assignments are submitted, and you participate in class presentations and small group discussions. Note, you may need to submit a brief assignment to make up for a missed class.
- I run an **unplugged classroom**, which means you should come to class with something to write, a notebook, and our syllabus (which I will hand out on the first day). No laptops are permitted, and phones should be stored away.
- Course participation is something I value highly as an instructor. I expect you to come to class with something to say every week. During class you will have the opportunity to engage in discussions in a large group and small group setting. I will note professionalism, arriving late/leaving early, patterns of absences, and classroom behavior.

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Readings
September 3	Course Overview and Outline Doctoral School Psychology Practice	No Reading
September 10	Professional Training in School Psychology	Dessen
September 17	Child Mental Health and Society	Beresin et al Sorter et al
September 24	Society and Systems of Education <i>In-Class Reading Application</i>	Nguyen et al Kaka et al Logan et al
October 1	Ecological School Psychology Practice <i>Ecological School Assessment Guidelines Provided</i>	Gutkin & Reynolds Chapter 23
October 8	History and Models of School Psychology Historical development of the field of school psychology, domains of school psychology practice, evolution of roles and functions of school psychologists	Best Practices Volume 1, Tilly Sapuontzis, 2012 NASP Practice Model
October 15	<i>In-Class Reading Application</i> Doctoral School Psychology Practice in the 21st Century	Assigned Reading
October 22	Assessment: Diagnosis and Classification Systems History and evidence of DSM system, history and evidence of the IDEA classification system, cultural dynamics and regulations <i>In-Class Reading Application</i>	Gutkin & Reynolds chapters 11,12 and 18
October 29	Counseling Consultation and Mental Health Development as a School Psychologist Introduction to theoretical models of school-based counseling, evidence-based counseling and consultation culturally informed practices within schools	McGorry and Mei Gutkin & Reynolds Chapters 28 and 43
November 5	Special Education Regulations, IEP Development and Ethics IDEA and federal mandates, assessment, classification and instructional regulations, 504	Assigned Reading
November 12	Current Issues in School Psychology Practice I <i>In-Class Reading Application</i>	Draper
November 19	Principles of Cultural Responsiveness in School Psychology Practice understanding cultural and linguistically different students, evidenced based culturally competent practice and policies	Gutkin & Reynolds Chapter 39 Castro-Ramirez et al
November 26	No Class	No Class
December 3	Current Issues in School Psychology Practice II	Assigned Reading
December 10	Portraits of Doctoral Level School Psychology Practice	Leath et al