This course provides an introduction to the field of school psychology and the role of the school psychologist. Course readings, lectures and class experiences focus on the forces that have shaped the field, the various roles performed by school psychologists, the legal and ethical standards, including NJ special education law, which guide practice, and current challenges to the field. Guest speakers— all doctoral level school psychologists—will be scheduled for certain dates. The development of one’s professional identity as a school psychologist will be explored through various forums.

Course Goals:
1. To familiarize students with the significant historical and social influences psychological movements, and legal and ethical guidelines that shape school psychology practice.
2. To enhance student’s understanding of work with diverse populations, including training needs and disproportionality in special education.
3. To equip students with an overview of current issues in school psychology, both nationally as well as NJ special education law.
4. To facilitate the beginning development of student’s professional identity as a school psychologist.

Required Text:

*Reserve readings will be located under my name (go to RU Library website under RU homepage, (www.rutgers.edu), look under “IRIS”, “Reserves”, and look under my last name/course name).

Grading Criteria:
Grades for this course will be based on:
• Active class participation; professional conduct during class, and completion of the assigned readings (10%)
• Written reaction papers on two readings including a class presentation on one of the readings (10%, 15% for class presentation for a total of 25%)
• Attendance at a local school board meeting and written analysis of same (15%)
• Report on interview with a school psychologist (20%)
• Final in-class exam (30%)

Please note: Course outline may be subject to change:

**CLASS PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:** I want to ensure that our class maintains a comfortable and supportive learning environment for all participants. We will be together as a group for the entire year and learning to work together as a group is one of the hallmarks of good school psychology practice; as such professional conduct within the class facilitates a supportive learning atmosphere. In addition to your acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes pertaining to school psychology, training as a school psychologist requires the development of professional behavior. Therefore, in line with the School Psychology Program’s Competencies, professional behavior is part of your grade and is expected at all times during class. Active participation in the form of raising questions and discussing readings is expected. Although you may disagree with your classmates, learning to interact in groups is a key competency of school psychologists; as such, respectful behavior toward peers, guest speakers, and faculty is required. Note writing, side conversations, and completing other work have the effect of excluding other class members and are not considered professional behavior.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Consistent with professional decorum, all electronic devices, including phones, pagers, and laptops, must be turned off during class. Laptops may be used as part of your class presentation (i.e., to show a video clip, etc.). Use of laptops for purposes such as checking email, instant messaging, surfing the web, social networking (chatrooms, Face book) etc. is not permitted and will result in their use being prohibited.

**ATTENDANCE:** Students are excused from class when observing religious holidays, in accordance with Rutgers University policy. With the exception of religious holidays, repeated lateness and/or absences, including prolonged absences during the middle of class, will lower your grade. Promptness is an essential component of professional conduct as a school psychologist.

Appropriate and professional class behavior, use of electronics, and attendance are all part of your class grade (10%).
COURSE OUTLINE

TUESDAY 9/8/09
Topics: Course Overview & History of School Psychology
The Changing Identity of the Profession;
Demographic Trends (National & State Levels);
Two Distinct Professional Identities and MLA
Readings: Merrell et al., Ch.1, 2; *Engelhart, Frasier, Lennox, & Marino

9/14/09
Topics: Models of Service Delivery
Data-Based Decision Making as a Framework for Practice;
Traditional and Evolving Roles for School Psychologists,
including social-emotional programming;
Evidence-Based School Practice
Readings: Merrell et al., Ch. 5;*Tharinger, Pryzwansky, & Miller;* Ross, Powell, & Elias

9/21/09
Topics: Understanding “The Culture” of Schools
The Ecological Model of Assessment and Intervention;
Schools as Socializing Contexts: Teacher-Student Relationships
Readings: Merrell et al., Ch.7; *Sarason Ch.2; *Gregory & Ripski (pp.
Recommended Reading on School Violence: * Baker

9/28/09---Yom Kippur (please let me know if you will be observing the holiday and away from class)
Topics: Culturally Competent School Psychology Practice
Working with Diverse Populations;
Addressing the Needs of Urban & Low Income Students; Urban School Psychology;
Overrepresentation Of Minority Youth in Special Education; School Violence
Readings: Merrell et al. Ch. 3, 4,*Elias & Haynes; *Kozol (“Children of the City Invincible...”)
Recommended Reading on Unequal Educational Opportunities along Racial Lines: *Kozol (“Still Separate, Still Unequal”)

10/5/09
Topics: Overview of the Educational Referral & Evaluation Process
Prereferral Teams and Intervention in General Education;
Response to Intervention;
IDEA and Revisions

Readings: Merrell et al. Ch. 6 through page 129; *Lukhurst & Lauback
Recommended Reading on Evidence-Based Instruction: Merrell et al. Ch. 9 pp.192-200

10/12/09
Topics: IDEA and Section 504
Assessment of Intelligence: Historical Overview & Legal Regulation; Best Practices;
NCLB;
Special Education Reform & Inclusion
Readings: Merrell et al., Ch.8;*Hopf & Martinez

10/19/09
Topics: New Jersey Special Education Rules & Regulations
Recommended Reading on School Psychologist’s Job Satisfaction: *Dickison et al.

10/26/09
Topics: Counseling: Best Practices in Social-Emotional Programming
Prevention;
Legal & Ethical Issues in Social-Emotional Interventions;
Counseling Ethnically Diverse Students
Readings: Merrell et al., Ch. 6 pg.136-139;**Ortiz & Flanagan; *Silverstein
Recommended Readings: *Goldklang et al.; *Tharinger & Stafford

11/2/09
Topics: Consultation: Working From a Systems Perspective
Organizational/Systems-level Change;
Parent-Team Relationships;
School Psychologists in Leadership Roles
Readings: *Borgelt & Conoley; *Gutkin & Curtis; *Shriberg
Guest Speaker

11/9/09
Topics: Ethical Decision Making for School Psychologists
Introduction to APA Ethical Guidelines and Standards for Practice;
Readings: Merrell et al., Appendix A (APA Ethical Guidelines),
PROJECT DUE DATES:
1. First reaction paper is due on or before Oct. 12, 2009
2. Reaction papers are due on the day the reading is assigned. One of the Reaction papers is due on the date you present. All papers must be submitted in hard form, not electronic copy.
3. All projects are due on the final day of class.

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS

REACTION PAPERS:
You will submit two reaction papers: one will be on an Assigned reading (10%) and the second will involve a small group presentation based on one of the Recommended readings (15%). Your written paper is due on the same day the reading is listed on the course outline; no exceptions. This is not a research paper so you will not require additional references. These papers tend to be about 3 pages in length.

Choose one of the readings from the Course Outline that interests you and summarize the main points. Then, discuss your own reaction to the reading in terms of possible implications for your future work as a school psychologist. For example, how might the topic at hand influence your work as a school psychologist? Shape your training interests? Your approach to working with children, parents, and school personnel? What points are new or different from what you previously knew? How do you think you might utilize this knowledge in your future work?

For the second reaction paper, you will be asked to present in a small group (total of 3 students) to the class on a Recommended reading (30 minutes maximum). These articles are on Reserve at LSM and are marked by an * asterik on the course outline. Briefly summarize the article’s main points and present an activity (i.e., debate, roleplay, case example) to engage your classmates in discussion of the relevant issues. These presentations are intended to stimulate discussion. Since this is a ten week course with many important topics, asking you to present on Recommended readings ensures that all students gain exposure to additional articles. Some of these topics will be relevant to the final exam, so remember that your classmates will be depending upon you for your coverage of the article’s main points.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING:
No more than three students should attend the same meeting. These papers
usually average 4-5 pages. The purpose of this activity is to familiarize you with school board meetings as well as some current educational issues. (Lists of meeting times may be found on school district web sites). Provide some information about the community whose school board meeting you attended. Describe who sits on the board; their demographics, and whether they are elected or appointed. How do board members interact with each other as well as members of the audience? What are the implications of this? Who has power on the board? What special interest groups are represented in the audience? How is the topic of special education dealt with? What other topics were discussed? What aspects of the meeting (topics, group process, etc.) might have implications for the district school psychologist? How receptive does this system appear to be to change? These are some possible issues to discuss but you are free to raise other points or focus on particular points.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST PAPER

1. Provide context of employment setting and educational training of s.p. What is their current job title? How do they actually see their role? (as compared to their job description) What roles/services do they perform? What percentage of time is spent in which activities? Who do see as their client/s? How has their job changed over time?
2. Describe a typical work day.
3. Highlight some current challenges in the school/district where they are presently employed. What factors contribute to these challenges? How is change created in this setting? Does the s.p. work primarily at an individual, group or systems level? What challenges exist in trying to work at more of a systems level?
4. What do they believe are their particular strengths/competencies? Areas they’d like to obtain more training in? What do they enjoy most about their work? How does it differ from what they imagined during their training? How do they engage in self care?
5. What are some legal and/or ethical issues they deal with?
6. How do they define their professional identity as a “school psychologist”? Do they engage in other professional activities outside of their school positions?
7. How diverse are the children on their caseload? What are the needs of diverse groups in their district?

DO NOT INTERVIEW A RELATIVE OR CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND. The school psychologist you interview should be currently employed within a school system and/or have retired from work in the schools within the past year.

FINAL EXAM
There will be a final IN CLASS exam, consisting of either essay or short answer questions. The exam will last one hour and fifteen minutes. The exam will be held on the following Monday AFTER this ten week course ends.

Let me know if you have additional questions. Remember, this course moves
quickly so don’t wait until the end of the course to complete everything. All assignments are due on November 16.

* LSM RESERVE READINGS:


