

MYSTERY, MADNESS, & MURDER

PSYC 405-001, Monday/Wednesday 9-10:15am
Mason Hall D003

Instructor Information

Tanya Tavassolie, M.A.

Jameela Conway-Turner (Assistant)

Office: David King Hall 1032 (basement level, inside 1021)

Email (preferred): ttavasso@masonlive.gmu.edu and jconwayt@masonlive.gmu.edu

Phone: 703-993-4712

Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:00-1:00pm or by appointment

Mailbox: located on the second floor of David King Hall, down the hall from the Undergrad Office

Required Textbook

Bartol C. R., & Bartol, A. M. (2011). *Criminal Behavior: A Psychological Approach* (10th ed.).

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-0132973199 - ISBN-10: 0132973197.

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

Blackboard: Students will be expected to access and use Blackboard on a regular basis. Important class information, such as the syllabus and assignment rubrics, will be posted here. To access Blackboard, students should use their George Mason email ID and password.

Facebook: Our class will have a Facebook page that students are required to "like". The purpose of this page is for students to ask questions that would benefit the whole class. All questions that are not of a personal nature should be directed to the Facebook page. I will also post interesting articles that are relevant to our coursework, students are encouraged to comment on links and share articles they find. The page can be found at the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/gmupsyc405>

Official Communications via GMU E-mail: 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. As a tip, please include your G-number and the course section in the subject of the email in all email correspondences with all instructors.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Participation and Discussion – 10 points

There will be 10 class discussions that will happen periodically throughout the semester. These will consist of short written reflections during class in response to a prompt that I will give the class. These reflections will be collected and graded for quality and completeness. Each reflection is 1 point each, however half credit may be given to students who put in marginal effort into this assignment, and 0 points will be given to students who do not attend that class period. If you are absent on the day that we do a discussion, you will forfeit those points. **No make-ups are permitted.**

2. Exams – 10 points each (30 points total)

There will be 3, 10-point exams throughout the semester (a combination of multiple choice questions and short answer). There is no cumulative final. All exams will be given online through Blackboard and are open notes/book. **Exams will be available starting at least 48 hours before the due date and the exam will end at 11:59pm on the day it is assigned, however you will have 1 ½ hours to complete the test from the time you begin. Class will be cancelled on the day of the exam.** Please do not wait until the last minute. You may NOT consult with other classmates about the exams. **No make-ups are permitted.**

3. Research Paper – 40 points

Students will turn in one 6-8 page research paper concerning a course topic of their choosing, in APA format. There will also be small successive assignments that work toward the finished product (e.g. topic selection, literature search workshops, bibliography, and drafts.). This project is to be completed in **groups of 2** and ONE paper will be turned in per group. More detailed information will be given as the semester progresses. See instructions and rubric on blackboard for more information.

4. Presentation – 10 points

On the last two days of class groups of students will give 10-15 minute presentations to their fellow classmates briefly summarizing their research paper topic.

5. Debates – 10 points

There will be in-class debates throughout the semester. Students will be divided into groups where they will defend a side of a controversial issue. Each group will prepare/meet outside of class and will present their case on the day of the debate. See Blackboard for more information.

Grade Calculation

Grades will simply be calculated by the amount of total points earned in the course; since it is out of 100 points, your calculations will be easy. For example, if you get 80 points in the class, you have an 80%.

<u>Grade Breakdown</u>							
A+	100+%	B+	89 – 87%	C+	79 – 77%	D	69 – 60%
A	100 – 93%	B	86 – 83%	C	76 – 73%	F	59% and below
A-	92 – 90%	B-	82 – 80%	C-	72 – 70%		

Honor Code

Students in this course are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with the GMU Honor System and Code. (<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>). Students are encouraged to study together as much as possible throughout the course, however, no assistance, sharing of information, or discussion of exam items or answers between students may take place. For all work, the name that appears on the paper must be the author. Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated in this course and will be immediately reported according to GMU procedures. The instructor reserves the right to use software to determine the extent to which the work is the student's. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

Psychological Services

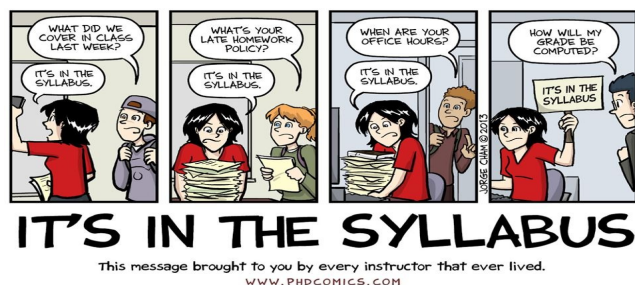
Life is stressful and we all need a little support sometimes. Students are encouraged to contact Counseling & Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu) for assistance with any kind of psychological/life problem or crisis situation. I can help with referrals for students with particular counseling needs so please feel free to talk with me for help with anything.

Disability/Other Issues

If you are a student with a 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.

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and its content. Any changes will be announced orally and in writing.



Please make sure you re-read the syllabus before asking questions about the policies, procedures, or format of the course. I spend a great deal of time writing the syllabus to make sure that it includes answers to most questions that you may have, so please do consult the syllabus before emailing me or the teaching assistant. As a general rule, you do NOT want to be the student that emails an instructor with a question that was answered in the syllabus.

Important Campus-Wide Dates

Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 18
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Tue Jan 19
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Tues Jan 26
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Tues Feb 2
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	Fri Feb 19
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 22 – Fri Mar 25
Spring Break	Mon Mar 7 – Sun Mar 13
Last day of classes	Mon May 2
Reading Days	Tue May 3
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 64 – Wed May 11

Course Schedule

Date	Readings	What's Due
Wednesday, Jan 20	Syllabus	
Monday, Jan 25	Chapter 1: Introduction	
Wednesday, Jan 27	Chapter 2: Origins of Criminal Behavior: Developmental	
Monday, Feb 1	Chapter 2: Origins of Criminal Behavior: Developmental	
Wednesday, Feb 3	<i>APA Style Workshop</i> <i>Topic Selection Workshop</i>	
Monday, Feb 8	Chapter 3: Origins of Criminal Behavior: Biological	Topic Selection Due
Wednesday, Feb 10	Chapter 3: Origins of Criminal Behavior: Biological	
Monday, Feb 15	No Class <i>Exam 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3</i>	Exam 1 on Blackboard Due by 11:59PM TONIGHT
Wednesday, Feb 17	<i>Literature Search Workshop</i>	
Monday, Feb 22	Chapter 4: Origins of Criminal Behavior: Learning	References Due
Wednesday, Feb 24	<i>Guest Lecture: Dr. Alvin Turner</i>	
Monday, Feb 29	Chapter 5: Human Aggression and Violence	
Wednesday, Mar 2	<i>Movie Day</i>	Research Paper Draft & Peer Survey Due
Spring break		
Monday, Mar 14	Chapter 6: Juvenile Delinquency	
Wednesday, Mar 16	<i>Guest Lecture: Dr. Allison Redlich</i>	
Monday, Mar 21	No Class <i>Exam 2: Chapters 4, 5, 6</i>	Exam 2 on Blackboard Due by 11:59PM TONIGHT
Wednesday, Mar 23	<i>Guest Lecture: Dr. Justin Ramsdell</i>	
Monday, Mar 28	<i>Washington Post Activity</i> <i>Paper Revision Workshop</i>	
Wednesday, Mar 30	<i>Debate Day</i>	Debate Groups 1-4
Monday, Apr 4	Chapter 8: Crime & Mental Disorders	
Wednesday, Apr 6	Expert Witness & Eyewitness Testimony <i>Movie Day</i>	
Monday, Apr 11	<i>Debate Day</i>	Debate Groups 5-8
Wednesday, Apr 13	Chapter 10: Multiple Murder	
Monday, Apr 18	Crime and the Law <i>Guest Lecture: Kenneth Holmboe, Esq.</i>	
Wednesday, Apr 20	Chapter 11: Psychology of Terrorism	
Monday, Apr 25	Catch Up and review	Research Paper Final Draft Due
Wednesday, Apr 27	Presentations	
Monday, May 2	Presentations	
Finals Week	<i>Exam 3: Chapters 8, 10, 11</i>	Exam 3 on Blackboard Due

by 11:59PM on Exam Day