PSY 495 - Special Topics in Psychology:  
**Seminar in School Psychology**  
3 credits - Spring 2008

This is a practical, interesting, and fun class which introduces students to the growing and dynamic discipline of school psychology. Currently, a great shortage of school psychologists exists and UNC offers two graduate school psychology programs (Ph.D. and Ed.S.) that lead to professional practice as a school psychologist. This class will discuss how to prepare a competitive application for a school psychology graduate program. This course is discussion oriented and student success depends on students’ preparation, attendance, and participation, as well as submission of written work. This is the format typical of many graduate psychology courses.

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Dr. Rik Carl D’Amato  
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**Catalog Description**  
PSY 495 Special Topics in Psychology: Seminar in School Psychology. PSY 495 courses are offered for the purpose of providing advanced students special learning opportunities in various areas of faculty expertise. The subtitles and credits vary and students may repeat the class with different subtitles: Professional issues in school psychology include roles and responsibilities, school reform, special education, training, certification and licensure, and legal and ethical issues.

**Course Requirements**  
Students/learners should complete assigned readings, attend all classes, submit chapter or article reaction papers, contribute to class discussions, and complete a PowerPoint in-service presentation individually or in a group.

**Course Objectives**  
The course will:
1. Provide an introduction to historical issues in psychology and education (e.g., psychology conferences, assessment).
2. Develop one's understanding of the similarities and difference between specialties in professional psychology (e.g., counseling psychology, clinical psychology).
3. Provide an overview of contemporary beliefs (e.g, diversity, evidence-based practice) related to the practice of professional school psychology.
4. Allow individuals to develop an understanding of typical and atypical development and how the developmental process is related to academic and social learning for students.
5. Develop sensitivity to and insight about current professional issues (e.g., disabilities, gender, mental health) in school psychology.
6. Explore legal and ethical issues related to the practice of school psychology.
**Method of Evaluation**
Letter grade.

**Text and Web-Sites**


National Association of School Psychologists’ Professional Conduct Manual. (2000). Including *Principles for professional ethics and Standards for the provision of school psychological services*. This is now available from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Publications, Bethesda, MD or can be downloaded or accessed online at: [http://www.nasponline.org/standards/ethics.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/standards/ethics.aspx)

**Optional Text**
Readings from this text are available on e-reserve:


**Academic Conduct**
Cheating on examinations, submitting work of other learners as your own, or plagiarism in any form will result in penalties ranging from an “F” on an assignment to expulsion from the University.

**Professional Conduct**
Students are expected to adhere to the appropriate code of ethics for professional psychology. In psychology, students should study the guidelines provided by the *National Association of School Psychologists* and the *American Psychological Association*. Both codes are available on line with addresses listed under texts in this syllabus. Any behavior, which is deemed unethical, will be grounds for expulsion from the school or university.

**Evaluation of Progress**

**Chapter Reaction Papers**
This class has no exams and the instructor does not believe that learners should memorize nonessential information. In place of exams, you are required to hand in chapter or article reaction papers (typed, double-spaced; 3 pages or less) for 5 book chapters or articles read. This is about one reaction paper every three weeks. Reaction papers should cover the students’ review and evaluation of each chapter, if information presented will help students be effective practitioners, and finally, if students have any questions after reading the chapters. Students may select any chapters from the required text or any of the readings. One
critique should be turned in to the instructor during week three and then one should be submitted every three weeks.

The chapter critiques should answer the following questions: (1) What is the purpose of the chapter? (2) What new knowledge did you gain from the chapter? (3) Explain any unfamiliar vocabulary of interest, (4) Detail how a psychologist might utilize this information, and (5) What questions do you have after reading the chapter? Critiques should be in APA style, double-spaced, each 3 pages in length. Critiques are graded according to the rubric available in class. Use the rubric as a guide when completing your critiques.

School Psychology In-service Presentation

In groups of one to three, students will select a specific topic that can be used for intervention or prevention activities in school psychology or related topics. These activities can be exciting vehicles for expanding your knowledge of the course material. The instructor must approve the topic and an outline must be presented two weeks before the in-service. Students will present a 20 to 30-minute in-service program individually or in a group of two. Groups of three will be assigned a 40 to 45-minute presentation concerning the selected topic. In-services will be timed. The program should be informative and hands-on, allowing participants to use a new technique or understand in depth an approach to solving problems. Handouts should be provided to the class. Sample in-service topics could be teen pregnancy, divorce and children, delinquency in schools, school psychology and stress, serving at-risk children in schools, school team building, parent training, dealing with school violence, and school crisis intervention.

Attendance

Attendance is important and students are required to attend classes. One absence will be allowed for every student with no consequence. If you need to miss more than one class please discuss this with the instructor the first week of classes. Repeated tardiness will count as an absence. Students who miss two classes or significant parts of classes will have the class letter grade reduced one grade for each absence. If a student is ill, they should not attend class and they will be granted an excused absence.

| Completion of chapter critiques | 500 points |
| Completion of in class activities | 100 points |
| In-service Power Point | 100 points |

700 points

GRADING: A = 90-100 %
B = 80-89 %
C = 70-79 %
D = 60-69 %
F = below 60 %

Disability Support Services

Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services office at (970) 351-2289 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.
**Readings**

Readings are from the primary textbook, online resources, or are posted at the library via electronic e-reserve. Reading are in red below.

**Week 1**

Introduction and Overview; Course Requirements; Welcome Activities
Read chapter 1, Fagan and Wise (2007), *Introduction to the field of school psychology*.

**Week 2**

Understanding Professional Psychology and Psychological Specialties
Guest Speakers: Clinical and counseling psychology practice.

**Week 3**

History of Schooling
Read chapter 2, Fagan and Wise (2007), *Historical development of school psychology*.

**Week 4**

Professional Identity and Origins of School Psychology Practice
Guest Speaker: Elementary practice.

**Week 5**

Understanding School Psychology Roles
Read Chapter 1: *Exceptionality and Special Education*
Chapter 2: *Current Trends and Issues*

**Week 6**

Special Education: What is so Special?
Guest Speaker: High school practice.
Read Chapter 3: *Parents and Families*
Chapter 4: *Multiculture and Bilingual Aspects of Special Education*

**Week 7**

Special Education: What is so Special? (continued)
Chapter 6: *Learners with Learning Disabilities*
Chapter 13 *Learners with Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities*
Week 8
Certification, Licensure, and Training Issues; How to Select a Program
Guest Speaker: Iterinant practice.
Read chapter 6, Fagan and Wise (2007), *The preparation of school psychologists*.

Week 9
Understanding Issues in School Reform Issues; Regulation of school Psychology
Guest Speakers: Alternative school services.
Read chapter 7, Fagan and Wise (2007), *The regulation of school psychology*.
Explore *Response to Intervention (RTI)* online readings, sites, and *PowerPoint*

Week 10
Serving Parents, At-Risk Children, and Families
Guest Speaker: Testing services.
Read 5 handouts from *Parenting* section:
*Bedtime, Daycare, Divorce, Running Away, and Household chores*;
Read 3 handouts from Home and School section:
*Academic Motivation; Homework; Study Skills*
Complete Online activities and visit suggested sites

Week 11
Counseling in the Schools; Understanding Various Training Activities
Guest Speaker: Counseling services.
Read chapter 8, Fagan and Wise (2007), *Practica, internships and job-site considerations*.
Read 13 Handouts from *Crisis and Safety* section:
*Crisis: Tips for Caregivers; Death and Grief in the Family: Providing Support at School; Death and Grief in the Family: for Parents; Death at School: Tips for School Administrators and Support Personnel; Group Psychological First Aid: Strategies for School Mental Health Professionals; Preventing Suicide: Information for Caregivers and Educators; School Bus Safety: Tips for Parents; Suicidal Students: Intervening at School; Suicide: Post-intervention Strategies for School Personnel; Threat Assessment at School: A Primer for Educational Professionals; Trauma Victims and Psychological Triage: Considerations for School Mental Health Professionals; Traumatized Children: Tips for Parents and Educators; War and Terrorism: Tips for Supporting Children at Home and School.*

Week 12
Consultation in the Schools
Guest Speaker: Consulting services.
Read chapter 5, Fagan and Wise (2007), *Professional evaluation and accountability*. 
Week 13
Classroom Management, Discipline, Positive Behavioral Support; Why Teachers Quit
Guest Speaker: Applying to a school psychology program (including "what I look for in applications").
Read 21 Handouts from Behavior and Discipline section:
  Aggression in Adolescents: Strategies for Parents and Educators; Aggression in Young Children: Strategies for Parents and Educators; Bullies and Victims: Information for Parents; Bullying and Bullying Prevention: Information for Educators; Classroom Rules; Compliance at Home and in the Classroom; Daily Behavior Report Cards (DBRCs): Useful Tools for Monitoring and Changing Classroom Behavior; Defusing Anger: When Someone Else Is Angry; Discipline; Strategies That Work: Fair and Effective Strategies for All Students; Functional Behavior Assessment: A Primer for Educators; Lying: Strategies for Parents and Teachers; Name-Calling and Teasing: Strategies for Parents and Teachers; Peer Mediation: A Guide for Educators; Positive Behavior Supports: Information for Educators; Positive School Climate: Information for Educators; Spanking and Alternative Discipline Strategies; Stealing: Strategies for Parents and Teachers; Temper Tantrums: Guidelines for Parents and Teachers; Time Out: Guidelines for Parents and Teachers; Verbal Aggression: Coping Strategies for Children; Zero Tolerance and Alternative Strategies.

Week 14
The Future of School Psychology; In-service presentations.
Read chapter 9, Fagan and Wise (2007), Perspectives on the future of school psychology.

Week 15
Legal and Ethical Issues in the Schools; Understanding Research in the Schools; In-service presentations.

Week 16
Final exam week activities.