

Course Syllabus

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PSYC 3353

Forensic Psychology

Course Description

A general survey of psychology and the legal system. Central themes regarding the psychological study of the legal system will be considered, as well as their implications for different contexts and situations within the legal system. A number of special issues will be considered, such as eyewitness memory, the insanity defense). Consideration will also be given to Christian perspectives on the topic and specific issues.

You are likely familiar with television shows such as Criminal Minds, Law and Order, CSI, or the Mentalist. These shows reflect the operation of the legal system in its many facets. At the same time, they reflect psychological practices and principles that influence, and interact with the legal system. This course is intended to provide a general survey of the interaction between psychology and the legal system.

In this context, there are 7 sessions in the course. The first session focuses on getting started – getting started in the online course experience, and becoming familiar with the nature of forensic psychology and forensic psychologists. The second session focuses on policing and policy - the specific psychology of policing, and how psychology may influence broader legal policy issues. Session 3 focuses on the psychology of criminal investigations, with particular emphasis on eyewitness interviewing and identification. Session 4 focuses on police interrogations and confessions, including work on detecting deception in interviewees. Session 5 looks at forensic assessment – the conditions and context for assessing the capacity and abilities of people involved with the legal system, ranging from the insanity defense to assessing parenting ability. Session 6 examines the context and nature of decision making in the legal system, the decision making of juries, and of juveniles in the legal system. The final session (session 7) examines the consequences of forensic decisions, treatment in a forensic context, and the psychology of people who are placed in the correctional system.

Course Prerequisites

Enter course prerequisites

Required Materials

Textbook:

Roesch, R., Zapf, P. A., & Hart, S. D. (2010). *Forensic Psychology and Law*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. ISBN 978 0470096239

Note that this text is available in hardcover, in electronic format from the publisher

(<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470570377.html>

(<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470570377.html>), and is also available in Kindle ebook reader format from Amazon.com.

Required Readings:

Cuppari, M., & Lewis, J. A. (2009). The polygraph: The truth lies within. *Journal of Psychiatry & Law*, 37(1), 85-92. Retrieved from EbscoHost Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection. Permanent link: <https://ezproxy.swu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pbh&AN=44863121&site=eds-live> (<https://ezproxy.swu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pbh&AN=44863121&site=eds-live>)

Gamson, R., Gottesmann J., Milan, N., & Weerasuriya, S. (2012). *Cues to Catching Deception*. College Park, MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Retrieved from www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/cuestocatchingdeception.pdf (<http://www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/cuestocatchingdeception.pdf>)

Geiselman, R. E., & Fisher, R. P. (2014). Interviewing Witnesses and Victims. In Michel St. Yves (Ed.), *Investigative Interviewing: Handbook of Best Practices*. Thomson Reuters Publishers, Toronto, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.cti-home.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Cognitive-Interview-Method-Fisher-Geiselman.pdf> (<http://www.cti-home.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Cognitive-Interview-Method-Fisher-Geiselman.pdf>).

Polaschek, D. L. L. (2014). Adult criminals with psychopathy: Common beliefs about treatability and change have little empirical support. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(4), 296–301. doi: 10.1177/0963721414535211. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0963721414535211> (<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0963721414535211>).

Wagstaff, G. F., & Kebbell, M. R. (1998). Hypnotic interviewing: The best way to interview eyewitnesses? *Behavioral Science & the Law*, 16(1), 115-129. Retrieved from EbscoHost Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection. Permanent link: <https://ezproxy.swu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pbh&AN=11818687&site=eds-live> (<https://ezproxy.swu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pbh&AN=11818687&site=eds-live>)

Additional Resources:

American Psychology-Law Association (<http://www.ap-ls.org/> [\(http://www.ap-ls.org/\)](http://www.ap-ls.org/))

Southern Carolina Legal Code (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/statmast.htm>)

Accreditation

Southern Wesleyan University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate, baccalaureate, and masters degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Southern Wesleyan University.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

CLO#1	Describe the basic domains, principles, and elements of forensic psychology.
CLO#2	Illustrate the "light" that psychological research throws on the legal process, and factors affecting that process (e.g., eyewitness interviews and memory, jury decision making, interrogations and confessions).
CLO#3	Describe the basic elements involved in forensic assessment.

Course Learning Assignments and Assessments

Grading

Name of Assessment (Evidence of Learning)	Weighting	Assessment Due
1. Weekly online exams	60 points (10 points each for 6 out of 7 exams)	Sessions 1-7
2. Weekly discussion forums	62 points (see detailed chart provided in the Explanation of Requirements below)	Sessions 1-7
3. Article reviews	45 points (15 points each for 3 article reviews)	Sessions 2, 4, 6
4. Application paper	25 points	Session 7
5. Application paper references	10 points	Session 2
6. Ancillary Assignments	10 points	Sessions 1, 4, 7
TOTAL	212 points	

Weekly Online Exams – 60 points (6 out of 7 exams @ 10 points each)

For each week/session of the course, there will be a timed (30 minutes) on-line exam on the chapters/articles assigned to be read for the week/session. The online exam questions will primarily be comprised of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and matching questions. If a student has *studied* all of the required material (both chapters and articles), he/she should do well on the exams. Exams are open book, which means that students may refer to weekly material to complete an exam. All exams must be completed on Canvas; exams not submitted in this manner will not receive credit. In order to receive credit, exams must be completed by designated due dates/times. Recognizing that events such

as illness or emergencies happen, I will drop the lowest exam grade for the purposes of calculating your final grade.

Weekly Discussion Forum Participation – 62 points (see detailed chart in this section)

Discussions are an integral part of this course and where much of our class integration will take place. Essentially, this is where we will have our class discussions. In a face-to-face course, if someone asked a question, everyone would benefit from hearing the response. Similarly, in the discussions, our responses to each other will prove useful to all of us. Discussion participation occurs every session of the course. Typically, initial comments/responses for a session are due on Wednesdays by 11:55 p.m.; responses to peer comments are due on Saturdays by 11:55 p.m. These contributions and responses should demonstrate critical thinking and reflection and should not simply be a statement of fact or a recitation of information presented in the readings.

All discussions are graded, unless otherwise noted on the discussion itself. In each session, there are 10-12 points allotted toward your grade for contributions to the Discussions. These roughly correspond to the minimum of 3 posts required for each Discussion (1 initial post, and 2 responses), with the exception of the Session 1, where 5 posts are required (2 posts – 1 initial post, and 2 responses – for the introduction discussion, and 2 posts - 1 initial post, and 1 response – for the Session 1 discussion). As a part of all Discussions, participants are expected to post an original response as well as a response to at least two other contributors. A detailed outline of the number of points allocated for each post is given below.

As a resource, I have provided a grading rubric for posts in Appendix C. Please avoid responses like, “I agree,” or “This was really good.” Instead, push yourself to engage in a meaningful dialogue with your peers, providing well-thought-out points instead of “shoot from the hip” answers. For example, if you agree, explain why.

Discussion	Points	Point Allotment
Session 1 Introductions	4	2 points for initial post & 1 point for each of 2 peer responses
Session 1 Discussion	8	6 points for initial post & 2 points for 1 peer response

Session 2 Discussion	10	6 points for initial post & 2 points each for 2 peer responses
Session 3 Discussion	10	6 points for initial post & 2 points each for 2 peer responses
Session 4 Discussion	10	6 points for initial post & 2 points each for 2 peer responses
Session 5 Discussion	10	6 points for initial post & 2 points each for 2 peer responses
Session 6 Discussion	10	6 points for initial post & 2 points each for 2 peer responses
Session 7 Discussion	10	6 points for initial post & 2 points each for 2 peer responses
Total	72	

Recognizing that events such as illness or emergencies happen, I will drop one discussion grade (the lowest grade, obviously) out of Discussions 2 – 7 for the purposes of calculating your final grade. This means that I will drop 10 points out of the 72 points total, for 62 points. Note that both session 1 discussions (i.e., the introductions and regular discussion) are not among the discussions that may be dropped. You are expected to be “in class” for Session 1, both for your introductions and for your initial discussion of the course material.

Keep in mind that the perceptions of other members of the class toward you may be almost entirely driven by your postings; consider the perception that you want others to have of you. All your online communications should be composed with fairness, honesty and tact. Spelling and grammar are very important in an online course. What you put into an online course illustrates your level of professionalism. For more information, see the rules of netiquette at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html> [\(http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html\)](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)

Article reviews - 45 points (15 points each for 3 article reviews)

The three article reviews address professional issues in forensic psychology which are not extensively covered in the text, so the articles cover issues beyond those in the text. The reviews should be a minimum of 2 full and a maximum of 4 full double spaced, type-written or word-processed pages (10-12 point font size, and maximum 1 inch margins), and should follow a format wherein you summarize the article(s), **which MUST be no more than 1/2 of the review**, and provide your analysis and comments. A good rule of thumb is keep your review of the article(s) to one page (which means that the summary will be very general), and make the remainder of the review your comments, reactions, and analyses.

In your summaries of the articles, focus on the general points and logic of the articles. In your analysis and comments, mention a couple of things that you specifically learned from each chapter, as well as your brief personal reactions and analysis. Keep in mind that I have read all the material in the course (several times); your job is to convince me that you have read (AND have thought about) the material. Do NOT say that you thought an article was interesting, boring, or that you learned something, or, for that matter, that you thought an article was complicated, and you didn't understand it. You are expected to learn things from article; if you learned something from an article, clearly and succinctly say what you learned, and relate your knowledge to other knowledge you already have. I want to see evidence that you worked to understand it.

The first article review, on hypnosis and eyewitness interviewing/testimony is due for session 2. The second article review, on the polygraph, is due for session 4. The third article review, on psychopathy, is due for session 6.

So, again, keep your summary of an article to no more than 1/2 of your review (failure to include comments and analysis will automatically make your review inadequate - 4 points out of 8 (or less)). For grading, I will pay attention to the following dimensions: 1) content and analysis: effective summary of the material, and an effective analysis of, or reaction to the material, including relating it to material outside of the article, and 2) organization and grammar; your writing should flow smoothly, and without awkward or ungrammatical sentences, or spelling errors. See the grading rubric provided in Appendix C. Article reviews should be submitted in MS Word (.doc or .docx) or .pdf format.

Application paper – 25 points

The application paper is intended to encourage your development of knowledge within the field of forensic psychology and the practical application of that knowledge. For the application paper, you are to write a 8-10 page paper (with 5-6 citations, excluding the text), in which you review the professional material on a specific topic, and then employ that material in making recommendations to a professional group. The applied proposal may be a program or activity proposal, a policy proposal (e.g., to a political

representative, a lawyer, or a police chief), or a research proposal to address a specific issue (e.g., comparing the effectiveness of 2 types of forensic interviewing).

In other words, you are to integrate your own experience and knowledge and the professional literature, and then apply that knowledge to improving some aspect of the forensic system, broadly defined. For example, you may review the literature on the guilty knowledge test as a procedure in polygraph administration, and use that review as the basis for a proposal (e.g., to some polygraph examiners) for improving polygraph administration. As a second example, you may review literature on lineups, and recommend procedures for improving the admissibility and accuracy of the police line ups to a police chief. As a third example, you may review the literature on interviewing children about sexual abuse, and make recommendations (e.g., to social workers) about procedures to follow when interviewing children.

You are expected to submit a topic (or a couple of possible topics, along with possible professional references or articles for the topic), for the second session of the course (See Point 5 below). Some sample topics with references are provided in the handout entitled “sample topics for forensic psychology.” This handout is in the “Resources” module on Canvas.

The application paper must be a 8-10 page paper, written in good literate English style using APA style conventions. Text should be 10-12 point font size, double spaced, with 1 inch margins, *with NO extra white space between paragraphs*. The paper must include a title page, abstract or executive summary, main body, and references page. In practice, this means that you will have between 4 and 6 pages of written text. The written body of your paper should include a brief introduction to the topic, a literature review, and a proposal or recommendations. The paper must be formatted according to APA style.

A rubric for marking the application paper may be found in Appendix D. In particular, attention will be paid to the following dimensions: 1) style/structure: your writing, including the structure of your paper, should flow smoothly and clearly, without awkward or unclear sentences, 2) content or critical analysis: the quality of your thought, revealed in the quality of your summary of the article, and the quality of your analysis, comments, or observations, 3) grammar and mechanics: the presence or absence of ungrammatical sentences or spelling errors, and 4) adherence to APA style as described (and modified) in this syllabus.

The application paper should be submitted in MS Word (.doc or .docx) or .pdf format.

Application paper references – 10 points

As preparation for your application paper, there is an important piece of coursework to complete – a set of references for your application paper. In particular, for Session 2 you will be asked to determine a topic, and to submit a list of 6-8 references for the topic. That is, by Session 2 I want you to have an idea for your application paper and to have developed a list of references for your paper. At least half of these references must be from professional or peer-reviewed sources. Articles should primarily be obtained through professional databases, such as the library (i.e., EbscoHost) databases. A set of references that consists primarily or entirely of web pages or links thereto is NOT acceptable (i.e., will receive a grade of 0/10). If you want me to review your references or make suggestions, you can contact me. In addition, if you want some ideas for possible topics/references, some sample topics with references are provided in the handout entitled “sample topics for forensic psychology.” This handout is in the “Resources” module on Canvas.

NOTE WELL: A submitted application paper that does not use most of the references submitted in this assignment will receive a GRADE OF zero.

Ancillary Assignments – 10 points

There are some assignments in the course that do not cover course content, but prepare the student for participation in and contributions to the course. These assignments are listed below. Details of each of the individual assignments are provided below and in the relevant assignment on Canvas. Completion of these assignments counts toward the course grade.

Assignment	Points	Due
Syllabus acknowledgement exam	2	Session 1
Midsession course evaluation exam	3	Session 4
Final reflective course evaluation	5	Session 7

The syllabus acknowledgement exam and the midsession course evaluation exam are online exams in Canvas, each consisting of about 5 questions.

The final reflective course evaluation should be about 1 full page. Some elements to consider for your reflection are:

- 1) what you learned from the course (e.g., what 2-3 concepts or principles particularly stand out for you, that you expect to remember several years from now);
- 2) what (positive or negative) experiences did you have in this course?;
- 3) what suggestions would you have for the course - is there any aspect of the course (e.g., specific coursework, course load, readings, topics) with which you were particularly pleased, and any aspect of the course with which you were particularly dissatisfied?;

Keep in mind that you do not have to include all of these elements, but I do want you to reflect on experience with the course. Please let me know if you have any questions, or additional comments or concerns.

GRADE EQUIVALENCY TABLE

All grades are reported in a system of eleven letter grades designated as "A" through "F" with appropriate plus and minus additions reflecting the following scheme:

Percentage Value	Letter Grade	Numeric Value for GPA
95-100	A	4.0
90-94	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.4
84-86	B	3.0
80-83	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.4
74-76	C	2.0
70-73	C-	1.7

67-69	D+	1.4
60-66	D	1.0
<60	F	0.0

Work Expectations

PSYC 3353 is 3 credit course. In accordance with SACS accreditation standards, a 3 credit hour course reflects 120 hours of work over the duration of the course. The chart below contains a proposed breakdown of work expectations for this course.

Activity	Number of activities	Time per activity	Semester hours
1. Reading course material (chapters and articles)	7 (i.e., 1 set of chapters and articles each week – usually 2 chapters or 1 chapter plus an article)	1-2 hours/chapter or article (mostly 1 hour/chapter)	18.0 hours
2. Accessing and studying course material	7	5.0 hours/week	35.0 hours
3. Weekly exams	7 (i.e., 1 exam each week)	30 minutes/exam	3.5 hours
4. Course discussion participation	7 (generally, 1 discussion each week)	2.0 hours/discussion	14.0 hours
5. Application paper references	1	3.5 hours/page	3.5 hours

6. Application paper	1	3 hours/page (about 9 pages)	27.0 hours
7. Article reviews	3	2 hours/page (about 3 pages each)	18.0 hours
8. Ancillary assignments	various	2.0 hours	2.0 hours
Total			121.0 hours

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is a key to success in the course. Please refer to the Attendance Policy outlined in the Catalog for full details of the SWU policy on attendance.

Online attendance is based on completion of at least one designated assignment by the due date/time posted within the course site for each session. Online activities may include lecture, assignments, readings, discussion forums, and assessments (e.g. quizzes, tests).

Communication

The course site (Canvas) and SWU email are the primary tools for class communication, assignments, handouts, etc. All participants must have access to the course site and SWU e-mail and are expected to access them on a daily basis.

While it is important to maintain good communication with the instructor, Internet connectivity problems and home computer problems are not considered adequate excuses for missing assigned class work.

Technology Requirements

To be successful in this course, all participants are expected to ensure their technology equipment meets the [recommendations](http://www.swu.edu/about-swu/technology-services/computer-recommendations/) [_ \(http://www.swu.edu/about-swu/technology-services/computer-recommendations/\)](http://www.swu.edu/about-swu/technology-services/computer-recommendations/) provided by SWU's Technology Services.

Students requiring technical support related to their courses or other SWU-provided technologies should send an e-mail to helpdesk@swu.edu or call 864.644.5050.

Academic Honesty




Honesty in all matters - including honesty in academic endeavors - is a valued principle at Southern Wesleyan University. It is the expectation of the university that all those joining the academic program will act with integrity in all matters.












No forms of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Students are encouraged to help each other maintain these high standards. All academic dishonesty should be reported to the faculty directly. Faculty, upon evidence of academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, or misuse of another's intellectual property), either by voluntary confession, report of another student, or on the basis of work submitted, must follow the procedure outlined in the Catalog (under *Academic Honesty*). This includes but is not limited to a zero for the work involved, 10% course grade reduction, or a failing grade for the course. Unresolved cases may be appealed using the Appeal Process outlined in the Catalog (under *Academic Honesty*).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Southern Wesleyan University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Accommodations can be made for students with disabilities, as outlined in "Services for Students with Disabilities," found in mySWU's Student tab under The Learning Center. Any student desiring accommodations must send the request and all documentation to the Academic Coordinator at the learning site where he/she attends classes. The Academic Coordinator will forward the materials to the Student Success Coordinator for Southern Wesleyan University.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Sun May 17, 2020	 Session 1 Discussion - Getting started	due by 11:55pm
	(https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170189)	
	 Session 1 Discussion - Introduce Yourself	due by 11:55pm
	(https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170190)	
	 Session 1 quiz - Chapters 1 & 12	due by 11:55pm
	(https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170177)	

Date	Details	Due
	 Syllabus acknowledgement quiz (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170176)	due by 11:55pm
	 Application paper topic & references (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170193)	due by 11:55pm
	 Article Review 1 - Wagstaff & Kebbell (1998) (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170194)	due by 11:55pm
Sun May 24, 2020	 Session 2 Discussion - Policing and Policy (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170188)	due by 11:55pm
	 Session 2 quiz - Chapters 9 & 11 (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170180)	due by 11:55pm
	 Session 3 Discussion - Investigations 1 (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170187)	due by 11:55pm
Sun May 31, 2020	 Session 3 quiz - Chapter 5 & Article (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170183)	due by 11:55pm
	 Article Review 2 - Cuppari & Lewis (2009) (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170195)	due by 11:55pm
	 Midcourse course evaluation (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170182)	due by 11:55pm
Sun Jun 7, 2020	 Session 4 Discussion - Investigations 2 (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170191)	due by 11:55pm
	 Session 4 quiz - Chapter 6 & Article (https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170179)	due by 11:55pm

Date	Details	Due
Sun Jun 14, 2020	 Session 5 Discussion - Forensic Assessments https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170186	due by 11:55pm
	 Session 5 quiz - Chapters 2 & 3 https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170181	due by 11:55pm
Sun Jun 21, 2020	 Article Review 3 - Polaschek (2014) https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170196	due by 11:55pm
	 Session 6 Discussion - Forensic Decisions https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170185	due by 11:55pm
Sun Jun 28, 2020	 Session 6 quiz - Chapters 7 & 8 https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170178	due by 11:55pm
	 Application Paper https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170192	due by 11:55pm
Sun Jun 28, 2020	 Reflective Course Evaluation https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170197	due by 11:55pm
	 Session 7 Discussion - Consequences https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170184	due by 11:55pm
	 Session 7 quiz - Chapters 4 & 10 https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170175	due by 11:55pm
	 Roll Call Attendance https://swu.instructure.com/courses/2649076/assignments/26170198	