

**Psychology 230****PSYCHOLOGY AND LAW****Winter 2008**

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Office Hours:	1:00 – 2:30 Mondays, Wednesdays	Office Hours:	

**Class Meets:** Monday, Wednesday 10:30 – 11:50, STJ 1036

**Text:** Pozzulo, J., Bennel, C. & Forth, A. (2006). *Forensic Psychology* Toronto, ON: Pearson Prentice Hall.

**Course Objectives and Content:**

This course is a general overview of psychology and law. The goal is to provide you with basic information and a working vocabulary about psychological concepts and principles as they pertain to phenomena encountered in the criminal justice system. This course will look at important research in the area and examine the contemporary methodologies being used in social and forensic psychology. This course is designed to develop the ability to use scientific methods to examine behaviors that occur in a legal context and to lay the foundations for further study in the areas of psychology and law.

**Requirements and Evaluation:**

There are two grading options. First, you may base your course grade entirely on your performance on four regular term multiple choice tests. Each test counts for 25% of your final grade (*Test 1: January 23; Test 2: February 13; Test 3: March 12; Test 4: April 2*). In general, the four term tests will be based equally on lecture and textbook material, and will primarily include material covered after the previous test. All tests will make use of scannable computer cards, so please bring a pencil and an eraser.

Test results will be posted as soon as they are available. Please check your mark after each test, as we do not generally release marks over the phone or by e-mail, and university policy prohibits final grades from being posted prior to the end of the examination period.

The mark received for a test stands – it will not be dropped, re-weighted, etc. because you weren't feeling well, had a lot on your mind, etc., nor will "extra" assignments given to students who are dissatisfied with their grades. My goal is to be fair to everyone – please don't ask for special treatment. However, it is fair for a test to be rescheduled for *legitimate* medical, compassionate, or religious grounds. Unless circumstances make it impossible to do so, please inform us **PRIOR** to the scheduled test to arrange a timely makeup, and to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical, compassionate, or religious claim (Page 1:8-9 in the University of Waterloo Calendar). Make-up exams may differ in format from the original.

As a second grading option you may base a portion of your grade on a research paper. With this option you are still required to write the four term tests. However, each test will be worth 17% of your final grade and the remaining third of your grade (32%) will be based on a research paper written on a topic of your choice related to psychology and the law. The paper is due on Monday, April 7. You may choose to write the paper at any time prior to the due date, but once you have handed it in, you will be graded according to the second grading option.

For this paper you are required to focus on a very narrow, specific topic within the empirical research literature (i.e. journal articles that present original data). You can get ideas for a topic by scanning the research literature (e.g. using PsycINFO or looking through the journals directly), but you must discuss the topic with me prior to writing the paper. This topic should be narrow enough such that there are only 2 to 4 empirical articles (original academic journal articles in which data is collected and analyzed) dealing with your specific topic. Keep narrowing down your topic until ALL of the available empirical articles on your topic number between 2 and 4. For your paper you are required to write a brief introduction to your topic, summarize the articles (approximately one article per page), and then write a one page integrative analysis and conclusion in which you should describe the state of knowledge on this topic and identify a future research direction.

**Special Needs**

Students with documented or suspected disabilities (i.e., physical, learning, or sensory disabilities or chronic medical conditions) are encouraged to contact the Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) to determine eligibility for their services. OPD is located in Needles Hall Room 1132 and can be contacted at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082, TDD/TTY 888-4044. In the event that you require an adapted learning or testing environment, please provide us with OPD documentation *at the beginning of the term*.

**Academic Offenses:**

A word about cheating – don't. It is lazy, disrespectful, and immoral. People who cheat or plagiarize are 1) incompetent – they haven't learned the material, and 2) untrustworthy – they are willing to mislead others and taken advantage of their fellow students in order to get ahead. I do not want incompetent, immoral people getting a university degree, much less a job

in a position of responsibility. Therefore, if you are caught cheating I will, with little sympathy, lobby for the most severe consequences possible. Here's the official statement: "All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts and its University colleges are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the University of Waterloo Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:10) and St. Jerome's University Calendar (pp. 16 – 17) [or on-line at <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.pdf>]. If you believe you have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized, you may grieve this decision in accord with Policy #70, (Student Grievance, p. 17–18 SJU Calendar). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor, the appropriate St. Jerome's departmental chair and ultimately the Appeals Officer (currently the Associate Dean) for St. Jerome's University."

### On Doing Your Best

As an alternative to cheating there are some things that you can do to put in the best performance possible in this class. First, come to class! Be alert. Do more than mindlessly write down whatever appears on an overhead: *Think* about the material – try to come up with your own examples and illustrations by applying the material to the things you already know. Don't simply assume that it's easy or common sense – often, it is not. (A good test of your own understanding of concepts is whether you can explain them to others.)

Second, do the readings! Ideally, read them more than once. Don't mindlessly run a highlighter over the words: *Think* about the material – write down questions, observations, possible examples, etc. as you read.

Third, look for connections! I will be dealing with a lot of specific phenomena in this class, but there will be some big themes that will keep recurring throughout the term. Look for them. Look also for connections between lecture and assigned readings. Think about what *this* theorist might say about *that* topic, etc. – even if it is never addressed in class.

You should be detecting a common theme in my suggestions. I try to create test questions that are conceptual and applied. It isn't good enough to memorize the material – you need to take the time to think about it and make the effort to really understand it.

### Course Schedule

Dates	Topics	Assigned Reading
Jan. 7	Introduction	
9	Values: psychology of the law	Ch. 1
14	Research Methods	Ch. 2
16	Psychological explanations of criminal behavior	
21	Children's victimization	Ch. 7
23	*** Test 1 ***	
28	Police psychology	Ch. 3
30	Police Investigations and memory biases	Ch. 4
Feb 4	Police Investigations and interrogation	Ch. 5
6	Criminal profiling	
11	Film: 12 Angry Men	
13	*** Test 2 ***	
18, 20	*** Reading Week	
25	Fitness to stand trial	Ch. 9
27	Eyewitness testimony	Ch. 6
Mar. 3	Evaluating testimony	
5	Jury selection	Ch. 8
10	Jury process	Ch. 8
12	*** Test 3 ***	
17	Decision-making: judging guilt and innocence	
19	Sentencing decision making	Ch. 10
24	Sentencing alternatives	
26	Violence and risk assessment	Ch. 11
31	Treatment of offenders and inmates	Ch. 12
Apr. 2	*** Test 4 ***	
7	*** optional research paper due ***	