

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo, Department of Psychology

Psychology 230

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PSYCHOLOGY AND LAW

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Class Meets: Tuesday, Thursday 4:00 – 5:20, STJ 1036

Text: Pozzulo, J., Bennell, C. & Forth, A. (2015). *Forensic Psychology, 4th Edition*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

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 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.

Course Requirements and Assessment:

There are two grading options. First, you may base your course grade entirely on your performance on four regular term multiple choice tests (**September 25, October 16, November 6, November 27**). Each test will be worth 25% of your final grade. 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 or re-weighted because you weren't feeling well, had a lot on your mind, etc., nor will "extra" assignments be 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. Make-up exams may differ in format from the original. [The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations](#) state that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the "[University of Waterloo Verification of Illness](#)" form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or on the link provided above. If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.
- The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.
- Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

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 32% of your grade 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 Tuesday, **December 2**. You may choose to write the paper at any time prior to the due date, but once you hand it in, you will be graded according to the second grading option. The paper should be submitted as an email attachment and is due at midnight. I will deduct 5% per day for late papers.

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. Much of the work for this paper will involve finding a topic that is narrow enough 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 describe the state of knowledge on this topic and identify a direction for future research.

Research Experience:

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students may earn a "**bonus**" grade of up to 2% in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 2% may be earned and will be added to the final grade to bring your final grade up to 100% (if needed). Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the [SONA](#) online system. Students enrolled in this course have been set up with a SONA account.

Academic Offenses:

A word about cheating – don't. It is lazy, disrespectful, and immoral. I expect university students to be mature, responsible, accountable people who act with integrity. Students who cheat or plagiarize are 1) incompetent – they haven't learned the material, and 2) untrustworthy – they are willing to mislead others and take 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 information:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Academic Integrity Office (UW): A resource for students and instructors.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 \(Student Discipline\)](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Students who decide to file a grievance should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 70 \(Student Petitions and Grievances\)](#). For more information, students should contact the Associate Dean of St. Jerome’s University.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline or University of Waterloo Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, read [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities:

The [AccessAbility Services \(AS\) Office](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

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 the screen: *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 read or 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 – even if something is not 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.

Tentative Course Schedule

Dates	Topics	Assigned Reading
Sept. 9	Welcome	
11	Introduction to Psychology and Law	Ch. 1
16	Research Methods	Online Reading
18	Value Systems and the Law	Online Reading
23	Psychological Explanations of Crime	Online Reading
25	*** Test 1 ***	
30	Police Psychology	Ch. 2
Oct. 2	Criminal Profiling	Ch. 3
7	Investigations and Deception: movie	Ch. 4
9	12 Angry Men: Movie	
14	Jury selection	
16	*** Test 2 ***	
21	Memories and Eyewitness Testimony	Ch. 5
23	Child Victims and Witnesses	Ch. 6
28	Courtroom Process	
30	Jury Process	Ch. 7
Nov. 4	Determinations of Guilt and Sentencing	Ch. 9
6	*** Test 3 ***	
11	Sentencing Alternatives	
13	Mental Illness in Court	Ch. 8, 14
18	Risk Assessment	Ch. 10
20	Psychopathy and Violent Crime	Ch. 11
25	Treatment of Offenders and Recidivism	
27	*** Test 4 ***	
Dec. 2	*** optional research paper due ***	