



St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Psychology
Psych230 cross-listed with LS 272
Psychology of Law
Fall 2015
Monday, Wednesday 10:00 – 11:20, STJ 1036

Instructor and T.A. Information

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Course Description

Psychological principles drawn from a variety of subdisciplines (e.g., social, clinical, cognitive) will be surveyed in terms of their relevance and application to the legal system. Topics may include jury selection and decision-making, eyewitness testimony, insanity defense, competency assessment, risk assessment, and attitudes toward law and the legal process.

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.

Required Text

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

Readings Available on LEARN

- Values and Gender Article
- Psychology and the Legal System Article

Option 1: Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Test 1	Sept 30	25%
Test 2	Oct 26	25%
Test 3	Nov 16	25%
Test 4	Dec 2	25%
Optional Research Experience		3%
Total		100%

Option 2: Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Test 1	Sept 30	17%
Test 2	Oct 26	17%
Test 3	Nov 16	17%
Test 4	Dec 2	17%
Research Paper	Dec 7	32%
Optional Research Experience		3%
Total		100%

Assessment Option 1:

There are two grading options. First, you may base your course grade entirely on your performance on four regular term multiple choice tests (September 30, October 26, November 16, December 2). 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.

Students requesting accommodation for course requirements (assignments, midterm tests, final exams, etc.) due to illness should do the following:

- seek medical treatment as soon as possible and obtain a completed uWaterloo Verification of Illness Form: <https://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic/services/verification-illness>
- submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours.
- (preferably) inform the instructor by the due date for the course requirement that you will be unable to meet the deadline and that documentation will be forthcoming.

In the case of a missed assignment deadline or midterm test, the instructor will either:

1. waive the course component and re-weight remaining term work as he/she deems fit according to circumstances and the goals of the course, or
2. provide an extension.

In the case of bereavement, the instructor will provide similar accommodations to those for illness. Appropriate documentation to support the request will be required.

Students who are experiencing extenuating circumstances should also inform their academic advisors regarding their personal difficulties.

Assessment Option 2:

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 Wednesday, December 7. 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.

Assessment 3: Optional Research Experience Marks

Information and Guidelines

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Research participation is one example of this, article review is another. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to earn grades while gaining research experience.

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students may earn a "bonus" grade of up to 3% in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 3% may be earned and will be added to the final grade if/as needed to bring your final grade up to 100%.

The two options for earning research experience grades (participation in research and article review) are described below. Students may complete any combination of these options to earn research experience grades.

Option 1: Participation in Psychology Research

Research participation is coordinated by the Research Experiences Group (REG). Psychology students may volunteer as research participants in lab and/or online (web-based) studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Participation enables students to learn first-hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that

participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience. Please be assured that all Psychology studies have undergone prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

Educational focus of participation in research

To maximize the educational benefits of participating in research, students will receive feedback information following their participation in each study detailing the following elements:

- Purpose or objectives of the study
- Dependent and independent variables
- Expected results
- References for at least two related research articles
- Provisions to ensure confidentiality of data
- Contact information of the researcher should the student have further questions about the study
- Contact information for the Director of the Office of Research Ethics should the student wish to learn more about the general ethical issues surrounding research with human participants, or specific questions or concerns about the study in which s/he participated.

Participation in LAB studies has increment values of 0.5 participation credits (grade percentage points) for each 30-minutes of participation. Participation in ONLINE studies has increment values of .25 credits for each 15-minutes of participation. Researchers will record student's participation, and at the end of the term the REG Coordinator will provide the course instructor with a credit report of the total credits earned by each student.

How to participate?

Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the SONA online system. All students enrolled in this course have been set up with a SONA account. You must get started early in the term.

INSTRUCTIONS/DATES/DEADLINES: How to log in to Sona and sign up for studies

*** Please do not ask the Course Instructor or REG Coordinator for information unless you have first thoroughly read the information provided on this website.***

More information about the REG program is available at:

REG Participants' Homepage

Option 2: Article Review as an alternative to participation in research Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative, students may opt to gain research experience by writing short reviews (1½ to 2 pages) of research articles relevant to the course. The course instructor will specify a suitable source of articles for this course (i.e., scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, other printed media). You must contact your TA to get approval for the article you have chosen before writing the review. Each review article counts as one percentage point. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines. The article review must:

- Be submitted before the last day of lectures. Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.
- Be typed
- Fully identify the title, author(s), source and date of the article. A copy of the article must be attached.
- Identify the psychological concepts in the article and indicate the pages in the textbook that are

applicable. Critically evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article. If inappropriate or incorrect, identify the error and its implications for the validity of the article. You may find, for example, misleading headings, faulty research procedures, alternative explanations that are ignored, failures to distinguish factual findings from opinions, faulty statements of cause-effect relations, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible.

- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.
- Keep a copy of your review in the unlikely event we misplace the original.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Sept 14	Welcome	
2	Sept 16	Introduction to Psychology and Law	Chapter 1
3	Sept 21	Research Methods	
4	Sept 23	Value Systems and the Law	Reading
5	Sept 28	Criminal Profiling	Ch. 3
6	Sept 30	*** Test 1 ***	
7	Oct 5	Psychological Explanations of Crime	Reading
8	Oct 7	Police Psychology	Ch 2
9	Oct 12	*** Thanksgiving – no class ***	
10	Oct 14	Investigations and Deception	Ch 4
11	Oct 19	12 Angry Men: Movie	
12	Oct 21	Jury selection	
13	Oct 26	*** Test 2 ***	
14	Oct 28	Memories and Eyewitness Testimony	Ch 5
15	Nov 2	Child Victims and Witnesses	Ch 6
16	Nov 4	Courtroom Process	
17	Nov 9	Jury Process	Ch7
18	Nov 11	Determinations of Guilt and Sentencing	Ch 9
19	Nov 16	*** Test 3 ***	
20	Nov 18	Sentencing Alternatives	
21	Nov 21	*** Saturday class *** Mental Illness in Court	Ch 8, 14
22	Nov 23	Risk Assessment	Ch 10
23	Nov 25	Psychopathy and Violent Crime	Ch 11
24	Nov 30	Treatment of Offenders and Recidivism	
25	Dec 2	*** Test 4 ***	
26	Dec 7	*** optional research paper due ***	

Late Work

Research Assignment: The paper is due on Wednesday, December 7 at midnight. I will deduct 5% per day for late papers.

Bonus Marks: The optional research paper as an alternative to participation in research:

Must be submitted before the last day of lectures. Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be not used to screen assignments in this course.

Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices are allowed in class as long as they are not disruptive.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is not mandatory however is highly recommended in order to succeed in the class.

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: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges 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.

Official version of the course outline

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class) and the outline posted on LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version. Outlines on LEARN may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.