Psychology and Law Course Overview and Learning Outcomes

The primary goal of this course is to provide an introduction to the field of psychology and law. These two fields are intimately related: Psychology is the study of the human mind and behavior while law is the societal regulation of human behavior. This introduction will hopefully provide both some breadth as well as depth of topics in the field by providing different theoretical views, research methods, empirical findings and policy debates and applications in the field of psychology and law.

The interplay between Psychology and the legal system has increased dramatically in the past 30 years to address questions such as: Can innocent people be convinced to confess to a crime, can false memories be implanted in witnesses, are there valid cues to when a person is lying, are children more or less honest than adults as witnesses, and many other such questions! By the end of the semester you should have a better idea of the benefits and limitations of using psychology to shed light on problems of law and injustice.

Specifically, this class will:

1) Develop critical reasoning and research skills through the reading and discussion of research articles in the field of forensic psychology as well as submitting a research proposal in this field.
2) Further your written and oral communication skills through summarizing research, writing short essays and a final paper and facilitating multiple discussions throughout the course.
3) Develop your knowledge of the field of forensic psychology in it’s applied and research questions and problems.

Just a few disclaimers: the syllabus is subject to change depending on the progress and interests of the class. Also, due to time limitations many topics within the field of psychology and law will not be addressed in detail, but if you would like to talk about any topic in more detail please let me know.
Course Mechanics and Rules

Class Time. Lecture and lab sections will serve as both lecture and discussion. This time is interactive and your participation is expected. Preparing for class is necessary for your participation and for the lab to proceed smoothly. There will be no laptops allowed in class. If you need an exception, please come speak to me. The course will be taught as a blend of lecturing and discussion, with a format more similar to a seminar than a lecture. There will be some lecturing on my part and on your part (see course requirements below), but the majority of the course is expected to be a class-wide intellectual discussion of the readings.

Professional Conduct: You are expected to be respectful and courteous with your instructor and TA’s both in and out of class. This entails: 1) Arriving to class on time, 2) Turning off your cell phone before class begins, 3) Not using class time to check social networking websites, comics, instant messaging services, or other off-task on-line behavior, and 4) Professional conduct when writing emails. Think of this last point as an opportunity to practice the kind of writing you will use when inquiring about job opportunities, communicating with your supervisor, and so forth.

Homework Etiquette: Professional conduct is necessary during the assessment portions of this class as well. Homework must be stapled together to be accepted. You are expected to work alone on homework unless otherwise noted. If you have questions or concerns, speak to your professor and/or TA’s.

Exam Etiquette: During exams, students will spread out throughout the room as much as possible. No talking or collaboration is allowed on exams. If you show up late to an exam, you will nonetheless be expected to stop at the appointed end time.

Grades

Class Facilitation (15%). You will be required to facilitate two classes. There will be approximately three class facilitators for every class. There are three components to your facilitations: 1) Written section, 2) Short quiz, and 3) In-class discussion facilitation. These three sections are described in more detail on Canvas. In general, as class facilitator you will be required to help encourage and stimulate discussion and debate on the readings and topics. In order to help you facilitate discussion you will be the ‘resident experts’ on the readings for which you have signed up for by providing a short written section on each reading as well as taking a short quiz on the readings. You will need bring a hard copy to class and turn it in to me at the end of class. Please make sure to read the facilitation instructions on Canvas.

It is very tempting and easy to plagiarize when writing about or summarizing articles so PLEASE be super careful and put the article away when writing about it. We take plagiarism very seriously.

Exams (40%). There will be one mid-term and one final exam. The exams will be a combination of short answer and essay questions.
Research Introduction and Question (20%). Each student will submit one short paper that will be a research question in the field of psychology and law and a short literature summary/review of this question. Your research question should be based on some topic from class. You should first formulate a question and then you will look at the psychological literature to see and summarize how this question has already been addressed, or not. This paper should be something you are thinking of throughout the semester. Students will: a) discuss the importance of your research question and why it is interesting, and b) cite at least 10 articles. The class project involves two parts. First, you must submit your research question and rationale for approval to the instructor (see below syllabus for dates). Then you must turn in a finalized paper to the instructor towards the end of the semester. You may find a topic early in the semester and begin your proposal at that point. Additional information regarding the expected format for this project will be provided on Canvas.

Class Participation and In-Class Activities (10%). There will be online readings quizzes for each class that will be posted on Canvas and due before class begins. Your performance on this grade will count towards your class participation grade. There will also be occasional in-class activities/assignments throughout the semester that will count towards participation and graded for completion and not accuracy. If there is an activity (other than the quiz), these activities will occur neither consistently at the beginning nor consistently at the end of the class and may be at multiple times in the lecture. Unlike for the quizzes, participation, not accuracy, is graded for these activities. These activities will take place in lecture and lab and may be paper based.

News Media Report (10%). This concepts talked about in this class are often talked about directly or indirectly in the media. You will be responsible for finding and discussing two different media formats this semester. The first media format should be from a major news source and published within this academic semester. You will briefly evaluate this news article and discuss 1) how it relates to this class, and 2) what psychological principles or theories are being discussed or implied or may be driving some of the news report even if it is not mentioned. You need to ensure that you have a unique news article and that no other student in the class is writing a report on the article you select. Thus, once you have selected your article you should post the title and citation to the Canvas site dedication to the media report. Claiming articles is a first come, first serve basis and it is your responsibility to ensure you do not duplicate another students article. If you do duplicate an article you will receive no grade for your report. This report should be one to three pages long and you should include the article when you turn in your report. There is a due date for this report but you may turn this media report in at any time. More details will be provided on Canvas for this assignment.

Entertainment Media Clip (5%). The content from this course is also prevalent in popular culture. You should find a short video (youtube, movie clip, etc.) or cartoon that depicts some aspect of this course. You will post the media file or link to Canvas and identify what topic/class this media clip would enhance. You need to ensure that you have a unique media clip and that no other student in the class has posted the same clip.
or from the same source (i.e., no two clips can be from the same movie). Thus, once you have selected your media clip you should post the link and citation to the Canvas site dedication to the media clip. Claiming media clips is a first come, first serve basis and it is your responsibility to ensure you do not duplicate another student’s media clip or you will not receive a grade for this assignment. There is a due date for this media clip but you may turn this in at any time.

**Extra Credit.** You may earn extra credit by participating in psychology studies. You may apply 3 credits towards this class for extra credit. Each credit is equivalent to one hour of participation in a study. These credits will be incorporated into your final grade by increasing your final percentage by one half percentage for each credit earned. **Thus, if you earn the maximum extra credit points this would result in a total of a 1.5% increase in your final grade.** These extra credit points will be credited at the end of the semester. To logon and sign up for studies go to http://umpsychology.sona-systems.com/

**Grading.** If you have a question about a grade, talk to the TA’s or me immediately. All grades will be posted on Canvas shortly after the assignments are graded. If you have a grading question talk to the person who graded your assignment (myself or the TA) immediately. If you disagree with the grade you receive, you will have two weeks from when the grade is posted to dispute it, after which time we assume you agree to the grading and no discussion of the grade will be had. Your course grade will be converted to a letter grade as dictated by the University. The grading rules are precise and generous and therefore there will be followed without exception and with no rounding. Your course grade will be calculated as

\[
\text{Grade} = 0.15 \text{ClassFacilitations} + 0.19 \text{Exam}_1 + 0.21 \text{Exam}_2 + 0.20 \text{ResearchIntroduction} + 0.10 \text{MediaReport} + 0.10 \text{ClassParticipation} + 0.05 \text{MediaClip} + EC
\]

Using the output from the above equation, you will be assigned a letter grade as follows:

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<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>96% – 100%</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>93% – 95.99%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90% – 92.99%</td>
<td>A−</td>
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<td>86% – 89.99%</td>
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Re-Grading: Occasionally, students are unhappy with a grade they have received. If you feel that you want your homework or final paper re-graded, you must take the following steps:
1. You must present a valid reason in writing for meriting a re-grade.
2. You must submit documentation, in writing, of why you should get points back. This documentation needs to be substantiated by the class textbook, class readings or class notes. This must be submitted within one week of the day the assignment is returned to the class.
3. If your documentation and argument are sufficient, the assignment will then be re-graded by a different grader.
4. By requesting a re-grade, you agree that the new grade will be the permanent grade. Please note that your re-grade may be the same, higher OR lower than your original grade.
5. Assignments will only be re-graded once.

Office hours: Our office hours are listed above. I encourage you to make appointments during those hours or for other times outside of those times.

Class Web Page. We will use the Canvas Academic Suite available at https://elms.umd.edu for this course. Log in there and follow the links to PSYC 309K. The syllabus and syllabus updates available there. In addition, we intend to post the overheads used in lecture so that you can download them after the course discussion.

Evaluations: Your feedback about this course is very important to me and therefore we do several forms of evaluations throughout the semester. One important campus-wide evaluation is the online evaluation at the end of the semester. CourseEvalUM will be open to students to complete their evaluation. Students can go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete their evaluations prior to the start of exam week.

Textbooks and Readings.
Readings. All readings are posted online on Canvas.

Attendance policies
The University provides for the rescheduling of significant assessments by students without penalty, when such assessments are missed by students with an excused absence. It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from the following causes: illness of the student, or illness of a dependent as defined by Board of Regents policy on family and medical leave; religious observance (where the nature of the observance prevents the student from being present during the class period); participation in university activities at the request of University authorities; and
compelling circumstance beyond the student's control. Students claiming excused absence must apply in writing and furnish documentary support for their assertion that absence resulted from one of these causes.

**Participation points:** If you miss a class for an excused and documented reason you will receive participation points for that day if you provide your documentation prior to missing the class or by the next class attended.

**Class facilitator points:** If you miss a class for an excused and documented reason when you were signed up to be a class facilitator, you will be provided another opportunity to facilitate a later class if you provide your documentation prior to missing the class or by the next class attended.

**Class presentation points:** If you miss a class for an excused and documented reason when you were signed up to be a class presenter, you will be provided another opportunity to present your topic at a later class if you provide your documentation prior to missing the class or by the next class attended.

**Final paper points:** If you fail to turn in your final paper on time due to an excused and documented reason you will be provided 24-72 hours to turn in your paper. Your time extension will be considered on a case to case basis depending on the nature of the excuse assuming that you also provide your documentation when turning in your final paper.

**Missing Exams:** If some extreme event or religious observance is going to require you to miss an exam, you must talk with me about missing the exam **one week before** the exam date. Claims of physical illness or distress **must** be accompanied by documentation from a physician or mental health practitioner. Claims of death in the family must be accompanied by a funeral announcement (or analogous documentation).

The make-up assessment will be at a time and place mutually agreeable to the instructor and student, will cover only the material for which the student was originally responsible, will be at a comparable level of difficulty with the original assessment, and will be given within a time limit that retains the currency of the material.

**Special Accommodations:** Appropriate special arrangements will be made for students with documented disabilities. Students with documented disabilities should report them to the instructor immediately so that proper arrangements can be made.

**University Closure:** If the University is closed due to inclement weather, emergency, etc. during a scheduled class period, that class period will be shifted to the next time we will meet. Therefore, any exams or papers that are due will be due the following class. This does not mean the deadlines for following projects or exams will be changed, however, so plan your time accordingly. Make sure to check the University’s website for information on closures.

**Academic Integrity**
Academic Integrity: The University is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered Code of Academic Integrity and an Honor Pledge. The Code prohibits students from cheating on exams and assignments. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing, copying another student’s answers, bringing cheat notes in for the exam, etc. You will be asked to write the following signed statement on each examination or assignment:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to abide by the University's Code of Academic Integrity which is printed in the Undergraduate Catalog (also see http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html). Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism) will not be tolerated. The definitions for these offenses are printed in the Code of Academic Integrity, and I urge you to familiarize yourselves with them. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and will be dealt with according to University policy.

The Code of Academic Integrity is reprinted in full in the Undergraduate catalog for further information, to report Academic Dishonesty, or to inquire about serving on the Honor Council call 301-314-8204.

http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/dishonesty.html

Note that ignorance of the student conduct policy is not an accepted excuse for committing academic dishonesty. Issues relating to academic dishonesty will be sent to the Office of Student Conduct.

Please read the Ethics of Scholarship in Psychology page in this syllabus.

Syllabus
**This is a GUIDELINE for the course and may not be followed strictly and is subject to change.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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Greene et al. (2007): Ch. 1 |                      |
Greene et al. (2007): Ch. 3 |                      |
| Tu 09/08  | Profiling                                     | Greene et al. (2007): 141-147  
*Explore < www.innocenceproject.org >; Discuss what you find. |                      |
| Th 09/24  | The sequential line-up                        | Wells, G. (1993). What do we know about eyewitness identification? AP, 48, 553-71. Translating data into practice?? A sequence of FIVE papers by Schacter et al.; Wells; Mecklenburg et al.; Ross & Malpass; Steblay  
<p>| Tu 09/29  | Eyewitness                                   | Meissner, C. A., &amp; Brigham, J. C. (2001). Thirty years of investigating the |                      |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
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UPDATE: http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/~glwells/New%20Hampshire%20v.%20Perry%20commentary%20-%20Wells.htm  
*Wells, G. et al. (2000). From the lab to police station.,* *American Psychologist*, 55, 581-98 |
| Tu 10/06 | Children on the stand part 1 | Greene et al. (2007): Pp.128-133.  
*Waterman, A. et al. (2002). How and why do children respond to nonsensical questions? In Westcott et al. (eds.), Children's testimony (pp. 147-159) |
*Pipe, M.-E. et al. (2002). Enhancing children's accounts: How useful are non-verbal techniques? In Westcott et al., (eds.), Children's testimony (pp. 161-174) |
<p>| Th 10/15 | EXAM 1 | <strong>Trial basics:</strong> Greene et al. (2007): Ch. 7 &quot;Between arrest and trial&quot; and Ch. 10 &quot;The trial process.&quot; |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Th 11/26</td>
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| **Tu 12/01** | How to set punishment & the ultimate punishment | Greene et al. (2007): 353-370  
| **Th 12/03** | Competence & the insanity plea | Greene et al. (2007): 370-380.  
US Supreme Court's Godinez v. Moran, which sets the standard for competency to plead guilty and waive counsel at the same level as trial competency  
| **Th 12/10** | Review |  |
| **F 12/18** | Final Exam | 1:30-3:30pm |

| Research Paper Due |  |  |