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Spring 2-1-2022

### PSYX 382.01: Forensic Psychology

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# Psychology 382

## Forensic Psychology

### Spring 2022

#### Course Location and Time

Location: Chem 123

Tues/Thurs 9:30am – 10:50am

#### Zoom access code for class sessions:

<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/91374190909?pwd=TWJsMjAzbHN4aFBKOExKcXl3OTJsZz09>

Meeting ID: 913 7419 0909

Passcode: 291038

*Please note: you are encouraged to come to class in person, as this facilitates your learning and creates a better atmosphere for class discussion. However, if you are not feeling well or have been told to quarantine, you may use the above link to attend class remotely.*

#### Instructor Information

Instructor: Laura Kirsch, Ph.D.

Office: Skaggs 364

Email: [laura.kirsch@umontana.edu](mailto:laura.kirsch@umontana.edu)

Phone: 406-243-6817

**Office hours** will take place remotely via Zoom on **Mondays from 1:30 to 3pm**, or by appointment

#### Zoom code for office hours:

<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/96468479530?pwd=dFNjT01XVzIUWJ2eGhuVTdJZnVZdz09>

Meeting ID: 964 6847 9530

Passcode: 362029

#### Course Description

This course examines the many areas of forensic psychology, which is the application of psychological concepts and theories to the legal system. This interface will be explored with an emphasis on empirical research findings from cognitive, social, experimental, and clinical psychology. Topics covered will include the variety of roles that psychologists play in the criminal justice system, the identification and evaluation of criminal suspects, the accuracy of eyewitness memory, the processes of jury selection and decision-making, competency to stand trial and the insanity defense, criminal sentencing, and offender rehabilitation, among others.

#### Learning Outcomes

After taking this course, you should:

- Understand the diverse ways that psychologists can interact with the legal system, including conducting research that informs criminal justice practice and policy; providing clinical services to litigants, defendants and inmates; and assisting the courts in making decisions.

- Have an appreciation for how psychological science can be applied to legal issues and the criminal justice system.
- Be able to critically evaluate the assumptions of the legal system in light of findings from psychological research.
- Understand and apply psychological information to particular criminal and civil cases.

## Required Readings

*Textbook:* Greene, E., & Heilbrun, K. (2019). *Wrightsmen's Psychology and the Legal System* (9<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Additional readings will also be assigned throughout the semester. These are available in electronic format on the course website.

## Student Evaluation

### Exams

There will be three exams in this course: two in-class exams and a final (which is cumulative). The exams will be based on both lecture material and the required readings, and will consist primarily of multiple-choice questions. Each exam is worth 100 points and the final is worth 125 points. All exams will be administered via Moodle during the class meeting time. You are allowed to use your notes and textbook, but exams will be timed so you will need to study in advance. Details will be discussed in class prior to the exam as well as in a post on Moodle. Questions about exam grades should be raised within one week of receiving the exam grade.

**The Midterm will be given on: Thursday March 3rd**

**The Final Exam is scheduled for: Wednesday, May 11 at 8am**

*You are expected to take the exams on the scheduled dates.* If you have an UNAVOIDABLE conflict with one of the exams or a University-excused absence, please speak with me prior to the exam to schedule a make-up exam. Please be advised that make-up exams will be essay exams. Missing an exam for other reasons will result in a grade of 0 on the missed exam.

### Writing Assignments

You will be expected to complete one writing assignment demonstrating your critical thinking on a main course topic. This assignment will be designed to allow you to apply your knowledge of course material to current events, real-life cases, or to comment on current criminal justice practices using information from class to support your position. *The assignment will be worth 75 points.*

**Writing Assignment is due on Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

### In-Class and Take-Home Activities

There will be six activities throughout the semester to encourage attendance and participation and to help students interact with the course material in a more hands-on manner. These will occur randomly throughout the semester, and will be worth 10 points each, for a total of 50 points towards your course

grade. I will drop your lowest class activity grade, which allows you one “freebie” in case you miss class that day. All activities will be submitted via Moodle. Make-ups for in-class activities will only be allowed if you have a University-excused absence. This means that you must attend every class. If you miss a class, please review the recorded lecture as soon as possible so that you do not miss the due date for the activity (48 hours after class ends). You are expected to keep up with the assignments without reminders.

### Grading

Points toward your final course grade will be counted as follows:

Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	125 points
Writing Assignment	75 points
In-Class/Take-Home Activities	50 points

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**Total:** 350 points

Course grades will be based on total points earned at the end of the semester out of a possible 350 points. Your letter grade will be determined in the following way: your two exam grades, your writing assignment grade, your top 5 class activities grades, and any extra credit you receive will be added together to determine your point total for the course. Your point total will be divided by 350 points to arrive at a percentage score, and the following scale will be applied:

Percentage = Letter Grade	Percentage = Letter Grade	Percentage = Letter Grade
93 - 100% = <b>A</b>	80 - 82% = <b>B-</b>	67 - 69% = <b>D+</b>
90 - 92% = <b>A-</b>	77 - 79% = <b>C+</b>	63 - 66% = <b>D</b>
87 - 89% = <b>B+</b>	73 - 76% = <b>C</b>	60 - 62% = <b>D-</b>
83 - 86% = <b>B</b>	70 - 72% = <b>C-</b>	Below 60% = <b>F</b>

Please note: I **will not** bump up grades that are close to the cutoff. There are no exceptions to this rule.

## Course Guidelines and Policies

### Course Website

All materials for the course (besides the textbook) will be available on the Internet through Moodle. Incomplete versions of the PowerPoint slides for the lectures will be posted prior to class, so that you can print them and use them in class. Any readings for the course besides the required text will also be posted on the site well in advance of their due date. Class announcements and assignments will also be posted when necessary, so please check the website on a regular basis. In addition to checking Moodle, you are also responsible for checking your UM email regularly, as you may receive course-related emails from time to time. This is especially important given that COVID-related precautions may necessitate that class meetings will switch to online with short notice.

### Missed Classes

Although your attendance is not mandatory and attendance will not be taken, in order to do well in this course you should attend every lecture, since exams and assignments are based heavily on lecture

material. Moreover, if you miss class you may miss an in-class activity, which may lower your course grade. In the event that you have to miss a class, come late, or leave early, you are responsible for obtaining the notes from another class member. You will also be held responsible for any changes or additions to the syllabus that were announced in class. Copies of handouts and announcements will be posted on Moodle, and films will be available via a link on Moodle.

### **Email Policy**

You are welcome to email me with general questions about the course, and I will typically respond within a business day. However, if you have a lot of questions, I prefer you come to office hours. Also, I will not answer emails sent to me after 8pm the night before an exam. Please do your best to study in advance so that you have enough time to expect a response.

### **The Learning Environment**

I would like this class to have a relaxed atmosphere where students can feel free to ask questions and comment on the material being presented and discussed. I realize this is difficult on the Zoom platform, but I will try to respond to questions posted in the chat forum during class time. If you are in class, please do not hesitate to raise your hand for clarification on a topic, to ask about related material, or to raise an interesting point. If you are online, please feel free to post a question or comment on chat and I will try to respond. However, remember that not everyone has similar viewpoints or experiences, so please try to be respectful of your classmates and their opinions. Also, please note that some of the subject matter in this course is sensitive, and at times, the material may be upsetting to some students. Moreover, there may be students who have had personal experiences with the criminal justice system or as victims of crime. As such, please be considerate of others, and voice your opinions or comments with others' feelings in mind.

Another way to create a respectful and productive learning environment is to ensure that it is free from distractions. Therefore, please turn off your cell phones and other personal electronic devices prior to coming to class or attending virtually. It is very difficult to maintain your attention when there are distractions around, so please ensure that your environment is free from temptations during the 3 hours we meet each week. Although coming to class late and/or leaving early is discouraged, on those occasions that it is unavoidable, please do it in such a way as to minimize disruption.

### **Disability Modifications**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the [Office for Disability Equality](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with the Office for Disability Equality (ODE), please contact ODE in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406-243-2243. I will work with you and ODE to provide an appropriate modification.

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to adhere to the University of Montana's [Student Conduct Code](#) with regard to academic integrity. Academic misconduct in this course will result in an academic penalty commensurate with the offense as well as possible disciplinary action by the university.

## **Feedback**

I hope to make this an enjoyable learning experience for everyone in the class. If you have any suggestions as to how to improve the class, please feel free to give me constructive feedback.

## **COVID-19 Policies**

This course abides by all University of Montana COVID-19 Guidelines, including the following:

- Mask use is required within the classroom
- Students are discouraged from congregating outside the classroom before and after class
- Specific seating arrangements will be used to ensure social distancing and support contact tracing efforts
- Class attendance will be recorded to support contact tracing efforts
- Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom (which requires mask removal)
- This class is being recorded, so this serves as your notification of such
- Stay home if you feel sick and/or if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, and please contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330
- Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from the University of Montana
  - UM Coronavirus Website: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus>

## Course Calendar

Please note that the dates and topics listed below are tentative, and are subject to change with proper notification. Readings and assignments are due by the date listed below.

Date	Topic Covered	Readings and Assignments Due
1/18	Introduction and Overview	
1/20	Psychology and the Law	Ch. 1
1/25	The Legal System	Ch. 2
1/27	The Legal System	
2/1	Psychology of Crime	Ch. 3
2/3	Psychology of Crime	Satel & Lilienfeld (2015)
2/8	Psychology of Crime: Psychopathy	Hare (1993), chs. 3 & 4; Seabrook (2008)
2/10	Eyewitnesses	Ch. 5
2/15	Eyewitnesses	
2/17	Evaluating Suspects	Ch. 7
<b>2/22</b>	Evaluating Suspects	<b>**Writing Assignment 1 Due**</b>
2/24	Evaluating Suspects	B. Dassey psych eval
3/1	<i>Catch-up/Midterm Review</i>	
<b>3/3</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
3/8	Criminal Forensic Assessment	Ch. 10
3/10	Criminal Forensic Assessment	
3/15	Criminal Forensic Assessment	Reading TBA
3/17	Criminal Forensic Assessment	
3/22	<b>NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK</b>	
3/24	<b>NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK</b>	
3/29	Civil Forensic Assessment	Ch. 11
3/31	Civil Forensic Assessment	
4/5	Jurors and Juries	Ch. 13
4/7	Jurors and Juries	
4/12	Jurors and Juries	Wines (2017)
4/14	Psychology of Police	Aviv (2015)
4/19	Punishment and Sentencing	Ch. 14
4/21	Punishment and Sentencing	
4/26	Punishment and Sentencing	
4/28	Corrections	
5/3	Corrections	Ch. 15
5/5	Wrap-Up and Review	
<b>Wednesday, May 11 8am-10am</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	

