



Psychology and the Criminal Justice System

CRIM 490-011, Spring 2019
Tue-Thurs, 10:30-11:45pm; Innovation Hall 204

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Office hours: By appointment; always happy to meet!

Resources

1. Greene, E., & Heilbrun, K. (2014). *Wrightsmen's psychology and the legal system* (8th Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
2. Weekly Readings—posted on Blackboard

Internet resources: A wide variety of legal resources (e.g., statutes and laws, judicial opinions and case law, law journals and law reviews) are available at Findlaw: www.findlaw.com, LexisNexis Academic, and the Legal Collection (within EBSCO Host). The latter two databases are accessible via the GMU Library link.

Scholarly psychology journal articles can be found through several University Library databases, such as (EBSCO) Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, PsycINFO, and MEDLINE. You may also use Google Scholar [but the key is to find empirical journal articles, rather than encyclopedic-type entries and internet summaries].

Relevant information on psychology and law (from career information to upcoming events) also is available at website of the American Psychology-Law Society (Division 41 of the American Psychological Association): <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-41/index>

Description & Objectives

This course is designed to provide undergraduate students with an overview of how psychology is applied to the criminal justice system, how case law shapes this application, and how legal decisions affect the direction of psychological research. Psychology and law is a vibrant area of research within the larger discipline of psychology. This is an interdisciplinary course for students who are interested in criminology, criminal justice, psychology, and/or legal issues.

This class is a seminar class, not a lecture class. *Attendance* and *participation* in class discussion is required and expected. You must come to class *prepared* (have read the assigned readings and have them accessible to you) and ready to discuss. Weekly classes will generally include three components: (a) presentation and discussion of key points from the weekly readings, (b) weekly quizzes, and (c) experiences designed to illuminate the course materials and help you understand and apply what you are learning. Student oral presentations will be interspersed.

Upon completion of the course, conscientious students will have acquired an understanding of how the fields of psychology and law intersect in individual, social, and public policy domains. Students will also have acquired specific knowledge about these interactions with respect to police, eyewitness accuracy, jury decision-making, expert witness issues, competence to stand trial, criminal responsibility, child victim/witnesses, sentencing, and corrections. In addition, critical thinking skills will be enhanced.

Requirements

1. Weekly Quizzes (20%) and Class Participation (10% of final grade)

Students *must read* the assigned material (common readings) prior to each class and participate in class discussion. Students *must* also be able to access the assigned material in class each week—either in hard-copy (printed, such as the textbook) form or online via Blackboard (laptop/tablet). Class meetings will focus on reading, thinking critically about, and applying the readings, as well as some new material.

To encourage critical thinking and engagement with the material (not just passive absorption of it), there will be weekly quizzes based on the readings. There will be a total of 12 quizzes (beginning Week 3, Feb. 5). Your 10 best quiz grades will factor into your final grade. This means you can miss two quizzes without adversely affecting your grade (though I do not recommend this strategy). Quizzes will occur at the beginning of Tuesday classes (Feb. 5 onward). If you are late to class, you may not be able to take the quiz and will receive a 0 for that day's quiz grade.

The quizzes will be short, and if you have done the readings, should be relatively straightforward. When reading, you should analyze, not just skim; make sure you understand the authors' point, think about questions for discussion, relate the reading to real-world events, critically analyze the method or results of a study, point out contradictions, etc. Reading critically and analytically will also help you with class participation and discussion, which is expected and makes up 10% of your final grade. This 10% will be graded according to attendance (as well as arriving late and/or leaving early), participating in class discussions, asking questions, and generally demonstrating that you have read—and absorbed—the readings.

2. Oral Presentation and Mini Paper (30% of final grade)

Each student will be assigned an empirical research article to present to the class, starting on Feb. 7. This is good way for students to build their presentation skills, but also to learn about the types of questions psychology and law scholars ask and the methods they use. Articles will be sent out two weeks in advance. Students will also have to write a 3-5 double-spaced paper on the article. A rubric is posted on Blackboard.

Oral Presentations:

Note that the presenting student will be the only person to have read the article. Thus, be sure to provide enough information that others can follow along.

- Generally, you will summarize what you read. More specifically, you will describe:
 - Who are the researchers [names and other relevant information]
 - Why did the researchers conduct the research? What are their main research questions? What are their hypotheses?

- How did the researchers conduct the research? What are the methods? Be sure to describe the subjects, the procedures, the measures, etc.
 - What did the researchers find? What are the results? If helpful, show graphs and figures from the paper
 - Conclusion -- What did the researchers conclude from their findings? What are the main take-home messages?
 - Relevancy – How does this study relate to the class-assigned readings for that week? Are there aspects that are or are not consistent with the general reading?
 - Class question(s) – Develop two or more class discussion questions based on your presented article and the other class readings.
- Come prepared with a powerpoint/prezi presentation – For help on creating a presentation, visit: www.actden.com/pp/. Use the headings (who, why, how, what, etc.) for your slides. DO NOT cut and paste quotes/passages from the article, but you are encouraged to paste in figures and graphs. Use your own words and be succinct. [Review carefully; typos and such will result in a lower grade.]
 - Your presentation should be approximately 15 minutes.
 - Be prepared to answer questions and lead a discussion. Be sure to bring the printed article with you in case you need to refer to it.

Mini-Paper:

Prepare a 3-5 page, double-spaced paper (11 or 12-point font) about your assigned article. The paper should be the written version of your presentation. Use the same headings. Instead of using bullet points (as you would on a powerpoint), however, use complete sentences.

- For the Class Questions section, you should ask and answer your own questions.
- **This paper is due the day of your oral presentation.** References should be included and are not part of the 3-5 pages.
- References should be in APA Style. Here is an excellent resource: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/>. You should click on all 7 Reference links on the left hand side of the page.

3. Midterm 1 and 2 Exams (20% EACH of final grade)

There will be two in-class exams in the form of multiple choice, short-answer, and/or essay questions. The first exam will cover Weeks 1-7 and will occur on March 7. The second exam will cover Weeks 9-15 and occur May 14 at 10:30am (finals week). **No make-up exams will be given unless (a) you have a valid reason for not being able to take the exam on its originally scheduled date and time, AND (b) you make arrangements with me to take the make-up exam BEFORE its originally scheduled date and time. The grade for a missed exam will be a 0.**

Both exams will be open-book, open-notes. Of course, this does not mean you do not need to study and master the material beforehand. You will only have 1 hour and 15 minutes max. The goal will be to integrate what was presented throughout the first or second half of the semester (readings, in-class presentations, and discussions). Top-quality answers will offer evidence in the form of examples, arguments, and/or excerpts.

Short-answer and essays will be evaluated on the knowledge and mastery of the subject matter, the degree to which you integrate ideas across sources, the development and support of your argument using evidence from the texts, logical organization of the essay, and writing mechanics (e.g., spelling, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure).

4. Grading

The course components (weekly quizzes, attendance and participation, oral presentation/mini paper, and exams) will be weighted as described above to determine your final grade, which will be assigned according to the following scale:

A+	97-100%	(4.0)		C+	77-79%	(2.33)	
A	93-96%	(4.0)	<i>outstanding</i>	C	73-76%	(2.0)	<i>average</i>
A-	90-92%	(3.67)		C-	70-72%	(1.67)	
B+	87-89%	(3.33)		D	60-69%	(1.0)	<i>marginal</i>
B	83-86%	(3.0)	<i>good</i>	F	0-59%	(0)	<i>failing</i>
B-	80-82%	(2.67)					

Policies

Students **must use their MasonLive email account to receive University information, including messages related to this class.

Student Comportment

To be courteous to others, please be on time to class and treat others with respect during class discussions (e.g., no cell phones; side conversations; early departures). Please be on time. Late arrivals are distracting, and if frequent, will not be accepted (i.e., you will not be allowed to attend class that day). Regarding electronic devices (such as laptops, cell phones, etc.), please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade. You may use electronic devices to access the readings.

Incompletes

Incompletes will not be given in this course except under rare circumstances that require documentation and adherence to University policies.

Academic Code

The GMU academic honor code can be found here: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>. The code outlines proscribed conduct with regards to cheating and plagiarism. Please note that cheating or plagiarism in this class will result in appropriate penalties that may include failing the course. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes,

or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using APA format. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, *please see me*.

If you have a *documented learning disability* or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Fellow Students

1. Name: _____; Tel/email*: _____

2. Name: _____; Tel/email: _____

3. Name: _____; Tel/email: _____

4. Name: _____; Tel/email: _____

5. Name: _____; Tel/email: _____

**email must be Mason email account*

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to [Mason's Title IX Coordinator](#) per University [Policy 1412](#). You may seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator, Jennifer Hammat, by calling 703-993-8730 or email cde@gmu.edu. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or [Counseling and Psychology Services](#) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. The 24-hour Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Crisis Line for Mason is 703-380-1434.

**All articles [not textbook chapters] are posted on Blackboard by Week #

PART I: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INVESTIGATION

Week #, Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Notes
1: Jan. 22-24	Overview of Psychology and Law	No readings	
2. Jan. 29-31	Overview cont.	1. Chapter 1 in textbook 2. <i>Roper v. Simmons</i> articles 2a. APA Brief 2b. States (AL, DE, OK, TX, UT, VA) Brief--Petitioner [Roper]. 2c. USSC Majority Opinion. [READ LAST]	
3. Feb. 5-7	Psychology of Police	1. Chapter 2 in textbook 2. Chapter 4 in textbook	--Quizzes Begin 2/5 --Presentations Begin 2/7
4. Feb. 12-14	Eyewitnesses	1. PP. 93-113 in textbook 2. The National Council of Research (2015). <i>Identifying the culprit: Assessing eyewitness identification</i> . Introduction.	
5. Feb. 19-21	Victims and Repressed/False Memories	1. PP. 113-118 in textbook 2. Chapter 6 in textbook	
6. Feb. 26-28	Lie Detection; Police Interrogation	1. PP. 154-173 in textbook 2. Kassin, S. M. (2014). False confessions: Causes, consequences, and implications for reform. <i>Policy insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 1</i> , 112-121.	--Guest lecturer: 2/28
7. Mar. 5-7	Psychology of Crime and Criminal Profiling	1. Chapter 3 in textbook 2. PP. 146-154 in textbook	Mid-term exam 1: March 7
8. Mar. 12-14	SPRING	BREAK	NO CLASSES

PART II: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ADJUDICATION AND THE COURTS

Week #, Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Notes
9: Mar. 19-21	After Arrest and Guilty Pleas	1. Chapter 8 in textbook 2. Redlich, A. D., Bibas, S., Edkins, V., & Madon, S. (2017). The validity of defendant plea decision-making. <i>American Psychologist</i> .	
10. Mar. 26-28	Preparing for Trials and Jury Selection	1. Chapter 12 in textbook 2. Lieberman, J. D. (2011). The utility of scientific jury selection: Still murky after 30 years. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 20, 48-52.	
11. April 2-4	Juror and Juries	1. Chapter 13 in textbook 2. Bornstein, B. H. & Greene, E. (2011). Jury decision making: Implications for and from psychology. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 20, 63-67.	
12. April 9-11	Evidence and Experts	1. PP. 240-245 in textbook 2. Chapter 1 of National Academy of Sciences report: Strengthening forensic science in the United States: A path forward.	
13. April 16-18	Sentencing; Death Penalty	1. Chapter 14 in textbook [do NOT read pp. 331-335; sentencing sex offenders] 2. Chapter 15 in textbook [do NOT read pp. 347-356; juvenile corrections]	
14. April 23-25	Forensic Issues	1. Chapter 10 in textbook 2. Friedman, R. (2006). Violence and mental illness—How strong is the link? <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> , 355, 2064-2066.	

15. Apr 30-May 2	Sex Offenders; Violence Risk Assessment	<p>1. pp. 261-264 in textbook</p> <p>2. pp. 331-335 in textbook</p> <p>3. Skeem, J. L., Polaschek, D. L. L., & Manchak, S. (2010). Appropriate treatment works, but how? Rehabilitating general, psychopathic, and high-risk offenders. In J. Skeem, K. S. Douglas, & S. O. Lilienfeld (Eds.), <i>Psychological science in the courtroom: Consensus and controversy</i> (358-384). New York: The Guildford Press.</p>	
May 14	Mid-term exam 2	No readings	10:30am Location: TBA