

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY
PSY 2015
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2004

Instructor: Erica L. O'Toole, M.A.
Office Hours: T/F 11-12:15
and by appointment

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Office Location: Dunton Hall
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Class Meetings: T/F 2:00-3:15
Meeting Room: Terrace 22

Required Text:

Bartol, C. R., & Bartol, A. M. (2004). *Introduction to forensic psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**PLEASE HAVE INTERNET ACCESS AND CHECK GMC E-MAIL
REGULARLY**

Course Description and Overview

Psychology is “the science of behavior and mental processes” (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2004, p. 3). Whereas forensic psychology, broadly defined, is “the research and application of psychological knowledge or concepts to the legal system” (Brigham, 1999, as cited in Bartol & Bartol, 2004, p. 8). The topics studied by forensic psychologists vary widely. They range from the effects of drugs on behavior, to criminal behavior, juvenile delinquency, psychopathology, and profiling serial killers, just to name a few.

The *goal* of this course is to introduce you to some representative areas of forensic psychology and to teach you how forensic psychologists contribute to the legal system. You will be introduced to the methods used by forensic psychologists to explain behavior by examining a number of studies devoted to topics related to forensic psychology. Paying attention to the methods will provide you with highly transferable, useful knowledge of the best methods humankind have developed to generate **reliable** and **valid** information about the social world in which we live.

There is much more to forensic psychology than can be presented in a single, introductory course. My hope is that this course will give you a sense of what forensic psychologists have discovered, how they have made these discoveries, and how it contributes to the legal system. Finally, I hope that this course will help you to distinguish **reliable, valid** information from the unreliable propaganda you will often encounter in your careers as information consumers.

Students will be introduced to and acquire knowledge about the following topics related to the study of forensic psychology:

- the historical development of forensic psychology
- research and statistical methods
- profiling
- legal psychology
- psychopathology
- psychometrics
- sex offenders
- program evaluation
- police psychology
- correctional psychology
- juvenile delinquency
- victimology
- criminal behavior

Course Format:

This course will be taught in a lecture/discussion format. As appropriate, various activities and supplemental readings will be used to enhance student's understanding of the material. Classroom lectures/discussions/activities will focus on the topics listed on the reading list. Furthermore, lectures will include material from the texts, but also additional information introduced by the instructor.

Course Requirements:

1. *Attendance and participation.* Class attendance and participation are mandatory and make up a total of 140 points of your final grade. All students will be expected to attend every class and actively participate in discussions and in-class activities. There are 28 days of scheduled classes, and each day you attend you will earn 5 points. If you must miss class due to an illness or family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible. If you miss a class, you will be responsible for making up the work missed.
2. *Reading.* Each student is expected to obtain a copy of the text book for this course and keep up with the reading assignments. It is important to look ahead at the assignments in order to delegate your time appropriately. For some assignments you may be required to look at information available only on the Internet or on reserve at the library. Additionally, handouts will be distributed in class.
3. *Assignments.* There are 6 assignments due throughout the semester. Each assignment is worth 10 points of your final grade, for a total of 60 points. Instructions for completing each assignment will be provided by the instructor.
4. *Exams.* There will be three exams in this course. Each exam will be worth 100 points of your final grade, for a total of 300 points. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, and/or short answer questions. Please note, there will be no make-up exams administered.

Grading procedure:

The grading procedure is based on a points system. Each activity has been designated a certain number of points. As you can see, each assignment has been given the same point value. This has been done because each assignment is equally as important as another. It is essential to complete all assignments in order to fully understand the material covered in this course. Additionally, incomplete or missed assignments will not be graded and cannot be made up. No late assignments, or assignments submitted by e-mail will be accepted without prior permission for the instructor. Finally, no extra credit will be awarded in this course. Your reward will be receiving a good grade for completing your work on time. If you do choose to look up items on your own, your reward will be the knowledge gained by that behavior.

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Grade	Range for point value
A+	480-500
A	459-479
A-	438-458
B+	417-437
B	396-416
B-	375-395
C+	354-374
C	333-353
C-	312-332
D+	291-311
D	270-290
D-	249-269
F	248 or lower

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is illegal and can result in a failing grade in this course and possible expulsion from school. Do not use any source, including the work of another student or work previously completed by you from another course, and claim it to be your own. Always place quotation marks around direct quotes and cite the source(s) of your information, including a page number where the quote can be found. Proper citation of references consists of the name of the author(s) followed by the year of the publication in parentheses at the end of the quote or statement. For example, if you cite the course text, your citation should look like this: (Bartol & Bartol, 2004). If you are using a direct quote a page number where the quote can be found must be provided with the citation as well. For example: (Bartol & Bartol, 2004, p. 23).

Suggested study techniques for this course:

1. Work on materials for this course by doing assignments by the time they are due, a little bit at a time. No athlete would prepare for a big game by sitting around doing nothing for weeks and then staying up late the night before intensively working out. The same principle applies to learning. **LEARN THE MATERIAL AS YOU GO AND DO NOT TRY TO CRAM IT ALL IN RIGHT BEFORE A TEST.**
2. Take responsibility for your own performance. Do not blame external factors (e.g., roommates, textbook) because of a lack of motivation or desire to complete assignments by the time they are due.
3. When reading, at the end of each paragraph stop and ask yourself what you learned--if the answer is "nothing" read it again. As you come across important things mark them with a highlighter or write something in the margin. Important items to learn are not just definitions. You should also study material that includes study findings and summaries of areas of research. Read for about 45 minutes, then stop and do something else for about 10-15 minutes (i.e., wash dishes, do laundry, stretch). At the end of each reading session, take the important things you have found and write them out as questions--without answers--in your notes. Put the page numbers on them as answers or place the answers on a separate sheet of paper. Test yourself with your study notes at intervals throughout your days.
4. Study in a place that is quiet and where you will not be disturbed (or will have minimal disruptions). Plan to work very hard when you read and study. Some students think that studying is nothing more than reading the book over and over with the stereo blasting or the TV on and people running in and out while the phone rings. Students who study in this manner spend hours at it, but they are not really doing anything useful. In order to learn, one must **WORK**, hard and intensely, focusing on the task at hand.
5. Study and/or read during the time of day which you are most alert (e.g., first thing in the morning). Do not put it off until you can hardly keep your eyes open.
6. Try to find a reliable, conscientious study partner or group. Review course material on your own. Then prepare study notes, questions, etc. to bring with you to a study session. Being prepared prior to getting together will make the session more productive. Again, be sure to use this time constructively. It is easy to get distracted and to talk about things other than course material when in a group setting. Also, be sure to use and keep your own notes. Plagiarism is a serious offense and has severe consequences.
7. Tell others (e.g., parents, friends, partners) about the things you are learning in the course. If no one will listen, just say the items **OUT LOUD** to your dog, plants, or desk lamp. The ability to repeat what you have learned enables you to

demonstrate that you understand the material while putting it to memory and reinforcing it every time it is described. This is a great way to be able to tell if you know and understand the material.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Day	Assigned Readings & Assignments
1	8/31	T	Review course syllabus & expectations for course <i>In-class activity:</i> How would you define forensic psychology?
1	9/3	F	<i>Class Discussion:</i> What exactly is forensic psychology and what do forensic psychologists do? <i>In-class activity:</i> Science v. Psychology <i>Class Handout:</i> The Prison Simulation & Research study worksheet Reading: Bartol & Bartol (pp. 3-12 & 20-25)
2	9/7	T	<i>Class Discussion:</i> Understanding Research <i>In-class activity:</i> Review research study worksheet – The Prison Simulation Reading: Class handout: The Prison Simulation (please be sure to have read this class handout prior to coming to class so you can be a productive member of the in-class activity). Assignment #1 due: How has your perception/understanding of forensic psychology changed after reading the introductory chapter and participating in the class discussion?
2	9/10	F	<i>Lecture:</i> Ethics in Social Science Research <i>In-class activity:</i> “ <i>The Psychology of Torture</i> ” Reading: Library reserve: Banyard & Grayson (pp. 17-23) – Milgram study Assignment # 2 due: Research study worksheet: “Behavioral study of obedience.” – Milgram study
3	9/14	T	<i>Class discussion:</i> Research designs (please have read and be prepared to discuss material from the assigned reading listed). Reading: Research Designs Class Handout, & Scientific Attitudes Class Handout.
3	9/17	F	<i>Lecture:</i> Statistics: Understanding Data in Social Science Research Reading: Introduction to Statistics Class Handouts
4	9/21	T	<i>Class discussion:</i> Investigative Psychology: Profiling Reading: B & B (pp. 69-83); “ <i>Does profiling really work?</i> ” - Class Handout
4	9/24	F	<i>Class discussion:</i> Continuation of Investigative Psychology <i>In-class activity:</i> Introduction to Brent Turvey Reading: B & B (pp. 84-96); “ <i>Criminal profiling: The reality behind the myth</i> ” – Class Handout

- 5 9/28 T *Lecture:* Psychology and the Courts
Reading: B & B (pp. 247-274); & Library reserve: B & G (pp. 305-309)
– Loftus & Palmer study
Assignment #3 due: Research study worksheet : “Eyewitness
Testimony” – Loftus & Palmer study
- 5 10/1 F *Lecture:* Consulting with Criminal and Civil Courts
Reading: B & B (pp. 276-332)
- 6 10/5 T *In-class activity:* Review for Exam 1
- 6 10/8 F *In-class activity:* Exam 1
- 7 10/12 T **NO CLASS FALL BREAK**
- 7 10/15 F *Lecture:* Police Psychology
In-class activity: Introduction to the MMPI and Personality Measures
Reading: B & B (pp. 33-50)
- 8 10/19 T *Class discussion:* Continuation of Police Psychology
Reading: B & B (pp. 51-66)

Midterm: Midterm grades will be determined by total number of points earned up to this point in the course.

- 8 10/22 F *Lecture:* Correctional Psychology
Reading: B & B (pp. 337-359)
- 9 10/26 T *Class discussion:* Continuation of Correctional Psychology
Reading: B & B (pp. 359-394)
- 9 10/29 F *In-class activity:* Prison Video About Death Penalty “*Nine days in May*”
- 10 11/2 T **Marble Valley Correctional Facility Field Trip?**
- 10 11/5 F *Class discussion:* About Video and/or Field Trip
Assignment #4 due: Write up about video/ field trip
- 11 11/9 T *In-class activity:* Review for Exam 2
- 11 11/12 F *In-class activity:* Exam 2
- 12 11/16 T *Lecture:* Victimology & Victim Services
Reading: B & B (pp. 189-212)
- 12 11/19 F *Class discussion:* Continuation of Victimology
In-class activity: Child Maltreatment Power Point Presentation
Reading: B & B (pp. 213-244)
Assignment #5 due: Investigate and research an organization that provides services to victims or families of victims and provide a summary of the services they offer.
- 13 11/22 T **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK**
- 13 11/26 F **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK**
- 14 11/30 T *Lecture:* Introduction to Criminal Psychology: Juveniles & Psychopaths
Reading: B & B (pp. 101-128)
- 14 12/3 F *Class discussion:* Continuation of Criminal Psychology
Reading: B & B (pp. 129-155)

15	12/7	T	<i>In-class activity:</i> Risk Assessment of Sex Offenders Power Point Presentation Reading: B & B (pp. 158-183) Assignment #6 due: Journal Article
15	12/10	F	LAST DAY OF CLASS: Review for Final Exam
16	12/13	M	<i>In class activity:</i> Final Exam @ 1:00 pm

Caveat:

Please take care of yourself during this course. Some of the material introduced in this class may challenge you to think in new ways that could feel uncomfortable at times. Some of the things covered in this class may relate to personal experiences you have had. If you feel the need to step out of the classroom at any time for personal reasons, please do so, but I ask that you check in with me after class.

Communication is very important in any relationship including student/teacher; please keep me informed of your progress during the course. It is my strong desire to make sure you leave this course with a solid understanding of forensic psychology and what forensic psychologists do. Please give me feedback as we go along and I will do the same for you.

Should you have a disabling condition which affects your ability to benefit fully from the delivery methods (i.e., lectures, discussions, demonstrations, readings, films, writing assignments, notes) of this course, you may be eligible for course modifications. Please consult someone from the Jose M. Calhoun Learning Center, located on the third floor of the Griswold Library or Nancy Ruby at rubyn@greenmtn.edu or 802-287-8287, for details.

Lastly, the syllabus and the course schedule may be adjusted at any time at the discretion of the instructor.