

**PSYCHOLOGY 4320
FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY
SPRING 2008
Room C102**

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OVERVIEW OF COURSE

Psych 4320, Forensic Psychology, is an undergraduate course that provides a survey into the interface between psychology and the law, with the criminal justice system. This course will be used by the Criminal Justice major to enhance the information available for those students who choose the Forensics concentration. This course will supplement CJ 4250 (Psychology of Criminal Behavior) by discussing mental illness and its relation to crime. It will cover criminal justice topics more completely from the psychological perspective (e.g., the not guilty by reason of insanity defense, competency to stand trial, sex offender recidivism risk, risk assessments of dangerousness, school shootings, police psychology, mental health defenses, civil commitment to psychiatric hospitals, and other topical areas where mental illness and the law intersect).

Students in this course will gain a basic understanding of the major mental disorders, particularly how they may cause, aggravate or mitigate criminal conduct. They will learn the role of forensic psychology in areas such as threat assessment (assessment of dangerousness), predictions of predatory sexual behavior, psychological crime profiling, psychological screening of police officer candidates and psychological fitness-for-duty evaluations of employed peace officers, select "abuse excuses" (i.e., battered wife syndrome), hostage negotiations, testifying as a court expert, and various civil competencies (e.g., informed consent to draw a will). This knowledge will help the student gain greater understanding of psychology related to the justice system and assist them in considering career paths.

TEXT

"Introduction to Forensic Psychology", Curt Bartol and Anne M. Bartol, Sage Publications (2004)

COURSE FORMAT

The class meets Wednesdays from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. from February 13, 2008, to May 21, 2008. Class will not be held on Cesar Chavez Day, March 30, 2008, or during Spring Break on April 9, 2008, . The course will primarily use a lecture format by the instructor, with supplemental use of audio and video tapes, discussions of assigned text, examination of selected cases, utilization and discussion of important case law, a guest lecturer, class discussion of high profile trials, visit to a Stanislaus (or other local county) County Courthouse jury/court trial for a minimum of 5 hours, a required 10-page paper related to a movie (video) selected by the student, with the concurrence of the instructor, related to any forensic psychology topic (e.g., *The Perfect Husband: The Laci Peterson Story*, *Taxi Driver*, *One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest*, *Primal Fear*, *Judgment Day [Ellie Nesler]*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Presumed Innocent*, *Reversal of Fortune*, *Nuts*, *Burden of Proof*, *My Cousin Vinnie*, *Hurricane*, *The Negotiator*, *Monster*, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, *12 Angry Men*), a midterm and a final examination.

GRADING POLICY

The final grade will be based on the sum of all points available in this course. There will be a total of 100 points

attainable. Final letter grades will be assigned as follows:

- A= 90-100% of course points (90-100)
- B= 80- 89% of course points (80-89)
- C= 70- 79% of course points (70-79)
- D= 60- 69% of course points (60-69)
- F= below 60 points

Points will be distributed as follows:

- Midterm Examination = 35 points
- Term paper = 20 points
- Final Examination = 35 points
- Trial Attendance + Paper = 10 points

Extra credit points:

- 3-page (minimum) paper explaining the issues of the Amadou Diallo shooting (1999) – 5 points
- TBD – 5 points

Class attendance and participation are used in determining grades for people who are on the borderline between two course grades. **Attendance at 10 or more classes is necessary for an A.**

TRIAL OBSERVATIONS

You will be required to observe an actual jury or court trial, preferably a criminal (rather than a civil) trial. The purpose of this exercise is to provide the student with some exposure on how trials are actually conducted. Contact legal professionals in your area or the Court Clerk's Office for a schedule of trials that are or will be in session during the course. The Clerk should be able to provide you with a schedule of upcoming trials and how long they are scheduled to last. You will be required to spend at least 5 hours observing actual trials. TAKE NOTES! as you are required to submit a written one to two page, double-spaced summary. Make sure to include the dates and times that you spend at the trial, the basic details or facts of the trial (e.g., the location of the alleged crime, the purpose of the trial, start and end time of your attendance, the names of the key figures (e.g. attorneys), etc.), and most importantly observations/thoughts about the principles and procedures that were used in the trial possibly including jury selection (if applicable), opening statements, presentation of evidence, closing statements, jury instructions and deliberations (if applicable), effectiveness of witness testimony, and the outcome of the trial. You may also want to contact the involved attorneys and have them discuss the case with you if they are willing to do so. Of course, do not contact them in court, but through their office. The time you spend interviewing the attorneys will count towards your 5 hours of observations. Use the basic notions in your textbook (and learning points from class) as a guide for your observations and writing. That is, what principles, procedures, etc. that were discussed in the text or presented in class were exhibited in the trial. It would be best to observe a complete trial, but unfortunately most trials last more than 5 hours. In this case, observe what you can for 5 or more hours. Your paper must include specific facts that were put forth by the prosecution as evidence of the defendant's guilt, and any facts presented by the defense that raise doubts about the defendant's guilt.

TERM PAPER

1. Write a double-spaced, 12 pt font, and at least 10-page term paper (without pictures or graphs) that addresses the following points.
 - (a) Introduction (Why you chose this video, who produced and wrote the video, actors, etc)
 - (b) What the video was about, emphasizing the story and main points, characters, plot, etc.
 - (c) Identifying and addressing the forensic psychological issue(s) presented in the video, weaving facts from the lectures or textbook into your discussion of observations in the video

- (d) What struck you about the video, what forensic lesson(s) did you learn, and how the video dramatized the issue(s).
 - (e) Your critical analysis, insights and conclusions
2. Include references at the end of the report with footnotes or end notes in the body of the report. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the paper. Each source you cite in the paper must appear in your reference list; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text. Support all your main points with references/citations from lecture notes or book citations with footnotes (e.g., Class 3- Mental Status Examination lecture, Guest Speaker, Internet).
 3. Be organized and use well-constructed paragraphs in your writing. Introduce your topic by laying out the critical points you are going to cover. Divide your paper into sections with meaningful titles. End your paper with concluding remarks that "wrap it all up". Use "spellchecker", or risk being docked points for typos. Follow this format or risk being docked for failure to follow instructions.
 4. Be prepared to have your paper read by another student in class who could orally summarize it (with you) to the rest of the class. Try to make your paper interesting and easy for others to read and summarize.
 5. Have a title page with the name of the paper, your name(s), Psych 4320, and Spring 2007
 6. Submit it with a suitable cover or binder
 7. You should write a coherent essay that makes a few points clearly. Do not restrict your research to just the text or lectures; use newspaper or articles from the internet. In your paper, you should not just summarize what other people have said about your topic – DO NOT PLAGIARIZE MOVIE REVIEWS. Instead critically and personally analyze the issue, seeking to prove a point and show why alternative perspectives are wrong.
 8. Instead of writing an individual term paper, you may work together with 1 or 2 other people (for a total of 2 or 3 people max) on a group term paper. This group term paper will meet the same requirement as the individual term paper. The paper will receive one grade and all of the members of the group will receive that same grade. The expectations for a group term paper are exactly the same as for an individual term paper. My reason for offering this group term paper option is to encourage the members of a group to watch and talk about the video, using the concepts learned about forensic psychology, and thus help one another develop their understanding of the issues. Once you have formed a group, each group should email the TA with their names and selected video by March 12, 2008.

REGRADE POLICY

After exams have been returned, a student may submit an exam for regrading consideration within seven days if it is believed the scoring was inaccurate in some way. The regrade request should contain a written explanation of the reason for the request and references to page number or lecture material to justify the request. It should be written and stapled to the relevant test and turned into the course instructor, TA, or to the Psychology Department secretary.

CHEATING POLICY

If there is reasonable evidence of any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., using notes during an exam, looking at the text during an exam, looking at another student's exam, having another student complete your work, plagiarism, etc.), the student will receive an "F" for the course and will be expelled from the class. The Dean of the College of Arts, Letters and Sciences, and your other instructors, will be informed of the academic dishonesty.

COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	2/13	Introduction to Forensic Psychology Outline of Psych 4320 Roles of Forensic Psychologists
2	2/20	DSM-IV-TR (Major Mental Disorders)
3	2/27	Mental Status Examination

Beautiful Mind and *Mr. Jones* (Mental Status/Disorder examples)

4	3/5	Competency to Stand Trial (CST) (PC 1368) Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGI) (PC 1026) (Celebrated Cases -Nesler, Hinckley, Yates, etc)
5	3/12	(Cont'd) NGI and CST Mentally Disordered Offender (MDO) TERM PAPER GROUPS DECLARED
6	3/19	Police Psychology Pre-employment Psychological Screenings Psychological Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations
	3/26	SPRING BREAK
7	4/2	(Cont'd Police Psychology) Hostage/Crisis Negotiations Police Stress (e.g., Critical Incident Stress Debriefing) Midterm Review
	4/9	Midterm
8	4/16	Psychopathy Criminal Profiling (Arthur Sanchez, Jr.) (Convicted of murdering Mary Odermatt at Sacred Heart Church in Turlock)
9	4/23	Assessment of Dangerousness Workplace Violence Schoolplace Violence
10	4/30	Sexually Violent Predators (SVP) Guest Speaker – DA Birgit Fladager EXTRA CREDIT PAPER DUE
11	5/7	Expert Testimony TERM PAPER DUE
12	5/14	Eyewitness Identification, False Confessions, and Recovered Memories Wrap Up and Topics TBD TRIAL OBSERVATION PAPER DUE
13	5/21	FINAL

USE EXTREME DISCRETION IN THE DISCUSSION OF PSYCHOLEGAL CASES PRESENTED IN CLASS. ALL DISCUSSIONS RELATIVE TO THE DISCLOSURE OR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION OR WRITING DURING CLASS TIME ARE CONFIDENTIAL