

**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY
PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LAW (PSYC 3383-01)
FALL 2017**

Instructor:	Jorge G. Varela, Ph.D.
Classroom:	College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Room 140 (CHSS 140)
Time:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00 – 9:20 a.m.
Office:	College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Room 377 (CHSS 377)
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Office Hours:	By appointment

REQUIRED TEXT

Huss, M. T. (2014). *Forensic psychology: Research, clinical practice, and applications* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS

Gendreau, P., & Goggin, C. (2013). Practicing psychology in correctional settings. In I. B. Weiner & R. K. Otto (Eds.), *The handbook of forensic psychology* (4th ed.; pp. 759-793). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Kassin, S. M., Perillo, J. T., Appleby, S. C., & Kukucka, J. (2015). Confessions. In B. L. Cutler & P. A. Zapf (Eds.), *APA Handbook of forensic psychology: Vol. 2, Criminal investigation, adjudication, and sentencing outcomes* (pp. 245-270). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Kovera, M. B. (2013). Voir dire and jury selection. In I. B. Weiner (Ed.), *Handbook of psychology: Forensic psychology* (2nd ed.; 630-647). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Kovera, M. B., & Lovett, L. M. (2015). Jury decision making. In B. L. Cutler & P. A. Zapf (Eds.), *APA Handbook of forensic psychology: Vol. 2, Criminal investigation, adjudication, and sentencing outcomes* (pp. 271-311). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Scrivner, E. M., Corey, D. M., & Greene, L. W. (2013). Psychology and law enforcement. In I. B. Weiner & R. K. Otto (Eds.), *The handbook of forensic psychology* (4th ed.; pp. 443-468). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Stebly, N. K. (2015). Eyewitness memory. In B. L. Cutler & P. A. Zapf (Eds.), *APA Handbook of forensic psychology: Vol. 2, Criminal investigation, adjudication, and sentencing outcomes* (pp. 187-224). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Taylor, P. J., Snook, B., Bennell, C., & Porter, L. (2015). Investigative psychology. In B. L. Cutler & P. A. Zapf (Eds.), *APA Handbook of forensic psychology: Vol. 2, Criminal investigation, adjudication, and sentencing outcomes* (pp. 165-186). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This *three-credit* course is designed to examine the application of scientific and professional principles of psychology in the legal system, the use of social science methods to study the legal system, and the impact of law on the practice of psychology. Content areas include legal competencies, the insanity defense, jury consultation, psychologists and the death penalty, psychology and law enforcement, the accuracy of eyewitness testimony, and violence risk assessment. This course is primarily a lecture course, although students are highly encouraged to ask questions and be active participants in the learning process. In addition to lectures, this course may incorporate other instructional formats, such as in-class discussions, instructional and demonstrational videos, and in-class activities, as appropriate, to enhance the learning experience.

Prerequisites: Six (6) hours of PSYC

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Essential Goal:** Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories related to forensic psychology
- Learn how the body of knowledge of psychology interfaces with the legal arena
 - Learn psychological principles and phenomena that exert force within the criminal and civil justice arena
 - Prepare students for further study in forensic psychology
- Important Goal:** Gaining factual knowledge (such as terminology, classifications, methods, and trends) related to forensic psychology
- Learn the findings of important research that informs the legal arena as well as psychologists working in forensic roles
 - Learn the various roles psychologist play in the criminal and civil justice arenas
- Important Goal:** Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view related to forensic psychology
- Learn to identify and think critically about forensic psychology, particularly when faced with opinions and ideas related to forensic psychology in the popular media and sources of information
 - Learn to use knowledge of forensic psychology principles and research when critically evaluating ideas and research in other branches of psychology or other disciplines of study

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EXPECTATIONS (<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>)

Students are expected to *read all assigned material prior to class*, thus enhancing the learning process and preparing the student for class discussions. Further, you are encouraged to discuss related topics in the media and elsewhere during class sessions. Please consider the following: there will be material presented in class, both in lecture format as well as in videos, etc., that is not from your textbook. This material will nonetheless be “fair game” for your exams. Consequently, attendance is important for success.

GRADING PLAN

- Exams:** Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on two exams and a non-cumulative final. *All material in your assigned readings (textbook and outside readings) as well as any material presented in class (lectures, guest speakers, videos, demonstrations, etc.) is “fair game” for your exams.* All exams will be multiple-choice format. Each exam throughout the semester and your final will be worth 100 points and each will be weighed equally in computing final grades.
- Make-up Exams:** There will be no make-up exams. The only exception to this policy is severe medical emergency (e.g., hospitalization) or death in the family. If this is case, you *must notify me within 24 hours of the exam.* Also, you must provide me with adequate documentation of your emergency, which I will verify. Make-up exams will consist of essay/short-answer questions. Failure to take an exam or the final exam will result in a score of zero for the missed exam/final.
- Extra Credit:** Students may earn up to TWO (2) extra credit points applied to their final average through (1) participating in mock interview sessions or psychological assessment with graduate students or (2) participating in research in the Department of Psychology and Philosophy. Participation is scheduled and tracked through the online Psychology Research Participation (PeRP) system (see <http://www.shsu.edu/academics/psychology-and-philosophy/psychology/research-participation.html>). If you are uncomfortable with research participation or mock therapy/assessment, please discuss your concerns with the instructor so an alternative assignment can be arranged to ensure you have an opportunity to earn extra credit. *If you would like an alternative assignment, you must make arrangements with the instructor by the end of the second week of classes.* All extra credit must be completed no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 1, 2017.
- Final Grade Scale:**
- A = 89.50 to 100.00
 - B = 79.50 to 89.49
 - C = 69.50 to 79.49
 - D = 59.50 to 69.49
 - F = 59.49 and below

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance is expected. Sam Houston State University policy is that no student will be penalized for three or fewer hours of absence. Thus, students may miss two classes without penalty to their grade. *Missing three or more classes, however, may impact your grade for the class.* The three hours of absence provided by university policy should be used carefully for serious illness and emergencies. If a student has a conflict with a scheduled class, he or she must meet with the instructor to determine an appropriate plan of action. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding make-up work, and arrangements must be arranged with the instructor *prior* to the absence or *as soon as possible* after the absence, in the case of an emergency.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The university expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The university and its official representatives, acting in accordance with subsection 5.32 of *The Student Guidelines* of Sam Houston State University, may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any

form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion and abuse of resource materials.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for the absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. *Religious Holy Day* means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the instructor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs, nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center (294-1720). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and talk with the instructor about how best deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. *No accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center, and there are no retroactive accommodations.*

CLASSROOM CODE OF CONDUCT

Students should review, and adhere to, the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline at <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. In addition, please turn off *all* electronic devices, including cell phones, and keep them in a case and/or totally out of view, unless special arrangements have been made ahead of time with the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

You will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE REVISED (5 SEP 17)

			Date	Description	Reading(s)
August	24	Thursday		Introduction to Forensic Psychology	Huss, Chapter 1
	29	Tuesday		CANCELLED – WEATHER	-----
	31	Thursday		CANCELLED – WEATHER	-----
	5	Tuesday		Intersection of Psychology and Law	Huss, Chapter 1
	7	Thursday		Law Enforcement Psychology	Scrivner et al. (2013)
	12	Tuesday		Law Enforcement Psychology	Taylor et al. (2015)
	14	Thursday		Eyewitness Psychology	Stebly (2015)
September	19	Tuesday		Eyewitness Psychology	Stebly (2015)
	21	Thursday		Psychology of Confessions	Kassin et al. (2015)
	26	Tuesday		Psychology of Confessions	Kassin et al. (2015)
	28	Thursday		EXAM 1	
	3	Tuesday		Behavioral Science Experts	Huss, Chapter 3
	5	Thursday		Psychology Applied to Civil Matters	Huss, Chapter 7 Huss, Chapter 13
October	10	Tuesday		Psychology Applied to Civil Matters	Huss, Chapter 7 Huss, Chapter 13
	12	Thursday		Criminal Competencies	Huss, Chapter 8
	17	Tuesday		Criminal Competencies	Huss, Chapter 8
	19	Thursday		Criminal Responsibility	Huss, Chapter 9
	24	Tuesday		Criminal Responsibility	Huss, Chapter 9
	26	Thursday		Jury Psychology	Kovera (2013)
	31	Tuesday		Jury Psychology	Kovera & Lovett (2015)
	2	Thursday		EXAM 2	
	7	Tuesday		Psychopathy	Huss, Chapter 4
November	9	Thursday		Psychopathy	Huss, Chapter 4

	14	Tuesday	Violence Risk Assessment	Huss, Chapter 5
	16	Thursday	Violence Risk Assessment Sexual Offenders	Huss, Chapter 5 Huss, Chapter 6
	21	Tuesday	Sexual Offenders	Huss, Chapter 6
	23	Thursday	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Day</i>	
	28	Tuesday	Psychology of Punishment	Gendreau & Goggin (2013)
	30	Thursday	Psychology of Punishment	Gendreau & Goggin (2013)
December	4	Tuesday	FINAL EXAM (8:00 – 10:00 a.m.)	
