

Spring 2018 Syllabus: Psychology 3383 (Psychology and Law, 3 hours)
Tuesday-Thursday 11:00 – 12:20, CHSS Room 140

Professor: Dr. Marc Boccaccini
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Office Hours: Monday 9-11; Thursday: 9:00-11:00

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Required Readings

1. Assigned readings (articles, book chapters) are listed in the class schedule and are available through the Blackboard class website.

Optional Textbooks

1. Matthew Huss (2014). *Forensic Psychology: Research, Clinical Practice, and Applications* (2nd ed.). Wiley.
2. Bartol & Bartol (2015). *Psychology and law: Research and Practice*. Sage.

Course Description

This lecture-based 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, the accuracy of eyewitness testimony, false confessions, and prediction of violence. Prerequisites: 6 hours of PSY.

Goals of this Course

1. Students will gain an understanding of the roles that psychologists play in the legal system, ranging from clinical psychologists evaluating the mental state of criminal defendants to experimental psychologists serving as consultants to trial attorneys.
2. Students will learn how psychologists study the legal process and how their findings influence the legal system.
3. Students will become familiar with how the courts and legal system influence the practice of forensic psychology, including how case law influences the focus of psychological evaluations.

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. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code" A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that 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. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a will notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. See: <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/0953c7d0-7c04-4b29-a3fc-3bf0738e87d8.pdf>

Academic honesty: Please see the University's code of conduct (<https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html>) and policy on dishonesty (<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>). Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.

Students with disabilities policy: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University 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 should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). 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 you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me

about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

Attendance: Your attendance in class is expected. My tests are heavily weighted toward information covered during lectures. Missing class will put you at a disadvantage for performing well in this class.

For more information on policies, please visit: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Instructor Evaluations: You will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form (IDEA) toward the end of the semester.

Required Supplies: Scantron forms and pencils for tests.

Assignments, Exams, and Grades: Your course grade will be determined by your performance on a series of assignments and exams. I use the traditional grading system for all assignments, exams, and final course grades (i.e., 100-90% = A, 89-80% = B, 79-70% = C, 69-60% = D, 59-0% = F). There are 100 points possible in this course. Below is a description of how you will earn points in this class.

Evaluation

100% **Examinations:** I will give four multiple-choice examinations during the semester. Each will be weighted equally in the calculation of your final grade. In other words, each will be worth 25% of your final grade in the class. Tests are heavily weighted toward information and case examples that are covered in lecture. The final exam is non-cumulative.

Extra **Current Event Paper (Extra credit):** For extra credit, you can write ONE current event paper. This paper will be worth 3 percentage points in the class. For example, if you had 77% in the class, completed a current events paper, and earned a grad of 3 points, you would then have an 80% in the class.

Current event papers are a mechanism for you to link what you have learned in class to real-world events. Events can include news items, current legal events, personal experiences, or other “real-world” happenings. You can even use an incident from a TV show or Movie with approval from the instructor. If you are not sure whether an event is appropriate, ask me in class or through e-mail. **Current event papers must be at least 3 pages, double spaced, using 12 point font with 1-inch page margins.** You should use the first paragraph to describe the event (no more than ½ of a page). The remaining portion of the paper should show me how you have thought critically about the event/issue. You can show this in several ways. You can use class material to explain the event (what happened) or to identify important additional issues related to the event. If you hear a news item that is biased or incorrect, explain why this is so using course material. If an issue has people taking sides, take one side of the issue yourself and back it up with psychological knowledge (from this class, not just your opinion). Another option is to identify an issue or event that needs further study. What could psychology tell us about the issue? What type of research is needed about the topic? How could you design a research study to examine the issue? You will lose points if you just give me your opinion about a topic, without linking it any way to psychological research or information we have covered in class.

IN ADDITION, **you must find a published research study** relating to your event and using the findings from the study to inform your reaction. And, this doesn’t mean that you can just include once sentence in your paper about the study. I want you to “integrate” the findings from they study with your opinion/position THROUGHOUT the paper. Publications must come from scientific journals, not popular magazines or internet publications. The study must report scientific data collected by the authors (i.e., it must report numbers, statistical analysis), not just someone’s review of existing research or his/her opinion about a topic. I strongly encourage you to have me approve the scientific article that you are going to use.

Schedule

The outline below is tentative and may be changed by the instructor. An updated syllabus will be provided if significant changes occur.

<u>Class Week:</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1/18	Introduction to class	None
1/23 – 1/25	Background	1) Graduate school and careers in Psychology and Law Website: http://www.apadivisions.org/division-41/education/students/careers.aspx http://www.apadivisions.org/division-41/education/programs/guide.pdf
1/30 – 2/1	Psych law interactions	
2/6 – 2/8	Confessions	1) Kassin et al. (2010). Police induced confessions: Risk factors and recommendations. <i>Law and Human Behavior</i> , 34, 3-38.
2/13 – 2/15	Confessions	
2/20 – 2/22	Plea bargain	<u>Thurs 2/22 is Exam 1 (Background, confessions, plea bargain)</u>
2/27 – 3/1	Eyewitness	1) Wells, G.L., Malpass, R.S., et al. (2000). From the lab to the police station: A successful application of eyewitness research. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 55, 581-598.
3/6 – 3/8	Mental illness diversion	
3/13 – 3/15	Spring Break	NO CLASS
3/20 – 3/22	Continue diversion	<u>Thurs 3/22 is Exam 2 (eyewitness/diversion)</u>
3/27 – 3/29	Competence/sanity	1) Huss, M. T. (2014) Criminal and Civil Competence. Chapter 8 (167-185).
4/3 – 4/5	Sanity	1) Borum, R., & Fulero, S. (1999). Empirical research on the insanity defense and attempted reforms: Evidence towards informed policy. <i>Law and Human Behavior</i> , 23, 375-394.
4/10 – 4/12	Risk Assessment	<u>Thurs 4/12 is Exam 3 (competence, sanity)</u> 1) Huss, M.T. (2009). Chapter 5 (Violence Risk Assessment) (pp. 96-107).
4/17 – 4/19	Sex Offender risk	1) Hanson, R. K. & Morton-Bourgon, K. E. (2005). The characteristics of persistent sexual offenders: A meta-analysis of recidivism studies. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> , 2) Miller, H. A., et. al., Sexually violent predator evaluations. <i>Law and Human Behavior</i> , 29, 29-54.
4/24- 4/26	Sex Offender risk (cont).	1) Boccacini, M.T., Murrie, D.C., Hawes, S., & Caperton, J. (2009). Field validity of the STATIC-99, and MnSOST-R among sex offenders evaluated for commitment as sexually violent predators. <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i> , 15, 278-314.
5/1 – 5/3	Catch up.	
5/10	Final Exam	<u>Thurs 5/10 Exam 4 (12:00 – 2:00)</u>