



*****SUBJECT TO CHANGE*****

Faculty of Health, Department of Psychology

PSYC 3310 3.0 Section M: PSYCHOLOGY AND LAW

Tuesdays, 11:30 – 2:30, Winter 2021, Online via Zoom

Instructor: Dr. Caroline Erentzen

Office Hours: by appointment

Email: caerenzen@yorku.ca

T.A.	TBD	TBD
Email		
Office Hours		

Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology), with a minimum grade of C.
- Completed at least 54 earned credits

Course Credit Exclusions

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

Course website: [Moodle](#)

Required Text

- Costanzo, M., Krauss, D., Schuller, R.A., & McLachlin, K. (2014). *Forensic and Legal Psychology, Psychological Science Applied to Law (First Canadian Edition)*. New York: Worth Publishing.

This text is available from the campus book store, with many second hand copies available. You may also find copies from third party vendors (e.g., amazon.ca), but be sure to get the Canadian edition rather than the American version. There are critical differences between the two texts.

Digital access to the text book may be obtained directly from the publisher, including options to rent the book for a significantly reduced fee. Click the link below for more information:

<https://www.vitalsource.com/referral?term=9781464193941>

I. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Course Description

The legal system governs our lives from the time before we are born until years after we die, with rules and laws touching on every aspect of life in between. In doing so, the law relies on a number of assumptions about how people think and behave, many of which are incorrect. This course examines how psychological science can test these assumptions, explore the consequences of faulty assumptions, and offer solutions for improvement. Students will be exposed to a wide range of topics derived from work in social, clinical, cognitive, and developmental psychology. Major topics include false confessions, wrongful convictions, police interrogation, lie detection, eyewitnesses, jury bias, sentencing and incarceration, “insanity,” and psychopathy.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge in psychology and the law.
2. Articulate trends in psychology and the law.
3. Express knowledge of psychology and the law in written form.
4. Develop understanding of the research processes used in psychology and law.
5. Describe and explain limits to generalizability of research findings in psychology and law.
6. Demonstrate ability to relate information in psychology and the law to their own and others’ life experiences.
7. Think critically about psychology and law research and its day-to-day applications.

Specific Learning Objectives

Students will develop skills to think critically about how psychology applies to law and whether our assumptions about human behaviour and cognition are accurate. This will include considering controversial topics related to psychology and law, such as the effect of mandatory minimum sentences, whether police ever coerce confessions, whether recovered/repressed memories are real, whether innocent people are ever convicted, whether juries are able to hear a case with true impartiality, and how to respond to mentally ill defendants. Many of these topics are covered widely in media outlets, often in inflammatory and inaccurate ways. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to consider media coverage with a critical lens and may develop an understanding of the strengths and limitations of the Canadian legal system.

II. SPECIAL CONCERNS REGARDING ONLINE LEARNING & COVID-19

Course Delivery Method

Due to social distancing requirements, York University has moved all summer courses to an online format. This will enable students to continue their education safely. I have elected to run the course asynchronously rather than by live lecture. There are a few reasons for this:

- **Asynchronous learning is more accessible and practical for many students.** There are many reasons that a student might not be able to access live lectures. Many students work to support themselves or their families. Many have childcare responsibilities. Others might lack access to reliable internet connections and may be unable to stay logged in to live lectures. Some may be experiencing illness. International students may be in different time zones. Allowing students to access the content around their availability increases accessibility for all students.
- **I care about your privacy rights.** Live online lectures can compromise your personal privacy by outside parties. In addition, some students may not have a safe or quiet place to access live lectures, such that some will miss out on learning opportunities. Unfortunately, there have been reports of live lectures being hacked, with students and instructors subjected to racist, sexist, homophobic, pornographic or other inappropriate content. Pre-recorded content prevents this form of harassment and disruption.

Rest assured, you will still receive the same lecture content via pre-recorded lectures that you would have received in person. A great deal of time, effort, and care went into the creation of this content and I hope that you find it engaging and interesting. Each weekly topic is broken down into a series of sublectures of 20-25 minutes. For those students who wish to have interpersonal communication, your teaching assistants and I are available for online office hours via zoom or email. We would love to hear from you, so please don't be shy!

Technical requirements for taking the course: Students should have zoom installed on their computers in advance of the class to take part in weekly chats and for any meetings with the TA or instructor. You will need access to high speed internet to watch videos when you are able to. You will also need to have wifi access to upload assignments and exam responses.

Course Materials Copyright Information

These course materials are designed for use as part of the PSYC 3310 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. See: [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#). All lecture recordings and powerpoint slides are the intellectual property of the instructor, Caroline Erentzen, and may not be disseminated or posted online without consent.

III. ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION METHODS

Course Requirements and Assessment:

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Midterm Exam	February 23, 2020	35%
Written assignment	March 23, 2020	30%
Final Exam	Final exam period	35%
Total		100%

Description of Assignments

The Midterm and Final examinations will be open book, time-limited exams comprised of a series of short answer questions based on lecture and textbook content. There will be no multiple choice or longer essays question. The exam will not require continuous internet access. The written assignment will be take the form of a research-based essay, approximately 4 pages in length and will be assigned during the term. The syllabus and plagiarism quizzes are low stakes ways to ensure that you have reviewed course material, know expectations of this course, and are familiar with proper citation.

Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.). For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2020-21](#)

Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to: <https://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/fw20>

	Winter
Last date to add a course without permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	January 25
Last date to add a course with permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	February 8
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	March 12
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript – see note below)	March 13 – April 12

***Note:** You may withdraw from a course using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W". The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

IV. ACADEMIC HONESTY

Information on Plagiarism Detection

Students will be required to submit all work (midterm, written assignment, and final exam) to Turnitin to ensure that all work is original content. Student work showing evidence of plagiarism or improper citation may result in penalty, failure, or reporting for academic dishonesty. If you are unfamiliar with how to properly cite your sources, please reach out to the instructor or your TA for assistance.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in this class is not mandatory. However, you will be required to take part in a weekly chat at least five times during the term for 5% of your final mark (1% per contribution). This is a great way for you to take part in topics that you find particularly interesting during the course. Only one contribution per weekly topic will be counted for that week's 1%. Comments should be at least a few sentences in length and have meaningful contribution and original thought (e.g., "good point" or "I thought that too" are not substantial contributions). See the assignments and evaluation section of the eclass page for more information.

Academic Integrity for Students

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and take the Academic Integrity Quiz: <http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/quizzes/ai/nologin/ai.quiz>

Test Banks

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as "Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation" (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or "encouraging, enabling or causing others" (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

V. ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with ***Student Accessibility Services (SAS)*** to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses.

Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

Missed Tests/Midterm Exams/Late Assignment:

Due to the shortened nature of this course, students are encouraged to write exams at the scheduled time period if at all possible. Those who cannot write the midterm or final exam must advise the instructor and their teaching assistant of the reason for their absence. As the exams are take home and open book, those who miss the exam session will be asked to write an exam comprised of different questions or they may be required to submit a different form of assessment in a style to be determined at the discretion of the instructor. Students who miss an exam due to illness or compassionate grounds must complete the online form found at [HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#). Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in a grade of zero for the missed quiz or late assignment. Due to COVID-19, an attending physician's statement will not be required to support a claim of illness.

Vacations and holidays are not valid reasons for missing an examination. Students who have scheduled travel and vacation plans that conflict with the course schedule should enrol in the

course during another term. A conflict in another course is also not a reason for missing a makeup exam, unless another examination is scheduled at that time.

VI. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading
January 12	Introduction to Psychology and Law & Wrongful Convictions	Chapter 1
January 19	False Confessions & Police Interrogations	Chapter 2
January 26	Lie Detection and Polygraphs	Chapter 3
February 2	Criminal Profiling	Chapter 4
February 9	Eyewitness Testimony	Chapter 5
February 16	READING WEEK – NO CLASS	
February 23	MIDTERM EXAM	Chapters 1-5 and lecture content to date
March 2	Child Witnesses and Recovered Memories	Chapter 6
March 9	Jury Selection and Bias Screening	Chapter 7
March 16	Jury Deliberation Processes	Chapter 8
March 23	Mental Illness in the Courts	Chapter 9
March 30	Psychopathy and Risk Assessment	Chapter 10
April 6	Sentencing	Chapter 11
DATE TBA (Exams run April 14-28)	FINAL EXAMINATION	Chapters 7 – 11 and lecture content post-midterm