

# **PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LAW**

## **Course Syllabus** **PSYC39H3F Fall 2023**

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Stefano Di Domenico

**Email:** [stefanoddmn@gmail.com](mailto:stefanoddmn@gmail.com) Use this email to schedule office-hour appointments.

**Office Hours:** Fridays from 4 to 5 pm on Zoom.

**Teaching Assistant:** Leif Anderson

**Teaching Assistant Email:** [2023psyc39@gmail.com](mailto:2023psyc39@gmail.com).

Use this email for content-related questions.

**Textbook:** *Forensic Psychology 6<sup>th</sup> Edition* by Joanna Pozzulo, Craig Bennell, and Adelle Forth

**Lectures:** Thursdays from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in SY110

**Prerequisites:**

PSYB32H3 and [(PSYB01H3) or (PSYB04H3) or PSYB70H3] and [PSYB07H3 or STAB22H3 or STAB23H3]

**Exclusions:**

PSYC53H3, PSY328H, PSY344H

## **Course Description**

This course will examine many aspects of human behaviour as it relates to the legal system. When appropriate, special attention will be given to Canadian law. It will introduce students to research methods, important

findings, theoretical perspectives, and applied problems in forensic psychology.

Students will be expected to recall previously learned facts, terms, and basic concepts from B-Level psychology courses. Because this is a C-Level course, students will be held to a higher standard of learning. Specifically, they will be challenged to apply newly acquired knowledge when they analyze and evaluate problems in forensic psychology.

This course aims to illuminate some of the ways that applied science differs from basic science. It also aims to help students evaluate develop a more detailed understanding of different career paths in psychology.

## **Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes in this course can be organized in two broad categories: *developmental outcomes* and *content-related outcomes*.

### **Developmental Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will practice and their develop skills

- Asking questions about the role of psychology in the law that remove assumptions and consider empirical evidence when evaluating a range of possible answers
- Respectfully and clearly communicating their thoughts on the psychology of the law to others using logic and evidence-based arguments
- Critically evaluating scientific and non-scientific information to be a better consumer of information presented in a variety of outlets (e.g., news media)
- Implementing effective strategies for course work
- Identifying, evaluating, pursuing, and capitalizing on learning experiences outside of the classroom (e.g., research positions, work placements)

### **Content-Related Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- Appreciate the differences between basic and applied research in psychology
- Appreciate the importance of psychometric test development (e.g., reliability, validity), understand a range of research designs that are appropriate for different research questions, and articulate why statistical competency is necessary for interpreting research results
- Describe the history of forensic psychology and explain the roles of a forensic psychologist
- Explain how the fields of psychology and law differ with respect to epistemology, the nature of law, and methodology; describe how these differences pervade the topics covered in this course
- Describe police selection procedures and the role of psychometric assessment standards
- Explain why police discretion is necessary and the areas in which it is used
- Describe the Reid model of interrogation and alternative models of police investigation
- Describe the various types of false confessions and explain, through example, how false confessions have been studied in the psychological laboratory
- Describe different types of criminal profiling methods and explain the theory and research guiding the different profiling approaches
- Describe and explain the relationships between eyewitness testimony and different types of memory
- Describe and explain the presumptions in Canada's legal system with particular regard to issues surrounding fitness to stand trial and the use of fitness instruments
- Explain how and why risk assessments are conducted, describe the different approaches to risk assessment, describe important risk factors
- Describe and explain the nature of psychopathy—its definition, assessment, research, and the challenge psychopathy represents for law enforcement
- Describe the different types of intimate partner violence, research on battered women, and typologies and treatments for male batterers
- Describe the classification of sexual offenders and the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders
- Describe different the types of homicide and research findings on homicidal aggression

## **Notice of Video Recording and Sharing (Download and Re-Use is Prohibited)**

This course, including your participation, may be recorded on video and may be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright.

Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor.

For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact Dr. Di Domenico.

### **Tentative Schedule**

The following topics will be covered in the course. The weekly schedule is a guideline and some topics will take more or less than a single lecture period to complete. At various points, guest speakers with specialized expertise will join our lectures to share their knowledge and experience.

Lectures will partially overlap with the assigned readings and will emphasize the central themes, week-to-week, through topic review and incremental elaboration. At times, lectures will significantly expand on the textbook content through in-depth discussion of additional primary-source material (i.e., published articles). Please note the weeks in which the midterms are indicated. The date for final exam will be determined by the registrar. When I have this information it will be posted to Quercus and announced during lecture.

**Both Midterm Test 1 and Midterm Test 2 will be conducted in-person during class time.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Lecture Date</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>
<b>Part 1</b>	<i>Basic Topics</i>	

1	Sep 7 <sup>th</sup>	Course Introduction
2	Sep 14 <sup>th</sup>	Police Psychology
3	Sep 21 <sup>st</sup>	Police Investigations
4	Sep 28 <sup>th</sup>	Eyewitness Testimony
5	Oct 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>MIDTERM TEST 1</b>

**Part 2**      *Special Topics*

6	Oct 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>READING WEEK!</b>
7	Oct 19 <sup>th</sup>	The Role of Mental Illness in Co
8	Oct 26 <sup>th</sup>	Risk Assessment
9	Nov 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Psychopaths
10	Nov 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>MIDTERM TEST 2</b>

**Part 3**      *Violent Crime*

11	Nov 16 <sup>th</sup>	Intimate Partner Violence
12	Nov 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Sexual Offenders

## Grading Scheme

Two midterm tests will provide students an interim assessment of their command of the course material. Both midterm tests will be 1.0 hour long. The first midterm test will comprise 30% of your final grade and it will cover Weeks 1 to 4. The second midterm test will also comprise 30% of your final grade. It will cover Weeks 7 to 9.

The final exam will be 2.5 hours long. The final exam will comprise 35% of your final grade and it will cover Weeks 13 to 15.

Students will also be asked to submit five brief (250-500 words) writing assignments. Each submission will count 1% toward your final grade. Students are free to submit these assignments at any point before November 30<sup>th</sup>. **All five assignments must be submitted by November 30<sup>th</sup>. Late assignments will not be accepted.**

**More details about the writing assignments.** You are encouraged to write about the topics in the course that you find interesting. You may use the writing assignments as an opportunity to specify and formalize questions about the course material. You can describe how a course topic relates to a story in the news or to other topics that you may have learned about in your previous courses. You are also strongly encouraged to use these writing assignments as an opportunity to develop a written plan for how you will prepare for your final exams (i.e., a study schedule), graduate/professional school applications, or your final year of university studies. These assignments will be graded for completion and constructive engagement.

## Grading Scheme Summary

Midterm 1	30% of final grade
Midterm 2	30% of final grade
Writing Assignments	5% of final grade (5 assignments, 1% each)
Final Exam	35% of final grade

## Missed Term Tests (Make-Up Tests)

Students who are unable to complete the regularly scheduled midterm tests for reasons that conform to the Department of Psychology Missed Term Work Policy (described below) may request a make-up test. Upon receipt of the missed term work accommodation form and appropriate supporting documentation, your TA will promptly schedule a make-up test. Please email the documents to 2023psyc39@gmail.com. **Before you reach out to Leif to ask for a make-up test, please make sure you carefully read the Department's Missed Term Work Policy.**

## POLICIES

### \*\*\*Department of Psychology Missed Term Work Policy\*\*\*

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedure outlined below.

#### Procedure:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) ("MTW Form").
2. Email **BOTH** your MTW Form and Supporting Documentation to **2023psyc39@gmail.com** according to the instructions specified below.

#### Supporting Documentation Requirements and Deadlines:

<u>Reason for Missed Work</u>	<u>Documentation required for a <i>first absence</i> in the term</u>	<u>Documentation required for <i>subsequent absences</i> in the term</u>
Illness or Injury	<a href="#">ACORN</a> Absence Declaration	<a href="#">UofT Verification of Illness</a>
Bereavement	<a href="#">ACORN</a> Absence Declaration	A death certificate or funeral notice.
University-sponsored athletic or artistic obligation at the varsity/provincial/national level	<a href="#">ACORN</a> Absence Declaration	A note from a university residence staff, etc.) who can verify directly to the course email.
Disability-related reasons for students registered with AccessAbility Services	<p>For missed <b>TERM TESTS</b>,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact your <b>AccessAbility consultant</b> and have them detail the accommodations needed.</li> </ul> <p>For missed <b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If your desired accommodation is <b>within the scope</b> of your letter, your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” and you are requesting,</li> <li>- If your desired accommodation is <b>outside the scope</b> (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but not that), contact your <b>AccessAbility consultant</b> and have them detail the accommodations needed.</li> </ul>	
Academic Conflict (e.g. two midterms at the same time)	Screenshot from Quercus demonstrating the conflict.	
Religious Conflict	None required	

**Notes:**

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: social activities, recreational travel, technological issues, avoidance of assessments or deadlines, work commitments
- Missed Final Exams are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService.
- For ACORN absence declarations, the date you declare the absence is required to fall within the seven-day declaration period (i.e.) the absence cannot be submitted proactively or retroactively.
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar's Office petition process.
- If you are unable to submit your request within the specified number of business days, you must still email your instructor within that window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the deadlines are made only under exceptional circumstances.
- Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered academic conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.
- Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered academic conflicts. Only overlapping activities are conflicts.
- Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

### **Next Steps:**

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your instructor or TA. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations will be made. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request. **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for the instructor's response to resume work on your assignment**. Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you're able, and email it to your instructor.

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting its requirements, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations. **Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation**. Examples: If you were granted an extension for a paper but are still unable to meet the new deadline, or if you miss a make-up term test, you must submit *another* MTW form and supply documentation according to the "subsequent absences" column in the chart above. \*Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not necessarily be provided.

## **Quercus**

This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This may include materials required to complete activities and assignments, as well as important announcements. New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or "card" for this course. There are Quercus help guides for students that you can access by clicking on the "?" icon in the left side column.

## **Disability-Related Accommodations**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please contact the [AccessAbility Services Office](#) as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm AA142, Arts and Administration Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please contact 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email [ability.utsc@utoronto.ca](mailto:ability.utsc@utoronto.ca) for more information. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## **Academic Integrity**

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

## **Religious Accommodations**

The University has a commitment concerning accommodation for religious observances. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. According to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from

class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

## **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion**

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.