



**Survey of Legal Psychology**  
PSYC 6344  
**University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Fall 2022**

**INSTRUCTOR**

Jennifer Eno Louden, Ph.D.

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**Office:** Vowell Hall room 204

**Office hours:** Tuesdays 2:00pm and by appointment

**COURSE TIME AND LOCATION**

TR 10:30-11:50, Hudspeth Hall 213

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Brewer, N., & Douglas, A. B. (Eds.) (2019). *Psychological science and the law*. Guilford.

Additional readings are listed in the course schedule.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to the field of Legal Psychology, with an overview of important theoretical and applied issues. Students will be exposed to current empirical work in various areas of the field and be encouraged to think about how psychological science can be applied to the legal and criminal justice systems in novel ways.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Locate legal scholarship and public policy statements relevant to psychological science
2. Describe primary research findings and the state of the field in legal psychology
3. Generate novel research questions that apply psychological science to the law or public policy

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

I have no tolerance for academic dishonesty in any form. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or assignments, forgery, and plagiarism. Students caught engaging in academic dishonesty may receive an "F" for the course. Please review UTEP's policy statement on academic dishonesty: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you have a disability and require accommodation, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148 or via e-mail ([cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)) during the first week of the semester. They will help you with the required paperwork necessary to obtain accommodation.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

*Attendance and participation, 15 percent of final grade.* As a graduate level course, students are expected to attend every class session and participate in the discussion on the readings for that week. You should actively engage in every class session—if you come to class but are not engaged in the discussion of the readings, you will not receive a passing grade on this component of the course. Active engagement requires a primary focus on the science—if your contribution is primarily rooted in opinion, consider whether your statement adds to the scholarly discourse. Disagreements are expected in academic discussions—please communicate respectfully with your classmates and instructor. If you must miss class due to illness, an emergency, or a non-negotiable academic obligation (e.g., conference travel), please email me.

*Reflection papers, 20 percent of final grade.* Each week, each student should submit a reflection on that week's readings that includes a brief summary of the main points along with your reflections on the state of the science presented (around one single-spaced page). The purposes of these papers are to encourage deeper thinking of the concepts presented in the readings, engage students in critical evaluation of research and theory, and encourage students to present ideas for practical application. Submissions that demonstrate superficial attention to the reading or are focused on opinion rather than science will receive less than full credit. Submissions are due to Blackboard by 1:00pm each Monday for that week's readings.

*Course topic presentations/discussion leading, 25 percent of final grade.* During each week where we cover content from the textbook, one or more students will be assigned to lead the class discussion of the assigned topics. The discussion leader(s) should prepare a presentation of the week's topic that includes: (a) an overview of the major research findings and theories from the readings (this can be supplemented with additional recent literature), (b) an overview of the relevant legal and policy issues related to the topic, and (c) 5 discussion questions. Presentations will be held on Tuesdays, but the discussion leader(s) will be responsible for leading discussion for both class sessions during their assigned week.

*Final project: 40 percent of final grade.* Each student will produce a final project examining legal and/or public policy issue where psychological science is relevant. The topic of your final project cannot rehash material covered in the class. You may choose to base your project on a topic from the textbook not covered in class or something else (e.g., emerging areas of research). In your paper, you should describe the relevant laws, court decisions, and/or public policy issues related to your topic along with the empirical research. You should get approval of your topic from me before you put too much work into your project to ensure that your topic meets the goals of the assignment.

The final project consists of two parts: a presentation and a paper. Each presentation will be approximately 15 minutes in length and accompanied by PowerPoint slides or other relevant presentation aides. The presentation should serve as a forum for your instructor and classmates to give feedback on your ideas before you turn in the paper. The paper must conform with the standards in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the APA style guide and must include discussion of law, legal scholarship, and/or policy statements. Papers should be no more than 10 pages excluding references and will be submitted via Blackboard. Students can work independently or in pairs for the final project (though if you work as a team the end product will be held to a higher standard).

## GRADING

Grades will be based on the quality of the course requirements above using the following scale:

90% and above	=A
80 to 89%	=B
70 to 79%	=C
60 to 69%	=D
59% and below	=F

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Adjustments to the course schedule may occur and will be announced via email. The readings are listed according to which day we will discuss them, but please complete all readings for the week by Monday of each week. Additional readings may be added at my discretion.

Dates	Topics	Readings/Assignments
8/23	Course introduction	
8/25	How do psychology and the legal system interact?	Read: Bartol & Bartol  Read: Zottoli, T., & Edkins, V. (2018, Feb.). Ignorance of the law can no longer be a defense for researchers. <i>American Psychology-Law Society Newsletter</i> , 1-5.
8/30	Introduction to the legal system	Read: King, K. & Leuzinger, J. (2015). <i>Introduction to the Law and the American Legal System</i> . UNT Scholarly Works.  Read: <a href="https://lawshelf.com/coursewarecontentview/civil-law-vs-criminal-law">https://lawshelf.com/coursewarecontentview/civil-law-vs-criminal-law</a>
9/1	Legal research	Read: Library guide
9/6-9/8	How Psychology can inform the Legal System	Read: Chapter 13  Read: APA site on amicus briefs: <a href="http://www.apa.org/about/offices/ogc/amicus/index-issues.aspx">http://www.apa.org/about/offices/ogc/amicus/index-issues.aspx</a>
9/13-9/15	Translating Psychological Science into Policy and Practice	Read: Chapter 17  Read: Halpern, D. Applying psychology to public policy. <i>Observer</i> , 27. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2014/january-14/applying-psychology-to-public-policy.html">http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2014/january-14/applying-psychology-to-public-policy.html</a>
9/20-9/22	Eyewitnesses	Read: Chapter 9

		Read: Kleider-Offutt, H., Stevens, B., & Capodanno, M. (2022) He did it! Or did I just see him on Twitter? Social media influence on eyewitness identification, <i>Memory</i> , 30, 493-504.
9/27-9/29	Interrogations	Read: Chapter 3  Read: Mogavero, M. C. (2020). An exploratory examination of intellectual disability and mental illness associated with alleged false confessions. <i>Behavioral Sciences &amp; the Law</i> , 38, 299– 316.
10/4-10/6	Child Witnesses	Read: Chapter 7  Read: Wilcock, R., Crane, L., Hobson, Z., Nash, G., Kirke-Smith, M., & Henry, L. (2019). Eyewitness identification in child witnesses on the autism spectrum. <i>Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders</i> , 66, 1-8.
10/11-10/13	Plea Bargaining	Read: Chapter 11  Read: Fountain, E. N., & Woolard, J. (2021). Negotiating with parents: Attorney practices in the juvenile plea bargain process. <i>Law and Human Behavior</i> , 45, 112–123.
10/18-10/20	Jury Decision Making	Read: Chapter 14  Read: Leach, A., Woolridge, L., Cutler, B., Neuschatz, J., & Jenkins, B. (2021): COVID-19 and the courtroom: How social and cognitive psychological processes might affect trials during a pandemic. <i>Psychology, Crime &amp; Law</i> , online ahead of print.
10/25-10/27	Judicial Decision Making	Read: Chapter 16  Read: Breger, M. L. (2019). Making the invisible visible: exploring implicit bias, judicial diversity, and the bench trial. <i>University of Richmond Law Review</i> , 53, 1039-1084.
11/1-11/3	Competence to Stand Trial and Criminal Responsibility	Read: Chapter 12  Read: Gowensmith, W. N. (2019). Resolution or resignation: The role of forensic mental health professionals amidst the competency services crisis. <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i> , 25, 1-14.
11/8-11/10	Aggression, Violence, and Psychopathy	Read: Chapter 15

		Read: Patrick, C. (2022). Psychopathy: Current knowledge and future directions. <i>Annual Review of Clinical Psychology</i> , 18, 387-415.
11/15	Criminal Profiling	Read: Chapter 1
11/17	<b>No class, ASC conference</b>	
11/22	<b>Student presentations</b>	
11/24	<b>No class, Thanksgiving</b>	
11/29-12/1	<b>Student presentations</b>	
12/9	<b>Final papers due</b>	