

# Psychology & the Law

Lecture: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:30-5:50pm, Room: UGLC 220

What theories and explanations have been proposed to explain crime?

What is the role of police in our society?

How do clinical psychologists' evaluations inform legal proceedings?

## COURSE OVERVIEW & GOALS

Welcome to Psychology and the Law! This course examines the relation between various subfields of psychology and the U.S legal system. We will learn about key debates, theories, and the application of research to real-world situations. This course highlights the challenges associated with working at the intersection of the fields of psychology and law and integrates ideas, findings, and logic between the fields. You will gain knowledge about how psychological research is used in legal contexts, how it informs legal contexts, and new directions in the study of psychology and law. We'll work together in a collaborative and inclusive environment to learn about topics such as policing, jury decision making, eyewitnesses, forensic assessment, and corrections. (If you don't know much about these topics yet, don't worry! You will soon 😊)

### Student learning goals:

- Describe the ways that psychologists interact with the legal system and different careers within the field.
- Describe the US legal system and procedures.
- Understand the major findings of experimental and developmental psychology that inform the legal system (e.g., eyewitness memory, jury decision making).
- Describe the ways that clinical psychologists' evaluations inform legal proceedings (e.g., insanity defense, competency).
- Communicate effectively about key issues and research pertaining to legal psychology.
- Discover how research is applied to inform public policy, improve public knowledge of legal concepts, and change attitudes toward legal policy.

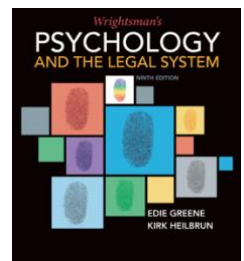
### Instructor goals:

- Establish a collaborative, close, inclusive classroom environment.
- Facilitate and encourage your learning.

### Course materials:

Required Text: Greene, E., & Heilbrun, K. (2019). *Wrightsmen's Psychology & the Legal System*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition -- MindTap. Cengage.

MindTap & Blackboard: We will use MindTap (MT) and Blackboard (Bb) to engage in interactive learning. Most assignments are completed on MT and are linked to Bb. Additional assignments and readings will be posted on Bb.



## CONTENT WARNING

We'll learn about sensitive topics that may be emotionally challenging for some individuals (e.g., rape, domestic violence, hate crimes, mass shootings/violence, racial injustice). Some content may make you feel uncomfortable or challenge your current way of thinking, which can be difficult.

**If you feel any of our topics may cause you undue distress, please let me know in advance so I can work with you and provide an alternate assignment.**

## ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTORS

**Professor:** Dr. Kelly Burke (she/her)

**Email:** [kcburke@utep.edu](mailto:kcburke@utep.edu)

**Student Hours:** Wednesday 12:00-1:00pm or by appointment

**Location:** Vowell\* 301 or via Zoom

\*Please note, Vowell is not handicap accessible. If you need an accessible meeting, please email me to schedule one in the Psychology Building.

I refer to these as “student” hours because they’re meant for you! This means I *want* you to come to them anytime you have questions, concerns, or just want to chat about the course. It’s important to me that you know I’m here to support you and your learning. So, if something isn’t working or you have constructive feedback on how to improve class, please let me know! I’m happy to adapt things in response to feedback.

It’s extremely important that you stay on top of the material each week.

**If you fall behind, feel stuck, have questions, or have trouble remembering earlier content, please come talk to me right away! I’m here to facilitate your learning, not create undue stress and anxiety during an already stressful time.**

**Teaching Assistant:** TBD

**Email:** TBD

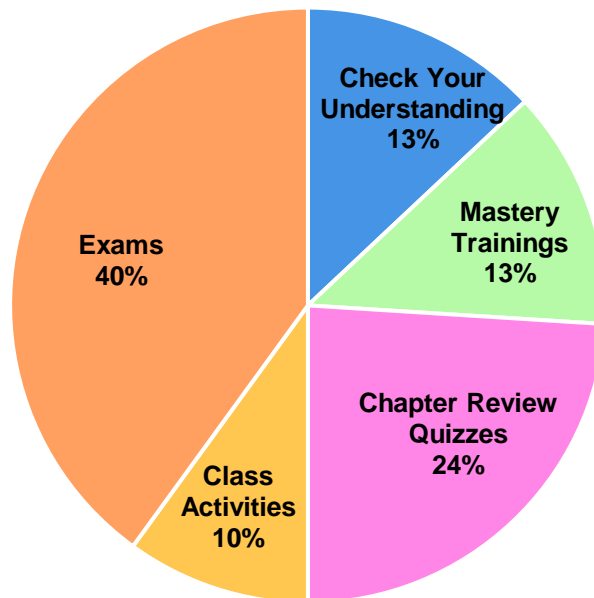
**Student Hours:** TBD

## COURSE FORMAT

The course will meet in-person two times a week (Tuesdays & Thursdays). Course materials (lectures, MindTap assignments, in-class assignments, exams, etc.) will be posted on Blackboard. Schedule updates and announcements will also be posted on Blackboard. Therefore, it is extremely important that you check Blackboard and your email regularly for updates from me. If you are not receiving emails from Blackboard, reach out to UTEP tech support.

## HOW YOUR LEARNING WILL BE ASSESSED

We have five different methods for assessing your learning:



### Check Your Understanding (130 points)

While you read each chapter, you will complete “Check Your Understanding” activities on MindTap. Each chapter is worth 10 points (give or take a decimal). Your 2 lowest chapter scores will be dropped for a total of 130 points. These must be completed **BEFORE** class to receive credit. Their purpose is to provide you with an introduction to the lecture ahead of time and check your understanding as you proceed through each chapter.

### Mastery Trainings (130 points)

After each chapter, you will complete “Mastery Trainings” on MindTap. Each chapter is worth 10 points. Your 2 lowest chapter scores will be dropped, for a total of 130 points. The purpose of these is to space out your understanding of the material and emphasize important content in each chapter. These are due 1-2 DAYS **AFTER** EACH chapter. However, you will receive credit if you submit before 11:59pm the night before the exam on that section. You must plan ahead to complete them because they are spaced out—you cannot complete them in one sitting.

### Chapter Review Quizzes (240 points)

There will be a total of 15 Chapter Review Quizzes that you will complete on MindTap. Each one is worth 20 points. Your lowest 3 quizzes will be dropped, for a total of 240 points. These are intended to help prepare you for the exams by reinforcing recent material you have learned about. These are due 1-2 DAYS **AFTER** EACH chapter. However, you will receive credit if you submit before 11:59pm the night before the exam on that section.

### In-Class Discussion Activities (100 points)

There will be 7 in-class discussion activities throughout the semester. Each is worth 20 points. Your lowest 2 will be dropped for a total of 100 points. To receive credit, you **MUST** be present on the day of the activity.

**Exams (400 points)**

There will be 5 exams, each worth 100 points. Your lowest exam will be dropped for a total of 400 points. Exams consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in the blank, matching, and/or short answer. Exams cover content from lecture, readings, MindTap activities, and in-class discussions. The final exam is cumulative.

- Exams will be distributed via Blackboard. They will take 80 minutes and are timed. If you require additional time or accommodations, you must provide documentation at least one week prior to the first exam.
- All exams will be available for a 48-hour window during which you can take the exam at your convenience; however, be advised that if you run into technical issues in the middle of the night, I won't be able to assist you until the next day.
- You must take the exam during the allotted 48-hour window. The 48-hour windows always include one scheduled class period (e.g., 4:30-5:50pm on a Tuesday or Thursday). You do not need to attend class on the scheduled exam day (see Course Schedule).
- Because your lowest exam will be dropped, makeups will not be given except for (a) absences sanctioned by UTEP and made in advance or (b) serious and unavoidable medical circumstances.
- Exams require you to use Respondus Lockdown, a program that will "lock" you out of being able to use other websites or items to take the exam. No notes, books, PowerPoints, electronic devices, etc. are allowed during exams. You are also prohibited from discussing the exam with each other during the 48-hour exam window.

You should download [Respondus Lockdown](#) and install it on your computer ASAP.

**Grading**

Your overall grade in the course will be determined by the number of points you receive divided by the total number of points in the course (1,000), and will follow this breakdown:

A: 90-100%	C: 70-79.9%	F: 59.9% or lower
B: 80-89.9%	D: 60-69.9%	

For any grading disputes you would like to bring up, you have one (1) week from when you receive your grade to review it and contact me. After the week has passed, I will not review it again.

**COURSE POLICIES****Our Inclusive Learning Environment**

I'm dedicated to establishing and maintaining an inclusive, welcoming, and open learning environment that values diversity. Regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, geographic background, religion, political ideology, language, or culture, I expect everyone to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of our class. If there is anything that results in barriers to your inclusion, engagement, accurate assessment or achievement, please notify me as soon as possible.

**COVID-19**

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please [contact CASS](#) and let your instructors know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu), so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help communicate with your professors. The [Student Health Center](#) is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. **If you still need the vaccine, it is available in the El Paso area.** For more information about current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

**If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, please do not come to class. Instead, contact me and we can make other arrangements.**

### **Attendance/Late Policy**

Active participation and engagement will help you understand the material better. I know it can be intimidating or difficult to actively participate (trust me, I really get it). To encourage this, I'm committed to providing the spaces and opportunities for you to actively participate by pausing during lectures to give you time to ask questions or make comments and providing small group sessions that make it easier to engage with your classmates.

Emergencies, illnesses, weather, and other priorities happen. Makeup exams, assignments, and activities (including in-class and MindTap activities) will not be offered except under exceptional circumstances. This is why you can drop several of each assignment type. This is designed to replace a more complicated excused absence and missed work system. Only approved absences for university-recognized activities, military leave, and religious holidays may be excused if documentation is provided in accordance with the university policies listed in the Student Handbook. In such cases, you will be required to complete an alternative assignment.

### **Laptops/Phones**

If you are going to use social media or visit any other non-course-related websites during class, please sit in the back of the classroom out of respect for everyone else. If you get this far in the syllabus, email me a picture of your favorite animal for 1 point extra credit!

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the [UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures](#). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student or possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be

referred to the Dean of Students Office (Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution) for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

By enrolling in this course, you agree to uphold a class honor code in which we trust one another and engage only in behaviors that reflect our community standards of academic integrity.

**If any part of you feels even slightly tempted to engage in academic dishonesty for the sake of a better grade, come talk to me and I'll give you all sorts of tips and tricks to earn that grade you're hoping for.**

## UTEP RESOURCES

### Classroom Accommodation

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 915-747-5148, [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). The instructor must be notified by CASS by the end of the first week of classes to facilitate accommodations support implementation. However, if an emergency arises later in the semester, contact CASS ASAP.

### Library

A number of resources (e.g., online access journals and eBooks, reference service, librarian assistance) are available through [UTEP Library](#).

### Technology Solutions

If you experience technological difficulties (e.g., email, Blackboard, software), you can submit a ticket to the [UTEP Helpdesk](#) for assistance. You can also find additional [remote learning resources here](#).

If you don't have access to the internet or a computer, there are a few options available:

- Check out a laptop or mobile hotspot from UTEP:  
[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc\\_eqcheckout.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc_eqcheckout.html)
- Use the computers in the Collaborative Learning Center (UTEP Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)
- Make an appointment to use the Liberal Arts computers:  
<https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/technology/coronavirus/>

You can download Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, etc.) for free from UTEP:

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFTWARE\\_PAGES/soft\\_microsoftoffice365.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFTWARE_PAGES/soft_microsoftoffice365.html)

If you experience any difficulties with Blackboard:

- Try using a different web browser. Chrome and Firefox are recommended.
- Ensure your browser is updated and clear your cache.
- Consult Blackboard or UTEP Blackboard help links, on the left side of Blackboard home page.
- Contact UTEP's help desk

**Writing Center**

For assistance with writing style and formatting, to receive tutoring help, and more you can visit the [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#).

**Military Student Success Center**

UTEP welcomes military-affiliated students to its degree programs, and the [Military Student Success Center](#) and its dedicated staff (many of whom are veterans and students themselves) are here to help personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

**Financial Resources**

The Dean of Students can help with [financial resources](#), including emergency loans to purchase textbooks.

**Mental, Physical, and/or Academic Challenges**

As a student, you may experience challenges such as struggles with academics, finances, student life, or your personal well-being. Please know this is completely normal, and you shouldn't hesitate to ask for help. Come to me, or if it's about an issue beyond the scope of our class, please contact your advisors or get help from any number of support services and resources available (see below).

Please note, faculty have a legal obligation to report incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking allegedly committed by or against a student or employee of the university to a Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you report such an incident, I have a legal obligation to report it and cannot guarantee confidentiality. Any reports of suicidal thoughts will also be reported. As such, it is important to make you aware of the following resources available to you that do allow for confidential reporting:

- [The University Counseling Center](#) offers counseling services for UTEP students. You may contact them at 915-747-5302, [caps@utep.edu](mailto:caps@utep.edu), or 202 Union West.
- [The Campus Advocacy, Resources, & Education Office](#) seeks to empower students who have been impacted by violence by providing private advocacy, resources, and support services. You may contact them at 915-747-7452, [care@utep.edu](mailto:care@utep.edu), or 1101 N. Campbell St., Room 100-103.
- [UTEP Student Health and Wellness Center](#) addresses health care needs of all UTEP students. You may contact them at 915-747-5624, [studenthealth@utep.edu](mailto:studenthealth@utep.edu), or 100 Union East.

**Syllabus Disclaimer:** This syllabus is intended to give you guidance on what will be covered during the semester, and will be followed as closely as possible. However, I may modify, supplement, and make changes throughout the semester.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

The course schedule is tentative and subject to change. You will complete the following activities on MindTap for each chapter: (a) Chapter readings and Check Your Understanding **BEFORE** class and (b) Mastery Training and Chapter Review Quizzes 1-2 days **AFTER** class so you don't fall behind. However, Mastery Trainings and Review Quizzes can be completed up until 11:59pm the night before the exam covering that section without penalty. Discussion activities will be posted on Blackboard.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Chapter
1	1/17 1/19	Introduction to the Course Introduction to Psych & Law	Ch 1
2	1/24 1/26	Overview of the Legal System Crime	Ch 2 Ch 3
3	1/31 <b>2/2</b>	Police <b>In-class Discussion #1: Policing</b>	Ch 4 <b>Discussion #1 materials (Bb)</b>
4	<b>2/7</b> 2/9	<b>EXAM 1 (on Bb, no class)</b> Eyewitnesses	<b>Ch 1-4</b> Ch 5
5	2/14 <b>2/16</b>	Eyewitnesses (cont.) <b>In-class Discussion #2: Eyewitnesses</b>	<b>Discussion #2 materials (Bb)</b>
6	2/21 2/23	Victims Criminal Suspects	Ch 6 Ch 7
7	<b>2/28</b> <b>3/2</b>	<b>In-class Discussion #3: Confessions</b> <b>EXAM 2 (on Bb, no class)</b>	<b>Discussion #3 materials (Bb)</b> <b>Ch 5-7</b>
8	3/7 3/9	Traditional Prosecutions Alternative Prosecutions	Ch 8 Ch 9
9	<b>3/14</b> <b>3/16</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b> <b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
10	<b>3/21</b> 3/23	<b>In-class Discussion #4: Prosecutions</b> Criminal Forensic Assessment	<b>Discussion #4 materials (Bb)</b> Ch 10
11	3/28 <b>3/30</b>	Civil Forensic Assessment <b>In-class Discussion #5: Juvenile Offenders</b>	Ch 11 <b>Discussion #5 materials (Bb)</b>
12	<b>4/4</b> 4/6	<b>EXAM 3 (on Bb, no class)</b> Preparing for Trials	<b>Ch 8-11</b> Ch 12
13	4/11 4/13	Jurors & Juries Jurors & Juries	Ch 13
14	<b>4/18</b> 4/20	<b>In-class Discussion #6: Juries</b> Punishment and Sentencing	<b>Discussion #6 materials (Bb)</b> Ch 14
15	4/25 <b>4/27</b>	Corrections <b>In-class Discussion #7: Rehabilitation</b>	Ch 15 <b>Discussion #7 materials (Bb)</b>
16	<b>5/2</b> 5/4	<b>EXAM 4 (on Bb, no class)</b> Final Exam Review	<b>Ch 12-15</b>
	<b>5/9</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM (on Bb, no class)</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>

**Other Important Dates:**

- Feb. 1: Spring Census Day, last day to register for classes.
- March 30: Drop/Withdrawal Deadline.

\* Portions of this syllabus were adapted from Professors Krystia Reed, Katherine Serafine, and Rebecca Littman.