

Psychology & the Law

Lecture: Mondays & Wednesdays 4:30-5:50pm, Room: UGLC 346

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 how 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:

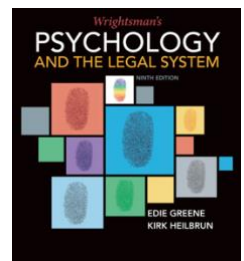
- Establish a collaborative, close, inclusive classroom environment.
- Facilitate and encourage your learning.

Course materials:

Required Text: Greene, E., & Heilbrun, K. (2019). *Wrightsmen's Psychology & the Legal System*, 9th 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 linked to Bb. Additional assignments and readings will be posted on Bb.

Visit the [Student Registration Page](#) for a step-by-step guide to register MindTap.



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 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

Student Hours: Wednesday 3:00-4:00pm or by appointment

Location: Vowell* 301

*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 anytime you have questions, concerns, or just want to chat about the course. It’s important you know I’m here to support you and your learning. If something isn’t working or you have constructive feedback 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, 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

Virtual Cengage Student Office Hours: Click this link to access [CENGAGE STUDENT OFFICE HOURS](#).

Jan. 13th-Feb. 7th from 9am-3pm MST.

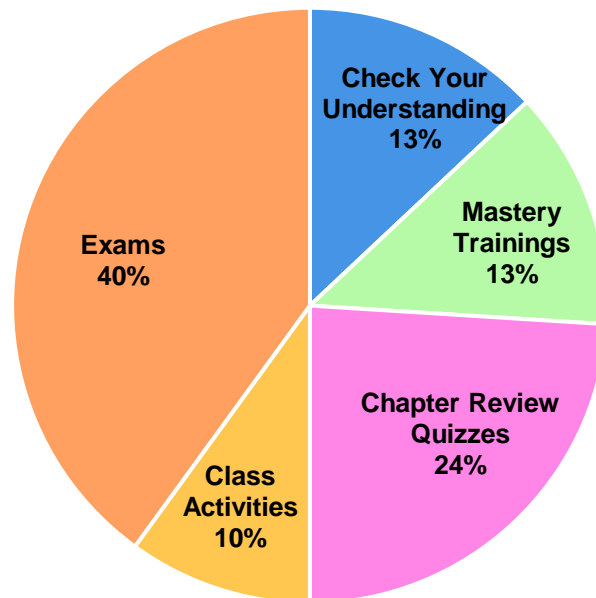
Lisa Goodrich's email: lisa.goodrich@cengage.com

COURSE FORMAT

The course will meet in-person two times a week (Mondays & Wednesdays). 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. 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. I recommend completing these 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. I recommend completing these 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 Monday or Wednesday). 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, 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.

Extra Credit (10 points)

You are eligible to receive up to 10 points of extra credit by participating in psychological research at UTEP via the SONA system. The 10 extra credit points equate to 2 hours of SONA credit. To receive credit, you must register SONA credits for this class (not multiple classes). The deadline to complete this is May 9th.

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. 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, [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, 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.

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

Although attendance and participation are not graded, 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'll be 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, activities (including in-class and MindTap activities), etc. 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. You must be present to receive credit for the assignments given in class.

Laptops/Phones

If you are going to use social media or visit non-course-related websites during class, please sit in the back of the classroom out of respect for everyone else.

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 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 \(OSCCR\)](#)) 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

UTEP is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. For additional information, visit the CASS website at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>.

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 915-747-5148, cass@utep.edu, apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. The instructor must be notified by CASS by the end of the first week of classes to facilitate accommodations. However, if an emergency arises later in the semester, contact CASS ASAP.

Library

A number of resources (e.g., online access to 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
- Use the computers in the Collaborative Learning Center (UTEP Library, 2nd floor)

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

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).

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, 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, or 1101 N. Campbell St.
- [UTEP Student Health and Wellness Center](#) addresses health care needs of UTEP students. You may contact them at 915-747-5624, 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 recommended 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. Discussion activities will be posted on Blackboard.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Chapter
1	1/20 1/22	MLK Day—NO CLASS Introduction to the Course	
2	1/27 1/29	Introduction to Psych & Law Overview of the Legal System	Ch 1 Ch 2
3	2/3 2/5	Crime Police	Ch 3 Ch 4
4	2/10 2/12	In-class Discussion #1: Policing EXAM 1 (on Bb, no class)	Discussion #1 materials (Bb) Ch 1-4
5	2/17 2/19	Eyewitnesses In-class Discussion #2: Eyewitnesses	Ch 5 Discussion #2 materials (Bb)
6	2/24 2/26	Victims Criminal Suspects	Ch 6 Ch 7
7	3/3 3/5	In-class Discussion #3: Confessions EXAM 2 (on Bb, no class)	Discussion #3 materials (Bb) Ch 5-7
8	3/10 3/12	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK	
9	3/17 3/19	Traditional Prosecutions Alternative Prosecutions	Ch 8 Ch 9
10	3/24 3/26	In-class Discussion #4: Prosecutions Criminal Forensic Assessment	Discussion #4 materials (Bb) Ch 10
11	3/31 4/2	Civil Forensic Assessment In-class Discussion #5: Juvenile Offenders	Ch 11 Discussion #5 materials (Bb)
12	4/7 4/9	EXAM 3 (on Bb, no class) Preparing for Trials	Ch 8-11 Ch 12
13	4/14 4/16	Jurors & Juries Jurors & Juries	Ch 13
14	4/21 4/23	In-class Discussion #6: Juries Punishment and Sentencing	Discussion #6 materials (Bb) Ch 14
15	4/28 4/30	Corrections In-class Discussion #7: Rehabilitation	Ch 15 Discussion #7 materials (Bb)
16	5/5 5/7	EXAM 4 (on Bb, no class) Final Exam Review	Ch 12-15
	5/12- 5/14	FINAL EXAM (on Bb, no class)	Cumulative

Other Important Dates:

- Feb. 5: Spring Census Day, last day to register for classes.
- April. 4: Drop/Withdrawal Deadline.

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