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**Professor:** Brian Cahill, PhD

**Department:** Psychology

**Office:** 257 Psy

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1-4pm or by appointment (**Zoom office hours by appointment only and only available to UFO students enrolled in section 321G**)

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**Graduate Teaching Assistants:**

**Teaching Assistants: Graduate TAs:** I will add this information once I get it.

**Office:** Virtual Office hours only

**Office Hours:** I will add this information once I get it

**Class Communication expectations:**

Please keep in mind that we need 48 hours to respond to all emails, NOT including weekends or holidays. Also, I am a big proponent of encouraging a work-life balance, as such, we will NOT respond to emails on weekends or holidays.

*"The struggle for justice doesn't end with me. This struggle is for all the Troy Davis's who came before me and all the ones who will come after me. I'm in good spirits and I'm prayerful and at peace." Troy Davis most likely an innocent man who was executed by the State of Georgia on Sept 21, 2011 at 11:00 PM.*

**Course Description:**

Legal Psychology is the study of the interaction between the individual and the legal system. This course will cover the major topics in the field, including eyewitness identification, investigative interviewing, interrogations, jury selection, the insanity defense, and punishment. Throughout the course, we will examine psychological research that investigates issues related to law and the legal process. At the end of the course, you will have a better understanding of how the legal system can be informed by psychological research, and how psychological research can be reactive to legal issues. Students should be prepared to think critically about each topic and to actively participate in class discussions; I enjoy discussions, so expect them in most of the modules! Successful completion of this course requires participation in class activities, completion of all assignments, and timely reading of assigned materials.

## Course Goals:

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Have a better understanding of a variety of contemporary issues in the legal system.
2. Have a basic understanding of research methods in the study of psychology and law.
3. Understand how psychological research can inform legal policies and procedures.

## Recommended Text, Canvas, and Required Materials:

**Text:** Castanzo & Krauss (2021). Forensic and Legal Psychology (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Worth Publishers, NY, NY.

*This course is participating in the UF ALL ACCESS program. **The ALL ACCESS program will allow you to gain access to the course materials at a significantly discounted price.** \*\*Please see UF All Access PDF posted in in the course files for directions on how to opt-in and access your course materials. Go to <https://bsd.ufl.edu/allaccess> to log into your GatorLink account. You will see a list of classes in which you are enrolled that are participating in UF All Access, with the prices. Click the **Opt-in check box** next to the appropriate class. You may have more than one class that you are taking participating in the program. Students then need to click the button below to authorize the charges.*



*This course is participating in the UF ALL ACCESS program for the **Spring 2023** semester. **The ALL ACCESS program will allow you to gain access to the required materials for the course at a significantly discounted price.** \*\*Please see UF All Access PDF posted in in the course files for directions on how to opt-in and access your course materials. Go to <https://bsd.ufl.edu/allaccess> to log into your GatorLink account. You will see a list of classes in which you are enrolled that are participating in UF All Access, with the prices. Click the **Opt-in check box** next to the appropriate class. You may have more than one class that you are taking participating in the program. Students then need to click the button below to authorize the charges.*

**Canvas:** If you aren't already comfortable with the Canvas platform ( <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>; click "Log in to e-Learning"), I highly suggest that you spend some time exploring its various components. It's our everything portal; the repository for **all** of the resources you'll need to make your way through the course. Announcements will be made periodically about class issues (such as when grades are posted). These will be visible on Canvas. Students are responsible for all announcements made there. Thus you must check Canvas on a daily basis so you don't miss any course announcement.

**Multimedia:** Netflix: You will need to obtain a Netflix account or have reliable access to one as you will be required to watch the first season of the documentary series titled "[Making a Murderer](#)" during the first week of the course. The series consists of 20, one-hour episodes and covers the exoneration of Steven Avery and the subsequent prosecution of him for a murder he is accused of committing shortly after being exonerated. This documentary is shocking to say the least and provides a sad but needed look into what we consider to be a fair and impartial justice system. We will reference this series throughout class as it provides an invaluable look into the current issues facing our legal system. Also, you will have several discussion posts related to various episodes in season one and thus successful completion of these posts is dependent upon you watching this series.

### **Additional Resources:**

[The Innocence Files on Netflix](#)

[Confession Tapes on Netflix](#)

[The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town](#) by John Grisham

[The Wrong Guys: Murder, False Confessions, and the Norfolk Four](#) by Tom Wells and Richard Leo

[Witness for the Defense: The Accused, the Eyewitness and the Expert Who Puts Memory on Trial](#) by Elizabeth Loftus and Katherine Ketcham

[Serial Podcast, Season 1](#): This podcast series investigated the 1999 murder of Hae Min Lee and is wickedly addicting!

[Murder on a Sunday Morning](#): Is an Oscar winning documentary that covers the murder trial of a young black man in Florida. If you love this class you will love this movie!

I have so many more recommendations so if you get through all of these and want more just let me know!

### **Course Structure:**

**Modules:** To make the class easier for you I have standardized the opening and due dates of all modules and assignments throughout the course. Most modules will be 1 week long (see class schedule for exceptions). Also most modules will begin on Monday at 12am (EST) and will end the following Sunday at 11:59pm (EST). Most Quizzes and Activities will be due on Sunday at 11:59pm (EST) (see class schedule for exceptions), while discussion posts will have 2 due dates.

Your initial discussion post will be due on a Thursday at 11:59pm (EST) and your response to a fellow student's discussion post will be due on Sunday at 11:59pm (EST). There may be exceptions to this pattern so please make sure you examine the class schedule carefully. Make sure you read the class schedule very carefully and mark all due dates in your calendar. **I tried to keep everything standardized as much as possible but because of various holidays I was unable to keep it perfect so please keep this in mind.**

**Exams:** Each exam will consist of 45 multiple-choice questions and 1 open ended question and you will have 60 minutes to complete them. Each multiple-choice will be worth 2 points and the open ended question will be worth 10 points for a total of 100 points for each exam. There will be 4 exams in all and each exam will be non-cumulative. Exam 1 will cover chapters 1, 2, and 3; Exam 2 will cover chapters 4, 5, and 7; Exam 3 will cover chapters 6, 9, and 10; and Exam 4 will cover chapters 12 and 17. Each exam will be taken using honorlock and remember you will NOT be allowed to use your book or notes. To make sure you have ample time to watch all of the lectures and prepare for the exams your exams will be given the week after the final module is covered for each exam. For example, Exam 1 covers modules 2 – 4 so the exam will be on the Monday of Module 5. This will be the same for all exams except for Exam 4 which will be on the Monday of examination week. You will be given 1 hour to complete each exam. Your lowest exam score will be dropped, so 3 exams x 100 = 300 points total.

Honorlock will proctor your exams this semester. Honorlock is an online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your home. You DO NOT need to create an account, download software or schedule an appointment in advance. Honorlock is available 24/7 and all that is needed is a computer, a working webcam, and a stable Internet connection.

To get started, you will need Google Chrome and to download the Honorlock Chrome Extension. You can download the extension at [www.honorlock.com/extension/install](http://www.honorlock.com/extension/install)

When you are ready to test, log into Canvas, go to your course, and click on your exam. Clicking "Launch Proctoring" will begin the Honorlock authentication process, where you will take a picture of yourself, show your ID, and complete a scan of your room. Honorlock will be recording your exam session by webcam as well as recording your screen. Honorlock also has an integrity algorithm that can detect search-engine use, so please do not attempt to search for answers, even if it's on a secondary device.

Honorlock support is available 24/7/365. If you encounter any issues, you may contact them via live chat.

**Please keep in mind that any violation of the academic code of conduct on exams or quizzes will result in a course grade penalty of one letter grade and completion of an ethical decision making training course. However, if you have a prior history of misconduct then misconduct will result in an E grade in the course.**

**Quizzes:** At the beginning of each week (i.e., Sunday at 11:59pm (EST)) I'll open up a 10-question **multiple-choice** quiz on Canvas. They'll be timed, such that you won't be able to look up answers quickly enough without knowing exactly where to look, so preparation's important. These quizzes are non-cumulative, thus they will focus on the current material being covered that week/module. Also, the questions will be randomly selected from a large question pool so each person's quiz will differ. Quizzes for each module will be due at the end of each module/week, which is usually a Sunday, at 11:59pm (EST). Please remember that you are to complete these quizzes independently and **any violation of the academic code of conduct on quizzes will result in a course grade penalty of one letter grade and completion of an ethical decision**

**making/plagiarism training course. However, if you have a prior history of misconduct then misconduct will result in an E grade in the course.** There will be 10 quizzes in total, one for each of the modules 2 -12, each worth 5 points (.5 points per question). Your lowest quiz score will be dropped, so 10 quizzes x (10 questions x 1/2 points each) = 50 points total.

**Discussion Posts:** There will be a total of 3 discussion posts throughout class, with your lowest discussion grade being dropped. Your posts will consist of an initial post which will entail you addressing the topic posed by me as well as a follow up response to one of your fellow students' posts. The purpose of these posts is for you to think critically about a topic and share your thoughts with your fellow students. The posts will likely change format from one to the next, but I will provide you with a detailed rubric for each post so you will have a clear understanding of what I am looking for in that particular post. I will open the post at the beginning of each module as well as post the rubric. The reason behind having 2 due dates for this assignment is to make sure that you give everyone ample time to read your post and create a thoughtful response. Hopefully this will allow for some really great discussions!!! Please remember that you are to complete these posts independently and **any violation of the academic code of conduct on discussion posts (e.g., plagiarism, posting a blank post to see others responses before posting your own post, etc.) will result in a course grade penalty of one letter grade and completion of an ethical decision making/plagiarism training course. However, if you have a prior history of misconduct then misconduct will result in an E grade in the course.** To earn your full points, make sure you **fully answer/address each component in the initial post** and provide a **thoughtful** response to a fellow student's post that will generate further discussions. Each post will be worth a maximum of 20 points, so with 2 posts x 20 points = 40 points total. Your lowest discussion grade will be dropped.

**Activities:** Another part of your grade is comprised of completing 4 activities. These activities are designed to be fun, interactive, and will help reinforce material we cover in that particular module. The first activity will be in Module 1 and will be a True/False quiz that will assess your knowledge of current legal issues. After you take the Legal Knowledge quiz you will discuss your reaction to your performance in a discussion post and it is this discussion post that is graded. The second activity will be in Module 6 and will consist of you categorizing killers into the different types based on their criminal acts and motivations. The third activity will consist of you role playing as an Eyewitness Expert and will consist of you working on a mock case with an AI attorney chat bot. The fourth activity will consist of you role playing as a jury consultant and will consist of you conducting voir dire with an AI chat bot to select a jury. More details about each of these will be provided at the beginning of their respective modules. Please remember that you are to complete these activities independently and **any violation of the academic code of conduct on discussion posts (e.g., plagiarism, working with others on the activity, etc.) will result in a course grade penalty of one letter grade and completion of an ethical decision making/plagiarism training course. However, if you have a prior history of misconduct then misconduct will result in an E grade in the course.** Activities will be available at the beginning of the module and will be due at the end of that module (i.e., Sunday at 11:59pm (EST)). The legal knowledge activity will be worth 9 points, serial killer activity will be worth 16 points, the Eyewitness Role Play activity will be worth 30 points, and the Jury Selection Role Play activity will be worth 24 points.

**Reflection Assignment Papers:** The goals of every class you take should be at least twofold: 1) Leave a more critical thinker and 2) Leave with more knowledge than you entered. In recent years I have realized that students often leave classes not realizing how much their thinking has

changed over the course of the semester. Thus, I want you to do an assignment that I hope will help you actualize how much you learn in this class. For this assignment I want you to write an initial reflection paper (no more than 250 words) in which you will answer the following questions: What is your current view of our criminal justice system? What can psychology contribute to the criminal justice system? How confident are you with your knowledge of the legal system? You will answer these questions in an essay format and upload it to canvas (see the schedule for the due date). Initial reflection paper is worth 5 points (a detailed rubric is on canvas).

For this assignment you will read your initial reflection paper and then submit, your final reflection paper (no more than 500 words) in which you will address the following question: How have your answers to the previous questions changed? That is, I want you to read your answers to the initial questions and then discuss in this paper how, if any, your answers have changed. You will answer this question in an essay format and upload your paper to canvas (see the schedule for the due date). The final reflection paper is worth 10 points (a detailed rubric is on canvas). Please remember that you are to complete these papers independently and **any violation of the academic code of conduct on the papers (e.g., plagiarism) will result in a course grade penalty of one letter grade and completion of an ethical decision making/plagiarism training course. However, if you have a prior history of misconduct then misconduct will result in an E grade in the course.**

#### Grading Procedure:

Assessment	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Exams	300	62%
Quizzes	50	10.3%
Discussion Posts	40	8.3%
Activities	79	16.3%
Initial and Final Reflection Papers	15	3.1%

Your final grade will include 3 exams, 10 quizzes, 2 discussion posts, 4 activities, and 2 reflection papers. **The following scale will be used to determine final grades, I will not round up final grades under any circumstances, so for example, 89.99 will be a B+ NOT an A-:**

A	=	93 – 100%	C-	=	70 – 72%
A-	=	90 – 92%	D+	=	67 – 69%
B+	=	87 – 89%	D	=	63- 66%
B	=	83 - 86 %	D-	=	60 – 62%
B-	=	80 - 82 %	E	=	0 – 59%
C+	=	77 - 79 %			
C	=	73 – 76%			

At any time, you may calculate your grade by adding up the number of points earned, dividing that sum by the number of points attempted, and multiplying the result by 100. Information about UF's current grading policies may be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>



## Our Class Policies

**This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).**

### **Late Work and Make ups:**

An example: You have been very busy all week, so you keep putting off taking that online quiz for your favorite class Cognitive Psychology. It is finally time for you to take the quiz, so you put on your most comfortable Snuggie, crawl into your memory foam bed and turn on your notebook to take the quiz and then you say, “Son of a &^%\*&!” because your internet goes out so you have no way of accessing the quiz now. You look at the clock and now there is only 20 minutes before the deadline, so you don’t even have time go to a local Starbucks to access the internet. So, you emailed me panicked, telling me about this horrible situation and plead for me to allow you to take the quiz late. Well unfortunately, unlike Lloyd Christmas who famously said “So you’re telling me there’s a chance. YEAH!”, you have no chance of earning points for late work, so please make sure you turn your assignments in on time. Please, please, please, be responsible and make sure you do not wait until the last minute to do any of your graded assignments. Of note, if the Canvas website experiences course wide technical difficulties deadlines will be adjusted to allow for completion of assignments. However, issues with your equipment (e.g., your computer) do not qualify as a valid excuse to allow for the submission of late work.

NO MAKE-UPS WILL BE GIVEN ON ANY MATERIAL FOR THIS COURSE, except for university excused absences with adequate documentation (i.e. doctor’s note). **You must notify me before the course material is due unless there are serious extenuating circumstances that physically prevent you from doing so.** Proper documentation must be provided prior to making up the missed assignment. Lastly, make-ups need to be completed no later than a week after the material was due (including weekends and holidays). Thus, if the material was due on Wednesday, then it must be completed by the following Wednesday at 11:59pm unless there are significant extenuating circumstances. **Keep in mind that for assignments that are open for multiple days (e.g., quizzes, discussion posts) make-ups will only be allowed if the documentation for the university approved absence is for more than 50% of the assignment window. For example, if an assignment is open for 1 week you need to provide university approved documentation that you were unable to work for 4 days or more during the assignment window. Lastly, all work must be made up within 1 week of the original due date, unless there are significant extenuating circumstances that you can provide documentation for.** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

**Grade Disputes:** For all graded assignments, you will have 1 week from the day your grades are released to dispute your grade, after which your grade will become final and can no longer be disputed. Obviously, just because you dispute your grade DOES NOT mean your grade will be changed in your favor. VERY IMPORTANT, keep in mind that if you request me to reevaluate your grade on an assignment, I will have to regrade your assignment which means your grade could increase, stay the same, or decrease based on my evaluation. Also, disputing your grade should not be a default reaction to any low grade you receive, please only pursue this route when you are confident that you can make a case that an error occurred. If you wish to dispute a grade you must email me to inform me that you wish to dispute your grade. Then you must attend office hours and be ready to provide a sound argument using the rubric and course material to

support your claim. Lastly, any changes to grades will be made solely at the discretion of your professor.

**Turnitin.com:** Turnitin.com is a plagiarism detection service available to the faculty at UF. The website searches your paper for instances of plagiarism (from previously turned in papers, internet resources and publications). **Plagiarizing on any assignment in this course will result in a course grade penalty of one letter grade and completion of a plagiarism decision training course. However, if you have a prior history of misconduct then plagiarism/misconduct on any assignment will result in an E grade in the course.** Please make sure you read the sections on plagiarism and misconduct in your Student Handbook and the APA manual. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism and misconduct are and any misunderstandings on your part may not be used as excuses.

Lastly, there have been recent advancements in the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and while many of these advancements are of benefit to society there exists serious pitfalls as well. One such pitfall is using AI to generate academic work for this class and then to submit it for grading as if YOU generated this work. To be clear, if you submit any work to this class for grading, that has been generated (in part or in whole) using any kind of AI program/computer program/chatbot/etc, under the guise that it is your OWN original work, then you will have committed academic misconduct and you will be reported to the university. Remember, **any form of academic misconduct within this class will result in a course grade penalty of one letter grade and completion of a plagiarism/ethical decision making course. However, if you have a prior history of misconduct then plagiarism/misconduct on any assignment will result in an E grade in the course.** The two greatest threats to the academic integrity of the University of Florida are cheating and plagiarism. Students should be aware of their faculty's policy on collaboration, should understand how to properly cite sources, and should not give nor receive an improper academic advantage in any manner through any medium. [UF Student Honor Code.](#)



**SOP 4842 Legal Psychology**  
**Spring 2026**  
**\*\*Course Schedule\*\***

Module/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments (all Assignments Due at 11:59pm (EST))
Start Here Page	General Course Information		<b>Very Important, must complete the following: syllabus quiz (score 100% on it), submit the legal knowledge activity, initial reflection paper (Score at least a 1 on it), makeup late work syllabus policy acknowledgement (Score a 1 on it), and contribute to the introduce yourself discussion post to open the rest of the modules</b>
1 (1/12 – 1/18)	Course Introduction Making a Murderer	Making a Murderer	<b>Due: Legal Knowledge Activity Post 1/18</b>
2 (1/20 – 1/25)	Psychology and Law: A Cautious Alliance	Chapter 1 Making a Murderer	<b>Due: Quiz 1/25</b> <b>Due: Initial Discussion Post 1/22; Response Post 1/25</b>
3 (1/26 – 2/1)	Interrogations and Confessions	Chapter 3	<b>Due: Initial Discussion Post 1/29; Response Post 2/1</b> <b>Due: Quiz 2/1</b>
4 (2/2 – 2/8)	Lie Detection	Chapter 2	<b>Due: Quiz 2/8</b>
5 (2/9 – 2/15)	The Psychology of Forensic Identification	Chapter 4	<b>Exam 1: Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Take between 12am and 11:59pm (EST) on 2/9</b> <b>Due: Quiz 2/15</b>
6 (2/16 – 2/22)	Criminal Profiling and Psychological Autopsies	Chapter 5	<b>Due: Serial Killer Activity 2/22</b> <b>Due: Quiz 2/22</b>
7 (2/23 – 3/1)	Interviewing Children and Memories of Sexual Abuse	Chapter 7	<b>Due: Quiz 3/1</b>
8 (3/2 – 3/8)	Jury Selection	Chapter 9	<b>Exam 2: Chapters 4, 5, and 7. Take between 12am and 11:59pm (EST) on 3/2</b> <b>Jury Selection Role Play 3/8</b> <b>Quiz 3/8</b>
9 (3/9 – 3/29)	Eyewitness Identification and Testimony	Chapter 6	<b>Due: Quiz 3/29</b> <b>Due: Eyewitness Expert Role Play 3/29</b>
10 (3/30 – 4/5)	The Insanity Defense	Chapter 10	<b>Due: Quiz 4/5</b>
11 (4/6 – 4/12)	Juries and Judges as Decision Makers	Chapter 12	<b>Exam 3: Chapters 6, 9, and 10. Take between 12am and 11:59pm (EST) on 4/6</b> <b>Due: Initial Discussion Post 4/9; Response Post 4/12</b> <b>Due: Quiz 4/12</b>

12 (4/13 – 4/19)	The Death Penalty	Chapter 17	<b>Due: Quiz 4/19</b> <b>Due: Final Reflection paper 4/19</b>
4/20 – 4/26	Exam Review		<b>Exam 4: Chapters 12 and 17. Take between 12am and 11:59pm (EST) on 4/27</b>

**\*\*This syllabus is tentative and subject to change\*\***