

## PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LAW (PSY 383, Sec. 1)

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Fall 2008 TTH 8-9:20 a.m.

Office Hours: Tues. 2-3:00; Wed. 11-12:00, Thurs. 2-3:00, or by appointment

**Course Description:** This course is designed to provide an overview of the relationship between psychology and the legal system. The focus will be on scientific applications. The course will consist of lecture and discussion. **Everyone is expected to come to class having read the appropriate material for that day's topic and be prepared to discuss that material.**

**Textbook:** Greene, E., Heilbrun, K., Fortune, W. H., & Nietzel, M. T. (2007). *Wrightsmen's Psychology and the Legal System* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. The assigned readings are indicated on the accompanying tentative calendar. The exams will include questions from both the lectures and the reading assignments, so expect some questions from the text that were not discussed in class.

### Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

► **Goal: Gaining factual knowledge in the area of psychology and legal issues**

Learning outcome: you will be able to define key terms and concepts

Learning outcome: you will understand and be able to describe the impact of the situation on individual behavior in the legal arena

Learning outcome: you will understand the ways information processing (i.e., attention, perception, memory) affects interpretation of the legal matters

► **Goal: Learning fundamental principles & theories related to social behavior**

Learning outcome: you will be able to describe major theories and research findings in the area of psychology and law

Learning outcome: you will understand and be able to describe basic research methods utilized in psychology and law

► **Goal: Learning to apply the knowledge of psychology to the legal issues**

Learning outcome: you will be able to use information from psychology to interpret and understand new situations and events in the legal arena

**Grading:** There will be 3 exams. Each exam will have 100 points possible and consist of multiple choice, T/F, and/or short and long answer essay questions. There is also a comprehensive final, which will count the same as one of the previous exams. The final exam will follow the same format as the previous exams; however, it will be longer and will consist of all new questions. There will also be 11 in-class quizzes, each counting 10 points, for a total of 100 points possible (the same number of points as one of the exams, with the lowest quiz score dropped). The quizzes will cover material from lectures ONLY and are indicated on the accompanying calendar by a "Q". Please note that academic dishonesty on any exam or quiz will result in a zero for that exam or quiz.

There are a possible 400 points available in the course (3 exams, final, cumulative quiz score.). This grading scheme, therefore, allows for one missed or dropped exam (or the cumulative quiz score). Because of this, make-up exams will be permitted only in EXTREMELY rare cases, and THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES. This also means, however, that if you have taken all of the 3 exams, all or most of the quizzes, and are satisfied with your grade based on the total number of points you have at the end of classes, you do not have to take the final exam.

**Attendance Policy:** In keeping with SHSU policy, class attendance is expected and required. Although absences will be recorded, grades will be based on student performance on quizzes and exams.

**Syllabus Guidelines:** You may find online a more detailed description of the following policies. These guidelines will also provide you with a link to the specific university policy or procedure: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

**Academic Dishonesty Policy:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty in any form in this class will result in a zero for quiz, exam, or assignment, and an "F" for the course. Further, the University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. Students are to turn off all cell phones while in the classroom. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination. Please note that I reserve the right to answer any phone that rings (jingles, or otherwise signals an incoming call) in the classroom.

**Students with Disabilities Policy:** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. Please note that no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

**Religious Holidays:** Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work.

**Visitors in the Classroom :** Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

## TENTATIVE CALENDAR

DATE	TOPIC	READING
<b>AUGUST</b>		
26	Course Introduction	
28	Issues in Psychology & Law	Ch. 1
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>		
2Q,4	The Legal System	Ch. 2, 7
9Q	Trial Processes	Ch. 10
11, 16Q	Jury Issues	Ch. 12
18	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
23,25Q	Eyewitnesses	Ch. 5
30	Punishment, Sentencing, & Corrections	Ch. 15
<b>OCTOBER</b>		
2Q,7	Evaluation of Criminal Suspects	Ch. 6
9,14,16	Confessions	
21Q, 23	Forensic Assessment – Criminal	Ch. 8
28	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
30	Forensic Assessment – Civil	Ch. 9
<b>NOVEMBER</b>		
4Q	Forensic Assessment – Civil, cont'd	
6, 11Q	Children, Adolescents and Law	Ch. 14
13	Psychology & Family Law	
18,20Q	Psychology & Police	Ch. 4
25	Victim Issues	Ch. 13
27	Happy Thanksgiving !!!	
<b>DECEMBER</b>		
2Q	Victim Issues, cont'd.	
4	<b>EXAM 3</b>	
9	Careers in Psychology & Law	
11Q	Review for Final Exam	

**Final Exam** : December 18, 2008 8-10 :00 a.m.

