

**PSY 383.02 - Psychology and Law  
Fall 2008**

**Instructor:** Laura Heinonen  
**Class Time:** Thursday, 6:00-8:50  
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**Office Hrs:** Mon, 8:00-9:00; Wed, 8:00-12:00; and by appointment

**Required Text**

Greene, E., Heilbrun, K., Fortune, W.H., & Nietzel, M.T. (2006). *Wrightsman's Psychology and the Legal System (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN 0534521061

**Course Description**

This course is designed to instruct students on the relationship between psychology and the legal system. Various topics in forensic psychology will be discussed, including eyewitness testimony, confessions, profiling, jury research, psychology of criminal behavior, forensic assessment (civil and criminal), malingering and capital punishment.

**Course Objectives**

1. Students will gain an understanding of the role that psychologists play in the legal system and the influence of psychological testimony in the courtroom.
2. Students will become familiar with current psychological research and how it relates to case law and the legal system.
3. Students will learn about important issues in forensic assessment, including assessment of competence, assessment of insanity, risk assessment and malingering.

**Course Requirements**

Course grades will be determined by performance on three exams and one research paper. The following grading system will be used for all exams, the research paper, and the final course grade: A = 100-90%, B = 89-80%, C = 79-70%, D = 69-60%, F = 59-0%.

**Exams**

Four non-cumulative exams will be administered during this course. The format for each exam will be multiple choice and each exam will be worth 100 points. Students will have the option of dropping their lowest exam grade. There will be **NO MAKE-UP EXAMS!** A missed exam will count as your dropped exam for this course.

**Research Paper**

Each student will submit a 5-page paper on a specific topic in the area of psychology and law. The paper will be due December 4. Additional information on the requirements and format of the paper will be distributed in class.

Exams	3 highest grades (100 points each)	300 points
Research Paper	100 points	100 points
<b>Total Course Grade</b>	<b>Exams + Research Paper</b>	<b>400 points</b>

### **Extra Credit**

Students may earn a maximum of 15 extra credit points by participating in psychological research through the Psychology Research Participation system (PeRP). Students may participate in a maximum of 5 hours of research and will earn 3 points for each hour. The maximum 15 extra credit points will be added to the student's final score at the end of the semester. Students will need to set up an account on the PeRP system via <http://shsu.sona-systems.com/>

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance in class is expected and required. Exams are heavily weighted toward material covered in lectures. In keeping with university policy, 2 absences are allowed without any penalty. Three or more absences will result in a grade reduction.

### **Religious Holidays**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code . . ." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s).

### **Academic Honesty**

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. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty. **DO NOT CHEAT!!!**

### **Students with Disabilities**

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 are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the you register with the Counseling Center.

### **Visitors in the Classroom**

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis with approval of the instructor.

### Course Schedule

The course schedule is tentative and may be changed at the discretion of the instructor. An updated syllabus will be provided if significant changes occur.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
8/28	Introduction
9/4	Eyewitnesses
9/11	Confessions
<b>9/18</b>	<b>EXAM 1</b>
9/25	Jury Research
10/2	Profiling
10/9	Psychopathy
<b>10/16</b>	<b>EXAM 2</b>
10/23	Civil Forensic Assessment
10/30	Competence
11/6	Insanity
<b>11/13</b>	<b>EXAM 3</b>
11/20	Malingering
<b>11/27</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
<b>12/4</b>	<b>PAPER DUE</b> Sex Offenders
12/11	Death Penalty
<b>12/18</b>	<b>EXAM 4</b>