

San José State University
Justice Studies
FS 171: Forensic Criminology
Fall 2019

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Bryce Westlake
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Email: Bryce.Westlake@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday: 12:00 am to 1:00 pm, 3:00pm to 4:00 pm
Tuesday (Online): 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
Class Days/Time: Monday & Wednesday 1:30p m to 2:45 pm
Classroom: MQH 526
Prerequisites: JS/FS 100W

Course Description

Contextualizes mental processes, intentions, motivations, and reactions of criminals, police, victims, and the courts systems. Critically examines the psychology of deviant behavior, the evidentiary processes in justice systems, and the validity and reliability that come with testimony and criminal defenses.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of forensic criminologists in the courtroom (e.g., jury selection, insanity, competency, expert witness, public policy), victimology (e.g., sexual abuse, testimony, custody disputes, battered woman syndrome), and policing (e.g., investigations, profiling, interrogation), and offender risk assessment (e.g., aggression, motivation, mental illness).
2. Discuss the history of forensic criminology, how it is currently presented in society, and important historical court cases that have shaped the field.
3. Describe how forensic criminology contributes to understanding offender motives, law enforcement practices, victimology, and criminal justice system procedures.
4. Analyze how mental illness and individual psychiatric disorders contribute to criminal, violent, and other forms of antisocial behavior; and the social implications of treatment and greater acceptance of people with illnesses and disorders.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook (Required)

Kitaeff, J. (2011). *Forensic psychology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978-0-13-235291-8.

Other Readings

Supplied electronically via Canvas.

Library Liaison

Silke Higgins (silke.higgins@sjsu.edu), (408) 808-2118
<http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies>

Course Requirements and Assignments

In-Class Discussion (20%): Participation in class discussion requires arriving on time and being prepared to critically discuss the implications of key issues of the week's topic. This requires completing the weekly readings and other assignments prior to arriving in class. Your grade will reflect the importance of being active in this course, which relies in great part on the reflections, discussions, and exercises in class. Attendance is mandatory. These discussions will specifically address CLO's 1, 2 and 4.

Midterm and Final Examination (40%): You will be administered a midterm and final examination, each worth 20% of your final grade. Each exam is closed book and will cover material from lectures (including all media presented) and assigned readings. The midterm will be held during regularly scheduled class time while the final will be held during the final exam period. Each exam will be non-cumulative and comprised of multiple choice and short answer questions. These examinations will specifically address CLO's 1 and 3.

Two of the Following Three Papers

False Confession Paper (20%): You will write a five to six-page paper (excluding title page and references) on your 'favorite' false confession case. You will analyze reasons why the false confession occurred and propose solutions for preventing false confessions going forward. You are expected to provide evidence-based analyses and solutions. Detailed assignment guidelines and marking rubric will be provided via Canvas. This paper will specifically address CLO's 2, 3, and 4.

Media Portrayal Paper (20%): You will write a five to six-page paper (excluding title page and references) on a topic in this course and apply what you have learned to an episode of a fictional legal television show. You will critique the extent to which the media portrayal of forensic psychology is (in)accurate as per research on the topic. Detailed assignment guidelines and marking rubric will be provided via Canvas. This paper will specifically address CLO's 2, 3, and 4..

Landmark Court Case Paper (20%): You will write a five to six-page paper (excluding title page and references) on three landmark court cases on a specific topic/issue. You will examine the issue under dispute, how the issue was decided, and its implications on society. Detailed assignment guidelines and marking rubric will be provided via Canvas. This paper will specifically address CLO's 2,3, and 4.

Grading Information

A plus = 97.0 to 100.0

A = 94.0 to less than 97.0

A minus = 90.0 to less than 94.0

B plus = 85.0 to less than 90.0

B = 80.0 to less than 85.0

B minus = 75.0 to less than 80.0

C plus = 70.0 to less than 75.0

C = 65.0 to less than 70.0

C minus = 60.0 to less than 65.0

F = less than 60.0

- To receive a grade for this course, all course requirements must be met, and every assignment must be completed. Failure to complete any one assignment may result in a failing grade for this course.
- Late assignments/papers will lose 10% for every calendar day that they are late, including weekend days.
- Individual assignment rubrics will be provided closer to the due date, on Canvas.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>”

FS 171: Forensic Criminology Fall 2019 Course Schedule

This course schedule is subject to change with fair notice, at the instructor's discretion. Changes will be communicated via Canvas, and in-class. All reading assignments listed should be completed prior to class on that date. Additional readings may be assigned.

| Date | Topic | Weekly Overview (Subject to Change) | Readings |
|---|--------------------------------|--|--|
| August 21 st | Introduction | What is Forensic Psychology? | Chapters 1 & 2 |
| August 26 th & 28 th | | Aggression & Violence, & Non-Violent Crimes | Chapters 3 (39-52; 60-66) & 4 |
| September 4 th & 9 th | | Mass & (Female) Serial Murder | Chapters 3 (pp.52-60) & 5 |
| September 11 th & 23 rd | The Offenders | Psychopathy & Sexual Offending | TBD |
| September 25 th & 30 th | | Terrorism, Extremism, & Cults | Chapter 6 Paper #1 Due September 30th |
| October 2 nd & 7 th | | Law Enforcement, Police Psychology, & Investigations | Chapters 7 & 8 |
| October 9 th & 14 th | Investigations | Eyewitnesses & False Confessions | Chapters 9 & 10 |
| October 16 th | | MIDTERM | No Readings |
| October 21 st & 23 rd | | Profiling (Criminal & Geographic) & Typologies | TBD |
| October 28 th & 30 th | | Child, Families, & Domestic Partners | Chapter 15 |
| November 4 th | | Child Witnesses/Interviewing | TBD |
| November 6 th | Victims | School & Workplace | Chapter 14 |
| November 13 th & 18 th | | Repressed/False Memories & Novel Syndromes | Chapter 13 Paper #2 Due November 18th |
| November 20 th & 25 th | | Role of Mental Illness, Capacity & Incapacity | Chapter 11 |
| December 2 nd & 4 th | Criminal Justice System | Jury Selection & Procedures | Chapter 12 |
| December 9 th | | Risk Assessment, Treatment, & Parole | Chapter 16 |