Warren County Community College

PSY 245 Forensic Psychology
Course Master Syllabus

Course Information

Catalog Description: This course is designed for both criminal justice and psychology students to explore the fundamentals of forensic psychology as it pertains to criminal law. Students will gain an appreciation for the diversity and complexity of this subject as well as understand basic methods of profiling, jury selection, interrogation, insanity defenses, interviewing children and predicting violent behavior using risk assessments. Students will also examine workplace law, sentencing, and the controversial topic of the death penalty.

Prerequisite(s): ENG 140 – English Composition I
CRJ 105 – Introduction to Criminal Justice

Corequisite(s): None

Credits: 3

Hours: 3

Required Text(s):

Supplemental Materials:

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name:

Contact Information:

Office Hours:

Program Goals

1. Explain key concepts, theories, and empirical findings in major areas of social science including biological, cognitive, developmental, and social psychology.
2. Examine scientific research and primary sources to understand key concepts in psychological and sociological theories.

3. Discuss recent advances in behavioral genetics, brain development, and cross-cultural approaches, with an emphasis on lifespan development.
4. Investigate human behavior, mental health, and social factors using cognitive, moral, and sociocultural perspectives.
5. Explore the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness, using the DSM framework and various assessment instruments.
6. Compare sociological theories and perspectives on racial and ethnic group interactions and dominant-minority relations in the United States.

Class Core Competencies

The following core competencies are embedded in this curriculum:

- Communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
- Use scientific method of inquiry, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.
- Use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.
- Use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.
- Address an information need by locating, evaluating, and effectively using information.

Class Learning Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes	Suggested Means of Assessment
Describe and evaluate how psychology has included the courts while evaluating the effectiveness of modern technology such as brain scans, lie detection, fingerprints, trace evidence, confessions, and witness memories.	Written assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions, projects, final exam
Differentiate methods of profiling as well as jury selection, competency to stand trial, insanity pleas, and syndrome defenses following DSM-V diagnosis. Evaluate various psychological assessments as standards in legal cases.	Written assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions, projects, final exam

Student Learning Outcomes	Suggested Means of Assessment
Discuss methods of predicting violent behavior and explore issues surrounding the death penalty including racial disparities, lethal injection, and deterrent factors.	Written assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions, projects, final exam
Explore and discuss child custody decisions within the justice system and evaluate new rising issues such as same sex parenting.	Written assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions, projects, final exam
Explain psychology aspects (theories, treatments, convictions) of sexual harassment and discrimination, stalking, and sexual assault	Written assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions, projects, final exam
Identify jury characteristics, ethnicity of jury consulting, and decisions of the judges (types of imprisonment and alternative programs).	Written assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions, projects, final exam

Grading System

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	90 to 100 percent
B Plus (B+)	87 to 89.9 percent
B	80 to 86.9 percent
C Plus (C+)	77 to 79.9 percent
C	70 to 76.9 percent
D	60 to 69.9 percent
F	Below 60 percent

College Information

Disability Services
Disability Services Webpage

Statement and Policy on Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Conduct
Academic Conduct Policy (Policy 304) [PDF]

Students are required to perform all the work specified by the instructor and are responsible for the content and integrity of all academic work submitted. A violation of academic integrity will occur if a student: (1) knowingly represents work of others as one's own, (2) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in any academic work, (3) gives fraudulent assistance to another student, or (4) furnishes false information or other misuse of college documents.

Unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is prohibited unless the instructor explicitly permits it in the syllabus or assignments. If tools such as ChatGPT are permitted by an instructor to be used for an assignment, they should be used with caution and with proper citation. In all such cases, you may only use the specific tools identified as acceptable and you must adhere to the College's standards for attribution, validation, and transparency.

In cases of suspected violation of academic integrity, the incident is to be reported to the Office of Academics. A student found guilty of violating the rule of academic integrity by the Vice President of Academics will be considered to have failed in personal obligation to the College; such failure will be subject to disciplinary action by the College. Unless otherwise notified, the instructor will allow students who are pending disciplinary action to attend class.

Tutoring and Testing at the Instructional Support Center (ISC)

- Instructional Support Center (ISC) Webpage

WCCC Library Services

- WCCC Library Website

Citation Styles and Formatting

Work submitted for any Warren County Community College course must conform to the required formatting and citation style that are specified by the instructor. The Library and Instructional Support Center can assist students with formatting and citations for assignments and papers.

WCCC Attendance Expectations

The College expects students to attend and participate in all classes. This involves sharing discussions and lectures in class, as well as interacting with other students. Grades are based on the quality of work students complete in meeting the requirements for a particular course, as stated in the course syllabus and catalog description.

Attendance, among other factors, may be an additional criterion for assigning grades. Students should realize that they are responsible for all class meetings and that work missed because of absences may affect their grades. Attendance in online classes is determined by the completion of assignments/ tests. Students who have not completed any assignments or tests will be considered non-attending and receive an NF grade in online classes.

Class Attendance Expectations

Topical Outline

Grading Methods

Assignment	Points/Percentage

Class Itinerary

Week / Unit	Topic	Readings/Assignments

Week / Unit	Topic	Readings/Assignments