



UNSW Course Outline

PSYC3301 Psychology and Law - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : PSYC3301

Year : 2024

Term : Term 2

Teaching Period : T2

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : Faculty of Science

Academic Unit : School of Psychology

Delivery Mode : In Person

Delivery Format : Standard

Delivery Location : Kensington

Campus : Sydney

Study Level : Undergraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

This course provides an introduction and broad overview to the discipline of Forensic Psychology. You will be introduced to a wide range of topics in forensic psychology, covering both criminal and civil law. Topics include jury decision making, eyewitness memory, criminal

profiling, children and the courts, victims and offenders, policing, and the treatment and rehabilitation of offenders. The course will draw on cognitive, social and clinical psychological research. The goal is to demonstrate how psychological research can help us to understand and reform all aspects of the legal process. Teaching activities include two hours of lectures each week and a series of laboratory classes supported by a set of online modules. The laboratory classes include role-plays and demonstrations designed to reinforce topics covered in the lectures.

In addition to providing an introduction to Forensic Psychology, the course may offer a useful foundation for students interested in further study of forensic psychology at the Masters, Doctoral or PhD level.

Some of the topics covered in this course are also introduced in the level 1 course, PSYC1027 Forensic Psychology: Crime, Courts and Corrections. These common topics are covered in greater depth in PSYC3301, and additional topics are introduced. PSYC1027 is not a prerequisite for this course.

Course Aims

The first aim of this course is to provide an introduction and broad overview to the discipline of psychology and law. Students will be introduced to a wide range of psychological issues related to aspects of both civil and criminal law. The topics covered will draw on psychological research from various branches of the discipline including cognitive, social, developmental and clinical psychology. The second aim is to encourage an evidence-based approach to the study of topics involving the application of psychological knowledge to legal issues, and to demonstrate how psychological research can help us to understand and reform all aspects of the legal process.

Relationship to Other Courses

Some of the topics covered in this course are also introduced in the level 1 course, PSYC1027 Forensic Psychology: Crime, Courts and Corrections. These common topics are covered in greater depth in PSYC3301, and additional topics are introduced. PSYC1027 is not a prerequisite for this course.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CL01 : Apply cognitive, social and clinical psychological theories to a range of legal issues.
CL02 : Critically evaluate and apply the findings of psychological research to a range of legal and policy issues in society.
CL03 : Describe the relative strengths and limitations of different psychology research methods when applied to legal questions.
CL04 : Create reports for legal professionals which accurately summarise relevant psychological research and provide the reader with an accessible and balanced set of recommendations based on the research.
CL05 : Collaboratively prepare and deliver an oral presentation on a current psycho-legal issue.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CL01 : Apply cognitive, social and clinical psychological theories to a range of legal issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Term Test • Final Exam • Media Presentation
CL02 : Critically evaluate and apply the findings of psychological research to a range of legal and policy issues in society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psych-Legal report • Mid Term Test • Final Exam • Media Presentation
CL03 : Describe the relative strengths and limitations of different psychology research methods when applied to legal questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psych-Legal report • Mid Term Test • Final Exam • Media Presentation
CL04 : Create reports for legal professionals which accurately summarise relevant psychological research and provide the reader with an accessible and balanced set of recommendations based on the research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psych-Legal report • Final Exam
CL05 : Collaboratively prepare and deliver an oral presentation on a current psycho-legal issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Presentation

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Blackboard Collaborate

Learning and Teaching in this course

All lectures will be online. There will be no in-person lectures. The lectures will be broadcast live via Blackboard collaborate and will also be recorded. We have opted for this mode of delivery as

we find it encourages students to ask questions and respond to prompts during the lectures. We strongly encourage you to listen to the lectures live where possible.

Lab classes are all in-person. All students are assigned to one of the Lab class / tutorial groups. You must attend the assigned group. Attendance is compulsory and will be checked.

Each week the two, lectures will be used to provide students with an introduction to a broad range of topics within the field of psychology and law. Within these topic areas the lectures will cover current theory, research methods, findings and the application of these findings to the legal process. Some of these topics will be supplemented with additional online modules and resources.

The Lab classes are designed to allow opportunities for in-depth and active learning. The sessions will be used to demonstrate and explore some of the issues covered in the lectures and opportunities will be provided to explore the methods used in forensic research, to take part in practical demonstrations, to debate issues and case studies and to participate in role-plays. Lab classes will not be recorded.

Additional Course Information

The [School of Psychology Student Guide](#) contains School policies and procedures relevant for all students enrolled in undergraduate or Masters psychology courses, such as:

- Attendance requirements
- Assignment submissions and returns
- Assessments
- Special consideration
- Student code of conduct
- Student complaints and grievances
- Equitable Learning Services
- Health and safety

It is expected that students familiarise themselves with the information contained in this guide

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Mid Term Test Assessment Format: Individual	20%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Week 7 as advised
Final Exam Assessment Format: Individual	30%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Not Applicable
Media Presentation Assessment Format: Group	20%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: week 3 to 10 as assigned
Psych-Legal report Assessment Format: Individual	30%	Start Date: Week 1 Due Date: Week 8

Assessment Details

Mid Term Test

Assessment Overview

The one hour in-person mid-term test will include multiple choice and short answer questions.

The mid-term test will take place during week 5 at the times of one of the two lectures and at locations to be announced.

The test will assess the material covered in weeks 1-5 of the course and will include the contents of the lectures, the related textbook chapters or any other assigned readings and online modules, and the material from related lab classes.

The format of the test will be similar to that of the final exam and is designed to assess both breadth of knowledge and understanding (multiple choice component) and the ability to logically apply this knowledge to develop short evidence-based answers to applied questions (short answer questions).

Individual feedback will be provided online with support from tutors, and one of the laboratory classes will be devoted to more general feedback designed to help develop successful strategies to apply in the final exam.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Apply cognitive, social and clinical psychological theories to a range of legal issues.
- CL02 : Critically evaluate and apply the findings of psychological research to a range of legal and policy issues in society.

- CLO3 : Describe the relative strengths and limitations of different psychology research methods when applied to legal questions.

Detailed Assessment Description

The one hour in-person mid-term test will include multiple choice and short answer questions.

The mid-term test will take place during week 7 at the times of one of the two lectures and at locations to be announced.

The test will assess the material covered in weeks 1-5 of the course and will include the contents of the lectures, the related textbook chapters or any other assigned readings and online modules, and the material from related lab classes.

The format of the test will be similar to that of the final exam and is designed to assess both breadth of knowledge and understanding (multiple choice component) and the ability to logically apply this knowledge to develop short evidence-based answers to applied questions (short answer questions).

Individual feedback will be provided online with support from tutors, and one of the laboratory classes will be devoted to more general feedback designed to help develop successful strategies to apply in the final exam.

Assessment Length

1 hour test

Submission notes

Hand written and submitted at the end of the test

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Final Exam

Assessment Overview

There will be a 2-hour final exam held during the exam period. This exam will include multiple choice and extended answer questions covering topics covered after the midterm exam.

Assessed material includes the contents of the lectures, the related textbook chapters or any other assigned readings and online modules, and the material from related lab classes.

The exam is designed to assess both the breadth of knowledge of the topics covered (multiple

choice questions) and the ability to logically apply this knowledge to develop evidence-based answers to applied questions.

Feedback is available through inquiry with the course convenor.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Apply cognitive, social and clinical psychological theories to a range of legal issues.
- CL02 : Critically evaluate and apply the findings of psychological research to a range of legal and policy issues in society.
- CL03 : Describe the relative strengths and limitations of different psychology research methods when applied to legal questions.
- CL04 : Create reports for legal professionals which accurately summarise relevant psychological research and provide the reader with an accessible and balanced set of recommendations based on the research.

Detailed Assessment Description

There will be a 2-hour final exam held during the exam period. This exam will include multiple choice and extended answer questions covering topics covered after the midterm exam.

Assessed material includes the contents of the lectures, the related textbook chapters or any other assigned readings and online modules, and the material from related lab classes.

The exam is designed to assess both the breadth of knowledge of the topics covered (multiple choice questions) and the ability to logically apply this knowledge to develop evidence-based answers to applied questions.

Feedback is available through inquiry with the course convenor.

Assessment Length

2 Hours

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Media Presentation

Assessment Overview

You will work in a small group to prepare and deliver a 15-25-minute presentation (depending on group size) based on an issue raised by a recent media article. Preparing your presentation and listening to other presentations in your class will encourage you to think about the ways in which psychological knowledge and research can be applied to everyday legal and policy questions in our society. During week 1 or 2 you will be assigned a week for your presentation. Your assigned

week could be between weeks 3 and 10.

Working as a group you will apply the published guidelines to select a topic which has appeared in the Australian news media in the 14 days preceding your presentation and will identify psychological research relevant to this topic. You will develop a presentation which introduces the topic and reviews the relevant psychological research before leading a class discussion of issues raised. Your presentation will consist of about 6 slides. Members of the group will contribute equally to the selection of the topic, the research, the preparation of the slides and delivery of the presentation. The presentation will be assessed by the class tutor with feedback and marks provided through a marked rubric within 10 days of the due date.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Apply cognitive, social and clinical psychological theories to a range of legal issues.
- CLO2 : Critically evaluate and apply the findings of psychological research to a range of legal and policy issues in society.
- CLO3 : Describe the relative strengths and limitations of different psychology research methods when applied to legal questions.
- CLO5 : Collaboratively prepare and deliver an oral presentation on a current psycho-legal issue.

Detailed Assessment Description

You will work in a small group (typically with two other people) to prepare and deliver a 10-minute presentation based on an issue raised by a recent media article.

Preparing your presentation and listening to other presentations in your class will encourage you to think about the ways in which psychological knowledge and research can be applied to everyday legal and policy questions in our society.

During week 1 or 2 you will be assigned a week for your presentation. Your assigned week could be between weeks 3 and 10.

Working as a group you will apply the published guidelines to select a topic which has appeared in the Australian news media in the 14 days preceding your presentation and will identify psychological research relevant to this topic. You will develop a presentation which introduces the topic and reviews the relevant psychological research before leading a class discussion of issues raised.

Your presentation will consist of about 6 slides. Members of the group will contribute equally to the selection of the topic, the research, the preparation of the slides and delivery of the presentation.

Your tutor will be able to answer questions and provide guidance on all steps of this process.

The presentation will be assessed by the class tutor with feedback provided through a marked rubric.

Assessment Length

A 10 minute group presentation consisting of about 6 slides.

Submission notes

Presented during assigned tutorial slot.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Psych-Legal report

Assessment Overview

You must submit an original report of no more than 1800 words. A choice of three different topics will be published in week 1. You must select one of these topics for your report. The submission date for your report will be in week 8. You can use the intervening weeks to select your topic, undertake reading and research and seek advice from your tutor when required. Some advice on the format and content of your report will be provided with the topics. Your report should summarise and evaluate psychological research relevant to the issue you selected, and do so in a format that would be accessible and useful to the target audience specified in the question. Target audiences may include police, lawyers, politicians, practitioners and other non-psychology audiences. Reports must be submitted via Turnitin. Marks and written feedback will be provided by the end of week 10.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO2 : Critically evaluate and apply the findings of psychological research to a range of legal and policy issues in society.
- CLO3 : Describe the relative strengths and limitations of different psychology research methods when applied to legal questions.
- CLO4 : Create reports for legal professionals which accurately summarise relevant psychological research and provide the reader with an accessible and balanced set of recommendations based on the research.

Detailed Assessment Description

You must submit an original report of no more than 2,000 words in length prepared in accordance with the APA publication manual (6th edition).

A choice of three different topics will be published in week 1. You must select one of these topics for your report. The submission date for your report will be in week 8. You can use the intervening weeks to select your topic, undertake reading and research and seek advice from your tutor when required. Some advice on the format and content of your report will be provided with the topics.

Your report should summarise and evaluate psychological research relevant to the issue you selected, and do so in a format that would be accessible and useful to the target audience specified in the question. Target audiences may include police, lawyers, politicians, practitioners and other non-psychology audiences.

Reports must be submitted via a plagiarism checker.

Written feedback will be provided by the end of week 10.

Assessment Length

Maximum of 2000 words

Submission notes

Submitted via Turnitin link on Moodle site.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

General Assessment Information

Special Consideration: Students who experience circumstances outside of their control that prevent them from completing an assessment task by the assigned due date due can apply for Special Consideration. Special Consideration applications should include a medical certificate or other documentation and be submitted via myUNSW within 3 days of the sitting/due date.

Important note: UNSW has a “fit to sit/submit” rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address and advised of the official outcome. If the special consideration application is approved, you may be given an extended due date, or an alternative assessment/supplementary examination may be set. For more information about special consideration, please visit: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>.

Alternative assessments: will be subject to approval and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Implementation Procedure and Psychology Student Guide.

Supplementary examinations: will be made available for students with approved special consideration application and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Policy and Psychology Student Guide.

All course assessments have been designed and implemented in accordance with [UNSW Assessment Policy](#).

The APA (7th edition) referencing style is to be adopted in this course. Students should consult the publication manual itself (rather than third party interpretations of it) in order to properly adhere to APA style conventions. Students do not need to purchase a copy of the manual, it is available in the library or online. This resource is used by assessment markers and should be the only resource used by students to ensure they adopt this style appropriately: [APA 7th edition](#).

Grading Basis

Standard

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 27 May - 2 June	Lecture	1.1 Introduction to the Course (RK) 1.2 What is Forensic Psychology (RK)
	Online Activity	A Psychologists' Guide to the Australian Legal System.
Week 2 : 3 June - 9 June	Lecture	2.1 Profiling (RK) 2.2 False Confession (RK)
	Online Activity	Media Presentations Explained and Assignment to Groups
	Laboratory	Lab 1: Detection of Deception
Week 3 : 10 June - 16 June	Lecture	3.1 Detection of Deception 1 (RK) 3.2 Detection of Deception 2 (RK)
	Laboratory	Lab 2: Profiling
	Online Activity	Real Case Examples of false Confession. Recent Advances in the Detection of Deception.
Week 4 : 17 June - 23 June	Lecture	4.1 Mental Illness and Crime (RK) 4.2 Forensic Evidence (KM)
	Laboratory	Lab 3: Identification Procedures
	Online Activity	The Crisis in Forensic Science
Week 5 : 24 June - 30 June	Lecture	5.1 Identification Evidence (RK) 5.2 Eyewitness Memory 1 (RK)
	Laboratory	Lab 4: Witness Interviewing. Report Writing & Exam tips
Week 6 : 1 July - 7 July	Other	Flex week.
Week 7 : 8 July - 14 July	Lecture	7.1 Time used for Mid-term test 7.2 Risk Assessment (RK)
	Assessment	Mid-term test.
	Online Activity	Innocent! Some Real Cases of Erroneous Conviction.
Week 8 : 15 July - 21 July	Lecture	8.1 Effective Prison & the Treatment of Offenders (MY0) 8.2 The Nature of Offenders (including sex offenders) (MY)
	Laboratory	Lab 5: Research Ethics
	Online Activity	False Memories in Research and in Case Law Fake news! Misinformation in the "Post-Truth" Era
Week 9 : 22 July - 28 July	Lecture	9.1 Eyewitness Memory Part 1 (RK) 9.2 Eyewitness Memory Part 2 (RK)
	Laboratory	Lab 6: Jury Deliberation. Exam Feedback and Tips
	Online Activity	When Juries Go Bad Public Attitudes to Offenders
Week 10 : 29 July - 4 August	Lecture	10.1 Eyewitness Memory Part 3 (RK) 10.2 Juries and Jury Decision Making
	Laboratory	Lab 7: Assessment and Treatment of Offenders
	Online Activity	NSW Child Protection Policies Concluding Thoughts Careers in Forensic Psychology Research or Clinical

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

General Schedule Information

Each week of the course there will be two, one-hour lectures. In addition, across the course there

will be seven, two hour laboratory classes. Most weeks the learning will also be supported by an online module.

All lectures will be online. There will be no in-person lectures. The lectures will be broadcast live via Blackboard Collaborate and will also be recorded. We have opted for this mode of delivery as we find it encourages students to ask questions and respond to prompts during the lectures. We strongly encourage you to listen to the lectures live where possible.

Lab classes are all in-person. All students are assigned to one of the tutorial groups. You must attend the assigned group. Attendance is compulsory and will be checked.

Course Resources

Recommended Resources

Course Recommended Text

Howitt, D (2018) Introduction to Forensic and Criminal Psychology (6th Edition). Harlow: Pearson Education

We have selected this as the textbook for this course and will be making reference to this text throughout the course. Students are strongly recommended to obtain access to a copy as early as possible. Copies are available from the UNSW library, the UNSW Bookshop (cost about \$82) or online. Please note that we are using the 6th edition of the text. You may be able to obtain second-hand copies of earlier editions which will provide reasonable coverage of most topics.

Other texts to consider

Brewer, N., & Douglass, A. B. (Eds.). (2019). *Psychological Science and the Law*. Guilford Publications.

This is a relatively recent edited collection of chapters by some of the leading researchers in the field. The coverage of topics in this course is very good. I am considering adopting this as the text book for this course in the future.

Other Media

Radio: The radio program, "The Law Report", broadcast on ABC Radio National each Tuesday at 5.30pm (repeated Wed 5.30am) often covers relevant legal issues. Past programmes are available for download from the ABC Radio National website (www.abc.net.au/radionational/)

programs/lawreport/). In addition the Radio National programs “Background Briefing” and “All in the Mind” are sometimes relevant.

Newspapers: The Media Presentation assessment requires you to locate relevant stories in current media. “The Sydney Morning Herald” (either in print or online) is particularly recommended for this, as is “The Australian”.

Course Evaluation and Development

In addition to the standard University feedback mechanisms, we ask students to complete a detailed feedback form during the last Lab class of the course. We use this information to review all aspects of the course. For example, in the past students have told us that they enjoyed the media presentation assessment, but they felt that it required a lot of work for relatively few marks. We responded to this by adjusting the relative weighting of the assessments to increase the value of the presentation. We have also used this feedback to monitor the mode of delivery for lectures.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Richard Kemp		Mathews 1005	02 9385 1401	By appointment via email	Yes	Yes

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Upon your enrolment at UNSW, you share responsibility with us for maintaining a safe, harmonious and tolerant University environment.

You are required to:

- Comply with the University’s conditions of enrolment.
- Act responsibly, ethically, safely and with integrity.
- Observe standards of equity and respect in dealing with every member of the UNSW community.
- Engage in lawful behaviour.
- Use and care for University resources in a responsible and appropriate manner.
- Maintain the University’s reputation and good standing.

For more information, visit the [UNSW Student Code of Conduct Website](#).

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Referencing is a way of acknowledging the sources of information that you use to research your assignments. You need to provide a reference whenever you draw on someone else's words, ideas or research. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism.

Further information about referencing styles can be located at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing>

Academic integrity is fundamental to success at university. Academic integrity can be defined as a commitment to six fundamental values in academic pursuits: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. At UNSW, this means that your work must be your own, and others' ideas should be appropriately acknowledged. If you don't follow these rules, plagiarism may be detected in your work.

Further information about academic integrity, plagiarism and the use of AI in assessments can be located at:

- The [Current Students site](#),
- The [ELISE training site](#), and
- The [Use of AI for assessments](#) site.

The Student Conduct and Integrity Unit provides further resources to assist you to understand your conduct obligations as a student: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct>

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Penalty for Late Submissions

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Any variations to the above will be explicitly stated in the Course Outline for a given course or assessment task.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request extensions as

early as possible before the deadline.

Special Consideration

If circumstances prevent you from attending/completing an assessment task, you must officially apply for special consideration, usually within 3 days of the sitting date/due date. You can apply by logging onto myUNSW and following the link in the My Student Profile Tab. Medical documentation or other documentation explaining your absence must be submitted with your application. Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address to be advised of the official outcome and any actions that need to be taken from there. For more information about special consideration, please visit: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

Important note: UNSW has a “fit to sit/submit” rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

Faculty-specific Information

Additional support for students

- [The Current Students Gateway](#)
- [Student Support](#)
- [Academic Skills and Support](#)
- [Student Wellbeing, Health and Safety](#)
- [Equitable Learning Services](#)
- [UNSW IT Service Centre](#)
- Science EDI Student [Initiatives](#), [Offerings](#) and [Guidelines](#)