



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO



COURSE SYLLABUS

Texas A&M University – San Antonio
Department of Arts and Sciences
**PSYC 4370: Forensic and Legal
Psychology**

Semester: Fall 2026

Professor: Kelsey Schroeder, Psy.D.

Email: kschroeder@tamusa.edu

Time: MW 5:30pm-7:15pm

Office Hours: W 4:45-5:30pm

*Appts must be scheduled

NOTE: Welcome to PSYC 4370 Forensic Psychology! I am delighted to be your professor for this class. I look forward to journeying together as we explore forensic and legal psychology. Schedule your work carefully and manage your time well. We have much content to cover! All timelines will be adhered to, plan accordingly. **There will be no “make-up” exams or extra credit options;** ensure you do not miss an exam or assignment deadlines. The listed email contact is the fastest way to receive a response. Please list the course title in the subject line for all email exchanges.

I encourage you to make a ‘class buddy’ to be able to have notes and updates from any missed classes! Of note, you will need to come to class prepared with pens/pencils and paper as some assignments will be completed in class and electronic devices will not be allowed.

Required Text:

Costanzo, M., & Krauss, D. (2026). Forensic and Legal Psychology, Psychological Science Applied to Law. 5th Ed. Worth Publishers: Macmillan Learning.
ISBN:9781319635541

Course Description:

Psychology became a specialized field of study in the 1960’s as part of an effort to enhance legal process and justice outcomes. In recent years, concerns about wrongful convictions, false confessions, and use of “junk science” in the courtroom has fueled an interest in psychological and legal aspects of high stakes rulings. Major landmark cases and the social science research which shaped U.S. history in this area will be discussed and debated in this course.
Prerequisite(s): PSYC 2388. TSI Restriction(s): Reading, Writing, and Math

Objectives:

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

- Distinguish forensic psychology from other forensic sciences.
- Understand the many ways psychology contributes to the investigation of crime.
- Describe the role of forensic psychologists working in criminal and civil courts.
- Understand main trends in knowledge and research in forensic contexts.
- Critically assess the credibility of “forensic” information disseminated by popular media.
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills in the behavioral sciences tradition.
- Identify the range of career opportunities available to forensic psychologists.

Grading:

Each student’s grade will be based solely on their performance (grades are *earned*, not given). Students will not compete against one another for grades (i.e., the instructor will not limit the number of As, Bs, etc.). An individual’s course grade is based on his or her raw score points (i.e., the total number of points earned during the semester). Students are expected to keep updated on their grades through Blackboard and **utilize campus resources** if needing additional support.

Letter Grade Cutoff Table

<i>Course Letter Grade</i>	<i>Percentage Correct</i>
A	90% or more
B	80 to 89%
C	70 to 79%
D	60 to 69%
F	59% or less

Grades will be posted on Blackboard so that any time during the semester, you can check your grade.

Grading Breakdown:

Participation (Attendance & In Class Discussions): 20 pts

Reflection Papers (2 pts/reflection paper): 20pts

Midterm: 30pts

Final: 30pts

Total 100pts

REFLECTION PAPER/WRITE UP INSTRUCTIONS:

The student will complete 10 Reflection Papers/Write Ups in this course. Every week as listed on the syllabus, students will complete a 1-page reflection paper and/or in-class assignment over that week's identified readings and in-class materials. Reflection papers are due **AT THE END OF CLASS** on Wednesdays as writing up will be completed **IN CLASS**. All papers/write up will need to be **HANDWRITTEN**, thus *you need to be in class to earn credit for the assignments*. Some in class work will be completed individually and some will be completed in small groups. **No typed write ups will be accepted.** For most of the class during these activities, electronic devices will not be allowed.

General themes that may be included within in-class assignments:

Key Concept Identification- Select one or two specific points from the chapter that resonate with you or challenge your previous perspective.

Critical Connection- Relate these concept(s) to previous course materials, current events, or personal/professional experiences.

Synthesis- Discuss how this chapter changes or reinforced your understanding of the subject matter.

EXAMS:

There will be 2 exams total throughout the semester, each will be graded out of 30 points. Exam will be offered in class for the full time (1 hour, 15 minutes). Students will be allowed to utilize **1 double sided piece of paper** for notes, **which must be handwritten.** No electronics will be able to be utilized during exams unless otherwise instructed per a student's specific accommodations. Students will need to bring lined paper for exams as questions to write responses.

PARTICIPATION:

Students will be graded out of 20 points for their participation in the course throughout the semester. Given that at least one class per week will include a small group discussion, students will not be required to speak out in class if it does not align with their learning style. Students will also be graded on questions asked directly to professor, use of small group discussion time, and/or any other style of class engagement that is appropriate. This grade will include students attendance, participation throughout the course, and engagement in small group discussions.

What Happens If I am Not Getting the Grade I Want?

Here are some pointers:

1. **Do all the assignments.** So many students perform poorly because they “forget” to do all the work. Keep up and do assignments.
2. If it's multiple choice you are having trouble with, try to **make your own multiple-choice quiz** on the chapter before the test. You won't believe how well you actually have to know the chapter to do that. This means not just the questions—make sure you come up with four possible answers, and that you know which one is correct.
3. You are welcome to **schedule an appointment to meet with me during office hours** especially if you have specific questions, and I plan to offer them on Fridays. I am available at other times too. If you are going to ask me how you can perform better, we will look at your grades, and then I will probably tell you to do #1 and #2. If you need one-on-one study skills help, we have a new office for you to visit! Please see #4 below.

4. **Go to the Student Academic Success Center.** Here is what they have sent us:
The Student Academic Success Center (SASC) offers one-on-one appointments and walk-in sessions to Texas A&M University-San Antonio students. The Center will also offer online and face-to-face group sessions on topics such as time management, note-taking in College, study skills, goal setting, reading strategies, test taking tips, and stress management. SASC practices proactive outreach to students who may be struggling academically at the University. If you would like to meet with the Student Academic Success Center please call 210-784-1352 or email at Student.Success@tamusa.edu to schedule an appointment!
5. **The Jaguar Writing Center** If you need help with writing, please see the information in the statements below about the Jaguar Writing Center.

Technical Support:

If you are having trouble with Blackboard, or email help, please call the help desk at 784-4357. You can also email them from your other working account at helpdesk@tamusa.edu. IT is available on campus for help this semester as well.

Class Attendance:

Students are expected to attend **every class** and will be graded on class participation and attendance. Students will be expected to sign in during every class meeting, meaning be on time to the class and stay the full class time. Students are allowed **six absences** to use at their discretion throughout the course. If a student misses more than six classes, they will be unable to earn full participation credit (which is earned through attendance, class participation, and small group discussions).

Make-Up or Late Work:

Assignments which are turned in on time must be turned in by the time assigned online, or it is late. **LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.** Please don't wait until after things are due. *I will work with you if I hear from you ahead of time (meaning more than 24 hours PRIOR to the due date/time) if there are emergency situations.*

Instructor Response Time:

I will get back to you within 24-48 hours. If you don't hear from me in that amount of time, that means I probably didn't get your question. Save all emails to me, so you can go into your sent mail and re-send anything that got lost in cyberspace. If it's a weekend, wait 24 hours after Monday morning. (If you happen to catch me on the computer, and I don't have to consult with anyone else to answer your question, then I can get back to you right away!)

Communication Guidelines:

It is important that you know where to go to obtain the necessary information needed as you work through the class.

Each time you access the class, I would encourage you to follow these general guidelines:

1. **Review the Announcements** on the announcement page. I will post important information here. Also, on Monday of each week, I will post an announcement with information about what is expected for that week and with links to due dates and materials.
2. **Check your TAMUSA email at least once a day**, or at a minimum every other day. I will use email as a primary means of communication for this course. I will also send periodic emails containing information that may be helpful to you as you progress through the course.
3. **I also encourage you to be professional in your email communication.** We live in a fast-paced world with text messaging, which encourages short and abbreviated communication. However, since you are participating in a university level program, I encourage and expect you to use full sentences and proper grammar when communicating with other students and faculty.

No Use of Generative AI Permitted

This course assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Schedule (Subject to Change):

***Note*- Readings for each week are expected to be completed PRIOR to class on Mondays!**

Week 1 8/24 & 8/26	Discussion: Class Introductions Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology – Chapters 1
Week 2 8/31 & 9/2	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 2-3 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 1 Due
Week 3 9/7 & 9/9	No Class Monday- Labor Day Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology – Chapters 4-5

Week 4 9/14 & 9/16	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 6-7 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 2 Due
Week 5 9/21 & 9/23	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 8 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 3 Due
Week 6 9/28 & 9/30	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 9-10 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 4 Due
Week 7 10/5 & 10/7	Monday: Lecture (catch all) Wednesday: Midterm (ch. 1-10)
Week 8 10/12 & 10/14	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 11 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 5 Due
Week 9 10/19 & 10/21	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 12-13 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 6 Due
Week 10 10/26 & 10/28	No Class Monday Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 14
Week 11 11/2 & 11/4	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 15 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 7 Due
Week 12 11/9 & 11/11	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 16 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 8 Due
Week 13 11/16 & 11/18	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 17 Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 9 Due
Week 14 11/23 & 11/25	Monday: Online Assignment-> No in-person class Wednesday: 'Study Day'-No Class
Week 15 11/30 & 12/2	Catch-All (anything left to cover)/Review & Study Wednesday- Small group discussions & Reflection Paper 10 Due
Week 16	Monday (12/7) 4:00pm-5:50pm Final Exam (Non-Cumulative)

****Any material on this syllabus is subject to change if a compelling situation arises. You will have access to updated syllabus via Blackboard.**

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

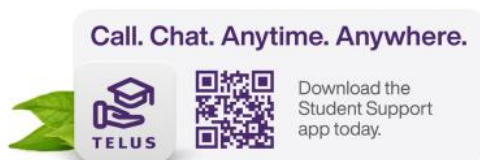
Appointments available MATH Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed

	Appointments available	Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.*

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: Jage Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information on emergency response may be found at: [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and the [Emergency Action Plan](#). Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC): The WLDCC provides support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any

assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. The WLDCC offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDCC in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an “Online Appointment.” Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an “eTutoring” appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#). The WLDCC can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a [CARE report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots’ Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University’s Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio’s Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university’s Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student’s studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student’s major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course,

activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. Hours of operation is Monday-Thursday 3:30pm-9:00pm. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Important Fall 2026 Dates:

Dates	Event
August 20	Tuition & Fee Payments deadline
August 24	First day of class
September 7	Labor Day Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
September 9	Census Date – Students not paid in full or enrolled in a payment plan by 4:59 pm may be dropped for non-payment
October 5 – October 16	Midterm grading period
November 13	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
November 25	Study Day – No classes
November 26-November 28	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
November 30	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5 – December 11	Final exams
December 15	Commencement

The complete [academic calendar](#) is available online