



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO



COURSE SYLLABUS

Texas A&M University – San Antonio
Department of Arts and Sciences
PSYC 4352: Forensic Psychology

Spring 2024
Valerie Valentin, MSCIN
Email: vvalentin@tamusa.edu

Time: Asynchronous
Office hours: Fridays (Zoom)
Appts must be scheduled

NOTE: Online courses provide a great deal of flexibility, however they also require discipline and planning. **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. If you need any help throughout this course, please know that I am here for you. I am your first point of contact for anything related to content in the course. Get to know me better by viewing the [Class Introductions](#). Post your introduction and meet your classmates. If you have a specific question for me, it would be best to email me at vvalentin@tamusa.edu

This email contact is the fastest way to receive a response. For more information view the Faculty Information page.

Required Text:

Costanzo, M., & Krauss, D. (2021). Forensic and Legal Psychology, Psychological Science Applied to Law. 4th Ed. Worth Publishers: Macmillan Learning.

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of forensic psychology within criminal and civil contexts. We will examine the fascinating dynamics of human behavior and professional practice within forensic psychology. This topic includes an analysis of the psychology of criminal behavior, as well as current research areas of police and investigative psychology (e.g., eyewitness identification, false confessions), psychology in the courts, mental illness in the justice system, and correctional psychology. Prerequisite: PSYC 2301, and PSYC 3488/or/CRIM 3380.

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 his/her performance. 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). For example, using the table below, a student who earns 850 points during the semester will earn a “B.” A student who has a total of 642 points at the end of the semester will earn a “D” in the course.

Letter Grade Cutoff Table

<i>Course Letter Grade</i>	<i>Percentage Correct</i>	<i>Raw Score (total raw score points earned)</i>
A	90% or more	900 or more
B	80 to 89%	800 to 899
C	70 to 79%	700 to 799
D	60 to 69%	600 to 699
F	59% or less	599 and less

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

Grading Breakdown:

Discussions: 5 total

Initial post: 40pts each	200pts
2 replies per discussion (20 pts each reply- 10 total)	200pts
Quizzes: 5 total: 40pts each	200pts
Midterm	200pts
Final	200pts
Total	1000pts

DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

The student will complete 5 Discussions in this course. The student will post one thread of at least 350 words by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday of the assigned week. The student must then post 2 replies of at least 150 words by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday of the assigned week. For each thread, students must support their assertions with at least 2 scholarly citations in APA format. Students are expected to support their discussions with specific references to the **materials** from that week. Each reply must incorporate at least 1 scholarly citation in APA format. Any sources cited must have been published within the last five years. Acceptable sources include classic or ancient literature/books, the textbook, etc.

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:

Online attendance will be graded based on answers to discussion questions and other activities assigned online.

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. Some assignments can be turned in late for reduced credit, with permission from the professor, but not all of them. Some cannot be made up. Because assignments can be turned in from home, it is expected that you will be able to turn in assignments on time. If you have issues with your internet, you must let me know immediately, not after the assignment is due. If you are too sick to do work at home, please send me an email immediately. Please don't wait until after things are due. I will work with you if I hear from you ahead of time.

Instructor Response Time:

When you have a question, please email me. I will get back to you within 24 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. After 24 hours, you are welcome to re-send your email. 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:

Since we are not in a physical classroom setting where I can speak/lecture in person, 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.

Schedule (subject to change):

Note: Anywhere it says "Read Chapter" you are to read chapter AND watch videos.

Week 1 Jan 16	Discussion: Class Introductions (Only non-graded discussion) Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology – Chapters 1& 2
Week 2 Jan 22	Discussion 1 Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 3&4
Week 3 Jan 29	Quiz 1 (over chapters 1-4) Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology – Chapter 5

Week 4 Feb 5	Discussion 2 Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 6-7
Week 5 Feb 12	Quiz 2 (over chapters 5-7) Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 8
Week 6 Feb 19	Discussion 3 Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 9-10
Week 7 Feb 26	Quiz 3 (over chapters 8-10) Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 11
Week 8 Mar 4	Mid-Term Ch. 1-11
Week 9 Mar 11	Spring Break
Week 10 Mar 18	Discussion 4 Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 12-13
Week 11 Mar 25	Quiz 4 (over chapters 11-13) Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 14
Week 12 Apr 1	Discussion 5 Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapters 15
Week 13 Apr 8	Quiz 5 (over chapters 14-16) Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 16
Week 14 Apr 15	Read: Forensic and Legal Psychology- Chapter 17
Week 15 Apr 22	Review & Study
Week 16+ Apr 29	Final (Over all material)

****Any material on this syllabus is subject to change if a compelling situation arises. You will be notified via email and Bb announcement.****

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Persons 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, please contact Disability Support Services in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210, or at (210) 784-1335 or visit <https://www.tamusa.edu/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: 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.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or 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 call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

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 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2'). For more information and self-help resources, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. 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 about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/campus-information/safety/university-police-department/documents/emergency-operations-plan.pdf> and <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/campus-information/safety/university-police-department/documents/emergency-action-plan.pdf>

Download the SafeZone App 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 the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend 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.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. 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. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://bit.ly/WLDCCenter>.

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 contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person 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 diversity 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 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, equality of 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 within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should 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, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units. 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- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, 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 or sexual violence, or other related 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 reasonable accommodations to pregnant students that would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition and 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.

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, sexual orientation, 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, University Catalog and to comply with them, as well as 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 an environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.

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, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe 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](#).

No Use of Generative AI Permitted

PSYC 4352 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.

Important Dates:

January 16	First day of class
March 11-17	Spring Break – No classes
March 29	Study Day – No classes
April 13	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
April 20	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
April 29	Last day of classes
April 30	Study Day – No classes
May 1-7	Final exams

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>