

Psychology of Criminal Conduct



(PSYCO 403-B4)
Course Syllabus
Winter 2021



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U of A Office: P-343 Biological Sciences Building
Clinic Office: 701, 10242 – 105 Street
780.428.4524 ext 324

Virtual office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:50 PM to 5:30 PM (by appointment)

Note: All times listed in this document refer to Mountain Standard Time (MST)

Prerequisites: PSYCO 104, 105, an introductory course in statistics, and at least one 300-level psychology course.

Required readings:

There is no required textbook for this course. All required readings are posted to our eClass page.

I have not ordered course packs through the UA bookstore because the cost would significantly exceed the price of a new printer and the all of the paper necessary to print the assigned readings.

Classes: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30 to 4:50 PM

Zoom invitations containing the meeting number and access code will be emailed to all registered students in advance and should be treated as private. Zoom links and lecture notes will also be posted to the eClass page. It is not permissible to invite others to observe, record, or participate in online classes. While students are both welcome and encouraged to interact with the instructor and classmates in the virtual environment, the same standards of conduct and attention that would be expected in a physical classroom apply.

Important Dates:

Add/Delete Date: January 22
50% Withdrawal Date: February 10
Withdrawal Date (grade of W): April 9

Evaluation:

Component	Weight	Date	Deferred Date
Assignments	25%	Ongoing	N/A
Midterm 1	25%	February 4 @ 3:30 PM	February 11
Midterm 2	25%	March 16 @ 3:30 PM	March 23
Final Exam	25%	Wednesday, April 21, 2021 (9:00 AM)	April 28

There will be three open book assignments (completed on eClass) which are based on, and intended to reinforce your understanding of course material. Each will be available for one week commencing upon completion of the relevant section(s) in class. After that, a zero will be entered for any assignments which have not been completed. Given that those assignments will be available for a week there is no opportunity for deferral.

All scheduled exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer. They are "closed book", meaning that no notes or other reference materials, electronic or otherwise, are permitted. Deferred exams will be essay/long answer style and are also closed book. All assigned readings and lecture materials are eligible for inclusion but exams are not cumulative. Students are responsible for being familiar with the University's policy on [Conduct of Exams](#).

EXAMS: Your U of A OneCard is required at exams and is the only acceptable means of verifying your identity through *Smart Exam Monitor* (SEM). I.e., Drivers licenses or other forms of ID are not acceptable. as indicated above, midterm exams will take place online during scheduled class times. Please see the information under the heading: *Technology Requirements/Recommendations for Remote Learning*, below.

It is important to find a quiet place with a strong and stable internet connection for the purposes of writing your exams. While you are allowed to wear foam earplugs to block out noise, *you may not wear any form of headphones or electronic devices, including earbuds, during exams*. You must also physically disconnect (not just switch off) all extra display monitors.

While some students may prefer to watch recorded lectures rather than attend "live" lectures, this course is not considered asynchronous. It is important to note that those recordings are stored in the Zoom cloud space and can be deleted at the discretion of Zoom's proprietors. In that event, the instructor has no ability to restore those recordings and assumes no responsibility for repeating those lectures or otherwise compensating students who fail to access materials while they are available. Students are therefore strongly advised to view those recordings soon after the recordings are made available. Likewise, it is the student's responsibility to arrange to be available to write exams at the scheduled times regardless of time zone differences or conflicting demands (including employment).

Final Grade Assignment:

The following approximate grid will be used in assigning final grades in this course. This grade translation is approximate; the instructor reserves the right to use expert judgment to adjust the grades as necessary. Grades are unofficial until approved by the Department of Psychology and Faculty of Science.

Score Range (Percent)	Letter Grade Range
≥ 90	A+
80 – 89.9	A, A-
70 – 79.9	B+, B, B-
60 – 69.9	C+, C, C-
55 – 59.9	D+
50 – 54.9	D
< 50	F

Representative Evaluative Material:

Example questions are posted to our eClass page to assist students in anticipating the nature and format of exams given in this course.

Missed Midterm Exams and Assignments:

For an excused absence where the cause is religious belief, a student must contact the instructor within three days of the start of classes to request accommodation for the term (including the final exam, where relevant). The instructor may request adequate documentation to substantiate the student request

A student who cannot write a midterm examination or complete a term assignment due to incapacitating illness, severe domestic affliction or other compelling reasons can apply for a deferred sitting. In such cases you must contact the instructor to make those arrangements within 48 hours of the missed exam. Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of Facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the [*Code of Student Behaviour*](#).

Missing an exam without a valid and properly documented excuse will result in a zero being assigned for that exam. For reasons such as a death or serious illness in the family, a statutory declaration from the registrar's office is acceptable. As with missed term exams, misrepresentation of facts to gain a re-examination is a serious breach of the *Code of Student Behaviour*.

Deferred Final Examination:

A student who cannot write the final examination due to incapacitating illness, severe domestic affliction or other compelling reasons can apply for a deferred final examination. Students who failed at the start of term to request exam accommodations for religious beliefs are expected to follow the normal deferred final examination process. Such an application must be made to the student's Faculty office within two working days of the missed examination and must be supported by a Statutory Declaration or other appropriate documentation (<http://calendar.ualberta.ca/index.php?catoid=20#Attendance>). Deferred examinations are a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferred examination will be

granted. Misrepresentation of Facts to gain a deferred examination is a serious breach of the *Code of Student Behaviour*.

Technology Requirements/Recommendations for Remote Learning:

For an optimal online learning experience, please review the University guidelines for [Technology for Remote Learning](#). If a student has any questions or concerns about these requirements/recommendations, it is highly recommended that they contact the instructor at the beginning of term.

You will need a webcam and microphone (which are usually included with laptop though not desktop) computers. It is your responsibility to ensure that the device is capable of accessing eClass quizzes. IST has advised that tablets and smartphones are generally not compatible. Please ensure that you have access to a stable internet connection of adequate bandwidth prior to signing in to complete the exam. **It is unlikely that failed internet connections will be accepted as an excuse for missed or incomplete exams** unless your internet service provider will provide written evidence of unavoidable service interruption.

You must have the Google Chrome browser installed to utilize the University's SEM software, which will be necessary to access the exams. You will also have to install ExamLock software. Instructions for using ExamLock as well as links for downloading it are available at:

<https://support.ctl.ualberta.ca/index.php?Knowledgebase/Article/View/376/10/taking-quizzes-using-examlock>

You are urged to download ExamLock and take the IST practice test *well in advance* of the first midterm exam to ensure that it works with your computer and browser. This will also eliminate unnecessary stress at exam times. There is no additional cost for ExamLock. Should you encounter any difficulty please contact eClass Support by email at eclass@ualberta.ca or by phone at 780.492.9372.

Guidelines for Respectful Online Engagement:

Students from many different backgrounds participate in courses at the University of Alberta. Sexist, racist, homophobic comments and other inflammatory remarks are not conducive to learning in our courses, and absolutely are not permitted. All participants are governed by the [Code of Student Behaviour](#). Be mindful when discussions involve controversial topics or issues, and consider the possibility that members of our community have themselves experienced some of these issues and/or very different realities because of these issues. Participate in a respectful and considerate manner.

If you are witness to or the target of abusive or offensive behaviour in any course, please inform your instructor immediately. You may also contact the Psychology Undergraduate/Graduate Advisor, Associate Chair of Undergraduate/Graduate, or Chair.

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the *Code of Student Behaviour* (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All forms of dishonesty are unacceptable at the University. Any offense will be reported to the Senior Associate Dean of Science who will determine the disciplinary action to be taken. Cheating, plagiarism and misrepresentation of facts are serious offenses. Anyone who engages in these practices will receive at minimum a grade of zero for the exam or paper in question and no opportunity will be given to replace the grade or redistribute the weights. As well, in the Faculty of Science the sanction for cheating on any examination will include **a disciplinary failing grade** (no exceptions) and senior students should expect a period of suspension or expulsion from the University of Alberta.

Course Content and Objectives:

This course will survey a cross section of topics from the areas of criminal forensic psychology and antisocial behavior. There are essentially three parts: We will begin with a discussion of biological, genetic, and environmental contributors to antisocial conduct. Second, we will examine criminal profiling and some selected areas of criminal conduct (e.g., homicide, sexual offenses) in detail. Finally, we will focus on practical issues in forensic psychology such as determining the mental fitness of an accused person to stand trial, offender treatment, and the psychologist's role in NCR-MD defenses. Unlike criminology courses, we will focus mainly on individual rather than broader social issues. Time permitting, we will discuss the use of some relevant assessment measures.

At the conclusion of this course students should have developed an integrative understanding of various risk factors for antisocial behaviour and the role of forensic psychologists in conducting research and clinical assessments. In addition, students should be able to demonstrate specialized knowledge of certain criminal subtypes including violent, sexual, and mentally offenders. Finally, students should be able to articulate an understanding of some evidence-based treatment interventions along with the benefits and limitations of each.

While the instructor will make every effort to present course content in a sensitive manner, students should bear in mind that issues such as violent crime, child abuse, sexual offending, and homicide are central to the field of forensic psychology. Individuals who are easily disturbed by discussion of such topics are strongly advised to consider alternative courses. Feel free to discuss this matter with the instructor if you have concerns.

Downloadable lecture notes are available on our eClass page but are not necessarily comprehensive. Additional materials will also be presented which are eligible for inclusion on exams. Relying on the notes in place of regularly attending classes (or watching the recorded lectures) will negatively affect your grade. (See Calendar for information on [Attendance](#)).

Lecture Schedule:

The following dates are approximate. We will make adjustments as needed to allow for discussion, illustrative examples, and practical exercises.

Date	Topic
January 2021	
12	Course Introduction and Definitions of Crime
14, 19	Developmental Factors
21, 26	Genetic/Biological Factors
28	Environment: The Effects of Learning
February 2021	
2	Environment: The Effects of Learning (cont.)
4	Midterm 1
9, 11	Profiling & Classification
16, 19	Reading Week – No Classes
23, 25	Risk Assessment/Violence Prediction
March 2021	
2, 4	Sexual Offenders
9, 11	Violent Offenders
16	Midterm 2
18, 23	Psychopathy & Antisocial Personality Disorders
25, 30	Mentally Disordered Offenders & Not Criminally Responsible Offenders
April 2021	
1, 6	Psychophysiological Detection of Deception (a.k.a. “Lie Detection”)
8, 13	Offender Treatment
15	Wrap up and Review (Optional)
21	Final Exam – Note: This falls on a Wednesday, and will take place at 9:00 AM.

STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR ACCESSIBILITY-RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS (students registered with Student Accessibility Services): Eligible students have both rights and responsibilities with regard to accessibility-related accommodations. Consequently, scheduling exam accommodations in accordance with Student Accessibility Services deadlines and procedures is essential. Please note that adherence to procedures and deadlines is required for U of A to provide accommodations. Contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) for further information. The instructor cannot make other accommodations for you if you miss the deadline for registering to write an exam with SAS.

Student Resources:

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB) The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB) [The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam preparation strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall) The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

First Peoples' House: The First Peoples' House provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth.

Office of the Student Ombuds: The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Learning and working environment: The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) section of the University Calendar.

Self-care: The demands of advanced education, including busy schedules and exam writing, can prove challenging at the best of times. The Covid-19 pandemic has only added to this and, in many cases, created feelings of anxiety, sadness, and isolation. If you find yourself struggling please reach out to personal supports and professional resources such as [ACCESS 24/7](#) (780.424.2424 ext 2), the [Edmonton Distress Line](#) (780.482.4357) or U of A [Counselling and Clinical Services](#) (780.492.5205).

Disclaimer: Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

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