

PSY328: Psychology and the Law

Winter 2025 LEC0101

Contact Info

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Office Hours: By appointment (email me)	Office Hours: See Quercus page.

Course Info

Classes Meet: Wednesdays, 10am-1pm	Room: UC 244 (University College)
Course Website: https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/382365	
Reading(s): Pozzulo, J. (2021). Revel Forensic Psychology (6th Cdn edition). Pearson. Link to access the text . The course code is available on Quercus. Any additional assigned material will be made available to you on Quercus. Note about text: If you would like a print copy of the book, you can request a looseleaf version once you are setup with Revel.	

Course Overview & Goals

The goal of this course is to broaden and deepen your understanding of the interaction of psychological research and the legal system. Specifically, we examine topics such as eyewitness memory, expert testimony, jury decision-making, police behaviour, sentencing, and other topics related to criminal investigations. We will discuss psychological theory, relevant case law, and methodological issues in psychology and law research. We will examine assumptions of the legal system about social behaviour and how to best apply psychological research to public policy. We will also explore and discuss how media portrayals of criminal investigations and other legal procedures influence public perceptions and understanding of the legal system.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Understand the psychological theory, methods, and findings frequently used in psychology and law (and forensic psychology) research
2. Understand how psychological research can inform and improve the legal system (e.g., reducing bias)
3. Discuss relevant legal issues and problems from a scientific perspective with your peers
4. Provide recommendations for policy reform based on scientific research

Prerequisites

PSY201H1/ ECO220Y1/ EEB225H1/ GGR270H1/ IRW220H1/ POL222H1/ SOC202H1/ STA220H1/ STA238H1/ STA248H1/ STA288H1/ PSY201H5/ STA215H5/ STA220H5/ PSYB07H3/ STAB22H3/ STAB23H3/ STAB57H3, PSY220H1/ PSY220H5/ PSYB10H3/ SOC213H1

Exclusions: PSY328H5/ PSYC39H3

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites, you will be removed. No waivers will be granted.

Course Structure & Requirements

Course Communication

- *General inquiries related to course content, policies, or assessments* should first be posted to the relevant Quercus Discussion Board. The TA and Dr. Sanchez will monitor the board, but you are welcome to respond to and support your peers as well.

- *Scheduling appointments to review content, get study advice, or view tests* should be done by emailing the TA directly at reem.ayad@mail.utoronto.ca
- *Personal questions related to illness, accessibility, accommodations, or other class concerns* should be addressed directly to the instructor, Dr. Sanchez at patricia.sanchez@utoronto.ca
- ***FOR ALL EMAILS:*** Please include a descriptive subject line, a greeting, complete sentences, and a signature with your full name. Please also include “**PSY328**” in the subject line with the topic of your email! Make sure though that your subject is still descriptive (i.e., “PSY328 lecture question” is not descriptive enough). We will try to respond to all emails within 2 business days. Emails received after 6pm or on the weekends may not be looked at until the next business day.

Course Webpage: Quercus

This course will use the University’s learning management system, Quercus, to post course information regarding assignments, grades, readings, and important announcements. You will also have access to several practice quizzes and learning check questions on the Revel platform that comes with our text (see more in *Shared Writing* section below). I will rely heavily on Quercus and Revel throughout the semester so make sure you develop a plan to check these platforms regularly.

Lectures

Almost every class meeting will involve some time for lecture. Lectures will review and synthesize material from the readings and other assigned material as well as introduce additional material *not* covered in the readings to expand on important points or ideas. Lecture slides will be provided in PDF format before each class period. These slides are meant to support your learning and do not contain the level of detail that is required to do well in this class. Thus, keep in mind *reading the slides is not a substitute for attending class*. If you are going to miss a class, you are responsible for borrowing notes from a classmate or scheduling office hours to review missed material.

Lectures will not be recorded. You may not independently record any part of the lectures unless you receive explicit permission from the instructor. If you are given permission to record any part of a lecture, the recordings cannot be distributed to anyone (including other students in the course) or posted online. Remember that the recording is only for the use of studying for the course (see *Use of Course Material* policy below).

Engagement and Participation

Your active engagement with the course material by participating in discussions (both in person and on the Shared Writing discussion boards) and in-class activities, taking notes, and thinking deeply about the questions that are posed helps us build a positive learning environment and enhances your understanding of the course concepts. Your participation and engagement will be evaluated for effort (i.e., reading material before class, contributing to discussions, thinking deeply about the material) and quality (i.e., insightfulness, respectfulness).

I highly encourage you all to ask questions **during** the lecture. Although this is a 300-level course, I guarantee if you have a question someone else in the class has the same or a similar question. I would so much rather take the time during lecture to answer a question than answer the same question over and over individually after class. I realize it may be intimidating to raise your hand in class at first, but you'd be surprised how helpful questions during lecture can be to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Although attendance does not directly contribute to your grade, you will miss out on important class discussions and activities if you do not attend regularly. There will also be several in-class activities and demonstrations throughout the semester (all of which are important for your full grasping of the course material, even if not directly graded).

Preparation (Readings)

Lectures and in-class activities will typically draw from and expand on material in the readings. I will also assign empirical journal articles from time to time, and other media like podcasts or videos. Reading empirical research will help you develop a skill you can apply in the future for academic purposes and to help you critically evaluate research and arguments in general. You are expected to complete all assigned readings even if they aren't directly discussed in lecture.

Over the semester, you will be tested equally on lecture and assigned reading materials. The textbook and other assigned readings are a supplement to our lectures, and vice versa. Meaning, sometimes the readings will cover a concept that we don't discuss in detail in class. You are responsible for the material in all the assigned content (e.g., readings, podcasts, videos), whether it is explicitly covered in lecture or not. The text provides several opportunities for you to test your own understanding such as chapter quizzes and journal prompts. Although these aren't graded, I highly recommend you use these

features as you read the text to ensure you are understanding the material and keeping yourself engaged.

I may occasionally provide additional readings (or videos or podcasts) when I lecture on a given topic. This additional material will be added on a rolling basis as we work through the semester in the Supplemental Material module on Quercus. Although material from this module will not directly be tested (and therefore, is optional reading), expanding your understanding on topics from the course will help you understand the material more deeply.

Assessment & Evaluation

Shared Writing Assignments (5%)

To keep you engaged with the material, give you a chance to explore your own ideas in relation to the readings, and discuss these ideas with your peers, you will be completing several Sharing Writing assignments. These prompts are available on the Revel platform, and you can use the textbox provided on the platform to plan out your response before officially submitting it. However, you will submit your responses to these prompts for a grade using the Quercus discussion boards. You will be able to view other students' responses and respond to them, as other students will be able to do for your responses. Importantly, to get full marks for a Shared Writing Assignment you need to post your original response *the day before* the lecture for that week and submit at least two responses to your classmates before the start of the *next* lecture. Your responses will be evaluated for thoughtfulness, writing clarity, and quality. Keep in mind that longer responses do not necessarily mean better responses. More info on these assignments will be discussed in class.

Psychology and Law in the Media Assignments (10%)

Throughout the term, you will complete several assignments and activities designed to help you be more critical consumers of psychology and law related media. These assignments will vary in format and length, and detailed instructions on each assignment will be provided to you in class. Below is an outline for the assignments planned this term with their associated contribution to your final grade.

Assignment (%)	Due Date
Psychologists in the Media (2.5%)	Jan 24
Film Reflection and Discussion (5%)	Feb 14

Amicus Brief Assignment (40%)

You will write an amicus curiae brief on a chosen topic. In this brief, you will write on behalf of an organization or group (e.g., APA, public policy organization) and make an argument supported by empirical psychological research. This assignment is broken up into four main parts: the topic idea (5%), the first draft (10%), peer reviewing 2 other students' drafts (5%), and the final paper (20%). More info on format, evaluation, and length will be discussed in class.

Midterm and Final Exam (45%)

There will be two exams this semester: a midterm (20%) and a final (25%). These exams may contain multiple choice, brief response, and short essay questions. The midterm will cover content discussed in the first half of the semester and the final will focus on content discussed in the second half (after the midterm content). Keep in mind that although the final exam is not strictly cumulative it is always good to keep key concepts and terms from the midterm content in mind to help make your responses in the final exam stronger. More info on these exams will be discussed later in the term.

Grading/Marking Scheme

Your final grade in this course will be calculated based on the breakdown below:

	Weight (%)
Shared Writing Assignments	5%
Psychology and Law in the Media Assignments	10%
Amicus Brief Assignment	40%
Midterm	20%
Final	25%

Note: Any grades posted in the Quercus gradebook are posted for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, included any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved at the end of the course.

Course Policies

Late Assignments & Extensions

Late assignments (those turned in after the due date *without* prior discussion with me) will incur a 5% penalty for each day it is late up to 25% (5 days after the due date). Late work will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date unless you have formal accommodations, have provided legitimate documentation, or prior arrangements have been made. Extensions will not be granted on Shared Writing assignments without appropriate documentation. Please do not email me asking for extensions on the Shared Writing assignments unless you are presenting and submitting formal documentation.

I am typically willing to grant 48-hour extensions on the other course work (e.g., the Media Assignments and the Amicus Brief assignments) if the extension request is received at least 48 hours before the assignment due date of the assignment (via email directly to Dr. Sanchez). Any requests for extensions made less than 48 hours before the due date will not be granted. I will not grant extensions longer than 48 hours or accept work after the extended due date except in the case of registered accommodations or extraordinary circumstances. If you will be unable to submit work by the extended due date, please let Dr. Sanchez know within 12 hours of the missed extended deadline (or as soon as you can), and we can discuss your case.

Missed Term Work Policy

If you miss class for *any* reason, you are responsible for making up the missed material and you should not expect the instructor or TA to re-teach the material from the class you missed. There will be no chances to make up missed in-class activities. If you miss the midterm, you must submit documentation to Dr. Sanchez that demonstrates your inability to be present for the test (i.e., the ACORN illness self-declaration tool, UofT Verification of Illness or Injury form (VOI), a letter from your College Registrar or Accessibility Counselor). Documentation must be submitted within 7 calendar days of the missed midterm. If you do not provide appropriate documentation, you will receive a 0 for the missed midterm.

Make up assessments will not be issued. If you are legitimately excused from missing the midterm, your other assignments will be reweighted to make up for the missing midterm (the Amicus Brief final paper will be weighted 30% and the final exam at 35%). If you miss the final exam, you will need to contact your College Registrar to file a petition for late term work

(<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/faculty-registrar/petitions>) or work out an alternative plan.

University's Plagiarism Detection Tool

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Online Communication Policy

Some questions are best answered in person or in an online meeting and some are best answered via email. If you have a complex question (i.e., you want to further discuss an idea from the course), me or your TA will be happy to meet with you to discuss it (see *Course Communication* above). Having face-to-face discussions, whether in person or online, about complex questions or issues is generally more effective. If you have a short/simple question, email might be the most efficient way to ask it. If you don't know, send an email with your question to either me or the TA and we'll let you know if a meeting would be better.

When communicating via email please adhere to the following:

- Emails received after 5pm will count as being received the following business day. Do not email the day of the due date with a question about the assignment, we might not see your email in time to send a helpful reply.
- Please consult the course syllabus, schedule, other handouts, and announcements on Quercus before submitting inquiries by email. There's a chance there is an answer to your question somewhere in these materials.
- In the subject line indicate the course code and the topic of your email (e.g., PSY328 Media Assignment #2 question).
- Begin your emails by greeting the person you are writing to (e.g., "Hello Dr. Sanchez", "Dear Prof. Sanchez,"). Make sure to address the person who you are emailing in your greeting.
- Emails should come from your utoronto email account to communicate with the professor and TA (otherwise they may get marked as spam).

- All communications (verbal, email) should be respectful in language and tone and constructive in nature. This includes communications with me, the TA, and your fellow students.

Grade Dispute Policy

If you believe an assignment has been incorrectly or unfairly marked, you can request a re-evaluation from the grader. You must wait 24 hours after the feedback is returned to bring up a grade concern. Grade concerns received within 24 hours of receiving the feedback will not be considered. Additionally, grade concerns must be brought to either mine or your TA's attention within 14 days of the return of the assignment. Requests received after this time will not be considered.

If you have concerns about how an assignment or test was graded, please first meet with your TA who graded your work. If, after your meeting, you still would like to submit your work for re-evaluation, please submit the request to Dr. Sanchez. In your request, please email me with a short paragraph detailing your grade concern including: 1) the question(s) to be re-evaluated, 2) why you provided the answer you did and where in the course materials you learned this content, and 3) why you think the grade is incorrect or incomplete and what in the course materials would support your request. Only reasonable and well-justified concerns will be considered, and all decisions are final.

Please consider very carefully before contesting your grade for an assignment or test. Course instructors and TAs work very hard to mark course assignments and tests as fairly as possible. By submitting a grade dispute, you are consenting to a full re-evaluation of the assignment. This means your grade may go up, go down, or stay the same. If a re-evaluation is granted, **you must accept the resulting mark as the new mark.**

Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. You can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI. For more information on the VOI, please see www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see

www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Religious Accommodation

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling assessments or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (such as a test) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical or non-religious reasons. If you have concerns about your ability to complete an assignment, please speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or accommodation. They may be able to provide you with a College Registrar's letter of support to give to your instructors, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with your situation. Regardless of the situation, it is always best to reach out about the issue as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

All students, faculty, and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty with writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism—representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program—is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity> and <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>.

Use of Generative AI Tools

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for assignments in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing or coding assistants, is allowed in this course only for very specific purposes. Students may not use these tools to write or complete course assignments (e.g., Amicus Brief assignments, Shared Writing assignments, Media Assignments). However, these tools may be useful when gathering information across sources and assimilating it for understanding. Some assignments may require an AI use declaration which would include what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how results from the AI were incorporated into your submitted work. If an assignment requires an AI use declaration, **you must complete it and submit it** by the assignment due date. Failure to submit the AI Use declaration with your assignment may result in a 5% penalty on the assignment.

Students may not copy or paraphrase from any generative AI applications for the purpose of completing assignments in this course. Representing as one's own idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated may be considered an academic offense in this course. This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach course learning outcomes.

Use of Course Material

Keep in mind that lectures and lecture materials are the intellectual property of the instructor, and the slides and related materials should be respected thus. Students are free to use all lecture slides and lecture material for their own use, but are not permitted to share lecture slides or materials with others not enrolled in this course without my approval. Uploading course materials to the Internet or shared server is expressly prohibited. I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain, has sold my materials, or has given my materials to a person or company that is using them to earn money. The University will support me in asserting and pursuing my rights, and my copyrights, in such matters.

Instructor Policy Statement

I intend to treat you with respect, to have empathy for your struggles (in and outside of this course), to assess your progress in a reasonable and thoughtful manner, and to offer you constructive feedback. I am available to discuss any concerns you have. I strongly encourage you to ask questions in class, book an office hour visit with me, and/or email me to discuss any concerns or questions. With all issues, I encourage you to contact me as early as possible

so we can work together on a solution. You may email me at any time, and I will do my best to respond within 2 business days. I will also do my best to refrain from sending out course announcements or emails on the weekends or on holidays.

Student Resources and Support

Guidance for Undergraduate Students in Psychology

The Department of Psychology recognizes that, as a student, you may experience disruptions to your learning that are out of your control, and that there may be circumstances when you need extra support. Accordingly, the department has provided a [helpful guide](#) to clarify your and your instructor's responsibilities when navigating these situations. This guide consolidates Arts & Science Policies for undergraduate students in one place for your convenience. As an instructor in the department, I will frequently consult with these recommendations when providing you with support, and I recommend that you also consult it to learn more about your rights and responsibilities before reaching out to me.

Accessibility Services (AS)

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/new-registration>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Recognized Study Groups

I encourage everyone to strongly consider joining or leading a study group. The Faculty of Arts and Science has a Recognized Study Groups program that can help you facilitate this (particularly useful if you don't know anyone else in the class!). If you become a study group leader, you can also receive co-curricular credit. To learn more about the program and join or start a study group visit: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/recognized-study-groups/>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engaged with each other, and respect one another's differences. Cultivating such an environment is important in all courses, and especially so when discussing topics like intergroup relations, stigma, and discrimination. As your instructor, I aim to create a classroom environment that supports the learning and growth of all students. Neither I nor the University of Toronto condones discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Mental Health & Well-Being

Your mental health is important. Throughout university life, there are many experiences that can impact your mental health and well-being. As a University of Toronto student, you can access free mental health and wellbeing services at Health & Wellness (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>) such as same day counselling, brief counselling, medical care, skill-building workshops, and drop-in peer support. You can also meet with a Wellness Navigation Advisor who can connect you with other campus and community services and support.

Call the mental health clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 5 to book an appointment or visit <https://uoft.me/mentalhealthcare> to learn about the services available to you.

You can also visit your College Registrar to learn about the resources and supports available: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices>

If you're in distress, you can access immediate support: <https://uoft.me/feelingdistressed>

Writing

As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with several resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>.

English Language Resources

For anyone who would like to advance their understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell/resources-for-students>

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change and adjustments. Students will be advised of all updates promptly on Quercus. The lecture topics below are guidelines of what will be covered over the course of the term. Some lectures might be longer than expected and run into the following week, whereas others will be shorter and allow us more time for discussion or in-class activities.

Week	Class Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Assignments Due
1	1/8	Introduction to course What is forensic psychology? Expert Testimony	Syllabus Ch. 1 Hunt & Shepherd (2023)	
2	1/15	Wrongful Convictions Eyewitness Memory	Ch. 5 Giacona et al (2021)	Ch. 1 Shared Writing Due Fri, 1/17
3	1/22	Police Investigations Interviewing, interrogations, and confessions	Ch. 3 Cross et al (2023)	Ch. 5 Shared Writing Due Tues, 1/21 Media Assignment #1 Due Fri, 1/24
4	1/29	Police Investigations cont'd Deception detection Review Session	Ch. 4 (focus on 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4)	Ch. 3 Shared Writing Due Tues, 1/28
5	2/5	MIDTERM		Ch. 4 Shared Writing Due Tues, 2/4
6	2/12	Introduction to Amicus Brief Assignment (on Quercus) Introduction to Jury Bias Film: <i>12 Angry Men</i> (1957) <i>No in-class meeting today</i>	Ch. 7	Film Reflection (Media Assignment #2) Due Fri, 2/14
	2/19	READING WEEK - NO CLASS		
7	2/26	Jury Decision-Making	LaBat et al (2023) Madon et al (2024)	Amicus Brief Topic Idea Due Wed, 2/26
8	3/5	Sentencing, Risk Assessment, and Parole I	Ch. 9 Fessinger & Kovera	Ch. 7 Shared Writing

			(2023)	Due Tues, 3/4
9	3/12	Sentencing, Risk Assessment, and Parole II	Ch. 10 Scherr & Normile (2022)	Ch. 9 Shared Writing Due Tues, 3/11
10	3/19	Mental Illness in Court	Ch. 8 Bergkamp et al (2023)	Ch. 10 Shared Writing Due Tues, 3/18 Amicus Brief Draft Due Fri, 3/21
11	3/26	Psychopathy and criminal trends	Ch. 11 (focus on 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, and 11.4) Edwards et al (2024)	Ch. 8 Shared Writing Due Tues, 3/25 Amicus Brief Peer Reviews Due Fri, 3/28
12	4/2	Catch up & Final Exam Review		Ch. 11 Shared Writing Due Tues, 4/1 Media Assignment #3 Due Fri, 4/4 Amicus Brief Final Paper Due Fri, 4/4
FINAL EXAM Time and Room TBA				

All assignments are due at 11:59pm EST on their scheduled due date unless otherwise stated.