

## SYLLABUS

### PSY 4090-1: Special Topics in Psychology – Criminal & Legal Psychology – Spring 2024

Faculty: Mitchell R. Spezzaferri, M.A.  
Semester Units: 3  
Schedule: Thursdays 4:30-7:00 pm  
Final Exam: Week 16, 4/29/24 – 5/3/24  
Class meetings held online [via Zoom](#)  
Email address: [mitchellspezzaferri@pointloma.edu](mailto:mitchellspezzaferri@pointloma.edu)  
Office hours: Wednesdays 7-11 am or by appt.

### PLNU Mission Statement

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is molded and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

### Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the areas and issues that define forensic psychology to instill a broad understanding of the field. This broad understanding will include the areas of psychology, law, criminal justice, and forensic mental health. Students will gain a basic knowledge and understanding of the role of psychology and other mental health professionals and learn how to apply psychological principles within the criminal justice system.

### Program Learning Outcomes

1. Identify basic tenants of psychology.

### Course Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate a basic working knowledge of the role of psychology and psychologists in a forensic setting.
2. Demonstrate a basic understanding of how the integration of psychological principles into legislation affects public policy.
3. Incorporate Christian values and ethics considering the application of theories into law.
4. Critically analyze and integrate information from a variety of sources into a comprehensive understanding of law and psychology.

### Textbook/Readings

1. Bartol, C. R. & Bartol, A. M. (2022). *Introduction to Forensic Psychology*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN-13: 978-1071815342
  - An older edition (i.e., 5<sup>th</sup> Edition) of this book is a reasonable option for the course as well
2. Bedford, R., Pickles, A., Sharp, H., Wright, N., & Hill, J. (2015). Reduced Face Preference in Infancy: A Developmental Precursor to Callous-Unemotional Traits? *Biological Psychiatry*, 78(2), 144-150.
3. Carter, R.T., & Forsyth, J.M. (2007). Examining race and culture in psychology journals: The case of forensic psychology. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 38, 133-142.
4. Gallo, F. J., & Halgin, R. P. (2011). A guide for establishing a practice in police preemployment postoffer psychological evaluations. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 42(3), 269–275.
5. Longobardi, C., Badenes-Ribera, L., Fabris, M. A., Martinez, A., & McMahon, S. D. (2019). Prevalence of student violence against teachers: A meta-analysis. *Psychology of Violence*, 9(6), 596–610.
6. Myers, B., & Arena, M. P. (2001). Trial consultation: A new direction in applied psychology. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 32(4), 386–391.
7. Neal, T. M. S. (2018). Forensic psychology and correctional psychology: Distinct but related subfields of psychological science and practice. *American Psychologist*, 73(5), 651–662.

### Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

### Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance at all **synchronous** class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions (virtual or face-to-face), the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. In some courses, a portion of the credit hour content will be delivered **asynchronously**, and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. If absences exceed these limits but are due to university excused health issues, an exception will be granted.

### I. Grading

A minimum of 50% is needed to pass the course. The final grade will be computed on the following basis:

- 20% Weekly Journal Entries and Replies
- 10% Attendance and Participation
- 20% Midterm Exam
- 30% Forensic Research Topic Paper
- 20% Final Exam

Point Loma Nazarene University: Psychology Department, Academic Guides

### DEPARTMENT FACULTY NORMAL CURVE GUIDES

Z Score

Percentage Score

A	1.33
A-	1
B+	0.67
B	0.33
B-	0
C+	-0.33
C	-1
C-	-1.33
D+	-1.67
D	-2
D-	-2.33
F	<-2.33

A =	93-100%	Total points
A -	90-92%	
B +	88-89%	
B	84-87%	
B -	80-83%	
C +	77-79%	
C	70-76%	
C -	65-69%	
D +	62-64%	
D	55-61%	
D -	50-54%	
F	49%	or below

## Test Policies

If a student cannot take a test due to any circumstances the student needs to notify the professor prior to the examination by email. Any missed exam or an exam submitted late will not be accepted and receive zero (0) points if permission or accommodations are not previously discussed with the professor.

## Assignments

### Weekly Journal Entries and Replies

Weekly journals are meant to cover material in class lectures, discussions, and assigned readings. The idea is to help the students integrate the information from class into real life scenarios. Each journal entry (250 words) is due at the beginning of class on Thursday (4:30 PM) and two replies (100-150 words each) are due by Sunday (11:59 PM). There will be 12 given, 10 points each.

### Class Attendance and Participation

Course attendance is mandatory and a necessity to be successful in the course, especially given the online modality. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each synchronous class session. It is vital that any excused absences be addressed before, if possible, or immediately after missing a class to avoid a loss of points. In addition, students are required to bring materials, notes, articles, etc. as outlined in the syllabus and to be prepared to engage and discuss them in class. This course is very discussion intensive, and students must come prepared to fully participate to make the most of their learning experience. Here are some requirements to help you make the most of our online, synchronous format:

1. Show up to Zoom on time.
2. Turn on camera and make sure your camera is turned on for the entire length of the class.
  1. If you need to have camera turned off an email **MUST** be sent to me prior to class otherwise I will consider this an unexcused absence.
  2. Excused reasons for intermittent camera being off: need to use the restroom, may need to protect roommate.
3. Participate with professor and peers by unmuting OR using the chat.
4. Make sure you are in a quiet space (when possible) free of distractions.
  - a. Students will not get participation points if they are driving in a car, at work, etc.
  - b. You should reserve this class time just like you would if you were in a face-to-face class.

### Midterm and Final Exams

The exams will cover information discussed in class lectures as well as the Bartol & Bartol text. Each exam is valued at 100 points. Exams taken through Honorlock on Canvas. No class meeting during exam weeks.

- Midterm Exam will open on Monday, 2/26/24 and will close Friday, 3/1/24 by 11:59 PM
- Final Exam will open on Monday, 4/29/24 and will close Friday, 5/3/24 by 11:59 PM

### Forensic Research Topic Paper

There will be one topic paper assignment. This paper is meant to evaluate your ability to integrate your knowledge of psychological principles into current legal topics. A list of suggested topics and more information about this paper will be given both in class and on Canvas. As this is an upper-division psychology course, APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition standards will be strongly enforced – non-psychology students should write in this format as well and will be given resources to assist them. An outline and preliminary draft will be due before the final draft with feedback incorporated. This paper is worth 85 points.

Research Paper Grading:

- Outline and organization of paper (10 pts)
- Preliminary draft (25 pts)
- Accuracy, comprehension, and synthesis of information (25 pts)
- Incorporated feedback into final revision (10 pts)
- Demonstrates need of research/problem needing to be researched (5 pts)
- Use of appropriate writing conventions (e.g., grammar, syntax, etc.) (5 pts)
- Adherence to APA-style (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) requirements in writing, citations, and paper format (5 pts)

### Late Policy

Any missed or late assignments will result in a **2% deduction** taken from the final grade of that exam or assignment for each day late (10% max). All late or missed work must be turned in by the last week of class (**Friday, 5/3/24 by 11:59pm**), to receive credit.

### State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

### Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. If a student needs technological resources, please contact [student-tech-request@pointloma.edu](mailto:student-tech-request@pointloma.edu).

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

### Academic Accommodations

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

### Academic Dishonesty

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

### Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

### FERPA Policy

In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by (each faculty member choose one strategy to use: distributing all grades and papers individually; requesting and filing written student permission; or assigning each student a unique class ID number not identifiable on the alphabetic roster.). Also, in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the "Information Release" section of the student portal. See [Policy Statements](#) in the undergrad student catalog.

### Final Exam

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the Class Schedules site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved. In the rare case that a student is scheduled for more than three (3) final examinations on the same day, the student is authorized to contact each professor to work out an alternative time for one of those examinations. This professor needs to be contacted at least 2 weeks prior to finals for any and such arrangements.

### Course Schedule

This syllabus is not a contract. It is designed to help you organize your study and meet the requirements of the course. Professor reserves the right to make changes from time to time.

**Note:** Given the hybrid and online modalities being used in the 2022-2023 academic year, the content of the course schedule and assignments will be posted in Canvas.

Week	Date	Day	Reading/Assignment Due
1	1/8/24	M	Spring Semester Starts
1	1/11/24	R	Introduction to Course/Syllabus B&B Ch. 1 Introduction to Forensic Psychology Neal, 2018
2	1/18/24	R	B&B Ch. 2 Police and Public Safety Psychology <i>Journal 1</i>
3	1/25/24	R	B&B Ch. 3 Psychology of Investigations <i>Journal 2</i>
4	2/1/24	R	B&B Ch. 4 Consulting and Testifying Meyers & Arena, 2001 <i>Journal 3</i>
5	2/5/24	M	<i>Research paper topic proposal due</i>
5	2/8/24	R	B&B Ch. 5 Consulting with Criminal Courts <i>Journal 4</i>
6	2/15/24*	R	B&B Ch. 6 Family Law & Civil Litigation <i>Journal 5</i>
7	2/20/24	M	<i>Two research articles due</i>
7	2/22/24	R	B&B Ch. 7 Dev. Of Delinquent & Criminal Behavior Bedford et al., 2015 <i>Journal 6</i>
8	2/29/24	M-F	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
9	3/7/24	M-F	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>
10	3/14/24	R	B&B Ch. 8 Psychology of Violence & Intimidation Longobardi et al., 2019 <i>Journal 7</i>
11	3/18/24	M	<i>Research paper outline due</i>
11	3/21/24	R	B&B Ch. 9 Psychology of Sexual Behavior Yates, 2007 <i>Journal 8</i>
12	3/28/24	R	B&B Ch. 10 For. Psych. & Victims of Crime <i>Journal 9</i>
13	4/21/24	M	<i>Research paper draft due</i>
13	4/4/24	R	B&B Ch. 11 Fam. Violence & Child Victimization <i>Journal 10</i>
14	4/11/24	R	**Special Topic Lecture** <b>FORENSIC RESEARCH TOPIC PAPER DUE</b>
15	4/18/24	R	B&B Ch. 12 Correctional Psychology in Adults <i>Journal 11</i>
16	4/25/24	R	B&B Ch. 13 Juvenile Justice & Corrections <i>Journal 12</i>
17	5/3/24	M-F	<b>FINAL EXAM DUE</b>

\* Fully asynchronous class this week. No Zoom meeting on Thursday.