Course Objectives

The essential objectives of this course are to provide a comprehensive introduction to the contemporary role of forensic psychology in comprehending crime from the perspectives of the perpetrator, victim and the community at large. In that effort we will operate from multiple domains of enquiry and theoretical perspectives: Developmental, Behavioral, Cognitive, Biological and Social. Relevant case law will be covered to provide a historical perspective of the increasingly important role of Forensic Psychology in our country. Contemporary research and individual case studies and forensic evaluations will be used to illuminate key issues, specific offense categories and offender characteristics. The uses of psychological evaluations in conducting forensic and competency to stand trial and insanity evaluations will be covered. The psychology of terrorism and violence in schools will be discussed.

Students will gain a factual and conceptual understanding of the contributions of forensic psychology and its role within the community and the criminal justice system. Guest lecturers with backgrounds in Criminology, Cognitive Psychology and law enforcement will present material from their respective fields as scheduling and their availability permit. Typically Mike and Ken from the FBI show up to dazzle us with accounts of true crime, North Texas style.

Attendance, Special Needs and Student Conduct

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities.
Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Halladay Student Services Building  
Room 303 A/D  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

Cell phones and other electronic devices will be turned off while in class.

Department policy provides for a maximum of three unexcused absences. Students are expected to be in class on time. Those students requesting accommodations for disabilities must submit their requests to the Academic Support Committee. For additional information please contact the Director of Disability Resources and Services, Halladay Student Services Building, Room 303D, (903) 886-5835. Socially appropriate, respectful behavior is expected toward the instructor and other students and the learning environment. See Student’s Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.

Class Format:

Lecture and team teaching (small groups) will be the principle format. Student participation and class discussion is encouraged. Students may work with a partner (1) for the class presentation. No more hockey or basketball team size presentation groups, please! Students who are prepared to present by the end of September will receive a (10) point bonus. Waiting till the last week of the semester to present is not typically a good strategy.

Tests: There will be four (2) compulsory tests and one (1) class presentation. The test material will be drawn from the text and class lectures. Test structure will be short answer essay. Each test score will comprise 25% of the total course grade. The research paper/class presentation will account for the remaining 50%.

Grading

Each test will account for approximately 50 points. The course grade will be based upon the cumulative points total for the two tests and the research paper/presentation (50 points).

90 – 100 = A
An eight to twelve page research paper/class presentation over an approved research topic, appropriately referenced, with a minimum of six reference resources will be required. Sources must be scientific and/or scholarly journals, books etc. Class presentations over an approved topic (no more serial murder cases!) in Forensic Psychology may consist of power point presentations and other appropriate, approved media. The paper/presentation will comprise 50% of the final grade. I will be glad to visit with you individually about your topic, presentation format etc. Classmates tend to be supportive and nonjudgmental so don’t worry about speaking in front of a class – its good practice!

A list of suggested presentation topics will be distributed post haste to aid you in your deliberations. A 10 point bonus is offered to those lucky few who are prepared to present by mid - September. Since we will only be meeting 13 times it is imperative to “get cracking” as the Brits say.

Sources of Extra Credit

Participation in approved departmental sponsored research. (Maximum of 5 points extra credit).

### Semester Schedule

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<td>Sept 26 – Oct 17</td>
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<td>Oct 25 – Nov 10</td>
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<td>Nov 17 – Dec 8</td>
<td>Chapters 10 – 13</td>
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**Final Exam**

Dec. 12, 4:30

Note: The final exam will not be cumulative. There will be no scheduled make-up tests. Make up tests will be provided for those students who have an approved excuse i.e. university sponsored activity or scheduled athletic event etc. Make-up tests are offered the last week of classes prior to the final exam.