

## PSYC 4335 - Issues in Psychology: Psychology and Law (MM - May 13 to May 31) 202450 Syllabus, Section M80, CRN 51638

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### Instructor Information

**Kate Houston, PhD**

Associate Professor of Psychology and Criminal Justice

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Office: AIC 338

Office Hours:

Monday 3pm – 5pm, Tuesday 3pm – 5pm; Wednesday 2pm – 4pm; Thursday 11am – 1pm or by appointment

Office Phone: 956-326-2630

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### Times and Location

Does Not Meet Face-to-Face

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### Course Description

Examines current or special topics in the field of psychology. May be repeated when topics change.

Psychology & Communication Department, College of Arts & Sciences

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### Additional Course Information

This course will provide an overview of the various factors that sit at the cross-roads of Psychology and Law. A thorough examination of every psychological factor that may interact with the legal system is beyond the scope of this course, however the classes will provide an overview of each topic with students expected to consult the recommended readings for additional information. This course will cover topics such as the unique characteristics of memory as evidence, lie detection in suspect interviews, recognition of perpetrators by eyewitnesses, the influence of emotions on eyewitness memory and the use of psychology to inform the interviewing of both witnesses and suspects. Examples will be given from legal cases and research from across the world so students will get an impression of how memory as evidence is treated in different countries.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

- (1) define the major theoretical perspectives surrounding the application of psychology to the legal system;
- (2) understand the utility and limitations of the various theoretical perspectives;
- (3) understand the various research strategies employed in the study of psychology in the legal system,
- (4) understand the principle factors that can impair the performance of suspects/perpetrators/witnesses in the legal system.

### Important Dates

Visit the Academic Calendar ([tamiu.edu](http://tamiu.edu)) (<https://www.tamiu.edu/academiccalendar/>) page to view the term's important dates.

## Other Course Materials

There is no required text for this course. The required readings for this course will be journal articles discussing the latest research on a given topic we are covering. These articles will be uploaded with the course materials and you will have full access to them via Blackboard. In other words, you do not need to buy any additional materials to take this course – all course readings will be provided for you.

## Grading Criteria

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	91-100
B	80-90.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

## Open Boilerplate

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE
Discussion Boards x 10 @4% each	40%
Exams 1 and 2 - 30% Each	60%

## Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
5/13	Topic 1: Introduction to the Course Topic 2: Introduction to the study of Eyewitness Memory Topic 3: Estimator Variables Topic 4: System Variables	Course Syllabus APA Overview of the Field of Psychology and Law Wells (1978)	Discussion Boards due Tuesday May 14th through Sunday May 19th. Check Blackboard for more information.
5/20	Topic 5: How to Interview a Witness Topic 6: Interviewing Suspects MIDTERM	Wright and Holliday (2007) Kassin (2007)	Discussion Boards due by Friday May 17th at 11:59pm. Check Blackboard for more information. Midterm Exam - due Sunday May 26th by 11:59pm. See Blackboard for full details.
5/27	Topic 7: Facial Appearance and Criminality Topic 8: False Memories Topic 9: Juries and Jury Decision Making Topic 10: Role of Experts in the Legal System FINAL EXAM	Loftus (1993) Desmarais and Read (2011)	Discussion Boards due by Thursday May 30th at 11:59pm. Check Blackboard for more information. Final Exam - due Friday May 31st by 11:59pm. See Blackboard for full details.

## Distance Education Courses

### Online Courses and On-Campus Meetings

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter J, Section 2.202 ([https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p\\_dir=&p\\_rloc=&p\\_tloc=&p\\_ploc=&pg=1&p\\_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=2&rl=202](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=2&rl=202)), defines distance education as the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50%) of instruction. Distance education includes hybrid and 100% online courses and programs as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB):

- **Hybrid Course** - A distance education course in which more than 50 percent but less than 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations.

- **100-Percent Online Course** - A distance education course in which 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations. **Requirements for on-campus or in-person orientation, testing, academic support services, internships/fieldwork, or other non-instructional activities do not exclude a course from this category.**

**In this online course, be sure to confirm what in-person meetings may be required of you (if applicable).**

## Course Structure

**Class Format and Requirements:** This class will consist of several components: discussion boards, a mid-term examination and a final exam. Please note that the final day to drop this course without record is currently May 13th but please check the University Calendar to confirm these dates if you decide to drop classes.

### How will this course be delivered and formatted?

This course will be split up into modules – one for each week of the course. Each module will be comprised of individual units which go into depth on specific issues. Each unit will contain a Powerpoint File and a journal article. At the start of each week, I will upload Powerpoint files for each module in that week's module. You will be assessed multiple times each week via Discussion Board postings, where you will be expected to discuss that unit's topic. Half way through Week 2 and at the end of Week 3, you will have a midterm and final examination (respectively) which will be comprised of multiple choice questions that you will respond to via Blackboard. Please review the below sections on Discussion Boards and Exams for information on what is expected of you in terms of your participation in these aspects of the course.

### How will I be evaluated in this course?

**Discussion Boards.** This course is structured in such a way that every week we will discuss new topics and sets of readings. Discussion boards will be required Monday – Friday of the course. In other words, during the week you will complete discussion boards. This is an intensive course and so it is imperative that you keep up with the course work. The articles assigned may include law reviews, overview chapters, or scientific articles that address the issue in question. You should be prepared to discuss these readings via the discussion board. I am looking for you to comment on the topic's significance, or to remark about things you may have found surprising or counterintuitive, or to generate ideas for research based upon the reading.

Discussion board posting which consist solely of "I agree with the readings" "I disagree with the readings" will not be accepted. I do expect you to post to the discussion board at least twice – once with your own post, and once in reply to a post from another member of the class.

Within the discussion boards, I encourage you to challenge the ideas presented and to think through the problems facing our criminal justice system. However I expect you to be respectful and polite – I will not tolerate any form of bullying, belittling or trivializing of others ideas or opinions. You are scholars, so I expect you to debate with and from evidence, and respect for the views of others – even if the views of others are contradictory to your own.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Generate Discussion Board Postings

Do not use AI to generate discussion board posts for this class. With discussion boards I am interested in what you think, not what AI thinks about a given topic. The use of AI to generate discussion board postings will be treated as plagiarism (attempting to pass off work that is not your own for a grade and progression towards your degree), resulting in a zero for the assignment and reporting to the TAMIU Honor Council for academic misconduct. Please see the below section on Academic Misconduct for more information on this and email me if you have any questions.

**Class participation and discussion board postings will account for 40% of your final grade.**

**Exams.** Two short multiple choice exams will be administered, one a mid-term and one as a final examination. These exams will be administered via Blackboard and will each be open for a 24 hour period of time. Each exam will account for 30% of your final grade. Please see course announcements for further information on the Exams.

## Student-Instructor Communication Policy and Response Time

### Announcements/Course Messages/Emails

As this is an online course, my main mode of general/class wide communication with you all will be course announcements. I will send a course message at the start, middle and end of each week of this course. Announcements at the beginning of the week will overview the week's topics and provide a reminder of assignments due. Announcements in the middle of the week will be fairly quick check-ins to make sure everyone is managing to navigate the course platform sufficiently. Announcements at the end of the week will review the week's materials and look ahead to the topics and assignments of the following week.

### Course Emails

I will endeavor to respond to course emails send Monday through Friday within 24 hours, and emails sent Saturday and Sunday within 48 hours. If you need to get in touch with my urgently please send an email to my TAMIU email account (found at the top of this syllabus) rather than sending me a course message via Blackboard, as I will see email more quickly.

## Assignments and Assessments

Discussion Boards will be graded, and feedback provided once the respective discussion board had closed. If you drop points in the DiscussionBoard, you will always be told why so you can fix it for the next one.

Exams will be graded within 48 hours of submission, with written feedback provided for short answer questions. For any Multiple Choice questions you get wrong, you will be able to see the correct answer so you can use your exam performance as a learning tool.

## Course Communication Guidelines (Netiquette)

There are course expectations concerning etiquette or how we should treat each other online. We must consider these values as we communicate with one another. Visit **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' web page on Netiquette** (<http://www.tamui.edu/distance/students/netiquette.shtml>) for further instruction.

## Accommodations/Accessibility Policy

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodation for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Director of Student Counseling and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodation. For more information, contact the online at **Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS)**, via phone at 956.326.3086 or by visiting the staff at the Student Center, room 118. A link to the Disabilities Services for Students site has also been included under the "Resources" tab inside the course.

## Student Support Resources

The University wishes to have all students succeed in their courses. To provide support to our students, an array of services in the areas of technology support, academic support, student support, and accessibility support may be found at the University. For more information, visit the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services page on **University Resources and Support Services**.

## Computer/Technology Requirements

When participating in distance education courses, it is vital to consider the technology involved in order to have a successful course. Online students will need regular access to a personal computer that runs on a broadband Internet connection.

It is recommended that you meet the technical requirements listed on the Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' webpage when using the learning management system (LMS) of the University.

**Additional Hardware.** For this class, you will need regular access to a computer that is connected to the internet. It will be very difficult to complete this course by only using a tablet/cell phone due to the screen size.

If you wish to attend office hours (which are virtual) you will need a microphone and webcam on your computer. If you would prefer to attend office hours in person, please email me and we will set-up a time to meet in person.

**NOTE:** Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services may check out available webcams to students on a first-come, first-served basis. To check out a webcam, please stop by Killam Library, Room 259, and request an available webcam.

**Additional Software. You will need Microsoft Office.** TAMIU Students may access online versions of this software through their Dusty Office 365 account at <https://dusty.tamui.edu/>. This site also provides students access to download the Microsoft suite for educational use. **See instructions for downloading the Microsoft Office suite.**

**Note:** Students, if you do not own the required hardware or software or do not have access to the Internet, it will be highly challenging for you to make any progress in this class. However, my goal is to assist you in finding solutions and guide you appropriately most of the required materials can either be found free of charge at TAMIU's library, classrooms, and available computer labs. **Visit Media Services' web page on the availability of on-campus computer labs.** In addition, you may also purchase any of these items at any electronic store.

## Learning Management System (Blackboard)

Students are provided with an orientation (\*eLearning (Blackboard) Student Orientation\*) and access to guides on how to use the Blackboard LMS. Guides may be available at **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' Student eLearning Tutorial Videos page** or by contacting the eLearning team at [elarning@tamui.edu](mailto:elarning@tamui.edu).

## Minimum Technical Skills Expected

When participating in distance education courses, it is vital to consider the technology involved in order to have a successful course. Students in distance education should have knowledge of basic computer and Internet skills, as mentioned on the **Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' webpage**.

## Technical Support Services

Because of the nature of distance education courses, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) computing and information services are vital to the success of online students. This webpage covers contact information for Distance Education Services (Blackboard Support), the OIT Help Desk, and E-mail support: **Technical Support Services**.

## Web Conferences/Synchronous sessions

Although this course is asynchronous, I more than happy to arrange a time to meet with you to review any of the course material. We can meet through an online meeting space within Blackboard. Please review my office hours at the top of this syllabus, and if you cannot find a time that fits your schedule then please email me and we will schedule an appointment.

## Grading Scale/Schema (after Grade Breakdown section)

In determining the final course grade, the following scale is used in percentage or point value.

- 90-100 = A
- 80-89 = B
- 70-79 = C
- 60-69 = D
- <59 = F

## Late Work Policy

Late submissions will not be accepted, except in cases of documented medical/other emergency which resulted in your incapacity to perform on the course, as per the policies of the College of Arts and Sciences at Texas A&M International University (found at the end of this syllabus). If, for any reason, you are unable to meet the deadlines and thus, requirements of this course, please contact me immediately.

## Course Evaluation

At the end of this course, students are encouraged to complete a course evaluation that will be distributed to them via email and through a course link.

## Turnitin Policy Or Other Types of Assignments in Other Systems

Academic misconduct in any form will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to: improper behavior in class (e.g. inappropriate verbal and non-verbal behavior towards Professor or other student), copying of other student's work and claiming it as your own work, even if that student isn't currently in my class but has been in the past (plagiarism), copying of published information and claiming it as your own work (plagiarism), use of AI generated text (plagiarism), cheating on any assignment/exam by copying answers, or using any other resource other than your own knowledge to answer a question. Please note that I take Academic Misconduct very seriously and I will report you to the Honors Council if I suspect you of Academic Misconduct. If I suspect you of Academic Misconduct related to an assignment you will be given a zero for that assignment, pending investigation by the Honor Council at TAMIU. If I suspect you of Academic Misconduct within my course, then I reserve the right to subject you to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being involuntarily withdrawn from the class.

Please refer to the College Policies below on Classroom Behavior, Cheating and Plagiarism, for more information on Academic Misconduct, as well as your student handbook.

## Accessibility and Privacy Statements on Course Technologies

At Texas A&M International University, we believe that all students should have equal technology opportunities in the classroom. These technologies/sites may also require user data, such as the creation of a username and password. You may find the accessibility and privacy policies of the technologies used in this class on the following pages: **Accessibility Statements and Privacy Statements**.

## Syllabus Subject to Change

While information and assurances are provided in this course syllabus, it should be understood that content may change in keeping with new research and literature and that events beyond the control of the instructor could occur. Students will be informed of any substantive occurrences that will produce syllabus changes.