Psych 595E Psychology and Law Seminar
Course Syllabus for Fall 2013

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Class meeting: Wed./Fri. 3:10 – 4:30
Location: Lago W057 (Psych/Law Conference Room)
Office hours: Tues./Thurs. 11 am – 12:30 pm

Psych 595E is a graduate-level course in experimental psychology and law. This course will expose you to contemporary and classic research in the major sub-areas of the discipline and will emphasize theoretical and empirical research. Topics covered will include Miranda, criminal confessions, deception detection, plea bargaining, alibis, forensic evidence, eyewitness identification, and jury decision making.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Discussion Leader

At each class meeting, we will discuss a set of readings that address a particular topic in psychology and law. One student will be responsible for leading a group discussion of these readings. As the discussion leader, you may want to do the following:

a. Review the key points and main arguments in defense of those views.

b. Give special attention to points that you think are difficult, need clarification, or that you find particularly interesting or informative.

c. Think of different ways to present the information, rather than simply presenting the material point-by-point as in the article.

d. Because your classmates will have carefully read the articles too, they will benefit most if you are able to suggest novel ways to analyze or synthesize the information or arguments made in the readings.

e. As part of your preparation, you may want to look up key studies mentioned in the article and provide additional detail when needed.

Although students can elect to include a PowerPoint presentation when leading the discussion, doing so is not required or expected. However, if you do use PowerPoint, then please bring your PowerPoint presentation to class on a thumb drive. Based on the class size, I anticipate that each student will lead the discussion about once every two weeks. Leading the discussions will comprise 25% of your final grade.

2. Class Participation and Attendance

All students are expected to have carefully read the assigned readings prior to class and to participate thoughtfully in the ensuing discussion. Although all students are expected to be fully engaged in the discussion each and every class meeting, the quality of a student’s comments will be weighted more heavily than the quantity of the comments. Class participation will comprise 25% of your final grade and will be based on the depth, novelty, and relevance of your contributions, as well as your general engagement in the discussion overall. Students are strongly encouraged to attend all class meetings and to avoid absences. Absences will negatively impact your participation since you must be present to participate. Students who are absent from class will receive zero participation points for that class meeting. Students who miss part of a class meeting will be eligible to receive partial participation points for that class meeting equivalent to the portion of class that they attended.
3. Reaction Papers

To facilitate discussion, each student (except the Discussion Leader) will prepare a reaction paper to the assigned readings. Each reaction paper should be very brief, approximately 250 - 500 words – just enough to get you thinking. The reaction papers can take several forms. For example, you may want to (a) discuss how the readings link to your own research or to other research and theories in psychology, (b) identify future research directions, (c) identify inadequacies in the work, and/or (d) identify areas of confusion or debate. Each reaction paper will be evaluated according to the quality and originality of the thoughts presented. Each reaction paper must be typed and turned in at the end of each class meeting. Because reaction papers are designed to help stimulate discussion, reaction papers will not be accepted late, nor from students who were absent from class. Reaction papers will comprise 15% of your final grade.

4. Term Paper

Each student will submit a final term paper. The nature of the term paper is flexible. Here are some ideas to consider:

(a) Thesis or dissertation proposal
(b) Major grant proposal (e.g., NSF dissertation, NIJ)
(c) Theory paper
(d) Meta-analysis paper
(e) Narrative review paper
(f) Empirical paper

The term paper should be approached as something more than just an assignment for this class. Ideally, it should amount to an achievement that will further your professional goals. For example, wouldn’t it be great to write a grant proposal for the term paper and then submit it to a granting agency? Or, to write an empirical paper for the term paper based on data you have collected during your normal course of research and then submit that paper to Law and Human Behavior? Or, get a solid draft of your thesis or dissertation proposal completed? To facilitate this kind of outcome, I encourage students to submit a term paper that reflects work they are currently involved in as long as that work is broadly relevant to psychology and law and is not too far along. You may not submit work that you have nearly or already completed (e.g., a grant proposal that you already wrote or submitted, or a manuscript that you already drafted or that was reviewed at a journal). Please check with me if you have any questions or concerns, or if you have a term paper idea that is not listed above. Students should begin working on their term paper early in the semester even though it is not due until the end. You may approach me anytime with questions about your term paper and I will do my best to provide guidance. Term papers are due December 13, 2013. There will be a penalty for lateness, so no late papers, please. The term paper will comprise 25% of your final grade.

5. Formal Presentation

Each student will give one formal presentation to the class. The presentation will focus on your term paper, with the goal being to help you finalize and articulate your ideas. For example, if you chose to write an empirical paper, then your formal presentation would be a standard research talk. If you chose to write a grant, thesis, or dissertation proposal, then your formal presentation would present the theory and method of your planned research. If you chose to write a theory paper, then your formal presentation would present your theoretical model and support for it. The formal presentation must include a PowerPoint presentation similar to what one might use if given a lecture or a conference presentation. General tips on PowerPoint presentations is provided below. Because the formal presentations will take place toward the end of the semester, you should be pretty far along on your term paper by that time. The formal presentation is not the time to begin thinking about your term paper! The formal presentation will comprise 10% of your final grade, and will be based on both the presentation’s content as well as the PowerPoint slides.
6. Feedback on Formal Presentations

Classmates will be expected to attend closely to each student’s formal presentation, to ask good questions, and to provide constructive feedback on the ideas presented (not on the speaker’s presentation style or slides). Toward this end, in addition to comments made during class, each student (except the presenter) will also be required to provide the presenter and me with a written summary of her/his feedback via email before the next class meeting. This document will count toward class participation and should be similar in content to a review of a manuscript.

**TIPS FOR PowerPoint PRESENTATIONS (gleaned from various sources):**

Keep the amount of text on the slides to a minimum. You don’t want to simply read your slides to the class. The idea is to use the slides as a guiding framework, sort of like an outline of a paper. If a speaker’s slides provide all of the information that there is to know, then the speaker is unnecessary – people could just read the slides themselves.

Use high contrast between text and background (i.e., don’t use dark font against a dark background or light font against a light background).

Use large font, typically not smaller than 34 – 36 point.

Use examples.

Make visuals simple, clear, and obvious. Don't clutter slides with irrelevancies.

If you have lots of results you must show, use many slides, not one cluttered slide.

Do not overdo animations. Unnecessary fade-ins or slides swooshing in from the side, etc. are more distracting than helpful. Animations should only be used if they serve to illustrate or emphasize a point.

Practice your presentation. If you don’t practice it, you won’t notice the places where you have left out something important.

**DISABILITY:**

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehab Act requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Disability Resources (DR) office for information on appropriate policies and procedures. DR is located on the main floor of the Dean of Students Building, Room 1076; their phone is 515-294-7220.

**ASSIGNED READINGS:**

Assigned readings are presented below. To access electronic copies of these readings, click on the appropriate hyperlink available at: [http://madon.public.iastate.edu/595E/Fall2013Hyperlinks.pdf](http://madon.public.iastate.edu/595E/Fall2013Hyperlinks.pdf)

**SPECIAL VISITOR**

Because of a special visitor to our class on September 13th, we will interrupt our discussion of confessions to discuss jury decision making.
TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

WEEK 1:
August 28: Overview of course
No readings

August 30: The Miranda Debate

WEEK 2:
September 4: Miranda Comprehension

September 6: Miranda Waivers

WEEK 3:
September 11: The Causes of Confessions and Experimental Paradigms

September 13: Jury Decision Making: VISITING PROFESSOR: Dr. Margaret Kovera, Professor, John Jay School of Criminal Justice.

WEEK 4:
September 18: The Causes of Confessions and Experimental Paradigms Continued
September 20: Confessions: The Big Picture
Correction to Kassin 2012.

WEEK 5:
September 25: Secondary confessions

September 27: Deception Detection: Theory and Meta-Analyses

WEEK 6:
October 2: Lie Detection Techniques

October 4: Plea Bargaining Debate

WEEK 7:
October 9: Plea Bargaining Experiments

October 11: Alibis
**WEEK 8:**

**October 16: More Alibis**


**October 18: Overview and the Admission of Forensic Science Evidence**


**WEEK 9:**

**October 23: The Scientific Method and Forensic Science Disciplines**


**October 25: Recommendations for Forensic Science**


**WEEK 10:**

**October 30: False Memories**


**November 1: Overview of Eyewitness Research**


**WEEK 11:**

**November 6: Post-Identification Feedback Effect**


November 8: Eyewitness Research Methods

WEEK 12:
November 13: Show-ups and Lineups

November 15: Pre-Trial Publicity and Inadmissible Evidence

WEEK 13:
(November 20): Formal Presentations
(November 22): No class

WEEK 14:
(November 25 – 29): Thanksgiving Break: NO CLASS

WEEK 15:
(December 4 and 6): Formal Presentations

WEEK 16:
(December 11): Formal Presentations
(December 13): Formal Presentations