Psychology 303: Forensic Psychology
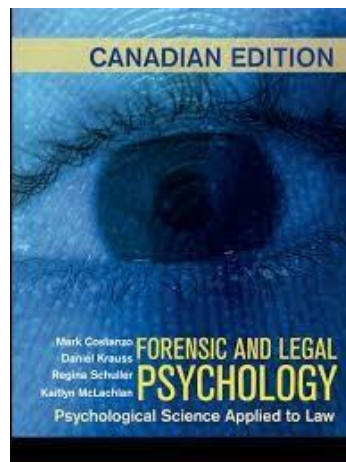
Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 42 hours of classroom lectures / coursework

Course Description:
This course will provide students with an overview of core research and practice within the realm of Forensic Psychology. Forensic psychology refers broadly to the research and application of psychological knowledge to the legal system. As this is an introductory course to this area, studentswill be exposed to a breadth of topics including detecting deception, recovered memories, jury decision making, interrogations and confessions, criminal profiling and eyewitness identification.

Course Text: Costanzo, M., Krauss, D., Schuller, R., & McLachlan, K. (2014). Forensic and legal psychology: Psychological science applied to the law (Cdn ed.). Toronto: Worth.

Course Requirements:

Exam #1	30%
Exam #2	30%
Profile Assignment	10%
Podcast Assignment	10%
Presentation	10%
In-class Assignments	10%

Examinations:
Two examinations are scheduled for this course. The dates of the midterms are listed in the course timetable. The final exam will be on the last day of class. Exams will consist of multiple choice, sentence answer and short answer (i.e., a paragraph or two) questions. Emphasis is on integration ofthe material from lectures (including information presented by guest speakers or from videos), readings and discussions. The exams are **not** cumulative.

Please note: You are expected to take each examination at its regularly scheduled time. The only acceptable excuses for missing an exam are serious illness, family affliction, or University related travel. Each of these excuses must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation (e.g., a note from a physician) to be accepted as a legitimate reason for

*absence. You must inform the course instructor **prior to the exam** if you will not be in attendance for any of the aforementioned reasons. If you do not provide a valid reason prior to missing the exam, a score of zero will be assigned.. If a makeup exam is approved, it will cover the same material as the missed exam but the format may differ and the exam questions may be more difficult than the regularly scheduled exam.*

Course Assignment:
Assignment details are outlined on the latter pages of the course outline. Penalty for late submissions is 10% per day (20% per weekend). If any assignment is not received, a score of zero will be assigned.

Final Grades:

A+	90-100%	B+	76-79%	C+	64-67%	D	50-54%
A	85-89%	B	72-75%	C	60-63%	F	Below 50%
A-	80-84%	B-	68-71%	C-	55-59%		

Tentative Course Schedule:

Class	Topic	Reading
#1	Introduction to the Course	
#2	Psychology and Law: A Cautious Alliance	Ch. 1
	Profiling	Ch. 4
#3	Profiling cont'd	
	Interrogations and Confessions	Ch. 2
#4	*Guest Lecturer : Dr. Kaila Bruer*	
	Reliability of Child Witness Memory	
	Lie Detection	Ch. 3
	ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE	
#5	Eyewitness Identification and Testimony	Ch. 5
	Evaluating the Memory of Children and Memories of Abuse	Ch. 6
#6	EXAM #1 followed by: *Guest Lecturer: Dr. Katherine Regan*	
	Provincial Corrections, Offender Programs	
#7	Jury Selection	Ch. 7
	Juries and Judges as Decision Makers	Ch. 8
#8	*Guest Lecturer: Dr. Matt Logan*	
	Predicting Violent Behaviour: The Psychology of	
	Risk Assessment	Ch. 10
#9	Fitness to Stand Trial and the NCRMD Defence	Ch. 9

#10   TBA: Corrections and/or Special Populations

#11   Police Psychology
                   ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

#12   Presentations

#13   EXAM #2

Assignment #1: Profile Assignment

Pick a convicted serial killer (preferably one on whom there is a fair amount of information available). By searching the internet/library resources available answer the following questions.(You MUST provide a citation list in APA format showing where you found the information.) If you cannot find the answer to a question put "unknown." You cannot profile Colonel RussellWilliams as I will be discussing him in class.

Please complete the assignment in the Question and Answer format provided here:

1. Subject's name: /.25
2. Date-of-birth: /.25
3. Briefly describe childhood home life (e.g., parents together? Siblings? Adopted? Etc.): /1
4. Any known childhood problems/convictions?   /.5
5. First known victim?   /.25
6. When did the first known homicide occur?   /.25
7. What are the details surrounding this first case?   /1
8. Kill alone or in partnership?   /.25
9. Any similarities between victims (e.g., age, race, appearance)?   /.5
10. Describe the subject's method of obtaining the victims: /.5
11. Describe the subject's method of killing the victims (MO):   /1.5
12. Did the subject have a signature? If so, what was it?   /1.5
13. Did the killings occur in one place (i.e., one particular city) or many?   /.25
14. How were the bodies disposed?   /1
15. Number of known victims before subject was caught?   /.25
16. Details around the subject's capture: /1
17. Did the subject confess to the killings? If so, to how many?   /.25
18. Details of the subject's conviction (e.g., years sentenced, death penalty)   /.5
19. Would you classify the subject as Organized or Disorganized? (Give examples that would support your conclusion.)   /4
20. Do you believe the subject qualifies as a psychopath? (Give examples that would supportyour conclusion.)   /4

Citation list in APA format   /1

Assignment total   **/20**

Assignment #2: Podcast/Innocence Project Assignment

Part One-Podcast:

For this assignment you will need to listen to episode 51 of the podcast Criminal. You can access the podcast through your phone podcast app or by going to this webpage: http://thisiscriminal.com/episode-51-money-tree-8-23-2016/

Once you have listened to the episode, answer the following questions (using your own words, you will receive a zero if you copy and paste from other websites). Please use question and answer format. This is not an essay assignment.

1. Briefly (in half a page) summarize the case described in the podcast.   /3

2. Given what you have learned in class do you believe that Axton's mother qualifies as a psychopath? Explain your answer referring back to the PCL-R.   /5

3. According to a 2017 study over 15 million US consumers had their identity stolen to some degree in 2016 alone. Referring back to your theories of crime knowledge/notes, how would you categorize identification theft (as a crime in general)? Explain your answer.   /2

Part 1 Assignment Total   /10

Just an FYI, if you are interested in true crime podcasts others are: Actual Innocence, GenerationWhy, Sword and Scale, 48 Hours.

Part Two-Innocence Project:

Go to the Innocence Project website: https://www.innocenceproject.org/all-cases/#exonerated- by-dna and pick a case (it can't be anyone we've covered in class). Based on the information provided for that case and your knowledge from this class, answer the following questions (using your own words, you will receive a zero if you copy and paste from the Innocence Project or other websites). You can use additional websites but MUST provide a citation list in APA format showing where you found the information.) Please use question and answer format.

1. Briefly (in half a page) summarize the case you chose (please include the person's name). /2

2. What charges were laid against the accused and what sentence did he/she receive?   /1

3. What were the contributing causes of the conviction (innocence project lists these on the righthand side of the page)?   /1

4. Given what you learned in class, describe in greater detail how these causes led to the wrongful conviction. (e.g., if there was an eyewitness misidentification go into detail about whatlikely led to that error given what you learned in class. If there was a false confession, what factors contributed to that confession, etc.) Note: I am not looking for you to just repeat what is on the innocence project website. I'm asking you to take the material you have learned in class and apply it to this case. This is the question where you show off what you have learned.   /4

5.   Based on this case, what recommendations would you make to police or lawyers to prevent this from happening again?   /2

Part 2 Assignment Total   /10

Podcast/Innocence Project Assignment Total   **/20**

*Please note that the information provided in the course syllabus is **subject to change**. Any changes will be announced in class.

Please familiarize yourself with Policy 96.01 the Student Academic Code of Conduct: http://www.viu.ca/policies/policies-index.asp

Students with documented disabilities requiring academic and/or exam accommodation should contact Disability Services, building 200, or call 740-6416.