

# PSY 133

## PSYCHOLOGY & LAW

FALL 2014 – TUFTS UNIVERSITY

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**OFFICE HOURS:** Fridays 10:00 – 12:00  
Or by appointment via e-mail

**COURSE DETAILS:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:30-2:45  
002 Bromfield-Pearson  
Course documents available via Trunk

### COURSE GOALS:

- To lead you to think about experimental psychology from different perspectives;
- To demonstrate the applicability of psychological theory and methods to a real-world setting;
- To develop your ability to criticize and discuss empirical research;
- To provide you with experience designing or actually conducting an original empirical investigation.

Note that of the numbered curricular goals and objectives for Psychology courses listed on the Department website, this course will help you fulfill #s 1-5 (and potentially 7-11 with your final project).

### REQUIREMENTS:

- This is a seminar, not a lecture. You are expected to attend regularly and to participate actively. Typing is not allowed in this course. In other words, you may bring a laptop/ tablet to class only so that you can access assigned reading pdfs. You may *not* use a computer for note-taking or other purposes.

- There is a heavy reading load for this course, comprised mostly of research articles from psychology journals. You must read all assignments before we meet and you must come to class prepared for discussion.

- Do not take this course if you are not willing to meet these expectations! Demand for the class is high and spots are limited—if you are filling one of these spots, do not plan to skip assignments or sit passively in the back of the room.

- You are also expected to check e-mail regularly. Announcements, assignment clarifications, and collaborative work will be done via e-mail.

## COURSE STRUCTURE:

Class meetings will be a combination of discussion, mini-lectures, guest speakers, demonstrations, and group activities. There is no textbook for the course, but rather readings (and films) available via Trunk. Careful and critical reading of these articles will be essential in determining your final grade and how much you get out of this course. At the end of each class I will clarify which readings should be done for the following class.



## MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Exams** – There will be two noncumulative exams consisting of identifications and other short response questions and short essays. There will be *no* final exam during finals period.

- **Response Papers** – You are required to write a response paper each week. Response papers are due at the *beginning of class* as indicated by the schedule included in this syllabus. The purpose of these papers is for you to think about the readings and generate discussion questions before we meet. It does no good to write these papers after we have our discussion, which is why they cannot be turned in late or outside of class. You have 12 response papers due; your 10 best responses will factor into your final grade. This means you can miss response papers for two weeks without adversely affecting your grade.

Response papers should be typed and between 500-1,000 words (1-2 single-spaced pages). In these papers you should analyze one (or more) of the readings for the day in question. You can raise questions for discussion, relate the reading to real-world events, critically analyze the method or results of a study, etc. It is good to pose questions in these papers; it is even better to give some sense of how one might try to answer those questions. General suggestions for research that could address the issues you raise are always nice to include.

- **Leading Discussion** – You will be responsible for leading a segment of the class once during the semester. You will work in small groups and your group will plan 20 minutes of material (which can be comprised of lecture, group exercises, demonstrations, structured discussion, etc.). Group and topic assignments will be made in the first few weeks of the class, and each group will need to meet with me one week before their assigned date to discuss their plans.

- **Final Research Paper** – You will choose one of two options. One possibility is to design and conduct an original empirical research project. You can work in groups on this study, but each individual will turn in his/her own paper. The second option is a research proposal. If you choose to this option, you will work on your own to conduct a literature review, propose a detailed design for multiple studies, and discuss the potential findings/implications of the investigation. This is a long-term project, so guidelines for the assignment will be distributed early in the semester. When you submit your paper to Trunk, it will also be submitted to turnitin.com, a site that compares your work to millions of published and unpublished sources (and will retain a copy of your submission in its database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submissions; you retain copyright on your original work).

## WRITING FELLOWS:

This course enables you to work with a Writing Fellow on your semester-long research paper. All writers, no matter how experienced, benefit from the revision process and from sharing their work with others. No psychologist would ever dream of submitting a first draft of a paper to a journal for review. Author notes of published articles almost always acknowledge several people who have read previous versions of the paper and offered suggestions for revision; authors typically spend weeks if not months editing and rewriting their manuscripts. Your experience with research papers should be no different.

You are required to meet with your assigned Writing Fellows at least twice (assignments will be made in the first few weeks of the semester). Early in the term, you will meet with a Fellow to discuss a polished draft of your Introduction (including a literature review and hypothesis statement). Several weeks before the finished product is due at the end of the semester, you will meet to discuss a polished draft of the entire paper. Your Writing Fellows will help you communicate your ideas more clearly and effectively. They are not responsible for addressing the course-related content of the paper, nor for grading your paper. Meeting twice with your Fellow is a course requirement, but I urge you to use them as resources throughout the paper process.

## FINAL GRADE:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- Exam #1 (25%)
- Exam #2 (25%)
- Final Research Paper (25%)
- Response Papers (15%)
- Participation (10%)

NOTE: Failure to attend class regularly will lower your participation grade.

## LATE POLICY:

For the final research assignment, any paper turned in after its deadline will be penalized 1/3 grade for each day it is late (e.g., an A- becomes a B+ if it is one day late, a B if it is two days late). Exam dates are nonnegotiable. In general, **if you have questions about a grade, concerns about an assignment, or extenuating personal circumstances that you feel I should know about, you need to bring them to my attention ASAP.** By the end of the term, it is too late to do anything about most of these concerns and issues, so do not wait until the week before grades are due to talk with me about these matters. Please feel free come to me with any concerns or questions you may have— just don't wait until it's too late for anyone to do anything about them!



## TIPS FOR GETTING ALONG WELL WITH PROFESSOR SOMMERS:

- Do not ask, “is it OK if I leave early today?” or “will I miss anything important if I’m not in class today?” I will never tell you that you do not have to come to class, so please do not ask me to validate or justify your absence. That said, feel free to let me know you will be leaving early or missing class. That is common courtesy, which I appreciate.
- My preference would be to ban laptops/tablets in this class. I understand the appeal of taking notes via computer, but this is a seminar, not a lecture. However, because all readings are posted on Trunk (and because I don’t want you feeling that you have to print all readings), I will allow computers in class. But there is a ban on typing! No note-taking or other typing allowed during class—your computers are only permitted to allow access to the readings. I understand that some of you may resent this rule. I’m sure I would as well; I’ll admit, I *much* prefer to have my computer with me in meetings. But I’m sure many of you will also recognize that as a seminar, we will get a lot more out of the class without the distractions; while I may not like having to pack my computer away in meetings, I begrudgingly recognize that I am more attentive and engaged when I do. We only have 75 minutes together twice a week. Email and the web can wait until that time is up.
- Do not start packing up until class is over. I will start and end on time; I ask you to do the same.
- Keep me in the loop. Do not disappear for several classes, then resurface to tell me you want to catch up; do not let a deadline go by without talking to me and assume that you can deal with it later. Unless you are physically unable to do so, contact me as soon as you begin having a problem that interferes with your class performance. Then we can work out a plan.
- Do not even consider academic dishonesty. By deciding to take this class, you enter into a social contract with me. I promise to be enthusiastic, organized, and fair. You promise to take the course seriously and complete all assignments with integrity. I consider cheating and other academic dishonesty to be a violation of this contract and a personal insult. If you are unclear as to what constitutes dishonesty in any situation, ask me directly.
- Finally, when it comes to grading, I don’t ever “take away” points. It’s just not the case that you start the semester with an average of 100% and I slowly (and coldheartedly) take points away. You actually start the semester with a blank slate. The onus is on you to convince me that you have earned points on various assignments. That’s how grading works, and while it may seem like a semantic distinction, it’s an important one.



**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & READINGS**  
(details subject to change as the semester progresses)

Date	Topic	Assignments
<b>Police Investigations:</b>		
W 9/3	Introduction	1. Swanson et al. (2003)
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M 9/8	Detecting Deception, Part I	1. Ekman & O'Sullivan (1991) 2. Vrij et al. (2011)
<b>Response Paper #1</b>		
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W 9/10	Detecting Deception, Part II	1. Saxe et al. (1985) 2. Langleben & Moriarty (2013)
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M 9/15	Confessions, Part I	1. Kassin & Kiechel (1996) 2. Kassin (1997)
<b>Response Paper #2</b>		
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W 9/17	Confessions, Part II	1. Kassin et al. (2003) 2. Hasel & Kassin (2012)
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M 9/22	Confessions, Part III	1. <i>The Central Park Five</i> (film)
<b>Response Paper #3</b>		
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## Race & Investigations:

W 9/24 Race & Policing, Part I

1. Harris (2002)
2. Stop & Frisk ruling (pp. 1-15, 18-37, 49-58, 119-128)

M 9/29 Race & Policing, Part II

1. Eberhardt et al. (2004)
2. Correll et al. (2002)

### Response Paper #4

W 10/1 Race & Policing, Part III

1. *Fruitvale Station* (film)
2. *Tufts Daily* ("Wrenchgate")

M 10/6 War on Drugs

1. Alexander (2010)
2. *The House I Live in* (film)

## Eyewitness Evidence:

W 10/8 Eyewitnesses, Part I

1. Wells & Olson (2003)
2. Dwyer (2001)

### Response Paper #5

M 10/13 **NO CLASS**

T 10/14 **NO CLASS** (most likely)

W 10/15 Eyewitnesses, Part II

1. Loftus & Palmer (1974)
2. Wells & Bradfield (1998)

### Response Paper #6

M 10/20 Eyewitnesses, Part III 1. Wells et al. (1998)

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W 10/22 **EXAM #1**

### **Victim Memory:**

M 10/27 Victim Memory, Part I 1. Loftus (1993)  
2. Loftus (1997)

**Response Paper #7**

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W 10/29 Victim Memory, Part II 1. Ceci & Huffman (1997)

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M 11/3 Victim Memory, Part III 1. Geraerts et al. (2007)  
2. *Capturing the Friedmans* (film)

**Response Paper #8**

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### **The Courtroom:**

W 11/5 Intro to the Courtroom 1. Wrightsman et al. (2002)  
2. *Gideon's Army* (film)

Guest Speaker???

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M 11/10 Jury Selection, Part I 1. Kovera et al. (2002)  
2. Lieberman (2011)

**Response Paper #9**

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W 11/12 Jury Selection, Part II 1. *Batson v. Kentucky* (1986)  
2. Sommers & Norton (2008)

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M 11/17 Jury Decision-Making, Part I 1. Ellsworth (1989)  
**Response Paper # 10**

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W 11/19 Jury Decision-Making, Part II 1. Rattan et al. (2012)  
2. Hetey & Eberhardt (2014)

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M 11/24 Death Penalty Juries 1. Eberhardt et al. (2006)  
2. Haney & Lynch (1994)  
**Response Paper # 11**

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W 11/26 **NO CLASS**

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M 12/1 Research in the Courtroom, Part I 1. *McCleskey v. Kemp* (1987)  
**Response Paper # 12**

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W 12/3 Research in the Courtroom, Part II 1. *MA. v. McCowen* transcripts  
2. *Murder on a Sunday Morning* (film)

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M 12/8 **EXAM # 2**

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