



Course Description

PSY2050 | Introduction to Forensic Psychology | 3.00 credits

This course explores the interaction between psychology and the legal system, examining the foundations, history, and terminology of forensic psychology, and includes works from the Western canon. Students will analyze the role of forensic psychologists in criminal and civil proceedings, public policy, law enforcement, and victimization, applying behavioral science concepts to understand the complex interplay between individual psychology and legal processes. Through critical examination of case studies and research, learners will develop an understanding of how psychological principles are used to analyze behavior within legal contexts and how these applications impact past and present social, political, and economic issues. Prerequisite: PSY2012.

Course Competencies:

Competency 1: The student will demonstrate knowledge of the field of forensic psychology by:

1. Defining forensic psychology as a subfield of psychology.
2. Tracing the evolution of psychology's role in the legal system.
3. Identifying and describing areas of research in forensic psychology.
4. Describing current issues in forensic psychology.

Competency 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of human behavior as it relates to forensic psychology by:

1. Contrasting theories of memory and cognition as they relate to legal issues.
2. Summarizing risk factors associated with violent behavior.
3. Classifying reasons for and providing examples of malingering and deception.
4. Relating the impact of media influences and cultural attitudes and values on forensic psychology, including jurors and public perceptions of mental illness.

Competency 3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between mental illness and legal issues by:

1. Stating current issues in forensic psychology
2. Recalling the role of mental health issues on psychological factors in the court system including competency issues, defense strategies, sentencing issues, domestic violence, abuse, and substance use.
3. Illustrating common psychological assessments and tools used in diagnosing mental illness, determining risk factors, identifying malingering, and determining cognitive functioning.
4. Identifying patterns of biopsychosocial factors, assessments, and tools in legal issues.

Competency 4: The student will demonstrate synthesis of knowledge regarding psychology and the law by:

1. Categorizing relationships between forensic psychology, other sub-disciplines within psychology, other disciplines, and the law.
2. Applying psychological theories of human behavior to legal issues.
3. Recognizing the effects of essential events and case law on the field of forensic psychology.
4. Describing the use of psychological principles in criminal courts, family courts, civil courts, law enforcement agencies, and public policy.

Competency 5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between mental issues and legal issues by:

1. Assessing the ethical principles and guidelines governing forensic psychology.
2. Applying the ethical principles and guidelines of forensic psychology to sample cases.
3. Developing ethical principles and guidelines of forensic psychology in conjunction with current issues in forensic Psychology.

Learning Outcomes:

- Communicate effectively using listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
- Solve problems using critical and creative thinking and scientific reasoning.

- Formulate strategies to locate, evaluate, and apply information.
- Demonstrate knowledge of ethical thinking and its application to issues in society