

#2XX PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LAW

GRADE: 11 and 12

LEVEL: Elective

CREDITS: 5

PREREQUISITES: NONE

BASIC TEXT: *Psychology Applied to Law*
Costanzo, Mark, Thompson Learning Inc, 2004

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS: Newspapers, Magazines, Internet articles

REQUIRED MATERIALS: textbook, notebook, pen

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Psychology and the Law is an elective course that provides an overview of the principles of forensic psychology as applied to the legal arena. Primary emphasis is given to the role of the forensic psychologist when dealing with the legal field. Topics include: forensics, the criminal justice system, expert witnesses, police interrogations, eyewitness interviews, profiling, serial killers, hate crimes, bullying, jury selection, plea bargaining, domestic violence, sentencing goals, and alternatives to prison. This course is best suited for those interested in the fields of law or psychology and will require extensive student participation and internet access.

MISSION RELATED GOALS: Academic excellence, respect for others, self-confidence, communication skills, and problem-solving skills.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING:

Students will communicate effectively through writing and speaking exercises.

Students will solve complex problems by reaching on policy debates.

Students will work with others toward a common goal through work in group projects.

Students will contribute to community and global society by providing valid research and informational handouts/posters on crucial school topics (ie: bullying, dating violence)

Students will respect the rights of others in class every day.

GENERAL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES: The student will:

1. Identify the areas where the fields of “forensics” and “psychology” merge
2. Compare the goals of the FP (Forensic psychologist) to the goals of the legal field
3. Discuss and debate the ethics involved in representation and expert testimony
4. Distinguish between substantive and procedural law, criminal and civil law
5. Evaluate the validity of lie detection testing and police interrogations
6. Understand the uses and concepts of “profiling”
7. Identify and examine behaviors of serial killers
8. Evaluate eyewitness testimony
9. Examine the insanity defense
10. Debate ethics involved in determining legal competency
11. Participate in jury selection exercise
12. Role play a plea bargaining session

13. Discuss and debate use of technology in court
14. Examine the role of the FP in family court (domestic violence, battered women syndrome, rape trauma syndrome, child emancipation, adoptions, child custody determinations etc.)
15. Determine the goals of sentencing in the correctional system

MASSACHUSETTS FRAMEWORKS STRANDS

Framework strands to be covered include: *See National Standards Below*

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS LEARNING STRANDS

National Standards for Social Studies: Curriculum and Content Area Standards

I. Culture

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity, so that the learner can:

- analyze and explain the ways groups, societies, and cultures address human needs and concerns
- predict how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference;
- apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns;
- compare and analyze societal patterns for preserving and transmitting culture while adapting to environmental or social change
- interpret patterns of behavior reflecting values and attitudes that contribute or pose obstacles to cross-cultural understanding;
- construct reasoned judgments about specific cultural responses to persistent human issues;
- explain and apply ideas, theories, and modes of inquiry drawn from anthropology and sociology in the examination of persistent issues and social problems

II. Individual Development and Identity

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity, so that the learner can:

- articulate personal connections to time, place, and social/cultural systems;
- identify, describe, and express appreciation for the influences of various historical and contemporary cultures on an individual's daily life
- describe the ways family, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, and other group and cultural influences contribute to the development of a sense of self;
- apply concepts, methods, and theories about the study of human growth and development, such as physical endowment, learning, motivation, behavior, perception, and personality
- examine the interactions of ethnic, national, or cultural influences in specific situations or events;
- analyze the role of perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs in the development of personal identity
- work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals;
- examine factors that contribute to and damage one's mental health and analyze issues related to mental health and behavioral disorders in contemporary society.

III. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions, so that the learner can:

- apply concepts such as role, status, and social class in describing the connections and interactions of individuals, groups, and institutions in society;
- analyze group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture in both historical and contemporary settings
- describe the various forms institutions take, and explain how they develop and change over time;
- analyze the extent to which groups and institutions meet individual needs and promote the common good in contemporary and historical settings
- explain and apply ideas and modes of inquiry drawn from behavioral science and social theory in the examination of persistent issues and social problems

IV. Power, Authority, and Governance

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance, so that the learner can:

- examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare;
- V. **Science, Technology, and Society**
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society, so that the learner can:
- identify and describe both current and historical examples of the interaction and interdependence of science, technology, and society in a variety of cultural settings;
 - make judgments about how science and technology have transformed the physical world and human society and our understanding of time, space, place, and human-environment interactions;
- VI. **Civic Ideals and Practices**
Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic, so that the learner can
- explain the origins and interpret the continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law;
 - identify, analyze, interpret, and evaluate sources and examples of citizens' rights and responsibilities
 - practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic
 - evaluate the degree to which public policies and citizen behaviors reflect or foster the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government

UNITS AND THEMES:

I. **An introduction to Forensic Psychology**

Unit 1:

- Define “Forensics”
- Identify the many areas involving Forensic Psychology
- Determine the various “fields” where forensics plays a role
- Brainstorm how psychology and law work together.
- Compare the goal of forensic psychologists (FP) with goals of legal field looking into the goals, methods, and style of inquiry used by each.
- Examine the historical and contemporary relationship between forensic psychology and the legal fields. – Are they compatible?
- Discuss/debate ethical obligations of the FP.

Unit 2:

- Distinguish between substantive law and procedural law
- Distinguish between criminal law and civil law
- Define relevant legal/psychological terminology
- Define the right to “confidentiality” and “privilege”
- Outline the various steps in trial procedure
- Examine the rules of evidence
- Evaluate credentials to determine “Expert Witness” status
- Create resumes for an “Expert FP witness”

II. **Forensic Psychology and the Police**

Unit 3:

- Examine how the FP deals with suspects and witnesses
- Examine interrogation techniques of police
- List the issues with police interrogations
- Role play an interrogation proceeding
- Complete a false confession case study and examine the reasons for false confessions
- Evaluate the validity of lie detection

Unit 4:

- Evaluate eye witness testimony and identification
- List and describe factors influencing eyewitness perceptions
- Discuss methods of police line-up
- Re-create and evaluate effectiveness of line-up
- Examine use of hypnosis

Unit 5:

- Examine role of FP in behavioral analysis
- Understand the uses of profiling
- Complete psychological profile
- Complete psychological autopsy

Unit 6:

- Understand the different types of killers
- Identify and examine the behaviors of serial killers
- Review differences between male and female serial killers
- Complete a dangerousness assessment

III. Forensic Psychology and the Court

Unit 7:

- Examine insanity defenses
- Define legal competencies and identify those who are usually challenged
- Understand the role of the FP in determining legal competencies
- Apply standards of evaluation to case studies
- Debate executing the insane (Atkins v US)

Unit 8:

- Analyze the role of the FP in jury selection process
- Brainstorm the “ideal” jury pool for a given case
- Define voir dire and preemptory challenge
- Discuss “scientific” selection
- Create a list of “tips” to select a jury
- Participate in a jury selection exercise
- Assess the role of group dynamics in jury deliberation
- Role play a plea bargaining session
- Discuss the uses of technology in court

Unit 9:

- Examine the role of the FP in domestic violence cases
- Briefly review Battered Women’s Syndrome and Rape Trauma Syndrome
- Research current Rape Shield Laws and Victim Impact Laws
- Discuss violence against children
- Understand the role of the FP in child custody cases
- Role play a child custody determination proceeding
- Determine factors considered in child emancipation cases
- Analyze a child emancipation case

Unit 10:

- Examine role of FP in Civil Court
- Define personal injury, malingering, sexual harassment
- Examine cases of malingering

IV. Forensic Psychology and the Correctional Department

Unit 11:

- Determine the goals of sentencing in the correctional system
- Validate the need for genetic testing and predeterminations of criminality
- Examine alternatives to prison sentencing
- Research and debate death penalty

IV. Forensic Psychology and Schools and other areas

Unit 11:

- Examine the role of the FP in the school system
- Review teen dating violence
- Examine sexual harassment and bullying rules and policies
- Look at the school environment (shootings, bullying) and review the policies
- What role can a FP play to help schools address these issues
- Create awareness posters on bully prevention strategies
- Examine the role of the FP in juvenile court
- Discuss differences between adult and juv court
- Discuss issue of child killers
- Examine hate crimes
- Examine anti-bullying programs

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:

- Brainstorming Activities
- Cartooning
- Formal Debate/discussion
- Role-Playing
- Think, pair, share
- Small group presentation
- Create posters/collages
- Surveys
- Games
- PowerPoint presentations

USE OF TECHNOLOGY:

1. Students will use internet and online databases for research.
2. Students will use Web 2.0 tools for project based learning.
3. Students will view online News sources and relevant video clips

ASSESSMENT(s):

1. Students will participate in class discussions demonstrating their knowledge of the major issues.
2. On written essay and objective tests students will demonstrate knowledge of the major issues and concepts.
3. Student will create a poster to outline various steps in trial process.
4. Students will create a resume of an expert forensic psychologist witness.
5. Students will role play an interrogation process.
6. Students will complete a psychological autopsy and dangerousness assessment.
7. Students will research and present findings about famous serial killers.

8. Students will debate the status of hate crime legislation.
9. Students will debate executing the insane.
10. Students will participate in a jury selection exercise.
11. Students will debate the uses of animation in the courtroom
12. Students will evaluate and make recommendations regarding a child custody determination.
13. Students will examine the school policies on sexual harassment and bullying.

Video Resources:

60 Minutes: Eyewitness
PBS: The Plea
PBS: The Crime of Insanity
Serial Killers
Criminal Minds
Switching Parents
12 Angry Men
Speak
Enough
The Framingham Eight
The Closer
Lie to Me
Plus Others