University of Arkansas – Fort Smith 5210 Grand Avenue
P.O. Box 3649
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3649
479-788-7000

General Syllabus

CRJU 34173 Psychology and Crime

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite: PSYC 11003 General Psychology and ENGL 10203 Composition II or ENGL 24103 Advanced Composition

Effective Catalog: 2025-2026

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

An introduction and overview to the field of psychology and its relationships to the field of criminal justice. Examines the interface between psychology and the law – including legal proceedings, law enforcement agencies, and correctional institutions.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Evaluate delinquent and criminal behavior from a psychological perspective –with particular focus on the developmental, cognitive behavioral aspects of offending.
2. Analyze various theoretical explanations of criminal behavior.
3. Analyze criminal psychopathy and the proposed etiological explanations for it.
4. Explain the organization of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and gain knowledge about the disorders it includes.
5. Perceive how criminal behavior can be assessed and predicted.
6. Interpret the use and process of criminal profiling.
7. Assess the psychology of terrorism.
8. Assess the psychology of sexual assault.
9. Analyze human aggression and violence.
10. Analyze the psychological aspects of substance abuse and how it contributes to crime.

III. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills: Students will identify criminal behavior and develop solutions/analysis.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will communicate proficiently. Students will use essay format for written presentation of research projects and discuss particular aspects of various topics in a seminar setting.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will model ethical decision-making processes. Students will examine ethical dilemmas in dealing with criminal behavior and develop ethical frameworks to resolve specific ethical issues.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will reflect upon cultural differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own.

IV. Major Course Topics

A. Developmental risk factors in criminality
B. Biological factors in criminality
C. Learning and situational factors in criminality
D. Human aggression and violence
E. Criminal psychopathy
F. Crime and mental disorders
G. Homicide, assault, and family violence
H. Multiple murder, school violence, and workplace violence
I. Sexual assault of children and youth and other sexual offenses.