

## Special Topics in Psychology: Legal Decision Making (PSY 498)

Spring 2016

Wednesdays 4:30 – 7:30

Burnett Hall 121

Instructors: Lori Hoetger, M.A., J.D.; Katherine Hazen

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Office Hours: KH Mondays 1:30 – 3:30

### Course Description:

This course will explore the decision making process of jurors and juries, as well as the application of psychology to law. We will discuss the ways legal decision-makers make decisions, including law enforcement, attorney, juries, judges, and laypersons. The goal of this course is to create an understanding of the biases and experiences that influence legal decisions. During this course, you will also have the opportunity to sharpen your critical thinking and research skills by reading and writing on difference research topics.

### Course Materials:

There is no book for this course. Readings will be made available on blackboard. Readings will include journal articles and law reviews. Students are expected to complete all of the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them.

### Course Format:

This class will be largely discussion based. There will be very little lecture; instead the majority of the class will be filled with group discussion about the readings. Students are expected to participate in the group discussion and their grade will reflect the quality and quantity of that participation.

### Attendance/Punctuality:

Students are expected to arrive at class on time. The course only meets once a week and is discussion based. Therefore unexcused absences will result loss of participation points. Students will not lose points for unexcused absences (including personal illness, family emergencies, or professional activities) if the instructors are informed **before** the class period. Students will be permitted to turn in a discussion paper if they have an excused absence.

### Cancellation Policy:

If class is cancelled for some reason, students will be informed via email as soon as possible and a note will be posted on the door. If the University is closed due to weather, we will not meet.

### Laptops/Cell Phones

Cell phones are not permitted during class. If you have an emergency and need to be aware of your phone, please inform the instructors before class. Laptops will be

permitted for looking at notes and the readings. We expect that students will not be on social media or email during the class. If we see it you will be asked to close your computer or hand over your phone for the remainder of the class period.

#### Student Rights:

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

#### Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to avoid dishonest conduct and complete their own work. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will receive a zero for that assignment and, at the discretion of the instructors, a failing grade for the course. If you are unsure about what constitutes cheating or have any questions about the University's academic dishonesty policy, please go to <http://stuafs.unl.edu/dos/code>.

#### Grading:

Your grade in this class will be determined by weekly discussion/reading assignments, 7 discussion papers, performance as discussion leader 1 week, and a final paper.

Assignment	Point Value	Due Date
Discussion Lead	95	1 week picked by the student over the course of semester
Reaction Papers	100	7 1-page reactions papers due by 5:00 PM Monday before class
In-class Participation	100	On-going
Final Paper	200	April 30 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM
Paper topic	5	March 9 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM
Outline or draft	Optional	April 6 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM
Total	500	

#### Assignments:

All assignments should be submitted through Blackboard by the time and date indicated above. The final paper will be submitted through SafeAssign on Blackboard. Any late assignments will automatically lose 25% for the first day and

an additional 10% for any additional days. All assignments should be in APA format, please see the most recent APA guidelines.

**Reaction Papers:**

You will be expected to write **seven** 1-page, double-spaced, reactions to the readings for that week. These reactions should include a very brief summary of what you read, any research ideas it generated, questions you have about the materials, and other comments about the readings. You may choose any 7 weeks to write about. They will be due by 5:00 PM the Monday before the class covering the topics through Blackboard.

**Discussion Lead:**

One student will be asked to lead the discussion about one of the readings each week. You will be asked to sign up for weeks the first day of class and which reading you want to discuss the week before you lead the discussion. You will be graded on the quality and quantity of the discussion.

**In-class Participation:**

Students are expected to participate in each class discussion. You will be graded on the quality and quantity of your participation.

**Final Paper:**

The final paper is worth half of your grade. This paper should be 10-12 pages, double-spaced and in APA format. This paper may be a literature review or research proposal on legal decision-making. The topic selected may be directly related to the course material or outside the scope of the topics we discuss. Your paper topic, and 3-5 sources you will use, is due on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM. An optional outline or rough draft may be turned in on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM. The final paper is due on April 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM. All should be submitted through Blackboard.

**Class Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
January 13 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction to Course
January 20 <sup>th</sup>	Police Decision-making - LH
January 27 <sup>th</sup>	Attorney Decision-making - KH
February 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Juries: Story model and Jury Instructions - LH
February 10 <sup>th</sup>	Juries: Biases - LH
February 17 <sup>th</sup>	Pretrial Publicity and Expert Witnesses - LH
February 24 <sup>th</sup>	Deliberation - KH
March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Death Penalty - KH
March 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>No class, paper work day – Paper topics due</b>
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Judicial Decision-Making - LH
March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Spring Break – <b>No class</b>

March 30 <sup>th</sup>	Eyewitnesses - KH
April 6 <sup>th</sup>	Waiver and Capacity – <b>Paper outline/draft due - LH</b>
April 13 <sup>th</sup>	Victims and Reporting - KH
April 20 <sup>th</sup>	Procedural Justice - KH
April 27 <sup>th</sup>	Adolescents and the Law - LH
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Final Paper due at 11:59 PM</b>