

**WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLANNED INSTRUCTION**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Course Title:** Forensic Psychology: Crime, Victims, and Punishment

**Course Number:** yet to be determined

**Course Prerequisites:** none

Forensic Psychology is the application of the science and profession of psychology to questions and issues relating to law and the criminal and civil justice systems. This course applies psychological theories, principles, and research to issues of concern to the criminal justice system.

This course is concerned with the prevention, detection, and reduction of crime. Throughout the course, students will acquire knowledge and practice in the application of psychological methods to understanding criminal behavior. They will use critical thinking and research skills to examine problems and issues related to criminal behavior. Students will look at the motives behind criminal acts such as persistent violence, multiple murders, and sexual offenses.

This course is designed to increase students' knowledge and understanding of the interaction of law and the study and practice of psychology, to show students how their knowledge of psychology and the law can be applied to their daily lives and experiences and their understanding of themselves and others. This course will also help students develop critical thinking skills as well as improve their reading, writing and presentation skills.

**Suggested Grade Level:** 10-12

**Length of Course:** X One Semester        Two Semesters        Other

**Units of Credit:** .5 (Insert NONE if appropriate.)

**PDE Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines (CSPG) Required Teacher Certification(s)**

(Insert certificate title and CSPG#) Social Studies

**Certification verified by WCSD Human Resources Department:**

X Yes        No

**Board Approved Textbooks, Software, Materials:**

**Title:**

**Publisher:** Worth

**ISBN #:**

**Copyright Date:**

**Date of WCSD Board Approval:**  
**BOARD APPROVAL:**

**Date Written:** \_\_\_\_\_ Sept. 2010

**Date Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Implementation Year:** \_\_\_\_\_ 2011-2012

**Suggested Supplemental Materials:**

none

**Course Standards- National & Pennsylvania**

**PA Academic Standards:**

**Reading and Writing**

**1.1 Learning to read independently**

- A. Locate various texts, media and traditional resources for assigned and independent projects before reading.
- B. Analyze the structure of informational materials explaining how authors used these to achieve their purposes.
- C. Use knowledge of root words and words from literary works to recognize and understand the meaning of new words during reading. Use these words accurately in speaking and writing.
- D. Identify, describe, evaluate and synthesize the essential ideas in text. Assess those reading strategies that were most effective in learning from a variety of texts.
- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

**1.2 Reading critically in all content areas.**

- A. Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
  - Differentiate fact from opinion across a variety of texts by using complete and accurate information, coherent arguments and points of view.
  - Distinguish between essential and nonessential information across a variety of sources, identifying the use of proper references or authorities and propaganda techniques where present.
  - Use teacher and student established criteria for making decisions and drawing conclusions.
  - Evaluate text organization and content to determine the author's purpose and effectiveness according to the author's theses, accuracy, thoroughness, logic and

**1.4 Types of Writing**

- B. Write complex informational pieces (e.g., research papers, analyses, evaluations, essays).
  - Include a variety of methods to develop the main idea.
  - Use precise language and specific detail.
  - Include cause and effect.
  - Use relevant graphics (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, tables, illustrations, photographs). · Use primary and secondary sources.

**1.5 Speaking and Listening**

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
  - Identify topic, task and audience.
  - Establish and maintain a single point of view.
- B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
  - Gather, determine validity and reliability of, analyze and organize information.
  - Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
  - Write fully developed paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.
- C. Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.
  - Sustain a logical order throughout the piece.
  - Include an effective introduction and conclusion.
- E. Revise writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how questions of purpose, audience and genre have been addressed.
- G. Present and/or defend written work for publication when appropriate.

## 1.6 Listening to others

### A. Listen to others.

- Ask clarifying questions.
- Synthesize information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy.
- Take notes.

### C. Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.

- Use a variety of sentence structures to add interest to a presentation.
- Pace the presentation according to audience and purpose.
- Adjust stress, volume and inflection to provide emphasis to ideas or to influence the audience.

### D. Contribute to discussions.

- Ask relevant, clarifying questions.
- Respond with relevant information or opinions to questions asked.
- Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.
- Adjust tone and involvement to encourage equitable participation.
- Facilitate total group participation.
- Introduce relevant, facilitating information, ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.
- Paraphrase and summarize as needed.

### E. Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.

- Initiate everyday conversation.
- Select and present an oral reading on an assigned topic.
- Organize and participate in informal debate around a specific topic

## 1.8 Research

### A. Select and refine a topic for research.

### B. Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.

- Determine valid resources for researching the topic, including primary and secondary sources.
- Evaluate the importance and quality of the sources.
- Select sources appropriate to the breadth and depth of the research (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses, other reference materials, interviews, observations, computer databases).
- Use tables of contents, indices, key words, cross-references and appendices.
- Use traditional and electronic search tools.

### C. Organize, summarize and present the main ideas from research.

- Take notes relevant to the research topic.

## Mathematics

### 2.6 Statistics and Data Analysis

A. Design and conduct an experiment using random sampling Describe the data as an example of distribution using statistical measures of center spread. Organize and represent the results with graphs. (Use standard deviation , variance and t-tests)

E. Determine the validity of the sampling method described in the study.

G. Describe questions of experimental design, control groups, treatment groups ,cluster sampling and reliability.

H. Use sampling techniques to draw inferences about large populations

I. Describe the normal curve and use its properties to answer questions about sets of data that are assumed to be normally distributed.

## Social Studies

### 5.1 Principles and Documents of Government

A. Purpose of Government

B. Rule of Law

C. Principles and Ideals that Shape Government

D. Documents and Ideals Shaping Pennsylvania Government

E. Documents and Ideals Shaping United States Government

F. Rights Created by the Pennsylvania and United States Constitutions

G. Contributions of Framers of Government

- H. Sources, Purposes and Functions of Law
- I. Individual Rights and the Common Good
- J. Role of Courts in Resolving Conflicts

## **5.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship**

- A. Civic Rights, Responsibilities and Duties
- B. Relationship between Rights and Responsibilities
- C. Sources and Resolution of Conflicts
- D. Political Leadership and Public Service
- E. Ways Citizens Influence Decisions and Actions of Government
- F. Consequences of Violating Rules and Laws
- G. Competent and Responsible Citizen

## **5.3 How Government Works**

- A. Branches of Government
- B. Services Performed by Governments
- D. Protection of Individual Rights

## **8.3 United States History**

- A. Contributions of Individuals and Groups
- B. Documents, Artifacts and Historical Places
- C. Influences of Continuity and Change
- D. Conflict and Cooperation among Groups

## **WCSD Academic Standards:**

none

## **National Standards for course content**

### **Forensic Science-Investigation and Experimentation:**

Std 1 – Scientific progress is made by asking meaningful questions and conducting careful investigations.

- a. Select and use appropriate tools and technology to perform test, collect data, analyze relationships, and display data.
- b. Identify possible reasons for inconsistent results.
- c. Formulate explanations by using logic and evidence.
- d. Recognize the cumulative nature of scientific evidence.
- e. Analyze situations and solve problems that require combining and applying concepts from more than one area of science.
- f. Investigate a science-based societal issue by researching the literature, analyzing data, and communicating findings.

## **Psychology**

- a. Describe availability and appropriateness of various modes of treatment for people with psychological disorders.
- b. Describe characteristics of effective treatment and prevention.
- c. Describe the intersection between mental health and law.
- d. Examine the influence of law on the practice of psychotherapy.

## **AP Psychology:**

### **Standard Area IA: Introduction and Research Methods**

#### **Content Standards**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

#### **IA-1. Contemporary perspectives used by psychologists to understand behavior and mental processes in context**

#### **IA-2. Major subfields and career opportunities that comprise psychology**

**Content Standards With Performance Standards and Suggested Performance Indicators**

#### **CONTENT STANDARD IA-1: Contemporary perspectives used by psychologists to understand behavior and mental processes in context.**

Students are able to (performance standards):

##### **IA-1.1 Describe and compare the biological, behavioral, cognitive, sociocultural, humanistic, and psychodynamic perspectives.**

*Students may indicate this by (performance indicators):*

- a. Analyzing how each perspective would explain concepts, e.g., aggression, altruism
- b. Evaluating the limitations of each perspective in assessing behavior and mental processes
- c. Comparing primary emphases of the different perspectives
- d. Examining historical factors that influenced the popularity of a selected perspective
  - a. Identify the major psychoactive drug categories (e.g., depressants, stimulants) and classify specific drugs, including their psychological and physiological effects.
  - b. Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture (including cultural variations) in the determination of behavior.
  - c. Identify frequently used assessment strategies (e.g., the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory [MMPI], the Thematic Apperception Test [TAT]), and evaluate relative test quality based on reliability and validity of the instruments.

### **V. Variations in Individual and Group Behavior**

#### **Standard Area VA: Psychological Disorders**

#### **Content Standards**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

#### **VA-1. Characteristics and origins of abnormal behavior**

#### **VA-2. Methods used in exploring abnormal behavior**

#### **VA-3. Major categories of abnormal behavior**

#### **VA-4. Impact of mental disorders**

**Content Standards With Performance Standards and Suggested Performance Indicators**

#### **CONTENT STANDARD VA-1: Characteristics and origins of abnormal behavior**

Students are able to (performance standards):

##### **VA-1.1 Distinguish the common characteristics of abnormal behavior.**

*Students may indicate this by (performance indicators):*

- a. Listing criteria that distinguish normal from disordered behavior*
- b. Identifying patterns of behavior that constitute abnormality*
- c. Describing how some abnormal behaviors may be designated as abnormal only in particular historical or cultural contexts*

#### **VA-1.2 Cite examples of abnormal behavior.**

*Students may indicate this by (performance indicators):*

- a. Describing observable symptoms of abnormal behavior*
- b. Distinguishing disorders on the basis of severity of interference with functioning, such as psychotic versus nonpsychotic disorders*

#### **VA-1.3 Relate judgments of abnormality to contexts in which those judgments occur.**

*Students may indicate this by (performance indicators):*

- a. Recognizing the influence of context in designating abnormal behavior*
- b. Identifying how judgments about abnormality have changed through history (e.g., epilepsy)*
- c. Describing some abnormal behaviors specific to particular contexts or circumstances*
- d. Acknowledging sociocultural implications of labeling behavior as abnormal*
- e. Citing examples of misdiagnosis that may result from evaluator ignorance of relevant cultural and situational norms for behavior*

*the long-term impact of diagnostic labels even after successful treatment*

### **CONTENT STANDARD VA-3: Major categories of abnormal behavior**

Students are able to (performance standards):

#### **VA-3.1 Discuss major categories of abnormal behavior.**

*Students may indicate this by (performance indicators):*

- a. Explaining selected psychological disorders as classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*
- b. Identifying symptoms of selected categories of disorders*

#### **VA-4.2 Discuss the stigma associated with abnormal behavior.**

*Students may indicate this by (performance indicators):*

- a. Citing historic or fictional examples of stigmatized behavior*
- b. Hypothesizing about how abnormal conditions might influence acceptance in contemporary*

### **Standard Area VB: Treatment of Psychological Disorders**

#### **Content Standards**

After concluding this unit, students understand:

#### **VB-1. Prominent methods used to treat individuals with disorders**

#### **VB-2. Types of practitioners who implement treatment**

### **Content Standards With Performance Standards and Suggested Performance Indicators**

#### **CONTENT STANDARD VB-1: Prominent methods used to treat individuals with disorders**

Students are able to (performance standards):

#### **VB-1.1 Describe availability and appropriateness of various modes of treatment for individuals (e.g., children, adolescents, and adults) with psychological disorders.**

*Students may indicate this by (performance indicators):*

- a. Describing major treatment orientations used in therapy, such as behavioral, cognitive, psychoanalytic, humanistic, feminist, and biomedical*
- b. Distinguishing psychotherapy from medical intervention and spiritual support*
- c. Describing different treatment formats, such as individual, couple therapy or group therapy*
- d. Explaining how different treatment orientations will influence the therapy plan*
- e. Discussing how theoretical orientations may promote specific treatment biases*

- d. Discuss the major diagnostic categories, including anxiety and somatoform disorders, mood disorders, schizophrenia, organic disturbance, personality disorders, and dissociative disorders, and their corresponding symptoms.
- e. Recognize the use of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*
- f. (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association as the primary reference for making diagnostic judgments.
- g. Discuss the intersection between psychology and the legal system (e.g., confidentiality, insanity defense).
- h. Describe the central characteristics of psychotherapeutic intervention
- i. Summarize effectiveness of specific treatments used to address specific problems.

### **Sociology**

- a. Give examples that demonstrate how the definition of deviance is relative to time, place, situation and social status, that is, how social deviance is socially constructed
- b. Differentiate between individual (biological, psychological) explanations of deviance and structural, sociological theories of deviance and crime.
- c. Summarize the sociological theories of crime and deviance.
- d. State the various types of crime and assess their effects on society.
- e. Interpret differences in crime and arrest rates by social categories of people (ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, age, etc.)
- f. Compare crime rates in terms of race, class, and gender differences
- g. Assess the effects of various policies and laws relating to social control, such as the question of the deterrent effect of capital punishment.

## **Instructional Methods and Strategies:**

**Group Assignments** will include written analysis of case studies, preparation for class debates on several criminal cases.

**Semester projects: Mock Trial**-The class will split into two teams who will compete against one another in a Mock Trial. Each individual will assume a role as either a witness or an attorney. Attorneys may be responsible for either making opening or closing arguments or questioning witnesses. Grades will be based on how well students perform in their roles and how well-prepared they are (it may be necessary to do some outside reading). A small number of bonus points will be given to the team picked by the jury as the “winner.”

**End of Year Semester- Cold Case File**-Forensic Psychology students will be working in a group to investigating a “cold case.”

**Case Presentations:** A list of landmark court cases relevant to the practice of psychology will be distributed within the first three weeks of school. Students will select cases to explain to the class in a brief presentation. Students will also read and analyze in writing, landmark Supreme Court Cases as they relate to the topics of study.

**Classroom lectures/discussions/activities** will focus on the topics listed on the reading list. As appropriate, various activities and supplemental readings will be used to enhance student's understanding of the material.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GIFTED REQUIREMENTS**

The teacher shall make appropriate modifications to instruction and assessment based on a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Gifted Individual Education Plan (GIEP).

**Strategies/ELD Strategies:** Use of graphic organizers, Powerpoint slides, group assignments, concept/skill development strategies



## ASSESSMENTS

**PSSA Assessment Anchors Addressed:** The teacher must be knowledgeable of the PDE Assessment Anchors and/or Eligible Content and incorporate them into this planned instruction. Current assessment anchors can be found at [pde@state.pa.us](mailto:pde@state.pa.us).

***Suggested Formative Assessments:***

- Pre-Assessments of prior knowledge (e.g. entrance cards or KWL chart)
- Discussions
- Projects
- Teacher observation
- Graphic organizers (e.g. Venn diagrams, word mapping, webbing, KWL chart, etc.)
- Summarizing
- Debate
- Writing prompts
- Note taking
- Problem-based learning modules
- Open-ended written response
  - Quizzes /tests
- Essays

***Suggested Summative Assessments:***

- Student presentations/projects
- Essays
- Quizzes/tests

**Formative Assessments:** The teacher will develop and use standards-based assessments throughout the course.

**Portfolio Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      x   No

**District-wide Final Examination Required:**   x   Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Course Challenge Assessment :**  
Does not apply.

## REQUIRED COURSE SEQUENCE AND TIMELINE

(Content must be tied to objectives)

Content Sequence	Dates
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**Course Outline (including Objectives:**

**Unit 1: Introduction and overview**

**History and Current Issues in Forensic Psychology :**

**wk 1**

- Identify the historical perspectives in forensic psychology
- List and review the major subfields of psychology
- Discuss the intersection between psychology and the legal system (e.g., confidentiality, insanity defense)

## **Unit 2-Criminal Psychology**

### **Aggression/Violent Crime-**

**Wks. 2-3**

Analyze the different types of violent crime (juvenile, criminal, gang violence, organized crime, etc.)

- Apply sociological, biological, learning, and psychological theories to understanding criminal behavior

### **Mass Murders and Serial Killers**

**wks: 4-5**

- Evaluate and assess psychopathic behaviors

### **The Psychology of Terrorism, Cults, and Extremism**

**wks. 6-7**

- Classification of Terrorists
- Tools of Terrorism
- Religious Cults

## **Unit 3-Police and Investigative Psychology**

### **Law Enforcement and Police Psychology**

**wks: 7-8**

- Describe forensic psychologists' role in police work including selection, training, and evaluating for fitness-for-duty.
- Explore the role of psychological testing in law enforcement.

### **Investigations**

**wks: 9-10**

- Analyze crime scene investigations
- Analyze criminal profiles of homicide, serial and mass murder cases
- Describe crime patterns, criminal profiling, needs for profiling, and the use of psychological autopsies.

## **Unit 4 Forensics and the Courts**

### **Eyewitness Testimony and Accuracy**

**Wk 11**

- Define hypnosis and court decisions regarding its use.
- Discuss guidelines for proper use of hypnosis and the polygraph.
- Discuss the role of eyewitness testimony and psychological research on the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.

### **Capacity and Incapacity :**

**wk 12**

- Define the types of competency and insanity, competency to stand trial, competency to plead guilty, and the competency of juveniles.
- Discuss the role of psychologists in death penalty cases. Discuss mitigation assessment, competency evaluations, malingering, evaluation of defense arguments, and the death penalty.
- Apply the standards for mental competency and insanity to case studies.

### **Sentencing and Death Penalty**

**Wk. 13-14**

### **Repressed Memories and Novel Syndromes**

**wk15**

- Relate difficulties created by reconstructive memory processes

## **Unit 5-Psychology and Civil Proceedings**

### **Forensic Psychology and the Workplace**

**wk16**

- Explore the nature and effects of bias and discrimination in the workplace
- Examine the roles of forensic psychologists in schools and the workplace.

- Discuss the role of psychologists in child custody disputes.
- Discuss assessing allegations of child sexual abuse, children's rights, and the role of the psychologist as an expert witness.
- Describe the nature of domestic violence, battered women syndrome (BWS)

**Objectives:**

Identify the historical perspectives in forensic psychology

1. Apply sociological, biological, learning, and psychological theories to understanding criminal behavior
2. Analyze the different types of crime (juvenile, criminal, white collar, gang violence, organized crime)
3. Identify and describe the specific roles of the forensic psychologist as expert witness, trial consultant, and preparer of amicus briefs.
4. Evaluate and assess psychopathic and antisocial behaviors
5. Analyze crime scene investigations
6. Analyze criminal profiles of homicide, serial and mass murder cases
7. Evaluate the treatment of the criminally insane, particularly sexual predators
8. Describe forensic psychologists' role in police work including selection, training, and evaluating for fitness-for-duty.
9. Describe crime patterns, criminal profiling, needs for profiling, and the use of psychological autopsies.
10. Define hypnosis and court decisions regarding its use. Discuss guidelines for proper use of hypnosis and the polygraph.
11. Discuss the role of eyewitness testimony and psychological research on the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.
12. Discuss the psychology of false confessions.
13. Define the types of competency and insanity, competency to stand trial, competency to plead guilty, and the competency of juveniles.
14. Discuss the work of risk assessment including predicting suicide, predicting danger to others, and identifying „sexual predators.
15. Discuss the role of psychologists in death penalty cases. Discuss mitigation assessment, competency evaluations, evaluation of defense arguments, and the death penalty.
16. Discuss the role of psychologists in child custody disputes.
17. Discuss assessing allegations of child sexual abuse, children's rights, and the role of the psychologist as an expert witness.
18. Describe the nature of domestic violence, battered women syndrome (BWS)

**WRITING TEAM:** Michel Elmer, Joe McClellan

### WCSD STUDENT DATA SYSTEM INFORMATION

1. Is there a required final examination?        X   Yes             No
2. Does this course issue a mark/grade for the report card?        X   Yes             No
3. Does this course issue a Pass/Fail mark?             Yes        X   No
4. Is the course mark/grade part of the GPA calculation?        X   Yes             No
5. Is the course eligible for Honor Roll calculation?        X   Yes             No
6. What is the academic weight of the course?  
           No weight/Non credit        X   Standard weight  
           Enhanced weight