Big Bend
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MASTER COURSE OUTLINE
Prepared By: Ryann Leonard   Date: September 2017

COURSE TITLE
Psychology and the Legal System

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION
Dept.: PSYC   Course Num: 225   (Formerly:)
CIP Code: 42.0101   Intent Code: Program Code:
Credits: 5
Total Contact Hrs Per Qtr.: 55
Lecture Hrs: 55   Lab Hrs: 0   Other Hrs: 0
Distribution Designation: Social Science SS

COURSE DESCRIPTION (as it will appear in the catalog)
As the study of human behavior, Psychology must also include the study of law, which is a primary instrument used by society to control human behavior. Psychology and Law is a vibrant area of research interest within the discipline of Psychology. This course is a survey of the major topics represented in the field of Psychology and Law. This course focuses on how psychological research (across sub-disciplines such as clinical, social, cognitive, and community psychology) can contribute to a better understanding of issues related to law or legal process, how the legal system can be informed by the results of psychological research, and how psychological research can be more reactive to legal issues.

PREREQUISITES
PSYC& 100 or CJ& 101

TEXTBOOK GUIDELINES
A text approved by department along with assigned scholarly readings.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate the following knowledge or skills:
1. Explain psychological principles to help understand the psychology of testimony, evidence, lineups, and expert testimony.
2. Explain how the psychological study of the legal system differs from the sociological, anthropological, and philosophical approaches.
3. Practice critically thinking about psychological variables and how they influence the criminal justice system.
4. Demonstrate the relationship between social, cognitive, developmental, and clinical psychology and how these areas are utilized to help understand the legal system.
5. Distinguish between the ways in which the legal system and the psychology profession use the terms "competence" and "insanity", and describe the consequences for defendants who are found either incompetent or insane.
6. Discuss the role of societal values in the evolution of laws and judicial decision.

7. Describe the various roles that psychologists play in the legal system and discuss the ethical issues associated with those roles.
8. Using research findings, assess the degree of accuracy of eyewitness memory. Discuss the role that psychologists have played in applying those research findings, and the courts' general level of acceptance of input from psychologists.
9. Describe the questioning style often used by police, and discuss the role of interrogations and eyewitness evidence on suspects.
10. Evaluate the assumptions that the legal system makes about juries. Apply research findings regarding information processing to a discussion of jurors' ability to suspend judgment until the end of trial.
11. Discuss the experiences of children in the legal system in their roles as witnesses, victims, and defendants.

INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES
IO1 Communication: Students will be able to communicate clearly and effectively.

COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE
1. Psychology and the law: Choices and roles.
2. The legal system: Issues, structure, and players.
3. Psychology of Crime.
4. Psychology of Police.
5. Crime investigation: Witnesses.
6. Evaluating Criminal Suspects.
7. Between arrest and trial.
8. Forensic assessment in juvenile and criminal cases.
9. Forensic assessment in civil cases.
10. The trial process.
11. Jury representativeness and selection.
12. The jury: Decision processes and reforms.
13. Psychology of victims of crime and violence.
14. Psychology of punishment and sentencing.
15. Juvenile and adult corrections.

DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES *(optional)*
PO4 should be assessed: Students will be able to recognize or articulate personal/interpersonal aspects of, or connections between, diverse cultural, social, or political contexts.
PO5 should be assessed: Students will be able to solve problems by gathering, interpreting, combining and/or applying information from multiple sources.

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DIVISION CHAIR APPROVAL   **DATE**