

# PS351-15 Psychology and the Law

**24/25**

**Department**

Psychology

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Kimberley Wade

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

12 weeks

**Assessment**

33% coursework, 67% exam

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This module aims to provide a broad understanding of the role of cognitive psychology in legal contexts.

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

Topics usually covered include: the legal system; eyewitness testimony; the suggestibility of children; theoretical issues in memory distortion; identifying people; interrogations and confessions; cognitive theories of sex offending; repressed and recovered memories; deception detection

### Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Eyewitness testimony

Eyewitness identification

Source monitoring Framework  
Interrogations & confessions  
Deception  
Children in court  
Case evidence  
Repressions  
Juries  
Revision sessions

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Discuss the ways in which psychology has been applied to the legal context;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the current state of psychology and law research;
- Compare and critically discuss the methodologies used in psychology and law;
- Discuss the topics covered in relation to theories and debates in the applied cognitive literature.

## **Indicative reading list**

For background and an introduction to psychology and law research, students are expected to read Loftus, E. F. (1996). *Eyewitness Testimony*. Harvard University Press.

Other recommended texts include:

Brewer, N., & Williams, K. D. (2005). *Psychology and law: An empirical perspective*. NY: Guilford Press.

Cutler, B. L., & Penrod, S. D. (1995). *Mistaken identification: The eyewitness, psychology, and the law*. Cambridge: University Press.

Loftus, E.F., & Ketcham, K. (1991). *Witness for the Defense: The Accused, the Eyewitness and the Expert Who Puts Memory on Trial*. NY: St. Martin's Press.

Loftus, E.F., & Ketcham, K. (1994). *The Myth of Repressed Memory*. NY: St. Martin's Press.

Lynn, S.J., & McConkey, K.M. (Eds.). (1998). *Truth in Memory*. NY: Guilford Press.

McNally, R.J. (2003). *Remembering Trauma*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Memon, M., Vrij, A., & Bull, R. (2003). *Psychology and Law: Truthfulness, Accuracy and Credibility* (2nd ed). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Ross, D., Read, J. D., & Toglia, M.P. (1994). *Adult Eyewitness Testimony*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Rubin, D. C. (Ed.). (1995). *Remembering our past: Studies in Autobiographical Memory*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Schacter, D. L. (Ed.). (1995). *Memory distortion: How minds, brains, and societies reconstruct the*

past. Cambridge, MA, US: Harvard University Press.

Toglia, M. P., Read, J. D., Ross, D. F., & Lindsay, R. C. L. (Eds.). (2007). The handbook of eyewitness psychology: Volume 1 – Memory for events. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lindsay, R. C. L., Ross, D. F., Read, J. D., & Toglia, M. P. (Eds.). (2007). The handbook of eyewitness psychology: Volume 2 – Memory for people. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Tulving, E., & Craik, F.I.M. (Eds.). (1995). The Oxford Handbook of Memory. NY: Oxford University Press.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## Subject specific skills

Understand how psychology can be applied to the legal context

knowledge of the current state of psychology and law research

Understanding of current theories and debates in applied cognitive literature.

## Transferable skills

Effective communication skills to develop a cogent argument supported by relevant evidence and being sensitive to the needs and expectations of an audience

Familiarity with collecting and organising stored information found in library book and journal collections, and online,

Critical evaluation of primary and secondary sources

effective personal planning skills

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required	Optional
Lectures	12 sessions of 2 hours (16%)	
Seminars	10 sessions of 1 hour (7%)	8 sessions of 1 hour
Private study	116 hours (77%)	
Total	150 hours	

### Private study description

116 hours of private study and assessment preparation

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group D4

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Multiple choice assessment	33%		No
Online multiple choice assessment			
Online Examination	67%		No
~Platforms - AEP			

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- Online examination: No Answerbook required

### Feedback on assessment

Formative and summative feedback is available in relation to the multiple-choice assessment. Further verbal feedback is available to students on request. Feedback on examination performance is provided in line with Department of Psychology procedure.

[Past exam papers for PS351](#)

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## Availability

### Pre-requisites

To take this module, you must have passed:

- Any of
  - [PS111-24 Brain & Behaviour](#)
  - [PS111-30 Brain & Behaviour](#)
  - [PS112-24 Psychology in Context](#)
  - [PS112-30 Psychology in Context](#)
  - [PS210-15 Language and Cognition](#)
  - [PS211-15 Perception, Planning and Action](#)

## Courses

This module is Optional for:

- UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
  - Year 3 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
  - Year 3 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
  - Year 3 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)
- UPHA-L1CB Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CG Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CH Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CJ Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway) (with Intercalated Year)
  - Year 4 of L1CB Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UPSA-C800 Undergraduate Psychology
- Year 4 of UPSA-C801 Undergraduate Psychology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UPSA-C806 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Unusual option for:

- Year 3 of UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 1 of TPSS-C8P9 Postgraduate Taught Psychological Research
- Year 4 of UPHA-VL80 Undergraduate Philosophy with Psychology (with Work Placement)

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C802 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics
- Year 4 of UPSA-C805 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Unusual option for:

- Year 4 of UPSA-C805 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics (with Intercalated Year)