

PSY 4931-U04: Senior Seminar - Wrongful Convictions
Spring 2024
Mondays 11am - 1:30pm
GC 287B (but may change)
Florida International University

WHO IS THE INSTRUCTOR?

Instructor: Haley Dawson (*she/her*)

Email: hdaws001@fiu.edu

Office Hours: If you want to discuss grades, the class, graduate school, or other topics, please talk with me in class or send an email to schedule a meeting!

WHAT IS THIS CLASS ABOUT?

This course has two components: Wrongful Convictions and Professional Development. These components are entirely independent of each other.

The **Wrongful Convictions** component will examine how human psychology can contribute to the conviction of innocent suspects. This will include various elements of psychology, with an emphasis on cognitive and social psychology. There will be a focus on empirical research, including reading journal articles. The field of legal (or forensic) psychology is very broad and diverse. We cannot discuss EVERY topic studied in the field. The primary goal of this course is to introduce you to some representative areas of legal psychology as they relate to wrongful convictions

The **Professional Development** component will help students to develop realistic and attainable career and/or educational goals. Students will pursue realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational and/or academic pursuits in a variety of settings that meet personal and societal needs. The aim of this course is to help prepare you for 'life after FIU' with a Psychology degree.

Relating to Wrongful Convictions, after taking this course, you will be able to:

- ❖ Recognize how the problem of wrongful conviction is relevant to your world.
- ❖ Describe psychological principles that contribute to wrongful convictions.
- ❖ Analyze empirical psychology research articles to interpret the research method, hypothesis, and findings of the study.
- ❖ Describe the best, evidence-based, practices recommended by researchers to minimize the likelihood of wrongful convictions.
- ❖ Describe the empirical research on the psychology of wrongful convictions.

- ❖ Evaluate the current state of knowledge in psychology (and related fields) in relation to a specific question/case/debate.

Relating to Professional Development, after taking this course, you will be able to:

- ❖ Identify the types of academic experiences and performance that will facilitate entry into the workforce and/or a graduate program of study.
- ❖ Develop a plan for your professional life, post-FIU, that takes into account your unique characteristics.
- ❖ Relate your knowledge and skills gained in your psychology coursework and experiences at FIU to your future.
- ❖ Complete a basic professional portfolio- including a resume, cover letter, personal statement of interest, list of professional recommenders and completed application for either employment or graduate school.

WHAT IS THE REQUIRED TEXT?

There is no required textbook. HOWEVER, each week articles will be assigned that you are expected to read and engage with. Please see the weekly page on Canvas for the articles.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME?

Before Class:

- ❖ Read the assigned readings that will be lectured and discussed that week in class.
- ❖ Assess your understanding of the material and come to class with questions and thoughts!
- ❖ Complete and submit your weekly Journal Entry.

During Class:

- ❖ Be engaged!
- ❖ Participate in discussions and take notes.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to ask questions, or connect the material to current events.

After Class:

- ❖ Prepare for the next class (i.e. read the assigned readings)
- ❖ Complete assignments
 - Note: All assignments will be due on Saturday or Sunday at 11:59pm EST (see schedule for exact dates)
- ❖ Attend office hours (if needed).

WHAT WILL I BE GRADED ON?

In this course, we will cover 11 different topics relating to Wrongful Convictions. Your goal is to demonstrate to me that you understand the material for each topic. Additionally, you will be completing a professional portfolio to help you excel after graduating FIU.

There are three primary areas that you will be graded on:

1. Professional Development (115 points)

- a. Explore Opportunities
 - i. Networking and Goals
 - ii. Plans after FIU, Jobs, and Programs
- b. Create Materials
 - i. Resume
 - ii. Cover Letter or Personal Statement
 - iii. Recommender Sample Letter
- c. Review Materials
 - i. Resume Review
 - ii. Cover Letter or Personal Statement Review
- d. Final Portfolio
 - i. Revised resume
 - ii. Revised cover letters/personal statement
 - iii. List of recommenders
 - iv. Letter of request to recommenders
 - v. Completed job/school application

2. Assignments (200 points total)

- a. All assignments will be turned in on Canvas through TurnItIn. All assignment information is on Canvas
 - i. Meet the Student Assignment
 - ii. Reform Essay
 - iii. Article Worksheet 1 and 2
 - iv. Wrongful Conviction Thought Assignment 1, 2, and 3
 - v. SONA Credit
 - To help you better learn about the research you will complete 5 SONA credits for 10 points.
 - You can sign up for experiments at: <http://fiu.sona-systems.com>.
 - a. First, you will need to create a SONA account at <https://fiu.sona-systems.com/default.aspx>
 - b. Second, you will need to log in through the link above.
 - c. Third, browse the list for available studies and sign-up for a time slot.
 - d. Fourth, attend the study.
 - e. Fifth, make sure that you assign the credits to this class.
 - If for some reason you cannot participate in experiments (i.e., under age 18), please inform me via email ASAP. You will receive an alternative assignment to complete.
 - vi. Final Presentation
 - Final Presentation Comments

3. **Participation (55 points)**

- a. Weekly Journal (10 points each for a max of 100, 1 "drop". No late work accepted)
 - i. Each journal will reflect on the previous week's topic, and summarize the next week's topic.
- b. Group Discussion Leader(20 points)
 - i. You will serve as a discussion leader once this semester on a topic. As a discussion leader, you will find an article related to the topic of the week and briefly present the article in class. You must also prepare some questions to ask the group about that week's topic.
- c. Weekly Participation in class
 - i. You must sign in each day in class
 - ii. Your total points will be the percentage of classes you attended.
 - For example, if you attended 11/14 of the classes, you will receive 78.6% of the 70 points for a total of 55/70

WHAT IS THE GRADING SCALE?

Course Requirements	POINTS
Professional Development	115 Points
Assignments	155 Points
Participation	190 Points
TOTAL	460 POINTS
Letter Grade	PERCENT
A	93% OR ABOVE
A-	90% - 92.99%
B+	87% - 89.99%
B	83% - 86.99%

B-	80% - 82.99%
C+	77 %- 79.99%
C	70% - 76.99%
D	60% - 69.99%
F	59% OR LESS

WHAT ARE THE COURSE POLICIES?

What if I miss an assignment/Reading quiz/essay?

- ❖ Participation points (including Weekly Journals) cannot be submitted late.
- ❖ If you miss other assignments for something that is out of your control, please reach out to me and let me know.
 - If an assignment is turned in late, you can still receive credit.
 - **To receive any partial credit, ALL assignments and essays MUST be turned in by Sunday, April 21st, 2023; NO EXCEPTIONS**
- ❖ Extra credit will be offered at least once throughout the semester, I highly recommend completing it to help your grade.

What if I have a disability and/or need accommodation?

- ❖ The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190. Paperwork needs to be handed in to me **ASAP**.

What if I will be observing a religious holy day?

- ❖ Students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious observances will not be penalized. A student who desires to be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of their religious faith should notify me **ASAP**.
- ❖ The student is responsible for any material covered during the excused absence but will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up any work missed.
- ❖ Examinations, major assignments, and university ceremonies will not be scheduled on a major religious holy day. If an examination was administered during the class at which a student is excused for a religious observance, the student should make arrangements with the instructor to be examined at an alternate time or be given a comparable assignment.

When is the last day to drop the class?

January 16th, 2024 is the last day to add/drop courses or withdraw from the university without incurring financial liability for tuition & fees. For other University dates, please see <https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/#spring-2024>

WHAT ARE THE CLASSROOM CONDUCT GUIDELINES?

Please carefully consider the students around you. In lectures, please turn off all electronic devices and refrain from online distractions. This not only helps your grade but also helps others in the classroom. Students' participation is highly encouraged; you should feel free to ask questions, share your experiences, and provide comments.

As a member of the FIU community, students must treat each other in a respectful manner, especially when addressing controversial/sensitive topics. FIU prides itself as a community of diverse backgrounds: ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, social, political, economic, gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability. The University encourages, supports and appreciates these differences, and discourages all forms of prejudice, bias, bigotry, discrimination, and intimidation in the process of learning. Civility is an essential component of the core values of FIU and that includes classroom behavior, whether in-person or online. FIU believes in fostering a supportive, safe, and caring environment conducive to learning. When both faculty and students model civility in the classroom, it contributes to the growth of individuals and their role as concerned and enlightened citizens. All opinions and experiences, despite how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. Students are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea, but never to attack an individual.

WHAT IS THE CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY?

Students at Florida International University are expected to adhere to the highest standards of integrity in every aspect of their lives. Honesty in academic matters is part of this obligation. Academic Integrity is the adherence to those special values regarding life and work in an academic community. Any act or omission by a student which violates this concept of academic integrity and undermines the academic mission of the University, shall be defined as academic misconduct and shall be subject to the procedures and penalties that follow.

Academic misconduct is defined as the following intentional acts or omissions committed by an FIU student:

- A. **Cheating:** The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or unauthorized use of on-line exams, library materials or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers (or on-line examination) or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Any student helping another cheat may be found guilty of academic misconduct
- B. **Plagiarism:** The deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is guilty of plagiarism. Any student helping another to plagiarize may be found guilty of academic misconduct

- C. **Misrepresentation:** Intentionally lying to a member of the faculty, staff, administration, or an outside agency to gain academic advantage for oneself or another, or to misrepresent or in other ways interfere with the investigation of a charge of academic misconduct
- D. **Misuse of Computer Services:** The unauthorized use of any computer, computer resource or computer project number, or the alteration or destruction of computerized information or files or unauthorized appropriation of another's program(s)
- E. **Bribery:** The offering of money or any item or service to a member of the faculty, staff, administration or any other person in order to commit academic misconduct
- F. **Conspiracy and Collusion:** The planning or acting with one or more fellow students, any member of the faculty, staff or administration, or any other person to commit any form of academic misconduct together
- G. **Falsification of Records:** The tampering with, or altering in any way any academic record used or maintained by the University
- H. **Academic Dishonesty:** In general, by any act or omission not specifically mentioned above and which is outside the customary scope of preparing and completing academic assignments and/or contrary to the above stated policies concerning academic integrity

Charges of Academic Misconduct may be brought against a student (hereafter Charged Student) by a faculty member, a chair, or a dean (hereafter Complainant). Charges may be filed by the aforementioned persons on behalf of a staff person, another student, or a person not affiliated with the University, who reasonably believes that a student has committed academic misconduct.

The Complainant, who suspects academic misconduct, must meet with the student in order to inform him/her of the allegation(s), to provide any evidence, and to allow the student to respond, before either entering into an Informal Resolution, as described below, or filing the Complaint Form Alleging Academic Misconduct with the Faculty Fellow for Academic Integrity.

All matters relating to academic misconduct are referred to the Office of the Provost for Academic Affairs. Acts of academic misconduct may be alleged by faculty, staff, and/or students. See the University's full academic misconduct policy for more information:

<http://undergrad.fiu.edu/academic-integrity/misconducts.html>

WHAT WILL WE DO EACH CLASS PERIOD?

In general, the classes will be structured as followed:

- ❖ Haley will briefly lecture on the material from the readings.
- ❖ Discussion Leaders will lead group discussion with their additional article.
- ❖ We will take a 20-30- minute break
- ❖ Everyone will come back together for a full group discussion lead by Haley.
- ❖ We will close class with a professional development lecture (not every week)

SCHEDULE

Date		Topic	To Read Before Class	Journal Entry (Due Saturday)	Assignments Due (Wrongful Convictions) (Due Sunday)	Assignments Due (Professional Development) (Due Sunday)
Week 1	Monday, January 8th	Class Introduction Overview of WC Overview of PD (What to do after FIU)	Garrett 2020 (optional)		Meet the Student Assignment	
Week 2	Monday, January 15th	MLK Day, No Classes		Journal 1: Introductory Reflection Journal Cumulative Disadvantage Summaries	WC Thoughts 1	Networking and Goals Plans after FIU, Jobs and Programs
Week 3	Monday, January 22rd	Cumulative Disadvantage Resumes	Sherr et al., 2020	Journal 2: Cumulative Disadvantage Reflection Journal, FC Summaries		Resume
Week 4	Monday, January 29th	False Confessions, Interrogations Review Resumes	Kassin et al., 2012 Norris er al., Chapter 3	Journal 3: FC, Interrogation, GP Reflection Journal Witnesses Summaries		
Week 5	Monday, February 4th	Witnesses	Wells et al., 2020	Journal 4: Witness Reflection Journal Forensics Summaries	Article Worksheet 1 : Perillo and Kassin	
Week 6	Monday, February 12th	Forensics Cover Letters	Hamnet and Dror, 2020 Kassin et al., 2013	Journal 5: Forensic Reflection Journal Governmenal Actors Summaries		
Week 7	Monday, February 19th	Governmental Actors Personal Statements	NRE "The Role of Prosecutors, Police and Other Law Enforcement", 2020 pg. 11-13 (stop before "The Comission and Discovery of Misconduct"), 29-33 ("Categories of Misconduct"), 133-144 (Beore "Can we reduce official musconduct")	Journal 6: Governmental Actors Reflection Journal Racial Dispartities Summaries	<i>Suggested: Reform Essay Outline for Feedback</i>	Cover Letter/Personal Statement
Week 8	Monday, February 26th	Spring Break No Classes				

Week 9	Monday, March 4th	Racial Disparities	Gross et al., 2022 (Executive Summary and Conclusion Only) Group leaders will be assigned one category to expand on in discussion	Journal 7: Racial Disparities Reflection Journal Attornys and Juries Summaries	Article Worksheet 2: Howard, 2019	Final Presentation Topic due to Haley
Week 10	Monday, March 11th	Attorneys and Juries Review PS/CL	NRE "The Role of Prosecutors, Police and Other Law Enforcement", 2020 pg. 96-106 (HALEY LOOK AT pg 166) MacKilop and Vidmar, 2015	Journal 8: Attorneys and Juries Reflection Journal Snitches Summaries		
Week 11	Monday, March 18th	Snitches and Informants Recommenders	Neuschatz et al., 2020	Journal 9: Snitches and Informants Reflection Journal No-Crime Summaries	WC Thoughts 2 <i>Suggested: Reform Essay Draft, meet with Haley if needed!</i>	Recommender List and Sample
Week 12	Monday, March 25th	No-Crime	Henry et al., 2018	Journal 10: No-Crime Cases Reflection Journal Aftermath Summaries		
Week 13	Monday, April 1st	Aftermath of WC	Karaffa et al., 2017 Zannella et al., 2019	Journal 11: Aftermath Reflection Journal	WC Thoughts 3	Final Portfolio
Week 14	Monday, April 8th	Presentations			Reform Essay	
Week 15	Monday, April 15th	Presentations			SONA Credits Due	
Week 16	Monday, April 22th Finals Week	Final Exam Week No Classes				

*All due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor