

BA (Hons) in Psychology (8th Semester)

COURSE NAME: FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

COURSE NO. PSYC2822M

MAXIMUM MARKS: 100
CREDITS: 06

CONTACT HOURS:120
THEORY: 04

CONTACT HOURS PER CREDIT: 15/30
PRACTICUM: 02

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to the basic concepts, roles, and applications of forensic psychology in the legal system.
- To help students understand how psychological knowledge is used in criminal investigations, courts, and correctional settings.
- To develop awareness of ethical issues and professional responsibilities in forensic psychology practice.

Course Outcomes

- Students will be able to explain the role of psychology in legal and criminal justice settings.
- Students will be able to describe methods used in offender assessment, eyewitness evaluation, and risk assessment.
- Students will be able to recognize ethical challenges and apply basic principles in forensic and correctional work.

Unit I: Foundations of Forensic Psychology and Legal Interface

- a) History, scope, and development of forensic psychology
- b) Role of forensic psychologists in psycho-legal cases and court processes
- c) Professional training, certification, and credentialing in forensic psychology
- d) Theories of criminal behaviour and admissibility of expert testimony

Unit II: Offender Assessment and Criminal Responsibility

- a) Offender profiling: concepts, methods, and approaches
- b) Psychological evaluation of sexual offenders
- c) Battered Woman Syndrome and its relevance in legal contexts
- d) Competence to confess, interrogation psychology, and criminal responsibility

Unit III: Psychology of Witnesses, Victims, and Family Law

- a) Eyewitness identification: memory, accuracy, and influencing factors
- b) Psychology of jury selection and juror decision-making
- c) Child custody and access evaluations in family courts
- d) Psychological assessment in child sexual abuse cases

Unit IV: Forensic Assessment, Intervention, and Ethics

- a) Risk assessment for violence and recidivism
- b) Involuntary commitment and civil forensic evaluations
- c) Psychological interventions in correctional and forensic settings
- d) Ethical issues and mitigation roles of forensic psychologists

PRACTICUM: Any four (04) practicum from the below listed themes, two (02) from each Unit.

Unit V: Practicum-I

- a) Offender Profiling Exercise (Students prepare a basic psychological profile of a hypothetical offender based on crime scene details and behavioral patterns)
- b) Forensic Case History Taking (Conducting and documenting a structured forensic case history interview (simulated) focusing on background, behavior, and legal relevance)
- c) Assessment of Competency to Stand Trial [Simulation] (Role-play based evaluation of a defendant's understanding of legal proceedings and ability to assist legal counsel)
- d) Risk Assessment Practice (Use of a standard risk assessment checklist/tool [simulated data] to evaluate risk of reoffending or violence)

Unit VI: Practicum-II

- a) Eyewitness Testimony Analysis (Examination of factors affecting eyewitness accuracy using case vignettes and identification of possible errors or biases)
- b) Child Custody Evaluation [Case-Based] (Analysis of a mock custody dispute case and preparation of a brief psychological recommendation report)
- c) Mock Expert Testimony in Court (Students present psychological findings from a given case in the format of expert witness testimony)
- d) Ethical Decision-Making in Forensic Settings (Discussion and written analysis of ethical dilemmas in forensic psychology [e.g., confidentiality vs. duty to warn])

Readings

1. Bartol, C. R., & Bartol, A. M. (2021). Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Research and Application (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
2. Howitt, D. (2018). Introduction to Forensic and Criminal Psychology (6th ed.). Pearson.
3. Towl, G. J., & Crighton, D. A. (Eds.). (2021). Forensic Psychology (3rd ed.). Wiley.
4. Weiner, I. B., & Otto, R. K. (Eds.). (2013). The Handbook of Forensic Psychology (4th ed.). Wiley.
5. Huss, M. T. (2014). Forensic Psychology: Research, Clinical Practice, and Applications (3rd ed.). Wiley.
6. Wrightsman, L. S., & Fulero, S. M. (2005). Forensic Psychology (2nd ed.). Wadsworth.
7. Pozzulo, J., Bennell, C., & Forth, A. (2021). Forensic Psychology (6th ed.). Pearson.