



## **Module Specification**

### **Forensic Psychology**

Version: 2024-25, v1.0, 12 Dec 2023

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## **Part 1: Information**

**Module title:** Forensic Psychology

**Module code:** USPKCH-15-3

**Level:** Level 6

**For implementation from:** 2024-25

**UWE credit rating:** 15

**ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

**College:** College of Health, Science & Society

**School:** CHSS School of Social Sciences

**Partner institutions:** None

**Field:** Psychology

**Module type:** Module

**Pre-requisites:** None

**Excluded combinations:** Criminal Psychology 2025-26

**Co-requisites:** None

**Continuing professional development:** No

**Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements:** None

## **Part 2: Description**

**Overview:** Not applicable

**Features:** Not applicable

**Educational aims:** See Learning Outcomes

**Outline syllabus:** Media Construction and Public Perceptions of Dangerous Offenders:

This section (1 lecture) will examine the public's attitude towards crime, focusing on their perceptions of dangerous and violent offenders. It will discuss the role of public education, social construction, moral panics, the media and how public attitudes can be changed.

#### Psychological Theories of Crime:

This section (2 lectures) will focus on:

Biological, Personality and Abnormal Psychology - This lecture will address biological perspective, focusing on: genetics, classical criminology, brain injury and brain dysfunction; psychological explanations of offending from personality and abnormal perspectives, focusing on: personality explanations, psychoanalysis, mental disorders, IQ, as well as attitudes, values and beliefs.

Social, Developmental and Integrated Theories - This lecture will address psychological explanations of offending from a social and developmental perspective, focusing on: (social) learning theories, rational choice, family and peer interactions, developmental factors and social influence. The lecture will then draw together all the previous theories and theoretical perspectives on offending so to ask if a comprehensive, all inclusive, theory on the aetiology of offending actually exist.

#### Crime Scene Analysis: Offender Profiling and Serial Killers:

This section (1 lecture) will address offender profiling techniques and provide an understanding of different typologies/profiles of serial killing and multiple murder. It will be given by an actual offender profiler who will, in conjunction with discussing the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of offender profiling, critically discuss their experiences, techniques and understandings of profiling techniques as well as giving an overview of serial killing.

## Psychology of the Courtroom:

This section (3 lectures) will focus on:

**Eyewitness Testimony** - It will start by looking at memory and cognition, before moving on to look at the issues of reliability that surround memories for events. This lecture will look at issues to do with memory and eyewitness testimony in regard to different groups (age, gender), different crime problems (weapon focus) and memory issues (repression, false memory syndrome). The lecture will end with a discussion of the CJS (police, probation and courts) attitude to EWT?

**Police Discretion and Decision Making** - The police have a legal mandate to enforce the law uniformly. But a policy of full enforcement, which uniform enforcement, implies may be neither possible nor desirable because of conflicting organisational goals (priorities) diverse situational demands, the demographics of the offender, victim and officer as well as the dependence of the police on the communities they serve. Thus it is important to distinguish between 'the law in books' and 'the law in practice' (Goldstein, 1960). Guiding officers through this interpretation is their ability to use discretion in their decision making. This lecture shall explore the dynamics of officer's use of discretion in their operational decision making.

**Jury Decision Making** - It will look at the social, psychological and decision making factors involved in groups; before going on to examine group processes, group think, personal/group stereotyping and group perceptions. The lecture will discuss the main issues and problems involved in Jury decision making and whether juries are an effective and/or justified means for prosecuting offenders (especially psychological disturbed, and/or dangerous/violent offenders).

**Offenders (focusing on sexualised violence):**

This section (2 lectures) will focus on:

**Sex Offenders** - This lecture will look at the complex and ambiguous area of sexual

offending (both in terms of offenders and victims). It will look at its definitions (rape, necrophilia, etc), the aetiology of sexual offending (psychological, biological, developmental, etc), the behaviours/personalities of sex offenders, the particular offences/acts perpetrated and the treatments available (as well as their success rates).

Terrorism - This lecture will look at definitions and typologies of terrorists; the causes (psychological, biological, developmental, etc) and paths to offending; the behaviours/personalities of offenders; the forms of offending; and treatments.

Crime Prevention:

This section (2 lectures) focuses on:

Risk Assessment, Treatment and Recidivism - This lecture will look at definitions of risk in regard to offenders, addressing what risk is, how its diagnosis. The lecture will move on to discuss types of treatments that are available to offenders, where they are located (i.e., prison, care setting and/or the community), the success of treatment, offender release/reintegration and offender recidivism.

Treatment: "Magic Cure", "Nothing Works", "Something Works", "What Works"- This lecture is divided into three sections. The first provides a brief history of treatment from the early Nineteenth-century until the present, highlighting both the ideas that shaped treatment and how treatment was delivered in practice. The second part explores the evidence base underpinning current offender programmes delivered both in the prison and in the community to establish to what extent practice is justified by the available evidence. The final part seeks to explore the theoretical relationship between evidence and practice and asks is criminal justice policy driven by evidence or is the evidence driven by policy?

### **Part 3: Teaching and learning methods**

**Teaching and learning methods:** This module will run in semester 1. Students will have a 3 hour session each week which will be an integrated mixture of lectures, tutorials and online style activities.

#### Scheduled Learning

Forensic Psychology is an extremely broad topic and this module aims to give students knowledge across the main themes. The module can be selected by students from a diverse range of programmes and must contain enough of interest and relevance for each.

The theoretical underpinning of the module is delivered through integrated lecture and tutorial sessions (36 hours) with additional bespoke resources made available electronically (i.e., using second life as a means for students to examine a crime scene and to consider how this impacts upon profiling, eyewitness testimony and sentencing). Employability focussed lectures are delivered by academic specialists from industry.

#### Independent Learning

It is expected that students will spend a significant proportion of the study time for this module engaging with relevant scientific literature, as directed by academic staff. Preparation for the coursework assessments will require significant research into relevant case studies and the ability to critically evaluate realistic forensic casework data. It is expected that independent study will take students to the notional 150 hours of study associated with this module.

**Module Learning outcomes:** On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

**MO1** Demonstrate an understanding of the multi-disciplinary nature of criminal psychology

**MO2** Demonstrate an understanding of the current perceptions of psychologically unbalanced offenders

**MO3** Critically analyse the spectrum of psychological theories of crime

**MO4** Critically analyse the role of psychology in the criminal justice system

**MO5** Critically analyse the psychology of offenders

**MO6** Critically analyse the treatment of offenders

**Hours to be allocated:** 150

**Contact hours:**

Independent study/self-guided study = 117 hours

Face-to-face learning = 33 hours

Total = 150

**Reading list:** The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/usskch-15-3.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/usskch-15-3.html>

## **Part 4: Assessment**

**Assessment strategy:** The student will complete an online exam at the end of semester 1, this will cover all the material from across the module. This assessment allows the student to be able to tie all the module content together, having a holistic view of the course content and how it helps them understand offending behaviour.

Online exam (100%), with 24 hour window for submission. The students will have to answer 2 essay questions from a choice of 5.

**Assessment tasks:**

**Examination (Online) (First Sit)**

Description: Online Examination (24 hour submission window)

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6

**Examination (Online) (Resit)**

Description: Online Examination (24 hour submission window)

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6

## **Part 5: Contributes towards**

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Psychology (Applied) [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2024-25

Psychology with Criminology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Sociology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Forensic Science [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Criminology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Forensic Science [Frenchay] MSci 2022-23

Applied Psychology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Health Psychology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Social Psychology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Biological Psychology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Psychology and Mental Health [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Applied Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Sociology with Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Criminology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons)  
2021-22

Criminology with Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22



Applied Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Health Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Biological Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Social Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology and Mental Health [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Forensic Science [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Forensic Science [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] MSci 2021-22

Forensic Science {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][5yrs] MSci 2021-22

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Forensic Science {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology with Criminology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Forensic Science {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Forensic Science {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][6yrs] MSci 2020-21

Criminology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology with Criminology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Applied Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Sociology with Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Criminology with Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Psychology with Criminology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Applied Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Psychology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BSc (Hons)  
2018-19

Psychology with Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] - Withdrawn BSc  
(Hons) 2018-19

Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BSc (Hons) 2018-19