



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Introduction to Forensic Psychology	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: assoc. prof. dr. Ilona Laurinaitytė Other(s): assoc. prof. dr. Aleksandras Izotovas	Criminal Behaviour Research Group, Institute of Psychology, Vilnius University

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
Bachelor	Optional

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Face-to-face, hybrid or fully online	Autumn	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: -	Additional requirements (if any): -

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	135	32	103

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed		
<p>This course will provide the theoretical and empirical bases of Forensic Psychology. The course will demonstrate the scope of Forensic Psychology and assess the contribution of forensic psychologists (researchers and practitioners) that can be made to the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Generic competences to be developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to find, analyse, systematize information from various sources. - Cross-cultural understanding and appreciation - Ability to communicate and cooperate in different contexts, work independently and in a team. - Practical knowledge application and problem-solving ability. <p>Subject-specific competences to be developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to understand the main topics of forensic psychology. - Ability to analyse and systemize the literature related to the forensic psychological research and practice. 		
Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
The students will be able to understand and critically assess the main topics and issues in forensic psychology	Lectures (problem-oriented teaching), reading of texts, discussions during the seminars	Written test (open and/or closed questions)
Ability to understand cross-cultural differences, especially regarding racial, ethnic, gender, religious differences in values, perception and behaviour.	Lectures (problem-oriented teaching), reading of texts, discussions during the seminars, presentations, argumentation	Essay writing (2,000-2500 words) and its presentation
The students will be able to conduct literature review in the field of forensic psychology, participate in academic discussions, present the results of scientific research [orally and in written form]		

Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Self-study work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work placement	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. Overview of forensic psychology. Definition of forensic psychology. A brief history of forensic psychology. Areas of forensic psychological practice and ethical issues.	2		2				4	8	Study of required literature; seminar discussions
2. Psychology of law enforcement / police. Psychological theories, methods, and research findings relevant to policing. Officer personality assessment and recruitment, training, stress management, and counselling.	2		2				4	8	Study of required literature; seminar discussions
3. Psychology of criminal conduct. Main theories and classification of offenders. Aggression and violent crimes. Sexual offending. Intimate partner violence. Psychopathic personality.	2		2				4	12	Study of required literature; seminar discussions, practical tasks
4. Investigative psychology. Suspect interrogation. Eyewitness memory and testimony. Deception detection. False confessions. Forensic interviewing and assessment issues with children. Offender profiling.	4		4				8	16	Study of required literature; seminar discussions, practical tasks
5. Psychology at the courts. Expert testimony, competence to stand trial, assessment of dangerousness and criminal responsibility, child custody evaluations, decision-making in court.	2		2				4	10	Study of required literature; seminar discussions, case examples
6. Corrections and prison practices. The Risk-Need-Responsivity model of offender assessment and treatment. Risk and protective factors. Intervention planning. Anger management. Parole decision-making. Training correctional staff.	2		2				4	10	Study of required literature; seminar discussions, practical tasks
7. Victimology and victim assistance. Psychological effects of victimization. Specific victimization categories. Therapeutic jurisprudence. Providing services for crime victims.	2		2				4	10	Study of required literature; seminar discussions
8. Essay writing								18	
9. Preparation for the exam								11	
Total	16		16				32	103	

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Written exam	50	End of semester	Students are presented with case examples and questions connected to them. In order to answer the questions students must apply knowledge gained during the course at lectures and seminars. Exam is evaluated at 10-point scale, where 10 indicates that student is able to understand main topics of the forensic psychology field and can apply this knowledge to the practical situations excellently.
Active participation in seminars	20	During the semester	Student gets 2 points if he/she actively participates in discussions based on course reading materials and other practical tasks during the seminars.
Essay writing and its	30	During the	The essay has to be based on the scientific literature of forensic

presentation during class		semester	psychology. The chosen topic has to be approved by the lecturer. Assessment criteria (maximum grade – 10): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content of the essay (use of forensic psychology concepts, quality of content) – 80% • Quality of the presentation (fluency, clarity, use of visual aid like MS Power Point, inclusion of audience in the presentation) – 20%
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Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
1. Brown J. M., & Horvath M. A. H. (eds.)	2021	The Cambridge handbook of forensic psychology. 2nd ed.		Cambridge University Press
2. Bošković I.	2025	Legal and forensic psychology: what it is and what it is not		Palgrave Macmillan Publishing, Springer Nature
3. Bartol C.R., Bartol A.M. (Eds.)	2019	Introduction to forensic psychology: Research and application. Fifth edition.		SAGE Publications, Inc.
4. Bonta, J., & Andrews, D.A.	2016	The Psychology of Criminal Conduct (6th ed.)		Routledge
5. Walker, L.E., Shapiro, D., & Akl, S.	2020	Introduction to forensic psychology: Clinical and social psychological perspectives (2 nd ed.)		Springer
6. Weiner, I.B., & Otto, R.K.	2013	The handbook of forensic psychology. (4th ed.).		Hoboken [N.Y.]: Wiley
7. Goldstein, A. M., & Weiner, I. B.	2003	Handbook of psychology: Volume 11 Forensic psychology		John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
8. Brown J. M. & Campbell E. A.	2010	The Cambridge handbook of forensic psychology		Cambridge University Press
9. Arrigo B. A. & Shipley S. L.	2004	Introduction to forensic psychology: controversies in crime and justice		Elsevier Science & Technology
10. Polaschek, D. L. L.	2015	(Mis)Understanding psychopathy: Consequences for policy and practice with offenders. <i>Psychiatry, Psychology and Law.</i>	22(4)	https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2014.960033
11. Lawson D. M.	2013	Family violence: explanations and evidence-based clinical practice		American Counselling Association
12. Oliva J. R.	2012	Sexually motivated crimes: understanding the profile of the sex offender and applying theory to practice		Taylor & Francis Group
Optional reading				
1.Keibell, M. R., Davies, G. M.	2006	Practical psychology for forensic investigations and prosecutions		John Wiley & Sons Ltd
2.Pietz, Ch. A., Mattson, C. A.	2015	Violent offenders: Understanding and assessment		Oxford: Oxford University Press
3.McIvor, G., Gelsthorpe,	2004	Women who offend		Jessica Kingsley Publishers

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