

COURSE CONTENT

Course Code / Title : HP4101 Legal and Courtroom Psychology

Pre-requisites : NIL

No. of AUs. : 4

Contact Hours : 52

Course Aims

Introducing Singapore's first-of-its-kind professional module, this applied course offers an in-depth exploration into the psychology of law and courtroom dynamics. Unlike traditional forensic psychology courses, which emphasize criminal behavior or rehabilitation, this module uniquely focuses on the intersection of psychology and the legal system, providing you with invaluable insights into how psychological elements influence legal settings, courtroom procedures, and decision-making processes.

This cutting-edge course is designed for individuals interested in careers intersecting with lawyers, legal institutions, police, military security, probation services, child protection, and community forensic psychology. Whether your career path is geared toward becoming a psychologist, counselor, clinical case manager, or law enforcer, this course equips you with the foundational knowledge required to excel in those roles.

What sets this course apart is its emphasis on forensic-legal settings, delving deeply into the psychological aspects of legal evidence (e.g., eyewitness testimony, false confessions, expert witness roles, and mental health assessments), alongside core legal procedures like trial conduct, and relevant topics in family law, and other pivotal areas. By focusing on how decisions are made by judges and other legal actors in court, the course provides a comprehensive view of legal psychology that is both practical and theoretically robust.

Key features of the course include exclusive talks by legal professionals, immersive mock "expert witness" exercises, and the presentation of real-world Singaporean and international case studies. With projects rooted in real-world legal problems and solutions, students gain hands-on experience that is directly applicable to professional practice.

Whether you are aiming to pursue a career as a law enforcer, a legal or forensic psychologist, or another related role, this module provides a strong conceptual foundation, bridging psychology with the intricacies of the legal system and positioning you for future success in this interdisciplinary field.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the key concepts, definitions, and differences between psychological and legal approaches.
2. Describe the key concepts relating to Psychology of Eyewitness Testimony, Investigative Interviewing, False Confessions, Decision Making in Courtroom Settings, Expert Witness Testimony, Child Witnesses, and Mental Health and Disability.
3. Write a basic forensic psychological report for the courts by organizing important psychological concepts to address legal questions.
4. Practice the role of an expert witness in court through a role-playing exercise.

Course Content

- Introduction to Legal and Courtroom Psychology
- Eyewitness Testimony in legal and courtroom contexts
- The psychology of interrogation, interviewing and false Confessions
- Field Visit and Guest Lecture by Lawyer or assistant prosecutor
- Decision Making Courtroom settings
- Presenting psychological evidence in courtroom room and legal settings
- Child Witnesses in interviews and in the court
- Mental illness and disability in the court
- The Role of Psychology in Family Law
- Current Issues and Future Directions in Legal and Courtroom Psychology

Course Assessment

CA1 Individual Report/Case study : 30%

CA2 Group Presentation : 30%

CA3 Take-home Assignment : 30%

CA4 Class Participation : 10%

Total -----
100%

Reading and References

Refer to NTUlearn