



Date: Jan – April 2024

Course Title: PSYO 480A Forensic Psychology (Advanced Topics): Criminal Minds: The impact of emerging technologies on our current conceptualizations of what constitutes a crime

Course Schedule: Tuesday – 11:00 – 1:40

Location: ART 112

Instructor: Michael Woodworth, Ph.D., R.Psych.

TAs: Ian Wellspring, Mercedes Yeast, Spandan Ghevriya

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Office location: ASC 205

Office phone: 250-807-8731 (rarely checked so better to email)

Office hours: by appointment

E-mail address: Michael.Woodworth@ubc.ca

Please use the email addresses provided for faster responses, rather than Canvas messenger. Responses are not guaranteed within 24 hours so please allow time

Course Description and Goals:

This unique course in the broadest sense will consider the impact of emerging technologies on our current conceptualizations of what necessarily constitutes a crime. It will primarily (but not solely) focus on the proliferation of the World Wide Web, technology enabled communication, and social media platforms, as it pertains to the extreme impact on our daily lives. This will be viewed through a Forensic Psychology lens which considers these issues relevance to psychology and the law. By the end of the course students will have a detailed and comprehensive knowledge of topics including (but certainly not limited to) how criminality is aided and abetted by emerging technologies, and how our understanding of what denotes criminal behavior is both being challenged and also shifting to keep up with technology. Further, students will contemplate at length what the moral (and legal) roles and responsibilities are (or aren't) of the both the individual and companies (such as Twitter) in computer-mediated contexts. Students will critically think about these and a variety of other issues pertaining to (fast) emerging technologies and the impact on criminal behavior, as well as how technology is shifting our understanding of both what constitutes truth, as well as potentially.....reality (and truth) itself.

Students are expected to be able to demonstrate this knowledge through a) extensive class discussion, b) an innovative presentation (in the form of a proposal that will be considered by the other students), c) a written assignment on the final day of class.

****On the first day of class (January 09, 2024) the Professor will provide an extensive overview of the specific topics he intends to cover during the semester.****



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Format of the Course:

Weekly *highly* interactive, held from 11:00AM to 1:40PM on Tuesdays.

Required Texts:

There are no required texts per se. However, both the students and professor will be collecting a number of sources throughout the semester to further illuminate and examine the various topics outlined above and below. In the vast majority of courses, sources should typically consist of primarily peer-reviewed empirical and non-empirical published journal articles. However, this topic is such a new and fast (by the hour!) developing area that availability of traditional academic sources will be sparse (especially for certain topics). With this in mind, sources will certainly also need to include a multitude of news items (both online and in printed form), online opinion pieces, media articles (both online and in printed form), books, academic book chapters, and documentaries.

Course Grading

This course's grading scheme is based on three components: participation, presentation + challenge, and a written opinion document on the final day. Please review each in turn, paying attention to when additional information will be released.

1. Participation: (25%)

As this is a seminar class with a small (ish) class size active participation from each student is critical to developing a productive learning environment. Please come prepared to participate extensively. Demonstrating intellectual curiosity by asking questions, challenging your own and others' opinions, and generally showing interest in the learning process and class content is not only encouraged but required! YOU and the Professor will be keeping track of your participation (primarily contributing during class time, but also could include finding articles, emails with ideas, etc.). Each student is required to keep a **contributions journal** (i.e., how/what was contributed per class) that **will be submitted at the end of the course**.

With the above in mind, regular attendance is clearly not only required but essential. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or personal emergency should report to the instructor or TAs as soon as possible. Other conflicts such as academic engagements (e.g., conferences, professional presentations) should also be cleared with the instructor in advance. Please see the below section on relevant policies.

2. Presentation and Challenge (35%):

The Presentation: Each student will choose one area of interest that combines emerging technologies and some aspect of psychology and the law that they are particularly interested in. They will then be required to provide an overview of this topic and then provide an argument for how the laws or current policies or procedures need to be modified, expanded, or completely altered. For example, a student could choose



to examine if penalties are stringent enough (or alternatively too stringent) for social media companies in ensuring that children are unable to access their platform. After consideration, they will come to some conclusion based on their researched opinion on the issue and propose potential next steps or solutions.

By week 3, grading criteria will be provided and reviewed. A **sign-up system** with presentation dates (first come first serve) will be made available on Canvas on the same date. Your presentation topic must be **submitted to the Professor by e-mail** (and agreed upon/finalized) by NO LATER THAN two weeks before the first presentation date (which is March 01st). **By the 2nd week the Professor will release at least 6 examples of presentations that were done by other students in previous years.**

While more than one student can present on a similar topic, once a sufficient number of topics have committed to present on a certain issue (say perhaps, three) the topic will no longer be available. So, there is perhaps some (minor) incentive to coming up with a presentation focus sooner, rather than later. All topics will be added to the schedule and released to students so they can prepare for/research their challenges.

The Challenge: After presenting, some of the other students in the class will have the opportunity to seek clarification and/or RESPECTFULLY provide objections to the presenter's opinion. For example, in the above example, students could potentially debate the type of regulation around children's access to social media and/or how extensively social media companies should be punished for not ensuring age-limit restrictions are followed.

****Depending on the final number of students enrolled in the class the presentation length will likely end up being approximately 9 and no longer than 11 minutes. Other students will then have the opportunity to provide questions, clarifications, objections for approximately 5 minutes. Each student can anticipate presenting for approximately (and no more than) 13 to 15 minutes.**

A Top shelf presenter and challenger will be crowned (with prize!) based on Professor and TA input, as well as student votes.

3. **Written Opinion Document on final day of classes (40%)**

On the final day of classes students will be required to write and hand in a document providing their expert opinion on some aspect of emerging technologies and their impact on the legal system and/or our conceptualizations of criminality. **This document will serve as an overview for the reasoning and opinion that the student presented to the class.** It is also intended to reflect additional information obtained since the students presentation and any enhanced or altered opinion based on the questions posed by their fellow students during their presentation. As mentioned above, the professor will provide numerous of examples of what could constitute an appropriate



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topic or focus. However, students are certainly allowed to come up with their own focus for their presentation and paper (innovative and creative thinking is encouraged!). The Professor and/or the TAs are more than happy to advise and provide feedback for students on potential avenues of inquiry. A grading will also be provided in advance.

Course Schedule

- **January 09 – INTRODUCTION TO TOPIC/HOUSE-KEEPING**
- **January 16 – Social Media & the World Wide Web: (Intentional & Unintentional) Assault on Truth**
- **January 23 – Potential legal and criminal repercussions for both individuals' online presence as well as online platforms (Snapchat etc)**
- **January 30 – implications for criminality in the Digital Age**
- **February 06 – Emerging Controversies around WHAT Constitutes Criminal Behaviour in computer-mediated contexts Pt. 1**
- Documentary of focus: I Love You Now Die
- **February 13 – Emerging Controversies around WHAT Constitutes Criminal Behaviour in computer-mediated contexts Pt. 2**
- **February 20 – READING WEEK**
- **Feb 27 – Positive considerations of Emerging Technologies Contribution to Law Enforcement and the legal System.**
- PLUS expansion (or introduction) of a Topic based on Student Feedback and request
- **March 05 – Pt.1 INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS & Discussion/Challenge/Clarification**
- **March 12 – Pt.2 INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS & discussion/Challenge/Clarification**
- **March 19 – Pt.3 INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS & discussion/Challenge/Clarification**
- **March 26 – MEDIA DAY (more details to Follow). Media provided by Professor Plus Student contributions**
- **April 02 – FINALE! : In class written assignment**



CLASS POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Conflicts, Late or Missed Evaluations: The following is an overview of UBCO's campus-wide policy of academic concessions. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with **full policy**, available here: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/?tree=3,48,0,0>.

In sum, students may request academic concession in circumstances that may adversely affect their attendance or performance in a course or program. Generally, such circumstances fall into one of two categories: **conflicting responsibilities** and **unforeseen events**. Students with **conflicting responsibilities** have a duty to arrange their course schedules so as to avoid as much as possible any conflicts with course requirements. Students with such responsibilities are also required to discuss with their course instructor(s) at the start of each term, or as soon as a conflicting responsibility arises, any accommodation that may be requested. Students who, because of **unforeseen events** or, are absent during the term and are unable to complete tests or other graded work, should discuss with their instructors how they can make up for missed work. Instructors are not required to make allowance for any missed test or incomplete work that is not satisfactorily accounted for. Students who, because of unforeseen events, experience a prolonged absence during a term or who miss a final or term-end examination, must report to their dean or director to request academic concession as close as possible to the time when attendance is adversely affected. Full policy details are available at the provided link.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to *know, understand, and follow* the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. **Plagiarism** is the presentation of another person's work or ideas without proper or complete acknowledgement. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional, and includes self-plagiarism where a student submits work that is the same or substantially the same as work prepared or performed for credit in another course. Both are serious forms of academic misconduct subject to disciplinary action. In the context of this course, plagiarism and self-plagiarism are most likely to occur in the term paper assignment (your TA's will provide resources to avoid plagiarism prior to). Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) are subject to a harsh sanctions, including an assigned mark of 0% in the evaluation, and more serious consequences if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. Formal guidelines from University of British Columbia – Okanagan academic misconduct and disciplinary measures can be found on the UBC-O Academic Calendar website: <http://okanagan.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm>.



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'Submitting work under your name that has been produced with the assistance of LLMs or generative **AI** is considered **plagiarism** unless you disclose that you used these tools. This is because you would be taking credit for the work done by the LLM, and also because LLMs operate fundamentally as plagiarism engines, by reproducing (or rewording) existing pieces of writing. Students in **this** course are prohibited from using LLMs (generative AI tools or chatbots) for any stage of their assignments, including generating ideas or rough drafts. All work is to be written independently. You cannot ask LLM, or chatbot to do the work of any part of the writing process for you-this includes producing rough draft or outline of your assignment.' (Courtesy of Dr. Mike Zajko)

Student Service Resources

UBC Okanagan Disability Resource Centre: The Disability Resource Centre ensures educational equity for students with disabilities and chronic medical conditions. If you are disabled, have an injury or illness and require academic accommodations to meet the course objectives, please contact the Disability Resource Centre located in the University Centre building. Office: UNC 215 Phone: 250.807.8053 Email: drc.questions@ubc.ca Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/drc

UBC Okanagan Equity and Inclusion Office: Through leadership, vision, and collaborative action, the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) develops action strategies in support of efforts to embed equity and inclusion in the daily operations across the campus. The EIO provides education and training from cultivating respectful, inclusive spaces and communities to understanding unconscious/implicit bias and its operation within in campus environments. UBC Policy 3 prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of BC's Human Rights Code. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, educational programs, discrimination or harassment please contact the EIO. Office: UNC 325H Phone: 250.807.9291 Email: equity.ubco@ubc.ca Web: www.equity.ok.ubc.ca

Student Learning Hub: The Student Learning Hub is your go-to resource for free math, science, writing, and language learning support. The Hub welcomes undergraduate students from all disciplines and year levels to access a range of supports that include tutoring in math, sciences, languages, and writing, as well as help with study skills and learning strategies. Office: LIB 237 Phone: 250-807-8491 Email: learning.hub@ubc.ca Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/academic-success/learning-hub/contact/

The Global Engagement Office: The Global Engagement Office provides advising and resources to assist International students in navigating immigration, health insurance, and settlement matters, as well as opportunities for intercultural learning, and resources for Go Global experiences available to all UBC Okanagan students, and more. Come and see us – we are here to help! Office: UNC 227 Email: geo.ubco@ubc.ca Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/global-engagement-office



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Indigenous Programs & Services: Indigenous Programs & Services provides community and culturally appropriate services and support to First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Studies. Office: UNC 210 & 212 Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/indigenous-students/contact

Health & Wellness: At UBC Okanagan health services to students are provided by Health and Wellness. Nurses, physicians and counsellors provide health care and counselling related to physical health, emotional/mental health and sexual/reproductive health concerns. As well, health promotion, education and research activities are provided to the campus community. If you require assistance with your health, please contact Health and Wellness for more information or to book an appointment. Office: UNC 337 Phone: 250.807.9270 Email: healthwellness.okanagan@ubc.ca Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness

Office of the Ombudsperson for Students: The Office of the Ombudsperson for Students is an independent, confidential and impartial resource to ensure students are treated fairly. The Ombuds Office helps students navigate campus-related fairness concerns. They work with UBC community members individually and at the systemic level to ensure students are treated fairly and can learn, work and live in a fair, equitable and respectful environment. Ombuds helps students gain clarity on UBC policies and procedures, explore options, identify next steps, recommend resources, plan strategies and receive objective feedback to promote constructive problem solving. If you require assistance, please feel free to reach out for more information or to arrange an appointment. Office: UNC 217 Phone: 250-807-9818 Email: ombuds.office.ok@ubc.ca Web: www.ombudsoffice.ubc.ca

SAFEWALK Don't want to walk alone at night? Not too sure how to get somewhere on campus? Call Safewalk at 250-807-8076. For more information, see: www.security.ok.ubc.ca

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