# Legal Psychology

## Prof. Lara Ferla; Prof. Rossella Shoshannà Procaccia

Module I: *Prof. Lar Ferla*

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Study of some of the problematic issues that criminal law has to address with non-legal knowledge, especially, psychology, psychopathology and neuroscience. Thanks to an interdisciplinary methodological approach, at the end of the course students will be able to deal with a knowledge that is at the same time different from and complementary to the criminal one. This will help them to better understand the dogmatic categories of criminal law.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Responsibility. Mental illness. Questions of expert methodology.

– Legal-criminal science and empirical-social science compared.

– The notion of responsibility and the causes for excluding that one lacks capacity to understand and to will: general rules.

– Theory and practice in the face of the concept of mental illness.

– Establishing that one lacks capacity to understand to will as a result of suffering from a mental disorder: psychopathological appraisal.

– The international debate and prospects for reform of the rules governing mental disorders.

Psychological appraisal.

Criminal mediation techniques.

***READING LIST***

M. Bertolino (ed.), *Materiali per il corso di psicologia giuridica,* handout available from EDUCatt, Milan.

Suggested reading

M. Bertolino-A. Quadrio, *Adulti e minori di fronte alla legge. Prospettive attuali di psicologia giuridica,* EDUCatt, Milano, 2014.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures which will also incorporate the participation of experts in the field.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final exam will consist of an oral test aimed to verify students’ understanding of topics examined in class for attending students, and of topics presented in the reading list for non-attending students. Particular attention will be devoted to lexical precision in argumentation and critical analysis skills, in an interdisciplinary perspective. The final mark will be out of thirty.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course will focus on fundamental concepts of criminal law and psychology. It is planned to provide during the lectures the basic knowledge regarding these aspects.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.

Module II: *Rossella Shoshannà Procaccia*

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Teach and ensure that students gain basic and specialist knowledge of the main theoretical models and on the research and practical areas of most importance in the context of legal psychology, with special reference to problems associated with protecting minors in high-risk conditions.

With reference to knowledge and understanding skills, at the end of the course students will be able to describe and illustrate the different reference approaches of legal psychology, to outline the development of the protection construct and analyse its dimensions in light of the interrelationships between risk factors and individual, family, and social protective factors. Students are also expected to know the different forms of unfavourable and traumatic experiences that in the evolution of individuals may alter and compromise their coping and resilience capacity, as well as analyse the different aspects of the intervention network necessary to start assistance and protection paths for the victims. Students will also need to know and be able to describe the tools used to identify the risk and the psychological and legal intervention measures.

With reference to the application of the knowledge and skills acquired, at the end of the course students will have to demonstrate their ability to use the knowledge learnt in the integration between psychological and legal aspects in order to identify the conditions of evolutionary risk, and the family and social factors connected to unfavourable experiences and violence, and be able to critically identify methods and effective instruments at a macro and micro-social level.

***COURSE CONTENT***

In the introduction on the main aspects of legal psychology, the historical-theoretical background of that discipline, the areas of application and the function and role of psychology in its interaction with justice will all be examined.

Special attention will then be dedicated to the high-risk conditions and psychological appraisals in civil and criminal contexts through addressing the following topics: placing of juveniles in foster care following separation and divorce, national and international adoption, psychological harm and its assessment, competent parenting, unfavourable and traumatic experiences, post-traumatic stress disorder, risk and protection factors in the assessment of parenting duties, the protection of minors, removing children from their family of origin, family dynamics and psychological consequences on victims in cases of abuse and violence, hearing of minors in court, testimony and impressionability, and criteria for assessing the statements of child victims of abuse.

***READING LIST***

Lectures available on the *Blackboard* platform.

A. Quadrio-M. Rivolta (ed.), *Aggiornamenti di psicologia giuridica,* ISU, Università Cattolica, 2007 (pages 105 to 347).

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be taught through traditional, practical exercises, group discussions, and case studies, posted on *Blackboard*.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam consists of an oral exam to test the level of learning of the topics covered during lectures for attending students or the learning of the topics included in the specified textbooks for non-attending students. Assessment of learning during the course may also be through interim tests. Assessment will be out of thirty, and will take into consideration exhaustiveness, pertinence, and correctness of answers, argumentative and critical skills and the ability to link and consistently interrelate interdisciplinary concepts.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no specific prerequisites, since the course aims to provide students with a basic knowledge concerning fundamental concepts of legal psychology.

Attendance is recommended given the interdisciplinary nature of the course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.