

EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

PSYC 360-24 (3 Credit Hours)

Spring 2018

Wednesdays, 2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Location: SCH 373



Instructor: [Elijah Ricks, Ph.D.](#)

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Office Hours: (CHI) Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:15 – 4 p.m. (and by appointment)

(SCH) Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m. (and by appointment)

To do a video chat with me using Zoom, go to <https://roosevelt.zoom.us/j/3537279615>

Roosevelt University's Learning Goals: (a) Effective communication, (b) knowledge of discipline-focused content, and (c) awareness of social justice and engagement in civic life.

Course Objectives: Eyewitnesses are crucial to our criminal justice system, but are prone to many weaknesses. This course reviews the workings and limitations of the human memory systems as especially relevant to the eyewitness context, the courts' and law enforcement's reliance on such memory, and researchers' recommendations for improving the accuracy of eyewitness memory.

Please be warned that the scope of this course necessitates the discussion of some disturbing crimes, including rape, murder, and child abuse, among others. It is perfectly normal to be uncomfortable with these topics. If, however, you feel that such topics would be unusually difficult or traumatizing for you, please consider taking another course.

If you should wish to speak with someone about your feelings about these things, please contact the [RU Counseling Center](#) in AUD 470, (312)341-3548. If you have any reports of sexual misconduct, please contact Alice Jones, Title IX Coordinator, at (312)341-2045, or ajones90@roosevelt.edu. See more about Title IX on page 4 of this document.

Text: Although there is no traditional textbook required for this course, students must read the account of mistaken identification in Thompson-Cannino, J., Cotton, R., & Torneo, E. (2009). *Picking cotton: Our memoir of injustice and redemption*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. ISBN: 978-0-312-37653-6. Read about one chapter each week to stay on track. Other readings or links to them are available on Blackboard. They are:

Brigham, J. C., Bennett, L. B., Meissner, C. A., & Mitchell, T. L. (2007). The influence of race on eyewitness memory. In R. C. L. Lindsay, D. F. Ross, J. D. Read, & M. P. Toglia (Eds.) *Handbook of Eyewitness Psychology, Volume II: Memory for People*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Christianson, S.-Å. (1992). Emotional stress and eyewitness memory: A critical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *112*, 284-309.

Fisher, R., Geiselman, R. E., & Amador, M. (1989). Field test of the cognitive interview: Enhancing the recollection of actual victims and witnesses of crime. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *74*, 722-727. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.74.5.722

Hope, L., & Wright, D. (2007). Beyond unusual? Examining the role of attention in the weapon focus effect. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *21*, 951-961. doi:10.1002/acp.1307

Lindsay, R. C. L., & Wells, G. L. (1985). Improving eyewitness identifications from lineups. Simultaneous versus sequential lineup presentation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *70*, 556-564. doi:10.1037//0021-9010.70.3.556

Memon, A., Hope, L., & Bull, R. (2003). Exposure duration: Effects on eyewitness accuracy and confidence. *British Journal of Psychology*, *94*, 339-354. doi:10.1348/000712603767876262

Odegard, T. N., & Toglia, M. P. (2013). Children as eyewitnesses: Historical background, and factors affecting children's eyewitness testimony. In R. E. Holiday & T. A. Marche (Eds.), *Child Forensic Psychology: Victim and Eyewitness Memory*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Poole, D. A., & Dickinson, J. J. (2013). Investigative interviews of children. In R. E. Holiday & T. A. Marche (Eds.), *Child Forensic Psychology: Victim and Eyewitness Memory*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Righi, G., Peissig, J. J., & Tarr, M. J. (2009). Recognizing disguised faces. *Visual Cognition*, 20, 143-169. doi:10.1080/13506285.2012.654624
- Sauer, J. D., & Brewer, N. (2015). Confidence and accuracy of eyewitness identification. In T. Valentine & J. Davis (Eds.), *Forensic Facial Identification: Theory and Practice of Identification from Eyewitnesses, Composites and CCTV*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Schreiber Compo, N., Evans, J. R., Carol, R. N., Villalba, D. K., Ham, L., Garcia, T., & Rose, S. (2012). Intoxicated eyewitnesses: Better than their reputation? *Law and Human Behavior*, 36, 77-86. doi:10.1037/h0093951
- Weigand, H. (2009). Rebuilding a life: The wrongfully convicted and exonerated. *Public Interest Law Journal*, 18, 427-438.
- Willingham, D. B. (1997). Systems of memory in the human brain. *Neuron*, 18, 5-8. doi:10.1016/S0896-6273(01)80040-4

Readings Questions (3 points each): For each assigned reading, on the day that the reading is due, students must construct and submit through Blackboard one multiple-choice exam question about the reading. It should be relatively broad so that students who actually read the assignment will be able to answer it, but not so broad that it can be easily answered without having done the reading. These questions may be integrated into course exams.

Research Project (point values vary): All students will carry out a research project for the class on the topic of eyewitness memory. The project will involve several stages, including design, preparation, observation, and reporting. You will be evaluated by your intellectual contributions to the project's design, and also by your classmates' perceptions of your work quality and dedication to the project.

Quizzes & Activities (5 points each): Quizzes and class activities will occasionally be administered during the course meeting time, at any point during the course meeting time. To prepare for these, read the course materials ahead of time, attend the entire course time, and pay close attention during lectures and other presentations. Your two lowest quiz and activity scores will be automatically dropped. Under no circumstances may you make up a missed quiz or activity.

Mini-Exams (10 points each): Following each topic we cover in class, a brief exam will be administered on the preceding material through Blackboard. Exams may include (but are not limited to) multiple choice, matching, true/false statements, fill-in-the-blank, and short answers. Questions will be drawn from the course readings (including *Picking Cotton*), discussions, and lectures. These are time-limited, and must be completed within 48 hours of the class meeting in which the topic was covered. Your lowest two mini-exam scores will be automatically dropped. Under no circumstances may you make up a mini-exam that you missed.

Final Exam (50 points): A final exam will be administered in our normal classroom on May 2nd from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. No one is excused from the final exam. It will cover material from the entire course, including weekly readings, *Picking Cotton*, and our class research projects, as well as lecture material. A study guide will be provided at least 1 week prior to the date of the exam. The format will be just like the mini-exams, except you will use a fill-in-the-bubble response sheet. If you do not appear by 3:00 p.m. on May 2, you will receive no credit for the final exam.

Grades: The course grade will be computed by dividing the points earned by the points that are possible. Points are not weighted differently; 1 exam point = 1 quiz point = 1 extra credit point. To compute a grade, sum all earned points, and divide that number by the total number of points possible. Make sure to include extra credit in the numerator, but not the denominator.

Final grades are based on the following scale:

89.1% to 100% = A 69.1% to 79.0% = C 0% to 59.0% = F
79.1% to 89.0% = B 59.1% to 69.0% = D

Your grades will be available for review through the Blackboard system. Although I make every effort to ensure that grades are accurate, you are responsible for checking your grades. If you see a discrepancy or have a concern please contact me as early as possible to get it resolved.

Classroom Behavior: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the University's function as an educational institution (see more [here](#)). Refrain from side conversations or other distractions to ensure everyone gets the best classroom experience. Punctuality is highly valued in the professional world; Make it a habit now!

Course Outline (Note that these dates and topics are subject to change, with notice):

| Date | Topic | Reading | Due |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1/17 | Intro. to Course | Syllabus | M-E Syllabus |
| 1/17 | Human Memory Review | Willingham | M-E Memory |
| Estimator Variables | | | |
| 1/24 | Stress and Emotion | Christianson | M-E Stress |
| 1/31 | Weapon-Focus | Hope & Wright | Variables; M-E |
| 2/7 | Cross-Race Effect | Brigham et al. | M-E CRE |
| 2/14 | Alcohol Intoxication | Schreiber Compo et al. | M-E Alcohol |
| 2/21 | Exposure Duration & Disguise | Memon et al.; Righi et al. | M-E Disguise |
| 2/28 | Lineups and Procedures | Lindsay & Wells | Methods; M-E |
| 3/7 | Spring Break (No Class) | <i>Cotton</i> , through Ch. 10 | |
| System Variables | | | |
| 3/14 | The Cognitive Interview | Fisher et al. | M-E CI |
| 3/21 | Catch Up/Trial Run Day | | |
| 3/28 | Children as Eyewitnesses | Odegard & Toglia | M-E Children |
| 4/4 | Research Project Day | Poole & Dickinson | |
| 4/11 | Confidence and Accuracy: Judge and Jury Perceptions | Sauer & Brewer; PC15 | Data |
| 4/18 | Exonerations | Weigand | M-E Exonerations |
| 4/25 | Discussion of <i>Picking Cotton</i> | <i>Picking Cotton</i> | |
| 5/2 | Final Exam: 2:30 – 5:00 p.m. | Entire Course | In-Class Final |

Extra Credit: A few opportunities will arise in the course for you to earn extra credit. One standing opportunity is to participate in psychological research through the SONA system, or to summarize scientific journal articles related to eyewitness memory. More detail is in a separate handout, available on Blackboard. Each paper summary is worth 2 points of credit, and each SONA credit is worth 1 point of course credit, for up to 10 total.

Students With Disabilities: Roosevelt University complies fully with the Americans With Disabilities Act. Details are found [here](#). If you have or believe you have a disability that affects you academically, please tell me as soon as possible, and also contact the Academic Success Center at (312)341-3818, or Danielle Smith at dsmith51@roosevelt.edu, to arrange for any accommodations. The Schaumburg campus office is in room 125. Call (847)619-7978.

Academic Integrity: In the best interest of your education and intellectual growth, cheating, plagiarism, and lying will not be tolerated. See details in the [Student Handbook](#) (also see [here](#)). Ignorance of standards will not be accepted as an excuse. References must be cited in the body of papers and listed in a References section. Direct quotes must be identified either by quotations marks for brief quotes or indentations for longer quotes, with the page number of the original article included (see the *APA Publication Manual*, 6th edition for details). Students found guilty of

academic dishonesty will fail the assignment, and their names will be forwarded to the Office of Enrollment and Student Services. Failing the assignment does not preclude imposition of other penalties by the University, including dismissal. When in doubt, ask me if something could be considered academic dishonesty. It is not worth risking your future!

“Rather fail with honor than succeed by fraud.” – Sophocles

Withdrawals: The last day to withdraw and receive a ‘W’ grade for this course is 3/23/18. Prior to and including the first week of the fall or spring semester sessions, students may drop one or more courses with no record of the class appearing on the transcript. In weeks 2 through 10 of the fall or spring semester, students may complete a Change in Registration form in person or by fax, found [here](#). After week 10 of the fall or spring semester students may not withdraw from courses without completing a Petition for Late Withdrawal form found [here](#). The petition form requires the student’s signature and the approval of the instructor, department chair, dean or dean’s designee. It also requires a statement of the non-academic reason for your late withdrawal, including reason student was unable to withdraw by deadline, and documentation. Withdrawing from courses may have serious consequences for academic progress towards the degree, for financial aid eligibility, for repayment of refunds, visa requirements (for international students), and eligibility for competition (for student athletes). Students should consult carefully with their instructors and academic advisors and must meet with a financial aid advisor before withdrawing from classes after the semester has begun. Tuition Refund Schedule and Withdrawal deadlines are published for each semester and for the summer session on the Important Dates page of the website [here](#).

Incomplete Grades: I follow the Registrar’s policy for assigning Incompletes for this course. A grade of ‘I’ will be assigned only when a small portion of the total semester’s work has to be completed and the student has a documented reason why the work cannot be completed within the regular timeframe.

Roosevelt’s Scholastic Policies: It is your responsibility to be familiar with and follow all of the University’s policies. These are available [here](#).

Title IX: Federal law, specifically Title IX, and the University Sexual Misconduct Policy require that all employees are mandated reporters of incidents involving sexual or gender-based violence or harassment. Disclosures made to faculty or teaching assistants (TAs) about sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and/or stalking on or off campus must be forwarded to the Title IX Coordinator. These staff are Responsible Employees and therefore are mandated to report. The Title IX office will contact any student who discloses an incident regarding student rights, including the option to request an investigation, interim safety measures, and/or academic accommodations. In certain circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator may need to proceed with an investigation, even if none is requested, if there are safety risks to the student or campus community. Participation in the process is voluntary.

If you want a confidential place to disclose sexual assault, sexual harassment or intimate partner violence, there are two confidential advisors on campus who are not mandated reporters. They are: Audrey Guy, (312)244-0577; and LaDonna Long, (312)244-0426. Both are available via phone all hours. The Counseling Center (430 S. Michigan Avenue Room 470 Phone: 312-341-3548) staff are also NOT mandatory reporters and therefore NOT required to report a disclosure to the Title IX Office.

Religious Holidays: Roosevelt University respects the rights of students to observe major religious holidays and will make accommodations, upon request, for such observances. See details [here](#). Students who wish to observe religious holidays must inform their instructors in writing within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity.

Students who make such arrangements by the deadline will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. However, all work missed for such absences, including papers and examinations, must be made up. Students who do not arrange for excused absences by the deadline are not entitled to such accommodations.