Psychology 370-04/Law 370-04
Professor Scullin
Fall 2021

Psychological Research and *Murder on a Sunday Morning*
5-Page Writing Assignment (20% of final grade)
OPTIONAL First Draft Due Sunday, November 22nd by 11:59 pm on Blackboard
Paper Due Sunday, December 5th by 11:59 pm on Blackboard

Your second 5-page paper is due on **Sunday, December 5th by 11:59 pm.** This paper will be a critical analysis of one of the two major forensic psychology issues raised in the documentary *Murder on a Sunday Morning*, which we will be your class assignment for the week of November 1st-November 7t. You might view this assignment as being like an amicus brief, written to inform the court or defense attorneys about some relevant research. You may submit an OPTIONAL first draft of the paper for a preliminary grade and feedback by Sunday, November 22nd. You may revise your first draft and submit it to the Final Draft Portal by Sunday, December 5th.

For this paper, you will **choose one** of the psychological issues that contributed to the wrongful prosecution of this case (eyewitness identification **or** interrogations/confessions) and analyze how this factor contributed to the prosecution of the defendant. You will need to identify three **empirical** articles on the psychological issue you selected that also are related to the facts of the case. This means that the papers should have at least one experiment where they are collecting data and testing their hypotheses. Your paper should clearly:

1) Make an argument for how either a) eyewitness identification issues or b) interrogations/ confessions contributed to the defendant's wrongful prosecution (approximately 1 page).

2) Provide a critical analysis of each the three articles that you identified as supportive of your argument (in #1). For each article, describe the research question tested by the researchers, describe how the authors tested that question and what they found, and relate their findings to the case presented in the documentary. If an article has more than one experiment, choose one of the experiments for this portion of your paper. This analysis should be critical, noting strengths and weaknesses both in the study itself and in its relevance to the case in question (approximately 1 page per article).

3) End with an evaluation of the **overall** prosecution in this case considering the material we have covered in class so far. You should discuss both eyewitness identification and false confessions in this section. Finally, make recommendations about how the prosecution of this case could have been improved (approximately 1 page).

4) Include a Reference section with the three articles you selected along with any other sources you used to complete your assignment. **You do not need to write a reference for the film**.

Your assignment must follow APA formatting including:

1) Size 12 font, preferably Times New Roman
2) Double-spacing
3) Page numbers on top right (header)
4) 1" margins on all four sides (you may have to adjust the default settings)

5) Title page including title of paper, your name, affiliation (college) and course
6) No abstract is necessary for this assignment

Psy 370/Law 370 Writing Assignment Grading Rubric

Students, please note that this writing assignment is designed to help you as you develop academically and begin to meet two of the learning objectives of the Forensic Psychology Major. Those objectives are below. I highlighted the specific objectives addressed in this assignment in purple font (and on the rubric on the following page).

#2. Learning Objective: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking: Students will demonstrate scientific reasoning and problem-solving skills including effective research methods.

Specific Learning Objectives
Identify and navigate psychology databases and other legitimate sources of psychology information (e.g., PsycInfo).
Develop plausible behavioral explanations that rely on scientific reasoning and evidence rather than anecdotes or pseudoscience.
Read and summarize complex ideas accurately, including future directions, from psychological sources and research.
Describe problems operationally to study them empirically (e.g., identify research questions).
Evaluate the effectiveness of quantitative and/or qualitative research methods in addressing a research question.

#4. Learning Objective: Communication: Students will demonstrate competence in writing and in oral and interpersonal communication skills.

Specific Learning Objectives
Construct arguments clearly and concisely using evidence-based psychological concepts and theories.
Use grammar appropriate to professional standards and conventions.
Use APA style effectively.
Interpret quantitative data displayed in statistics, graphs and tables, including statistical symbols in research reports.

On the next page, you will see that I have included some of these specific learning objectives (in purple) within this grading rubric. Other learning objectives will appear as you move on to more advanced classes in the major.

Grading Category	*Unacceptable*	*Acceptable*	*Good*	*Excellent*	*Score (possible points)*
Critical Components of the Article Critique					
Introduction Describe problems operationally to study them empirically (e.g., identify research questions).	Does not adequately convey research questions(s). Little or no rationale for studies about to be presented.	Conveys topic but not key research question(s). Some rationale for studies about to be presented.	Conveys topic and key research question(s) raised by documentary. Rationale for studies is provided.	Clearly introduces key research question(s) raised by documentary. Demonstrates good understanding of question(s) and topic. Rationale for studies is provided.	**(16)**
Study 1 Interpret quantitative data displayed in statistics, graphs and tables, including statistical symbols in research reports.	Research question, methods, and results are not clearly described or presented coherently. May be missing many key components. Study is not tied to the target case.	Research question, methods, and results may not be organized in coherent form, but most key components are described. Study's relevance is somewhat tied to the target case	Research question, methods, and results are mostly organized in coherent form and all key components are described. Study's relevance is tied to target case.	Research question is clear, methods and results are coherently organized and presented correctly. Study's relevance is appropriately tied to the target case.	**(16)**
Study 2 Interpret quantitative data displayed in statistics, graphs and tables, including statistical symbols in research reports.	Research question, methods, and results are not clearly described or presented coherently. May be missing many key components. Study is not tied to the target case.	Research question, methods, and results may not be organized in coherent form, but most key components are described. Study's relevance is somewhat tied to the target case	Research question, methods, and results are mostly organized in coherent form and all key components are described. Study's relevance is tied to target case.	Research question is clear, methods and results are coherently organized and presented correctly. Study's relevance is appropriately tied to the target case.	**(16)**
Study 3 Interpret quantitative data displayed in statistics, graphs and tables, including statistical symbols in research reports.	Research question, methods, and results are not clearly described or presented coherently. May be missing many key components. Study is not tied to the target case.	Research question, methods, and results may not be organized in coherent form, but most key components are described. Study's relevance is somewhat tied to the target case	Research question, methods, and results are mostly organized in coherent form and all key components are described. Study's relevance is tied to target case.	Research question is clear, methods and results are coherently organized and presented correctly. Study's relevance is appropriately tied to the target case.	**(16)**
Overall Evaluation Read and summarize complex ideas accurately from psychological sources and research. Construct arguments clearly and concisely using evidence-based psychological concepts and theories.	Very weak evaluation. Paper ends without a clear discussion of the key issues in the documentary or ways in which the investigation/prosecution could have been improved.	Significant deficits in the discussion of the prosecution's case, issues relating to eyewitness identification and interrogations/confessions. Inadequate discussion of ways in which the investigation/prosecution could have been improved.	Analyzes the prosecution's case, but could be better organized or make stronger points. Discusses both eyewitness identification and interrogations/confessions in this section. Discusses ways in which the investigation/prosecution could have been improved.	Clearly analyzes the prosecution's case. Discusses both eyewitness identification and interrogations/confessions well in this section. Makes good suggestions of ways in which the investigation/prosecution could have been improved.	**(16)**
Grammar, mechanics and APA					
Use grammar appropriate to professional standards and conventions.	Grammatical errors, spelling and/or punctuation errors are common and detract significantly from the	Grammatical, spelling, and/or punctuations errors are present and interfere somewhat with reading the paper.	A few grammatical, spelling, and/or punctuation errors are present but they do not interfere with reading the paper.	Grammatical, spelling and/or punctuation errors are very rare and do not detract from the paper. Scholarly writing.	**(8)**

	paper. Word choice is informal in tone.	Word choice occasionally informal in tone.	Mostly scholarly writing style.		
Use APA style effectively.	Errors in APA style (in text) detract substantially from the paper.	Errors in APA style (in text) are noticeable.	Some minor errors in APA style (in text) but they do not detract from the paper.	Very rare errors in APA style (in text).	**(8)**
Reference Page	References are missing key elements	All key elements are included but the order is incorrect	All key elements are included in the correct order; some formatting errors	Reference page is correctly written	**(2)**
Specific Assignment requirements		Page length requirement not followed (significantly too short or too long).	Page length requirement not followed but only minor fluctuation.	Page length requirement followed.	**(2)**
				Total	**(100)**