

Module specification

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Module Code	SOC664
Module Title	Constructing Guilt and Innocence
Level	6
Credit value	20
Faculty	FSLS
HECoS Code	100483
Cost Code	GACJ

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Is the module core or option for this programme
BA (Hons) Criminology and Criminal Justice	Option
BA (Hons) Law and Criminal Justice	Option

Pre-requisites

None

Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	24 hrs
Placement tutor support	0 hrs
Supervised learning e.g. practical classes, workshops	0 hrs
Project supervision (level 6 projects and dissertation modules only)	0 hrs
Total active learning and teaching hours	24 hrs
Placement / work based learning	0 hrs
Guided independent study	176 hrs
Module duration (total hours)	200 hrs

For office use only	
Initial approval date	May 2021
With effect from date	September 2021

For office use only	
Date and details of revision	August 2024 – AM0 minor update to Indicative Syllabus and Indicative Reading for implementation from Sept 2024.
Version number	3

Module aims

To study the legal and social constructions of guilt and innocence; the problematic nature of “facts” and “truth” and the role of accusers, accused, adjudicators, the media, researchers, and the public in these constructions.

Module Learning Outcomes - at the end of this module, students will be able to:

1	Critically reflect on the legal and social constructions of guilt and innocence.
2	Appreciate the problematic nature of ‘facts’ and ‘truth’ in constructions of guilt and innocence.
3	Account for the role accusers, accused, adjudicators, the media, researchers, and the public play in the construction of guilt and innocence.
4	Analyse the construction of guilt and innocence in a selection of cases which have gone to criminal trial.

Assessment

Indicative Assessment Tasks:

This section outlines the type of assessment task the student will be expected to complete as part of the module. More details will be made available in the relevant academic year module handbook.

Students to complete a 3000 word essay that demonstrates a critical understanding of how guilt and innocence is constructed through the criminal justice process

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Weighting (%)
1	1 - 4	Written Assignment	100

Derogations

None



Learning and Teaching Strategies

The learning and teaching strategy is grounded in the University's commitment to an Active Learning Framework (ALF) so that learning will be both accessible and active and include synchronous and a-synchronous elements. Face to face classroom teaching will be supplemented by online lectures wherein students will be expected to complete activities such as watching panopto videos; undertake Other Indicative Reading; complete quizzes and exercises; and post comment for a-synchronous debate. These activities will be the subject of formative feedback by the module tutor. Added to this, will be access to staff who provide presence, challenge and support for student learning and can relate learning to real world uses.

Indicative Syllabus Outline

The prejudice and labelling of Amanda Knox by the British media.
Language style and persuasion in the criminal trial of O.J. Simpson.
Techniques of Neutralisation and the conviction of the Oklahoma Bomber, Timothy McVeigh.
The requisites for establishing guilt: failing to establish guilt in the trial of Casey Anthony.
The role of vulnerability in the alleged false confession and subsequent conviction of Brendan Dassey.
The role of social geometry in the acquittal of Michael Jackson.
The Defence of Insanity and the trial of Peter Sutcliffe.
Judicial judgement and the trial of Oscar Pistorius.
A trail by media: witchcraft and cult following - the case of Lindy Chamberlain "A dingo's got my baby!"
Inconsistency in stories and the trial of Dr Crippen.

Indicative Bibliography:

Please note the essential reads and other indicative reading are subject to annual review and update.

Essential Reads

Wilkes, R. ed. (2006) *The Mammoth Book of Famous Trials*. London: Robinson.

Bennett, W. Lance and Feldman, Martha, S. (2014) *Reconstructing Reality in the Courtroom: Justice and Judgment in American Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Hastie, R. et al. eds. (2008) *Inside the Juror: The Psychology of Juror Decision-making*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Howe, M. and Knott, L. (2016) *Memory and Miscarriages of Justice*. London: Psychology Press

Other indicative reading

A comprehensive reading list that is relevant to the psychological and sociological perspectives that are covered, will be provided at the end of each lecture. E.g.

Masters, B. (1997) *She Must Have Known: Trial of Rosemary West*. London: Corgi.
(Rosemary West)

Knox, A. (2015) *Waiting to be Heard*. Harper: New York (Amanda Knox case)

Cotterill, J. 'If it Doesn't Fit, You Must Acquit': Reframing the Story through Metaphorical Choice in the Closing Arguments' in Cotterill, J. ed. (2003) *Language and Power in Court: a linguistic analysis of the O. J. Simpson trial*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK. (OJ Case)

Michel, L. and Herbeck, D. (2001) *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*. New York: Harper Collins (Timothy McVeigh case)

Ashton, J. 2012 *Imperfect Justice: Prosecuting Casey Anthony*. New York: Harper Collins.
(Anthony Casey case)

Cicchini, M. D. (2018) *Anatomy of a False Confession: The Interrogation and Conviction of Brendan Dassey*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers (Brendan Dassey)

Dimond, D. (2005) *Be Careful who you Love*. London: Atria Books (Michael Jackson case)

Bilton, M (2003) *Wicked Beyond Belief: The Hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper*. HarperCollins
(Peter Sutcliffe case)

Carlin, J. (2015) *The Trials of Oscar Pistorius: Chase your Shadow*. Atlantic books. (Oscar Pistorius case)

Smith, D. J. (2005) *Supper with the Crippens*. Orion (Dr Crippen case)

Employability – the University Skills Framework

Each module and degree programme are designed to support learners as they develop their graduate skills aligned to the University Skills Framework.

Using the philosophies of the Active Learning Framework (ALF) our 10 skills are embedded within programmes complementing core academic subject knowledge and understanding.

Through continuous self-assessment students own their individual skills journey and enhance their employability and career prospects.

This Module forms part of a degree programme that has been mapped against the University Skills Framework.

The Wrexham University Skills Framework Level Descriptors: An incremental and progressive approach.

Learners can use this document to identify where and how they are building skills and how they can develop examples of their success.