Spring 2006, University of Illinois at Chicago
2:00 - 4:45 Wednesdays, BSB 1076

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Professor Bette L. Bottoms
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GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

More and more children are becoming involved in our legal system, a system that was designed for adults. Special issues arise when children enter the legal system, issues that receive a considerable amount of attention from psychological researchers. In this seminar, we will focus on psychological research investigating a number of those issues, particularly the nature of and societal response to child maltreatment, the reliability of children's eyewitness testimony, jurors' perceptions of children's testimony, and juvenile justice. We will focus on how psychological research and the use of psychological theories can contribute to a better understanding of the issues, how the legal system can be informed by the results of research, and how to design future research to address remaining questions. The research in this field is interdisciplinary, so theories and methods from nearly every subdiscipline of psychology will be featured, including cognitive, clinical, and community psychology, but because your professor is a social psychologist, and this course is a Seminar in Social Psychology, there will be special emphasis throughout on understanding the issues in their social context.

READINGS:

Readings are empirical, theoretical, and review articles and chapters from journals and books.

FORMAT AND GRADING:

This course, a graduate seminar, will be conducted as a seminar, not a lecture course. Emphasis is placed on the preparation and active participation of all seminar members. The success of the course will depend, in large part, on student participation at a level appropriate for graduate students. This includes completing all readings prior to class and being prepared to discuss the theories, methods, and findings from all readings, as well as the implications of readings for law and for future psychological research. The "class preparation questions" are assigned to help you achieve the level of preparation necessary to participate in class. If you are unwilling to speak up in class often, you will not do well in this course, and you should drop it.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of in-class participation (13%), class preparation essays (10%), one in-class oral report (6%), and two exams (74%).

% Grade Assignment

14% 1. In-Class Participation: In-class verbal contributions and attendance, 1% per class (not counting the mid-term exam day).

Although it may seem at first glance like this is a small percentage of your grade, please realize that even if you score all possible points on all other assignments (highly unlikely), you cannot make higher than a "B" if you do not participate in class. Participation points are meant to reflect in-class comments and questions, not simply class attendance, which is assumed. (Even so, more than two unexcused absences will result in a loss of most participation points.)

14% 2. Class Preparation Questions: (1% per day). Each class, you are required to bring in 2 – 3 typed questions about the readings. These should be brief, but with enough detail that they are clear and
well developed. Participating in class would be difficult if you hadn’t read and thought about the main points in the articles. These questions are designed to help you do that. They can be questions about methods, theories, things that you don’t understand in a reading, and questions that go beyond the readings by considering implications of the readings for future research or law or policy, etc. Questions will be graded as A – E, but I assume most will get C or better, and that I’ll be able to grade them as check + (A), check (B), and check – (C).

35%  3. Final Examination: There will be a cumulative final exam, covering information from readings, class discussion, and class reports.

25%  4. Final Project: Instead of a mid-term examination or a typical term paper, students will be given an opportunity to engage in actual research in the field of children, psychology, and law. This project is designed to give students first-hand experience in the methods of the field, on a project that is relevant and timely and that has the potential to result in a useful product such as a literature review for a manuscript or a grant proposal (rather than a paper that is written only for the purpose of the class). Specifically, I have provided access to parts of my own program of research – projects that range from a drafted manuscript, to a pile of data that could be analyzed, to one of my ideas that could be fleshed out through literature review. We will discuss each project and find one that works best for each class member, who will work in teams of two on each project.

Students will have to do work on the project each week, and report on their progress in class each week. To help with this, each student should keep a diary of work done on the project, in some type of notebook or 3-ring binder. These will be turned in with the final project.

12% 5. Oral Reports: Two in-class reports on an auxiliary reading of interest to the entire class (6% each). To reduce the number of readings assigned to the entire class, one extra reading will be assigned to one or two members of the seminar for many days of class. Students who give reports are responsible for explaining the main points of their article and for leading a discussion of how the article is relevant to that day’s common readings. The formal, prepared part of your presentation should last no more than 15 minutes, although the class discussion can make this last longer. In fact, the very best presentations will encourage and involve class discussion.

In general, the importance of expressing ideas orally is often overlooked in undergraduate training, but it is essential for success in any domain. Students may be nervous at first about giving oral reports, but after we get comfortable with one another, the reports will be easier and go quite smoothly. Here are a few guidelines that will be helpful.

There is nothing more tedious and even embarrassing than being forced to sit through an ill-prepared presentation. Think about bad presentations you’ve attended. Make a list of the things that made the presentation horrible, and avoid them all! Make sure your reports are concise, accurate, and well-prepared—over prepared. Write out every word you plan to say, and practice saying it several times. Advance preparation, including timing of your presentation, is key to a good report. If you don’t understand something about an article, see me before class.

Your job is to summarize the reading so that everyone understands what information it contains. If the article describes an empirical study, be sure to mention the predictions, methodology, main findings, and conclusions. If the article is a theoretical piece, state the main premise and basic argument, as well as evidence used to support the thesis. For any article, present a critical analysis of the work, and begin the presentation with a short statement of what the article was about. The best reports, and class atmosphere in general, are those given in a relaxed, but professional manner. If you don’t want to be interrupted during your presentation, say so. However, if is generally helpful if we can interrupt you to ask questions or make comments.

Give your reports from notes rather than the article. Do not read from a "highlighted" version of the article (a sure way to bore us all). All students must use handouts or overhead transparencies to help make the main points of the paper.
MISCELLANEOUS:
1. Because the class meets only once per week, attending each and every class is very important. Students who miss classes are responsible for all notes, announcements, and handouts for that class.
2. Late work (on any assignment) will not be accepted. No “incompletes” will be given.
3. In fairness to the vast majority of students who take their college career seriously, no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Students who cheat on any assignment (including, but not limited to, copying the words of a fellow student or of any other author on your preparation essays, or cheating on an exam) will receive an automatic “E” for the course. In addition, judicial charges will be filed. No exceptions.
4. If you have any problems or concerns throughout the class, I’m here to help you.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>1, Jan. 17</td>
<td>Introduction to the field, course requirements, overview of Professor Bottoms’ research related to children and the law</td>
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<td>[Choose project teams]</td>
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<td>2, Jan. 24</td>
<td>The science and politics of child maltreatment: Focus on sexual abuse.</td>
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<td>[Team meetings during last 20 minutes of class]</td>
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<tr>
<td>3, Jan 31</td>
<td>The science and politics of child maltreatment: Focus on sexual abuse.</td>
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<td>[Discussion of class projects, reports of a plan from each team]</td>
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<td>4, Feb. 7</td>
<td>New Directions in Child Maltreatment Research (Part I: Scope of the Problem, Psychology’s Response, Cultural Issues)</td>
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<td>5, Feb. 14</td>
<td>New Directions in Child Maltreatment Research (Part II: Etiology &amp; Treatment)</td>
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<td>6, Feb. 21</td>
<td>Child Maltreatment: Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse</td>
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<td>7, Feb. 28</td>
<td>Children’s eyewitness testimony: Suggestibility</td>
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<td>8, Mar. 7</td>
<td>Children’s eyewitness testimony: Stress and memory</td>
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<td>9, Mar. 14</td>
<td>Children’s eyewitness testimony: Witnessing domestic violence, implications of research for child forensic interviews</td>
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<td>10, Mar. 21</td>
<td>Controversial cases, repressed memory, false memory</td>
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<td>(Mar. 26 – 30) **** SPRING BREAK ****</td>
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<tr>
<td>11, Apr. 4</td>
<td>Jurors’ perceptions of children’s testimony; Assessing the accuracy of children’s reports</td>
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<td>12, Apr. 11</td>
<td>Jurors’ perceptions of children’s testimony</td>
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<td>13, Apr. 18</td>
<td>Jurors’ perceptions of children’s testimony</td>
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<td>14, Apr. 25</td>
<td>Juveniles and crime: Linking child maltreatment to juvenile offending.</td>
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<td>**** PROJECTS DUE ****</td>
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<td>15, May 2</td>
<td>Juveniles and crime: Jurors’ perceptions of juvenile offenders</td>
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<tr>
<td>16, May. X</td>
<td>**** FINAL EXAM ****</td>
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Week 1, Jan. 17  Introduction to the field, course requirements, overview of Professor Bottoms’ research related to children and the law [Choose project teams]

General Readings:


Week 2, Jan. 24  The science and politics of child maltreatment: Focus on sexual abuse. [Team meetings: last 20 minutes of class]

General Readings:


Class project readings (team discussion):

Team 1 (Disclosure): Disclosure of child maltreatment, other trauma, and witnessing domestic violence (product: manuscript)  
(Tisha Wiley, Alaine Kalder)  

Team 2 (Wrightsman): Wrightsman text revision (product: chapter revision)  
(Katie Shartzer and Sylvia Perry)  

Team 3 (Survey): Therapists’ experiences with repressed memory and recovered memory techniques (product: grant proposal)  
(Cindy Najdowski, Sarah Altman)  


Team 4 (Social Support): The influence of socially supportive interviewing, interview delay, and individual differences on children’s eyewitness testimony (product: manuscript)  
(Jess Salerno, Elgiz Bal)  

Team 5 (Juror individual differences): Jurors’ perceptions of child sexual abuse: Individual differences (product: manuscript)  
(Maggie Stevenson, Jenn Veilleux)  
Bottoms, B. L., Epstein, M. E., & Schmidt, E. Gender and jury decisions in child sexual assault cases: What happens after deliberation and why. Or


Week 3, Jan 31  The science and politics of child maltreatment: Focus on sexual abuse.

**General Readings:**
We will read the entire special issue of the *American Psychologist [2002, Volume 57 (3)]* devoted to commentary on various issues related to the controversy surrounding the Rind article. The separate, brief articles are written by:

1. Albee (161 – 164)  
2. Garrison & Kobor (165 – 175)  
3. Lilienfeld (176 – 188)  
5. Sternberg (193 – 197)  
6. McCarty (198 – 201)  
7. Newcombe (202 – 205)  
8. Sher & Eisenberg (206 – 210)  
9. Lundberg (211 – 212)  
10. Zimbardo (213 – 214)  
12. Phillips (219 – 221)  
13. Levant & Seligman (222 – 224)  
14. Lilienfeld (225 – 227)

**Student Reports:**  
Discussion of class projects, reports of a plan from each team.

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Week 4, Feb. 7  New Directions in Child Maltreatment Research (Part I: Scope of the Problem, Psychology’s Response, Cultural Issues)

Week 5, Feb. 14  New Directions in Child Maltreatment Research (Part II: Etiology & Treatment)


**Student Reports:**

Corporal punishment: TBA

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Week 6, Feb. 21:  Child Maltreatment: Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse


**Student Reports:**

1. Report from the Disclosure Team on their project

2. Reading chosen by the Disclosure Team.
Week 7, Feb. 28  

Children’s eyewitness testimony: Stress and memory


Student Reports:


Week 8, Mar. 7  

Children’s eyewitness testimony: Stress and memory (for the longer term)


Student Reports:


And:
Epstein, M. E., & Bottoms, B. L. (2002). Forgetting and recovery of abuse and trauma memories: Possible mechanisms. Child Maltreatment, 7, 210-225. [Report on only the part relevant to understanding definitions of repressed memory.]

And if you have time…

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**Week 9, Mar. 14  Children’s eyewitness testimony: Suggestibility**


**Student Reports:**


Week 10, Mar. 21  Children’s eyewitness testimony: Implications of research for child forensic interviews


**Student Reports: SOCIAL SUPPORT TEAM (JESS & ELGIZ)**

1. Report of the Bottoms et al. study and its findings

2. One additional reading related to the project suggested by the team.

March 26 – 30  **** SPRING BREAK ****

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Week 11, April 4  Repressed memory, false memory


**Student Reports:  THERAPIST SURVEY TEAM (CINDY & SARAH)**


Week 12, Apr. 11  
Expert testimony in child abuse and child witness trials; Assessing the accuracy of children’s reports (lie detection)

1. Myers, J. E. B. (in press). Improving the validity and reliability of expert mental health testimony in child sexual abuse trials: is expanded use of Frye and Daubert part of the solution? In B. L. Bottoms, G. S. Goodman, & C. Najdowski (Eds.), *Child victims, child offenders: Psychology and law*. New York: Guilford. [Note: This is a draft document and the author awaits feedback, so please come prepared with your suggestions for improvement. Also note that the author is a law professor, not a psychologist.]


Student Reports:


Week 13, Apr. 18  
Jurors’ perceptions of children’s testimony (overview, juror individual differences)


**Student Reports:**  
**JUROR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES TEAM: (MAGGIE & JENN)**

1. Report of the Bottoms et al. study and its findings

2. One additional reading related to the project suggested by the team.
Week 14, Apr. 25  Juveniles and crime: Jurors’ perceptions of juvenile offenders

**** PROJECTS DUE ****


3. Haegerich, T. M., & Bottoms, B. L. (in preparation). Stereotypes of Juvenile Offenders and their Influence on Juror and Jury Decision Making. [Note: This is a draft document being prepared for publication. It needs to be shortened, etc. Your specific comments and edits are very welcomed.]

**Student Reports:**


Week 15, May 2  STUDENT PROJECT ORAL REPORTS

No readings.

Week 16, May 9, 2:15 – 5:00  FINAL EXAM