

## **SPECIALTY: PSYCHOLOGY**

### **MASTER'S PROGRAM: FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**

**Educational and qualification degree:** Master's degree

**Professional qualification:** Master in Forensic Psychology

**Duration of study:** 1 year

**Form of study:** Full-time Full-time, in Bulgarian and English

### **QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTION**

#### **1. General Description and Educational Aim of the Master's Program**

The Master's program in Forensic Psychology aims to prepare qualified specialists with professional knowledge, skills, and competencies for diagnosis and consultation regarding various participants in the judicial process. This is achieved through the application of diverse academic and didactic methods and practices. The acquired knowledge supports the efficiency of judicial proceedings, the objective adjudication of different types of offenses, and the substantiation of the criminal activity of offenders.

During their studies, students acquire advanced and in-depth psychological knowledge about crime and its causal factors; criminal behavior and the criminal realization of the individual; motives and motivation behind criminal behavior; and psychological patterns specific to the prosecution of offenders. Their professional skills relate to activities arising during the initiation and execution of judicial processes – including the preparation of expert assessments on the mental state of offenders, victims, or witnesses, providing expert opinions in divorce cases, preparing forensic psychological expertise, and recording the “judicial history.”

#### **2. Professional Competences and Career Opportunities**

Graduates of the program acquire personal and professional competencies for successful and productive professional practice related to:

- The application of general psychological and specific knowledge concerning the use of scientific principles, methods, and procedures for evaluation, diagnosis, prevention, and consultation of various judicial process participants;
- Conducting fundamental and applied psychological research in the field of forensic psychology;
- Performing independent research for the development of personality profiles;
- Participating in expert groups alongside other specialists to develop complex forensic expert reports.

Graduates also gain professional skills and competencies for conducting psychological studies with offenders; psychological evaluations of candidates for employment in specialized state agencies; psychological consultations on organizational and management issues in specialized state agencies; psychological consultations related to operational-investigative, preventive, and judicial activities; conducting forensic psychological research and preparing forensic psychological expert reports.

#### **3. Organization and Structure of the Training**

The training lasts one year (two semesters) and is intended for holders of a Bachelor's or Master's degree in the same professional field. The Master's program is structured to ensure coherence, sequence, and thematic linkage among the prescribed courses.

The curriculum provides a total of 60 ECTS credits, evenly distributed across two semesters. The lecture course includes 285 hours, 90 hours of exercises, and 90 hours of practical training.

Structurally, the Master's program in Forensic Psychology consists of compulsory and

elective courses (in a 70% to 30% ratio), optional courses, and mandatory practical training in the specialty.

Compulsory courses ensure the acquisition of in-depth theoretical and specialized preparation for effective psychodiagnostic, consultative, and expert activities. Elective courses offer opportunities to broaden and deepen theoretical and specialized knowledge for mastering specific skills and competencies related to particular scientific-applied tasks. Optional courses provide students with knowledge and skills from various scientific fields according to their interests.

Students graduate by passing a written state exam based on a prepared synopsis or by defending a Master's thesis, which accounts for 15 ECTS credits (Art. 10 of Regulation № 21/30.09.2004).

Mandatory practical training is conducted as an internship, during which students gain opportunities to observe and perform, under supervision, psychodiagnostic and legally oriented psychoconsultative activities with clients of various ages: children, adolescents, and adults.

#### **4. Compliance with the Mission of South-West University "Neofit Rilski"**

The implementation of the Master's program in Forensic Psychology aligns with the mission of South-West University "Neofit Rilski" and the Faculty of Philosophy, reflecting their goals and strategies. It responds to new dimensions in higher education in Bulgaria and to the tasks of fully integrating the country into international educational processes. The program complies with national and European standards, as well as with the requirements and specifics of the region where South-West University "Neofit Rilski" is located.

The qualification description of the specialty "Forensic Psychology" for the Master's degree with the professional qualification "Master in Forensic Psychology" serves as the primary document guiding the development of the curriculum and syllabi. It is aligned with the Higher Education Act, the Classification of Higher Education Fields and Professional Directions, the Regulation on State Requirements for acquiring higher education degrees (Bachelor, Master, Specialist), the National Classification of Positions and Professions, the Rules for the Organization and Activities of South-West University "Neofit Rilski," the Regulations on Educational Activities, and other normative documents of the university.

## CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

| <b>First year</b>   |                 |  |                 |
|---|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| First semester  | ECTS credits    | Second semester  | ECTS credits    |
| Introduction to Forensic Psychology                             | 5               | Psychology of Mediation  | 2               |
| Judicial System and Human Rights Institutions                   | 5               | Forensic Psychiatry  | 2               |
| Psychology of Delinquent Behavior                               | 5               | Visual Psychodiagnostics   | 2               |
| Forensic Psychological Expertise                                | 4               | Elective Course  | 3               |
| Psychological Profiling of Offenders                            | 3               | Elective Course  | 3               |
| Elective Course   |                 | Practical Internship   | 3               |
|   | <b>30 total</b> |  | <b>30 total</b> |
|   |                 |  |                 |
| Optional discipline/ First group/<br>Students choose one course | ECTS credits    | Optional discipline/ Second group/<br>Students choose one course | ECTS credits    |
| Criminology   | 3               | Psychology of Business Communication                             | 3               |
| Resocialization of Incarcerated Persons                         | 3               | Legal Consciousness  | 3               |
| Communication with Accused, Victims, and Witnesses              | 3               | Working with Victims of Serious Crimes Against Persons           | 3               |
| Psychology of Mass Phenomena                                    | 3               | Legal English  | 3               |
| Communication with Incarcerated Persons                         | 3               | Police Psychology  | 3               |
| Preventive Psychology   | 3               |  |                 |
| <b>TOTAL FOR 1 ACADEMIC YEARS: 60 CREDITS</b>                   |                 |  |                 |

## ANNOTATIONS OF COURSES

### COMPULSORY COURSES

#### INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

**ECTS Credits:** 4

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:** Department of Psychology  
Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Asst. Prof. Dr. Iva Dimitrova, Department of Psychology

**E-mail:** [idimitrova@swu.bg](mailto:idimitrova@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 30 lectures + 15 seminars

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Introduction to Forensic Psychology" consists of several thematic modules. The aims of the course are: to clarify the main theoretical approaches, categorical apparatus, and methods of forensic psychology; to develop a nuanced understanding of the psychological sources and mechanisms underlying criminal activity; to provide a comprehensive overview of the psychological characteristics of professionals involved in investigative, judicial, police, penitentiary, and probation functions; to form a detailed view of the practical applications of forensic psychological research; and to improve personal skills for timely identification of deviant criminal activity and risk prevention related to it.

**Content of the course:**

The first part covers topics such as: Subject and scope of forensic psychology; Methods

of forensic psychology; Tasks of forensic psychology; History of forensic psychology development. The second part includes: Subject and tasks of criminal psychology; Subject and tasks of judicial psychology; Forensic psychological expertise; Subject and tasks of penitentiary psychology. The third part discusses psychological aspects of deviant and unlawful behavior; psychological aspects of alcoholism and alcohol dependency; theories on homicide and suicide as legal problems; psychological aspects of group crimes. The fourth part analyzes criminal activity at the individual and group levels. Included topics are: Psychological patterns in forming unlawful attitudes and values; Motives for committing property crimes; Motives for committing violent crimes; Motivation for crimes committed by organized groups; Motivation behind crimes by representatives of organized crime.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Student achievements are assessed according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The final grade is based on a combination of continuous assessment and the exam result.

## **FORENSIC SYSTEM AND HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS**

**ECTS Credits:** 4

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:** Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Asst. Prof. Dr. Iva Dimitrova, Department of Psychology

**E-mail:** [idimitrova@swu.bg](mailto:idimitrova@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 30 lectures + 15 seminars

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Forensic System and Human Rights Institutions" is a compulsory subject in the Master's program in Forensic Psychology and covers three main modules: 1) Organization and functions of the forensic system; 2) Role and structure of human rights institutions; 3) Interaction between the judiciary and human rights protection institutions. The course aims to familiarize students with the main components of the forensic system in the Republic of Bulgaria and the functions of key institutions responsible for safeguarding citizens' rights. Emphasis is placed on the legal framework, structure, and mechanisms of control and accountability within the forensic system, as well as the role of national human rights bodies such as the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. International law aspects related to the operation of the European Court of Human Rights, and interactions between national and international human rights mechanisms are also included.

**Content of the course:**

The course covers the following lecture topics: Rule of law and supremacy of law; Structure and functions of the judiciary; Types of courts – general and specialized jurisdiction; Constitutional Court – powers and significance; Prosecutor's office and investigation – role in criminal proceedings; Bar and legal aid – institutional framework; Ombudsman – functions and significance for human rights protection; Commission for Protection against Discrimination – mechanisms and procedures; National and international legal protection mechanisms; European Court of Human Rights – structure, competencies, and cases against Bulgaria; Institutional interaction in human rights protection; Transparency and accountability of the forensic system.

Seminar exercises include analysis of the structure of the Bulgarian forensic system; comparison between national and international human rights institutions; practical cases: complaints to the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination; simulated trials: roles of lawyer, prosecutor, and judge; discussion of real decisions of the

European Court of Human Rights related to Bulgaria.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Student performance is evaluated based on the ECTS system. The final grade results from a combination of continuous assessment and the exam.

## **PSYCHOLOGY OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR**

**ECTS Credits: 4**

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:** Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Emelina Zaimova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [emelina\\_z@swu.bg](mailto:emelina_z@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 30 lectures + 15 seminars

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Psychology of Delinquent Behavior" is a core subject in the Master's program in Forensic Psychology. It aims to familiarize students with the main characteristics of criminal behavior in children and adolescents.

The course includes 30 academic hours of lectures and 15 hours of seminar exercises. Its objective is to provide systematic knowledge about the main aspects of delinquent behavior, motives for criminal activity among children and adolescents, as well as factors and causes of such behavior. The psychological issues addressed in this course overlap with other subjects such as forensic psychology, criminal psychology, psychology of deviant behavior, and preventive psychology.

**Content of the course:**

The course includes lectures and seminars focusing on the unlawful behavior of children and adolescents. Topics include: Psychology of delinquency – nature and development; Theories of delinquent behavior; Classifications of delinquent personalities; Theories on group delinquency during adolescence; Motives for delinquent behavior; Aggression and delinquency; Correction of delinquent behavior in various social environments. Seminars involve analysis of delinquent behavior and the development of delinquent personality profiles.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Student achievements are assessed according to the ECTS system. The final grade is based on the combination of continuous assessment and the exam.

## **FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERTISE**

**ECTS credits:** 5

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stoil Mavrodiev, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [stoil\\_m@swu.bg](mailto:stoil_m@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 30 lectures + 15 seminars

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Forensic Psychological Expertise" is a mandatory discipline in the Master's

program in Legal Psychology. Its content focuses on the practical framework for structuring and conducting forensic psychological expertise for judicial proceedings. The main emphasis is on the organization and structure of forensic psychological expertise, the types of forensic psychological examinations, and the specific characteristics of such expertise. The course includes 30 academic hours of lectures and 15 hours of exercises.

**Content of the course:**

The course includes lectures and seminar exercises. Topics covered during the course include: Tasks, methods, and sources of forensic psychological expertise; Legal regulation of forensic psychological examinations; Types of forensic psychological expertise; Forensic psychological expertise of affective states in criminal proceedings; Expertise on mental retardation in juvenile defendants; Expertise to determine probable helplessness of the victim; Postmortem forensic psychological expertise to establish the psychological state of a person predisposed to suicide; Expertise on the role of the accused in committing group crimes; Expertise on individual psychological characteristics; Expertise on psychological impact. The goal of the seminars is to enable students to develop expert evaluations based on acquired knowledge from lectures and practical case studies.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Student performance evaluation is conducted according to the credit transfer and accumulation system. The final grade is based on the ratio of continuous assessment and exam results.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILING OF OFFENDERS**

**ECTS credits:** 4

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Senior Assistant Dr. Emelina Zaimova-Tsaneva, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [emelina\\_z@swu.bg](mailto:emelina_z@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 30 lectures

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

This course is designed to train professional psychologists who will work directly with offenders of various crimes. It is a compulsory course in the Master's program "Legal Psychology" and consists of 30 lectures. The main objective is to familiarize students with the main offender types and their personality traits that have influenced their criminal behavior. This knowledge will assist students in easily orienting themselves regarding typological features of individuals who committed specific crimes.

**Content of the course:**

The course consists solely of lectures. Topics include: Subject and tasks of psychological profiling; Methodology of psychological profiling of offenders; Personality profile of juvenile and adolescent offenders; Personality profile of women convicted of crimes; Personality profile of men who committed various crimes; Personality traits of repeat offenders; Personality traits of murderers; Profiles of rapists; Profiles of thieves by age and gender; Traits of fraudsters; Psychological profiling of crime victims; Personality traits of members of organized crime groups; Psychological characteristics of perpetrators of traffic accidents; Personality traits of terrorists.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Evaluation follows the credit transfer and accumulation system. Final grades are based

on a combination of continuous assessment and exam results.

## PSYCHOLOGY OF MEDIATION

**ECTS credits:** 2

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Angelova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [natasha\\_v@swu.bg](mailto:natasha_v@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lectures

**Type of exam:** written

### **Annotation:**

The course "Psychology of Mediation" is a compulsory discipline in the Master's program in Legal Psychology. It aims to familiarize students with the role of the psychologist-mediator in resolving disputes and managing conflicts in judicial processes to help the parties reach mutually beneficial agreements. After completing the course, students should acquire the knowledge and competencies for acting as mediators in the legal process, crafting agreements in compliance with national and international legislation governing mediation.

### **Content of the course:**

The course consists of lectures covering: Legal framework of mediation; Nature and preparation of the mediation process; Psychological aspects of mediator behavior; Psychological analysis of legal frameworks and interpersonal relationships during mediation; Main stages of mediation – preparation, meeting organization, analysis of psychological barriers and their effects; Moral and ethical norms in mediator practice; Professional competencies of the mediator – working with cognitive and behavioral opposition; Role of the mediator throughout the judicial process and its development; Relationship between mediator, prosecutor, and judge.

### **Teaching and assessment method:**

Student evaluation is based on the credit transfer and accumulation system. Final grading is based on continuous assessment and exam performance.

## FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY

**ECTS credits:** 2

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stoil Mavrodiev, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [stoil\\_m@swu.bg](mailto:stoil_m@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

### **Annotation:**

The course "Forensic Psychiatry" is taught in the second semester of the first year as a compulsory subject in the curriculum of the Master's program in Legal Psychology. The course aims to familiarize students with mental disorders and their connection to criminal, civil and family law. The acquired knowledge assists investigations and courts in dealing with mentally



ill persons involved in various roles – witnesses, victims or perpetrators of crimes The subject is directly related to legal sciences, forensic medicine, criminology and psychology

**Content of the course:**

The course includes lectures only The content covers: Introduction to forensic psychiatry Organization of psychiatric and forensic psychiatric practice in Bulgaria Legal procedural and organizational foundations of forensic psychiatric practice Types of forensic psychiatric examinations Working with clients hospitalized in specialized psychiatric institutions Ethical issues in working with clients subject to forensic psychiatric examination Content of forensic psychiatric examination Forensic psychiatric significance of main mental disorders Forensic psychiatric significance of the concepts “criminal responsibility” – “insanity” Forensic psychiatric significance of the concepts “capacity” – “incapacity” and guardianship

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Assessment of students’ results during the learning process is carried out according to the credit transfer and accumulation system The final grade is formed on the basis of the ratio between continuous assessment and exam grade

## **VISUAL PSYCHODIAGNOSTICS**

**ECTS credits:** 2

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Prof Dr Stanislava Stoyanova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [avka@swu.bg](mailto:avka@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 15 lecture hours + 5 seminar hours

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course “Visual Psychodiagnostics” is included as a compulsory subject in the Master’s program in Legal Psychology The course includes 15 academic hours of lectures and 5 seminar hours The course builds upon students’ knowledge from other psychological courses such as Cognitive Psychology Social Psychology Personality Psychology Differential Psychology Criminal Psychology Legal Psychology Psychology of Communication

**Content of the course:**

The aim of the course is to provide professional information to students about the nonverbal signals sent by a person in communication situations These signals are related to psychophysiological characteristics and help better analyze the content of the testimony The course content covers topics aimed at recognizing facial expressions and gestures of persons with criminal behavior and their victims as well as the behavior of participants in judicial proceedings The essence of visual psychodiagnostics Physiognomy in the past Nonverbal communication – body language (expressiveness of movements relationship between movement and emotion language of the eyes and face) Observation as a main method of visual psychodiagnostics Diagnosis of nonverbal communication The lectures are conducted using modern technical means and interactive methods Seminar exercises take place in laboratories Students’ active independent work includes preparation and presentation of scientific research projects conducting psychological tests summarizing articles and book chapters essays on issues based on their personal observations and experience case analysis



**Teaching and assessment method:**

Assessment of students' results during the learning process is carried out according to the credit transfer and accumulation system. The final grade is formed at the end of the course based on the grade obtained on a written essay about the course content and the student's independent work. Grading scale: six-point scale is used where grade 6 Excellent equals grade A in the European grading system, grade 5 Very Good equals B, grade 4 Good equals C, grade 3 Satisfactory equals D, grade 2 Fail equals E.

**PRACTICAL INTERNSHIP****ECTS credits:** 3**Hours:** 90 practical hours**Assessment:** continuous assessment during the first and exam during the second semester**Type of exam:** written**Semester:** II**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assist. Prof. Dr. Simona Nikolova, Department of PsychologyE-mail: [simona.nikolova@swu.bg](mailto:simona.nikolova@swu.bg)**Annotation:**

Students enrolled in the Master's program must complete a mandatory practical internship during the first and second semesters. The purpose of the practical internship is to acquaint students with the work of practicing professionals in a real professional environment and to enable them to carry out supervised activities in accordance with their training in the Master's program.

**Essence of the practical internship:**

- The internship supervisor gives instructions before the start of the internship;
- The internship supervisor assigns students by order of the Rector to institutions with which there is an institutional agreement;
- Each student must validate the internship booklet at the educational department inspector;
- The base mentor prepares a program and schedule which is coordinated with the internship supervisor;
- During the internship each student keeps a diary of practical tasks performed;
- The base mentor monitors the student's attendance and engagement and gives an overall evaluation at the end;
- After completion of the internship the student prepares a portfolio report including a detailed description of the activities and practical tasks performed during the internship.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Students who successfully complete the practical internship are admitted to the exam. The final grade includes the evaluation of the base mentor, the submitted portfolio report and is formed after an interview with the internship supervisor including defense of acquired knowledge and competencies during the internship. The internship booklet contains two feedback forms for the student and the base mentor in which they enter their evaluation opinion and recommendations for improving the internship.

**ELECTIVE COURSES****CRIMINOLOGY**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assistant Prof. Dr. Emelina Zaimova-Tsaneva, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [emelina\\_z@swu.bg](mailto:emelina_z@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Criminology" includes modules on criminological methodology and methods, main criminological theories, and the personality of the offender. It consists of 20 academic hours of lectures. The course aims to introduce the foundational principles of criminology methodology, foster understanding of criminal behavior mechanisms as presented in various theoretical frameworks, and develop competencies concerning offender personality.

**Content of the course:**

The course covers the subject and tasks of criminology; methods of criminological research; history of criminology as a science and practice; the biological perspective in criminology including Cesare Lombroso's theory; the sociological perspective with theories of learned criminality; psychological theories and typologies of offenders; evidence supporting psychological conclusions about crime typology; Gestalt psychology and the relationship between offender and social environment; social and personal aspects of victimological behavior; victimological typology by gender, age, and social role; personality of the offender and its relation to the criminal event; typologies of offenders; mechanisms of criminal behavior; antisocial personality orientation; research on crime and offender personality; criminological forecasting; and crime prevention.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Lectures are delivered traditionally with multimedia support. Independent work includes completing assignments and preparing theoretical essays. The final grade is based on the combination of continuous assessment and a written exam.

## **RESOCIALIZATION OF PRISONERS**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Associate Prof. Dr. Emil Madzharov

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Resocialization of Prisoners" covers issues and methodology of resocialization, resocialization of different categories of offenders, and specialized correctional programs. The course consists of 20 academic lecture hours. The aim is to present core principles of resocialization methodology, understand the challenges and mechanisms of resocialization interventions for various offender categories, and enhance competencies regarding specialized correctional programs.

**Content of the course:**

Lectures address problems related to individuals preparing for release; resocialization in the context of cognitivism, behaviorism, and psychoanalysis; diagnostic and counseling techniques for prisoners pending release; standards for measuring the effectiveness of resocialization; training of personnel involved in resocialization activities; challenges in resocializing juvenile offenders; key issues in female prisoner resocialization and approaches for overcoming them; resocialization of first-time male offenders; approaches for sexual offenders; work with recidivists; specialized programs for juvenile offenders; and programs for offenders convicted of negligent acts.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

The course is taught using traditional lectures and multimedia. Independent work includes completing assignments and essay writing. The final grade combines written exam results with continuous assessment.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH ACCUSED, VICTIMS, AND WITNESSES**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assistant Prof. Dr. Emelina Zaimova-Tsaneva, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [emelina\\_z@swu.bg](mailto:emelina_z@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Communication with Accused, Victims, and Witnesses" includes modules on methodology and methods of communication with accused persons, victims, and witnesses, specifics of communication with various categories of accused persons, and communication characteristics of different victim and witness groups. It consists of 20 lecture hours. The course aims to present fundamental communication methodologies, promote understanding of communication challenges with different accused categories, and enhance competencies related to working with victims and witnesses.

**Content of the course:**

The course covers social psychology principles relevant to interpreting communication with accused, witnesses, and victims; psychological interpretation of legal typologies of these groups; methods for studying communication in professional interactions; specifics of interviewing accused persons; interview techniques with witnesses and victims; communication with juvenile accused persons; communication with female accused; first-time accused offenders; communication challenges with accused sexual offenders and recidivists; working with manipulative, unreliable, and demonstrative witnesses; and communication with juvenile victims.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

Lectures are delivered traditionally with multimedia support. Independent work includes assignments and theoretical essays. The final grade is based on continuous assessment combined with a written exam.

## **PSYCHOLOGY OF MASS PHENOMENA**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Assessment:** exam

**Type of exam:** written

Semester: I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Angelova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [natasha\\_v@swu.bg](mailto:natasha_v@swu.bg)

**Annotation:**

The course "Psychology of Mass Behavior" includes four substantive modules related to the assessment of individual behavior as part of a crowd or audience. The discipline consists of 20 academic hours of lectures. The aim of the course is to provide systematic information on the psychology of mass phenomena concerning large social groups: typical forms of interaction in large groups—suggestion, imitation, contagion—and the development of phenomena such as propaganda, fashion, panic; mass psychological phenomena influencing individual criminal behavior.

**Content of the course:**

The course consists solely of lectures covering the following topics: the science of crowds—causes of emergence and main themes in crowd analysis according to Le Bon, G. Tarde, and S. Freud; suggestion and propaganda and their influence on criminal behavior; mechanisms of imitation and fashion as forms of standardized mass behavior; socio-psychological characteristics of contagion and panic in the context of aggressive and rescuing crowds; public mood—factors for emergence, dynamics, and research approaches; mechanisms for the emergence and functioning of rumors and gossip; analysis of the phenomenon of public opinion; terrorism—psychological aspects.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is delivered in the traditional manner, utilizing multimedia. Independent preparation includes solving control tasks and developing theoretically oriented topics. The final grade is based on a combination of continuous assessment and the exam grade.

## COMMUNICATION WITH INCARCERATED PERSONS

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Assessment:** exam

**Type of exam:** written

Semester: I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emil Madzharov

**Annotation:**

The purpose of the discipline "Communication with Incarcerated Persons" is to acquaint students in the Master's program "Legal Psychology" with the specifics of communication and its methodological support when working with convicted individuals. The course content covers research-applied and practical aspects. Through the course, students become familiar with the main content and procedures for communication with various groups of incarcerated persons, their specific problems, attitudes, and motives for communication with penitentiary staff and experts. The goals include gaining understanding of communication issues and methods used with incarcerated individuals, learning communication styles of different offender categories, and informing about communication techniques applied in standard and

crisis situations.

**Content of the course:**

The course includes 20 hours of lectures. Topics covered include isolation and communication with incarcerated persons; forced cohabitation and communication among inmates; the impact of total control on communication; characteristics of verbal and non-verbal communication with inmates; communication specifics with juvenile offenders; communication with female inmates; communication with offenders convicted of property crimes (theft, fraud, embezzlement); communication with offenders convicted of violent crimes (murder, attempted murder, bodily harm, sexual assault); communication with repeat offenders and organized crime members; handling conflict situations initiated by violent offenders; overcoming conflict situations provoked by female inmates; communication as a negotiation technique during hostage situations involving inmates.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is delivered traditionally with multimedia support. Independent preparation involves solving control tasks and developing theoretical topics. The final grade is based on the ratio of continuous assessment and exam results.

## **PREVENTIVE PSYCHOLOGY**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** I

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Angelova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [natasha\\_v@swu.bg](mailto:natasha_v@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The discipline "Preventive Psychology" includes 20 academic hours of lectures. The aim is to provide systematic information on the main research and applied directions of preventive psychology concerning the subject and tasks of crime prevention; deficits and distortions in legal socialization and predisposition to aggressive behavior, which are the object of preventive intervention; psychological characteristics of youth groups with antisocial orientation; psychological support for preventive activities with different categories of offenders. The course aligns with the psychological issues of legal psychology, criminal psychology, and penitentiary psychology.

**Content of the course:**

The course includes lectures covering: subject and tasks of preventive psychology; deficits and distortions in legal socialization as sources of deviance and targets of preventive intervention; psychological principles of individual prevention; informal youth groups with antisocial orientation; aggressive behavior and its overcoming; grounds for applying individual preventive measures to prevent offenses; psychological support for preventive activities with juvenile offenders; psychological support regarding organized crime; psychological support for preventive measures against corruption crimes; psychological aspects of preventive counteraction to property crimes; psychological support of preventive activities related to traffic accidents.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is delivered in the traditional way using multimedia. Independent preparation involves solving control assignments and developing theoretical topics. The final grade is formed based on the ratio of continuous assessment and exam results.

## PSYCHOLOGY OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Angelova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [natasha\\_v@swu.bg](mailto:natasha_v@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

### **Annotation:**

This course is divided into two parts. The first part presents the psychological conditions necessary for conducting business conversations. It reveals the specific conditions, ways to establish initial contact, and types of reactions exhibited during problem exposition. It broadly outlines the conditions for perceiving the manager's requirements, while simultaneously analyzing approaches to building and maintaining a positive attitude of subordinates toward the manager. The second part focuses on the specifics of the negotiation process, covering issues related to argumentation, negotiation organization, and emphasizing tactical approaches that negotiators should adhere to. Concurrently, the course analyzes the issue of public speaking, with special attention to its planning, methods of delivering information, structuring speeches, and the role of its individual parts. Additional topics include perception of the speaker, comprehension of the topic, and addressing the audience.

### **Content of the course:**

The course covers the following topics: Characteristics of business communication; The role of business communication within interactions between two or more individuals; Determinants of individual behavior in business communication; The role of intuition, personality traits, reconstructed past behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and activity; Persuasion and its role in changing others' attitudes in business communication (persuasive messages; approaches to the persuasion-attitude-business communication relationship); Business communication as a multifaceted process (perceptual aspects; first impressions; duration of communication; communication acts; communicative aspects; communication barriers); Conversation as a fundamental form in business communication; Requirements for the business conversation leader; Persuasion and tactics in negotiations; Conflicts and methods of conflict resolution in business communication; Psychological aspects of public speaking.

### **Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is delivered in a traditional format using multimedia. Independent study involves completing control tasks and developing theoretical topics. The final grade is based on the ratio between continuous assessment and exam results.

## LEGAL CONSCIOUSNESS

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written



Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer: Asst. Prof. Dr. Iva Dimitrova**, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [idimitrova@swu.bg](mailto:idimitrova@swu.bg)

**Annotation:**

The course "Legal Consciousness" is offered as an elective within the Master's program in Forensic Psychology and covers three main thematic modules: 1) Theoretical foundations of legal consciousness; 2) Socio-psychological aspects of legal consciousness; 3) Legal consciousness and legal behavior. The course includes 20 academic hours of lectures. Its aim is to introduce students to the nature, structure, and functions of legal consciousness as a specific form of social consciousness and to clarify its relationship with legal culture and the individual's legal behavior. The course discusses fundamental concepts on the development and transformation of legal consciousness in contemporary society, including the influence of education, media, and institutional environments.

**Content of the course:**

The course includes topics such as: Essence and functions of legal consciousness; Structure and levels of legal consciousness; Forms of legal consciousness – individual, group, and societal; Legal culture and its interaction with legal consciousness; Psychological and social factors shaping legal consciousness; Legal attitudes and motivation for legal behavior; Legal nihilism and legal idealism as deviations in legal consciousness; Influence of institutions, education, and media on legal consciousness; Legal consciousness and processes of legal socialization; Current challenges facing legal consciousness in modern democratic societies.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is delivered traditionally using multimedia. Independent preparation includes solving control tasks and developing theoretical topics. The final grade is based on a combination of continuous assessment and exam results.

## **WORKING WITH VICTIMS OF SERIOUS CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer: Chief Assistant Dr. Emelina Zaimova-Tsaneva**, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [emelina\\_z@swu.bg](mailto:emelina_z@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Working with Victims of Serious Crimes Against the Person" covers the following modules: 1) Methodology and methods of working with victims of serious crimes; 2) Psychological characteristics of different types of victims of serious crimes; 3) Psychological interventions concerning victims of serious crimes. The objectives are to present the main methodological and methodological approaches in working with victims, to achieve an understanding of the psychological mechanisms and specific features of victims of serious crimes, and to enhance students' competencies regarding practical approaches and techniques for psychological interviewing of victims.

**Content of the course:**

The course includes lectures on topics such as: Personality and behavioral



characteristics of victims of serious crimes; Psychological trauma and stress in victims of violence; Basic approaches to psychological work with victims of serious crimes; Psychological work standards applied to victims; Psychological characteristics of victims of attempted murder; Psychological interventions with victims of attempted murder; Psychological and behavioral features of victims of bodily injury; Psychological interventions with victims of bodily injury; Psychological characteristics of robbery victims; Psychological characteristics of rape victims; Psychological characteristics of victims of lewd acts; Psychological characteristics of extortion victims.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is conducted traditionally using multimedia. Independent study includes solving control assignments and theoretical topic development. The final grade is based on the ratio between continuous assessment and exam results.

## **LEGAL ENGLISH**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Asst. Prof. Dr. Iva Dimitrova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [idimitrova@swu.bg](mailto:idimitrova@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

**Annotation:**

The course "Legal English" is an elective discipline within the Master's Program in Legal Psychology, aimed at developing language skills necessary for working with legal documentation and communication in an international legal context. The course includes 20 academic hours of lectures. Its goal is to familiarize students with fundamental legal terminology in English used across various branches of law — criminal, civil, constitutional, and international law. Special emphasis is placed on types of legal texts, legal style and grammar, as well as the analysis and translation of authentic legal documents. The course supports the acquisition of communicative skills for professional correspondence, participation in negotiations, and presentation of legal opinions in English. The content is designed to meet the practical needs of professionals working in multicultural and international environments.

**Content of the course:**

Introduction to Legal English — features and principles; Basic terminology in public and private law; Structure and language of legal documents (contracts, complaints, rulings, regulations); Grammatical and syntactical features of Legal English; Types of legal systems and judicial terminology; Terminology in criminal, civil, and international law; Translation and analysis of legal texts to and from English; Professional communication — oral and written legal correspondence; Use of English in judicial and institutional settings; Working with bilingual legal sources and dictionaries.

**Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is delivered traditionally with multimedia support. Independent study includes completing control tasks and developing theoretical topics. The final grade is based on a weighted combination of continuous assessment and exam performance.

## **POLICE PSYCHOLOGY**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Semester:** II

**Methodological guide:**

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Angelova, Department of Psychology

E-mail: [natasha\\_v@swu.bg](mailto:natasha_v@swu.bg)

**Hours:** 20 lecture hours

**Type of exam:** written

### **Annotation:**

The course "Police Psychology" aims to provide students with specialized training related to the psychological aspects of the work of Ministry of Interior employees. It includes a module addressing the assessment and prevention of professional stress among officers. Additionally, the course covers topics introducing the audience to psychodiagnostics and evaluation procedures for candidates applying to the Ministry of Interior, as well as psychological assessments during career advancement.

### **Content of the course:**

The course includes 20 lectures covering: History and subject matter of police psychology; Psychodiagnostics during recruitment for the Ministry of Interior; Psychological assessment for career advancement within the Ministry; Psychological evaluation of risk behavior; Nature and characteristics of professional stress in the Ministry of Interior; Prevention and management of professional stress; Psychological aspects in the security police; Psychological aspects in crime investigation; Psychological aspects of proactive police work; Strategic thinking, initiative, and goal-oriented police activity.

### **Teaching and assessment method:**

The lecture course is conducted in a traditional format, supported by multimedia. Independent preparation involves completing control tasks and theoretical topic development. The final grade is based on the proportion between continuous assessment and exam results.