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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & COUNSELLING
2024/2025 – SEMESTER II – FINAL EXAMINATION



BSC (HONS) IN PSYCHOLOGY
PLU5311 – PSYCHOLOGY AND LAW – LEVEL 5
FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER
DURATION: 03 HOURS

DATE: 11th November 2025

TIME: 1.30 PM – 4.30 PM

INDEX NO:

SECTION 2: STRUCTURED ESSAY QUESTIONS (60 MARKS)

Choose 04 out of the 06 questions given below and answer using the provided answer sheets.

2.1 Criminal law plays a central role in regulating social behaviour, determining which actions are punishable, and shaping justice processes.

- a) Define criminalization. (2 marks)
- b) Explain the key tenets of the restorative justice process. (4 marks)
- c) Discuss the three principles of criminalization with examples. (9 marks)

2.2 In the field of forensic psychology, decision-making during interrogations and courtroom evaluations is often shaped by psychological pressures and cognitive biases.

- a) Identify and explain five key factors that may lead suspects to provide false confessions during police interrogations. (5 marks)
- b) A forensic psychologist, Dr. Silva, is called as an expert witness in a high-profile homicide case. The prosecution strongly believes the suspect, Arun, is guilty. During evidence review, Dr. Silva is shown DNA samples, eyewitness testimony, and CCTV footage. The DNA evidence is partial and inconclusive, the eyewitness statement is inconsistent, and the CCTV footage is blurry. Despite these limitations, Dr. Silva concludes that the evidence supports Arun's guilt. Later, it is revealed that Arun was innocent and had an alibi. Upon review, it was found that Dr. Silva's judgment was influenced by forensic confirmation bias, as he aligned his interpretation of evidence with the prosecution's narrative. Additionally, his confident testimony in court swayed the jury, even though his conclusions were inaccurate.
 - i. Based on the scenario provided, identify the potential biases present and critically evaluate how those biases may have influenced Dr. Silva's professional judgment. (5 marks)
 - ii. Explain evidence-based debiasing strategies forensic psychologists can use to ensure objectivity in legal decision-making. (5 marks)

2.3 Deception detection can be quite challenging due to misconceptions based on non-scientific strategies. Therefore, there's a critical need for careful interpretation and reliable strategies.

- a) Explain five challenges in deception detecting lies. *(5 marks)*
- b) Karan, a 29-year-old shop assistant, was taken in for questioning after being mistakenly identified near the scene of a robbery. During the interrogation, he avoided eye contact, his hands trembled, and he was visibly sweating. When investigators asked him questions, he hesitated before answering. The officers interpreted these behaviours as signs of deception and pressed harder for a confession. However, further investigation revealed CCTV footage proving Karan was at work during the robbery. His behaviour was not due to lying, but rather to high anxiety, fear of authority, and the stress of being accused of a crime that he did not commit.

According to the given scenario, discuss why Karan's behaviour was misinterpreted.

(5 marks)

- c) Provide five strategies with examples to improve deception detection. *(5 marks)*

2.4 Psychological assessments and services are central to forensic psychology, helping courts and law enforcement to make informed decisions.

- a) Identify three major types of psychological assessments commonly used in forensic settings for serious offending cases, supported by one specific example of an assessment tool. *(6 marks)*
- b) Discuss multiple roles of forensic psychology in providing psychological services within legal and law enforcement settings, using relevant examples to illustrate its applications. *(9 marks)*

2.5 Forensic psychology plays a vital role in assessing offenders and supporting the justice system through specialized psychological services.

- a) List out the main types of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods. *(2 marks)*
- b) Differentiate between Restorative Justice and Retributive Justice frameworks by outlining five key points of comparison. *(5 marks)*
- c) Explain the major psychological effects of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) on children with examples. *(8 marks)*

2.6 You are invited as a forensic psychologist to conduct a session on psychology and law for undergraduate students. Select one topic from the list provided and explain it in detail, showing its relevance to forensic psychology incorporating with examples.

(15 marks)

- a) Paraphilic disorders and sexual offending: psychological perspectives
- b) The psychology of aggression, violence, and homicide
- c) Prisonization and the psychological impact of incarceration

-----END OF QUESTION PAPER-----