



Mind Games in Crime: Psychology of Lies, Deception and Truth

Course Instructor: Dr. Divya Dubey

Jindal Institute of Behavioral Sciences (JIBS)

4 Credits Course

FALL SEMESTER 2026

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PART I

| Course Title: Mind Games in Crime: Psychology of Lies, Deception and Truth | |
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| Course Code | BE-E-0164 |
| Course Duration | 1 Semester |
| No. of Credit Units | 4 credits |
| Level | UG & PG |
| Pre-Requisites | Nil |
| Pre-Cursors | - |
| Equivalent Courses | Nil |
| Exclusive Courses | Nil |
| Class Timing | To be Decided |

PART II

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course *Mind Games in Crime: Psychology of Lies, Deception, and Truth* explores the psychology of deception, credibility, and truth-telling in criminal and legal contexts. It examines why individuals lie, the psychological processes involved in deception, and the methods used to detect it. Drawing from cognitive, social, and forensic psychology, the course addresses verbal and nonverbal cues, cognitive load, memory errors, and the role of technology in lie detection. Students will critically analyze real-world cases and participate in experiential activities to understand how deception impacts justice systems

COURSE AIMS:

1. To provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes behind lying, deception, and truth-telling.
2. To examine the strengths and limitations of psychological tools and techniques used to detect deception.
3. To foster critical thinking about how deception shapes criminal investigations, trials, and justice outcomes.

COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the cognitive, emotional, and social mechanisms underlying deception and truth-telling.
2. Identify verbal, nonverbal, and behavioral cues linked to deception.
3. Critically evaluate the role and limitations of lie detection methods (polygraphs, brain-based approaches, credibility assessments).
4. Analyze case studies where deception influenced investigations or trials.
5. Apply psychological concepts to assess credibility in interviews, testimonies, and investigative scenarios.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

The course will be taught using lectures, discussions, debates, role-play, videos, and case study analysis. Assessments will include quizzes, class activities, presentations, written assignments, and a final exam.

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF GRADE:

- 20% Internal Quizzes
- 15% Classroom Assignments
- 25% Presentations
- 10% Home Assignments
- 30% End Semester Exam (Closed book)

(Absenteeism on assessment days will not be entertained, and no rescheduling will be allowed.)

MISSED OR LATE ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION

All assessments are expected to be submitted on the scheduled day before the deadline. The students are expected to anticipate internet or technological issues or any other circumstantial hindrances and prepare in advance to circumvent those issues. E.g. save your work on cloud in case of laptop malfunction, in case of internet outage, use your mobile data, in case of UMS glitch, send it by email directly to instructor's inbox before deadline etc. Only one submission per student

accepted. It is the student's responsibility to double check that the correct file has been submitted. In case the incorrect or corrupted document is submitted for evaluation, it may result in a lower grade for the student.

In case, any student is unable to appear for these assignments or needs special allowances, you are required to inform the instructor prior to end of the assessment period. Inability to attend any component of the internal assignments without intimation will be understood as forfeiting the assigned marks for that assignment. In case of exceptional circumstances, the student can contact the course instructor and at their discretion (with or without penalty), the instructor may take a call on the concession that is granted.

RE-EVALUATION PROCESS

Detailed feedback and a breakdown of the student's performance against the marking rubric is provided to enable the student to reflect upon their submission and areas where they can improve. In case that is not clear to the student, they can book an appointment to discuss this one-on-one with the instructor. Barring errors in calculation or casual errors, the internal marks may not be changed. The grading is done after careful consideration, and is not open to negotiations during the consultation. Requests/demands to scale up grades to accommodate personal academic ambitions will not be entertained. You are adequately informed beforehand of the marking criteria and the ways to excel in particular assignments as per the instructor's expectations.

With regards to any questions regarding the grading criteria or marking procedure of the internal exams, please clarify with the instructor before or at the time of the assignment (within reasonable hours). Delayed requests for clarification will not be entertained nor considered grounds for re-evaluation.

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF GRADE: GRADING OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT

| Letter Grade | Percentage of Marks | Grade Points | Interpretation |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---|
| O | 80 and above | 8 | Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability. |

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| A+ | 75 - 79 | 7.5 | Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability. |
| A | 70 - 74 | 7 | Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing material and originality in thinking and presentation. |
| A- | 65 -69 | 6 | Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills. |
| B+ | 60 - 64 | 5 | Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills. |
| B | 55 - 59 | 4 | Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study and reasonable critical and analytical skills. |
| B- | 50 - 54 | 3 | Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials, and poor critical and analytical skills. |
| P1 | 45 - 49 | 2 | Pass 1: Pass with Basic understanding of the subject matter. |
| P2 | 40 - 44 | 1 | Pass 2: Pass with Rudimentary understanding of the subject matter. |
| F | Below 40 | 0 | Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course. |

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO DECEPTION (WEEKS 1–3)

- Defining lies, deception, and truth-telling
- Why people lie: motives and functions of deception
- The psychology of honesty and credibility

Reading List:

1. Vrij, A. (2008). *Detecting Lies and Deceit: Pitfalls and Opportunities*. Wiley. (Ch. 1 & 2)
2. Ekman, P. (2009). *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage*. Norton.

UNIT II: PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN DECEPTION (WEEKS 4–6)

- Cognitive load and lying
- Memory errors, fabrication, and confabulation
- Emotional and physiological reactions to lying

Reading List:

1. Vrij, A. (2008). *Detecting Lies and Deceit*. Wiley. (Ch. 4–6)
2. Porter, S., & ten Brinke, L. (2010). The truth about lies: What works in detecting high-stakes deception? *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 15(1), 57–75.

UNIT III: CUES AND DETECTION TECHNIQUES (WEEKS 7–9)

- Verbal and nonverbal cues to lying
- Polygraphs and their limitations
- Brain-based lie detection and credibility assessments

Reading List:

1. Ekman, P., & O'Sullivan, M. (1991). Who can catch a liar? *American Psychologist*, 46(9), 913–920.
2. National Research Council (2003). *The Polygraph and Lie Detection*. National Academies Press.

UNIT IV: DECEPTION IN LEGAL AND CRIMINAL CONTEXTS (WEEKS 10–12)

- Police interrogations and false confessions
- Courtroom deception and credibility judgments
- Case studies of wrongful convictions due to deception

Reading List:

1. Kassin, S. M., & Gudjonsson, G. H. (2004). The psychology of confessions. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 5(2), 33–67.
2. Loftus, E. F. (2005). Planting misinformation in the human mind: A 30-year investigation of the malleability of memory. *Learning & Memory*, 12(4), 361–366.

UNIT V: APPLIED PERSPECTIVES AND ETHICAL CONCERNS (WEEKS 13–15)

- Ethical issues in lie detection

- Cross-cultural perspectives on deception
- Future of deception detection: technology, AI, and psychology

Reading List:

1. Vrij, A. (2019). Deception and truth detection in forensic contexts. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 11*, 60–64.
2. Hartwig, M., & Bond, C. F. (2011). Why do lie-catchers fail? A lens model meta-analysis of human lie judgments. *Psychological Bulletin, 137*(4), 643–659.

UNIT VI: Deception in the Digital Age (Weeks 14–15)

- Online deception: catfishing, scams, phishing, and fake identities
- Social media lies and impression management
- AI and deepfakes: the future of deception

Suggested Readings:

1. Toma, C. L., & Hancock, J. T. (2010). Looks and lies: The role of physical attractiveness in online dating self-presentation and deception. *Communication Research, 37*(3), 335–351.
2. Burgoon, J. K., Blair, J. P., & Strom, R. E. (2008). Cognitive biases and nonverbal cue availability in detecting deception. *Human Communication Research, 34*(4), 572–599.
3. Chesney, R., & Citron, D. K. (2019). Deep fakes: A looming challenge for privacy, democracy, and national security. *California Law Review, 107*(6), 1753–1819.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

Learning and knowledge production of any kind is always a collaborative process. As such, collaboration demands an ethical responsibility to acknowledge who we have learnt what from, and how reading and learning from others have helped us shape our own ideas. Even originality requires an acknowledgement of the sources and the processes that helped you achieve it. Thus, any idea, sentence or paragraph you refer to or are inspired by must be cited in the piece of writing or any presentation being made.

Any source from the internet, articles, books, journals, magazines, case law, statute, photographs, films, paintings, etc. must be credited with the original source. Citations from sources will be ranked in this order of suitability: peer reviewed journal articles or organizational reports from reliable sources, case law, statute > books & book chapters > internet blogs, web source, archival films, photographs and paintings > magazine, fictionalized/fiction source > anecdotal accounts, interview statements not part of qualitative interviews. If the source or inspiration for your idea is a

friend, a casual chat, something that you overheard, or heard being discussed at a conference or in class, even these must be credited.

If you paraphrase or directly quote from a web source in the exam, presentation or essays, the source must be explicitly mentioned as (Author(s), date of publication of source) in text, and as per appropriate referencing style in the end of the document. Please proofread your document before submission, using software to cheat plagiarism checkers is not allowed.

The university has strict rules with consequences for students involved in plagiarism, resulting upto loss of entire marks for the assignment. This is an issue of academic integrity on which no compromise will be made, especially as students have already been trained in the perils of lifting sentences or paragraph's from others and claiming authorship of them.

Sourcing evidence: This means you must draw your references from peer reviewed articles, academic books and e-books, and reports from credible sources (UN, Government reports, white papers etc.). Please avoid weblinks completely if you can (some online sources like reports contain links which is fine to show when accessed). Non-academic sources can't replace academic ones in terms of the basis of your discussions. However, if you come across a newspaper article that helps illustrate your point, then you can use these sources but sparingly. Credibility of newspaper information can be contested. A blog or website is not the same as journal articles.

IN CASE OF PENALTY

Only Unfair Means Committee (UMC) has the mandate to impose penalty for the end-term component. However, for internal components, the final decision on penalty lies with the course instructor. Should there be any contestation between the two parties, student may appeal to the JIBS Academic office.

PLAGIARISM

Students are encouraged to paraphrase in their own words any content they wish to reference from the reading list, or other authored sources, including lecture slides and notes. It is advisable to strike a balance between the thoughts and ideas and words of others and original thought or criticism and analysis. Lack of either may result in deduction of marks. Where applicable, the instructor will illustrate the best ways to write for the academic intent.

1. No student shall represent the work of another person as his own in any academic assignment, thesis or project even if the material so represented constitutes only a part of the work

submitted. Reproduction of one's own work submitted for other assignments will be permitted in limited degree and only when considered relevant by the instructor.

2. Copying of text from other students (unless in group activities) or from other sources (for instance the study guide, prescribed material or directly from the internet) will entail plagiarism. If the assignment necessitates the inclusion of other people's works, it must be clearly indicated and appropriate references supplied within and/or at the end of the text. No more than 40 words can be copied verbatim from a source (not tutor's lecture and notes) and must have appropriate references.

3. Even originality requires an acknowledgement of the sources and the processes that helped you achieve it. Thus, any idea, sentence or paragraph you refer to or are inspired by must be cited in the piece of writing or any presentation being made. Any source from the internet, articles, books, journals, magazines, case law, statute, photographs, films, paintings, etc. must be credited with the original source. If the source or inspiration for your idea is a friend, a casual chat, something that you overheard, or heard being discussed at a conference or in class, even these must be credited. If you paraphrase or directly quote from a web source in the exam, presentation or essays, the source must be explicitly mentioned.

4. No student shall contribute any work to another student (unless otherwise instructed) if s/he knows or should know that the latter may submit the work in part or whole as his own. Receipt of payment in whatever form of work contributed shall raise a presumption that the student had such knowledge.

5. Any student found to have committed or aided and abetted the offence of plagiarism may be subject to the following penalties depending on the severity of his involvement in the offence.

- a) The student shall receive no mark for the relevant academic assignment, thesis or project;
- b) The student shall fail the subject, course or programme of study, with or without a mark given for that subject, course or programme of study; and
- c) The student shall be treated as having committed a disciplinary offence.

Submissions will be checked for plagiarism by the course instructor (through the software or through other means), and the following norms shall be considered:

- Match of text upto 15% maybe considered at the discretion of course instructor(s).
- If the percentage of plagiarism is $\geq 15\%$ - 25% with more than 5% similarity with a single source, the penalty will be deduction of 25 marks.

- If the percentage of plagiarism is $\geq 25\%$ - 35% with more than 5% similarity with a single source, the penalty will be deduction of 35 marks.
- If the percentage of plagiarism is beyond 35% with more than 5% similarity with a single source, *Fail* grade will be given to the student in the course.

DISABILITY SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS

JGU endeavours to make all its courses accessible to students. The Disability Support Committee (DSC) has identified conditions that could hinder a student's overall well-being. These include physical and mobility related difficulties, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental health conditions and intellectual/learning difficulties e.g., dyslexia and dyscalculia. Students with any known disability needing academic and other support are required to register with the Disability Support Committee (DSC) by following the procedure specified at <https://jgu.edu.in/disability-support-committee/>

Students who need support may register any time during the semester up until a month before the end semester exam begins. Those students who wish to continue receiving support from the previous semester, must re-register within the first month of a semester. Last minute registrations and support might not be possible as sufficient time is required to make the arrangements for support.

The DSC maintains strict confidentiality about the identity of the student and the nature of their disability and the same is requested from faculty members and staff as well. The DSC takes a strong stance against in-class and out-of-class references made about a student's disability without their consent and disrespectful comments referring to a student's disability.

All general queries are to be addressed to disabilitysupportcommittee@jgu.edu.in

COMPASSIONATE CLASSROOM

Some parts of this course may discuss a range of issues that might result in distress for some students. Discussions and images in the course might also provoke strong emotional responses. To make sure that all students collectively benefit from the course, and do not feel troubled due to either the contents of the course, or the conduct of the discussions, it is incumbent upon all within the classroom to pledge to maintain respect towards our peers, and towards the instructor.

This does not mean that you need to feel restrained about what you feel and what you want to say, however, please communicate respectfully and kindly in classroom and in emails/group discussion forums etc.

Conversely, this is about creating a safe space where everyone can speak and learn without inhibition and fear. Online teaching presents some unique challenges to instructors and students in the learning process. You are welcome to highlight your struggles or problems in private or in the class, however, please do not abuse your allowances, or make false claims. This builds distrust in the instructor-student relationship within the classroom and prevents other students in real need from availing suitable provisions. The responsibility lies with both students and instructor to create a problem-free learning experience. Any bullying or harassment maybe reported to the Academic Dean of JIBS/ School by the respective parties.

TRIGGER WARNING:

This course involves pedagogical practices that are closely associated with studying crimes and criminal cases, and viewing material from the same, that might include elements of violence and gore and mentions of criminal patterns such as sexual assault, hate speech, discrimination etc. Please feel free to opt out of viewing these if you are familiar with the victims/perpetrators or if they make you uncomfortable/ sick/ trigger unsafe thoughts. Be mindful of balancing your consumption of dark media and ensure that your mental health is in a good place. Do let me know if you want me to make other allowances or keep certain sensitivities in consideration during the teaching process.

NOTE: Previously, some students have found themselves consuming an excess of dark media which has negatively impacted their mental health. Please be mindful of this phenomenon and seek help or change when needed.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all classes (100% attendance), however allowances will be made for health or other issues that interfere with live attendance of classes. A 75% attendance policy is mandatory. Students must avail 'sudden absences' in the 25% allowed. You do not need to provide any proof or notification for taking absences within this limit.

Any medical leave/ on-duty leave for missing classes will be granted only upon submission of a valid medical certificate or valid approval from appropriate sources. Students are required to contact

the Academic Office of their respective School to recommend any such requests. Do not pass on such proof to the instructor or TA, we cannot mark ODs or MLs on our end. In case your absence is eligible for ML or OD, please let the instructor know so that appropriate cognizance and allowances can be made for your situation (makeup lectures, substitute assignments, extensions etc.).

You will be marked absent if you are not in class for the entire duration of the class. If you need to leave class midway for any non-emergency reason (e.g. going home, games, other JGU/personal commitments), you may do so but you will not receive attendance for the class.

No requests for attendance will be entertained by the instructor except in case of mis-marking. In case of mis-marking attendance, please notify the instructor before the next class, after receiving the notification on your email. Requests will not be entertained after the week has passed.

A student who fails to submit an assessment or related material when scheduled because of similar reasons is expected to inform the course instructor, via email, the reason for their inability to submit before the end of the assessment if they want to apply for an extension of the deadline.

If you are unable to answer any component of the end-term examination owing to medical or other reasons, the request for a re-sit has to be submitted to Exam Office.

RE-SIT EXAMINATION POLICY

If a student fails to appear for an end-term component due to extenuating circumstances, valid supporting documents and permissions will be essential to allow for any re-sits. The re-sit examinations for Fall 2023 semester will take place only once next year (i.e. Fall 2024). There will be no provisions for other examinations.

POLICIES SPECIFIC TO THIS COURSE

Re-evaluation:

With regards to any questions regarding the grading or marking criteria or procedure of the internal exams, please clarify with the instructor at the time of the assignment, or after you have received feedback. Delayed requests will not be entertained for re-evaluation. End-sem reevaluation as per exam office procedure. If there are any contests with regards to the internal grade given, first consult with the instructor. If the marks remain unchanged and the student is unhappy, the student may approach the JIBS Academic Committee.

Scaling up grades:

JIBS academic policy does not allow scaling up grades for missed assignments. You can submit a substitute assignment if notified prior to missing the deadline and agreed upon by instructor and student adequately ahead of time. Substitute exams are subject to the discretion of the instructor and such requests may not always be considered. Requests/demands to scale up grades to accommodate personal or professional ambitions of GPA will not be entertained. You are adequately informed beforehand of the marking criteria and the methods to excel in particular assignments.

INTERNALS SUBSTITUTION OR EXTENSIONS:

In case any student is unable to appear for the IA tests or needs special allowances, you are required to inform the instructor prior to assessment deadline. Inability to attend any component of the internal assignments without intimation will be understood as forfeiting the assigned marks for that assignment.

DSC ALLOWANCES:

Assignment instructions will have individual DSC allowances mentioned. For group assignments, please discuss DSC allowances beforehand. Do not make assumptions on whether individual allowances will be extended to entire group, this is dependent on certain factors and is best to be confirmed by the instructor.

RECOMMENDATION POLICY:

I have often received requests from students to be a reference contact for internships or further higher education. While I am happy to write you a letter of recommendation, please do confirm this beforehand before putting down my name as a referee. Also, I would need to have the following information prior to writing your letter a) tell me about the school/program or position b) provide a current resume and info about why you are a good fit. It is my policy to only give strong recommendations, therefore it would be better if you were applying to fields that are closer to my areas of expertise (welcome to discuss) or if we have worked closely where I have gained good knowledge of your acumen (this goes beyond your marks in my subject and GPA). I would also like to have an opportunity to discuss your resume with you so that I can highlight the best parts in my letter.

DEBARMENT FROM END TERM:

In case students are found to be below the 75% attendance marks even after attempting the end sem, they will still be held debarred due to shortage of attendance and their answer script will be considered null and void and not evaluated. No emails from parents or appeals will be considered in case of debarment due to shortage of attendance.