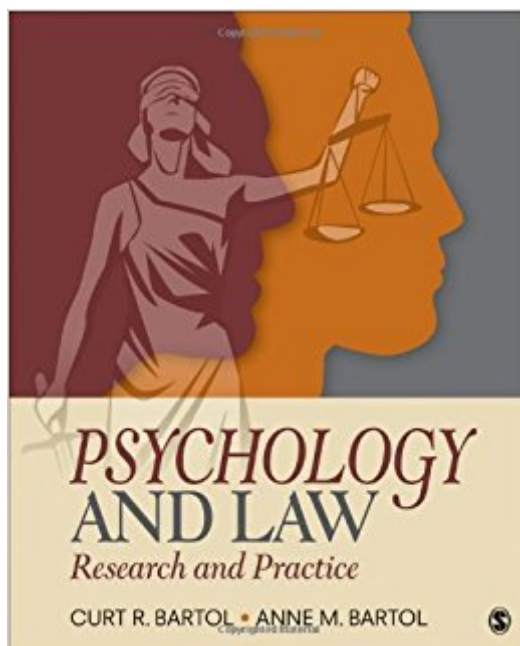


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Psychology And Law: Research And Practice



Synopsis

Psychology and Law offers the definitive perspective on the practical application of psychological research to the law. Authors Curt R. Bartol and Anne M. Bartol emphasize the various roles psychologists and other mental health professionals can play throughout the text. Insight is offered into the application of psychology in criminal and non-criminal matters. Topics such as family law, insanity, police interrogation, jury selection and decision making, involuntary civil commitment, and various civil capacities are included. This comprehensive text examines complex material in detail and explains it in an easy-to-read way. The authors emphasize the major contributions psychological research has made to the law, and encourage critical analysis through examples of court cases, high-profile current events, and research. "The writing is concise and student-friendly. . . The text incorporates contemporary cases and information and maintains a good balance between the important issues in psychology and law."

Barbara Abbott, New England College

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Good resource.

Well written and interesting even for a college book.

Curt and Anne Bartol have written several key textbooks in the area of psychology and the law, but most have been focused on forensic psychology, a field that is largely clinical in nature and emphasizes criminal courts. *Psychology and the Law--Research and Practice* is their first venture into psychology and the law. If you are considering this textbook just in the context of learning and not as a student (or instructor), I discuss that toward the end of this review, but the tl; dr version is--pick this text if you are in it for learning. Students will have little choice on a textbook, but the casual reader or the legal professional does. While a bit later to the game than competing books such as *Wrightsmen's Psychology and the Legal System* and *Forensic and Legal Psychology: Psychological Science Applied to Law, 2nd Edition*, Bartol and Bartol demonstrate why they had such a keen presence in the forensic psychology textbook market and why they are sure to make a dent in the more general psychology and the law field. This textbook covers all of the major topics that would be expected in a psychology and the law textbook (e.g., jury research, eyewitness memory, false confessions, custody evaluations, etc.) and covers many of these topics in more detail than in competitor's texts. One of the nicest things about Bartol and Bartol's text is that they give plenty of attention to **legal** arguments as well as to the research. Many students who take courses in psychology and the law would come into the class with no legal background. They do an excellent job of putting the research in context. It is one thing to discuss how eyewitness memory works, but it is another entirely to explain how this might work from a practical standpoint (e.g., appeals, the rules of evidence, etc.). Other textbooks emphasize the psychological research

on the topic, which is great, but they provide less context in the legal setting. In my experience, many students are going to be partial to Wrightsman's Psychology and the Legal System as it is less text-heavy and written more like an introductory book. Like the Bartol and Bartol textbook, that is a great book. However, it is a bit outdated, and from a teaching perspective I feel that the Bartol and Bartol book contains more information that students can learn from. It just might take more motivation to read. If you are a casual reader or a legal professional and just want a good reference on psychology and the law, there are a few handbooks available, but those tend to be written for an academic audience. Bartol and Bartol do an awesome job of explaining topics on a more basic level without insulting the reader's intelligence. It includes enough case law that a lawyer might make use of a particular topic (e.g., custody evaluations, criminal competency), and anyone just interested in learning would find the book useful. Eventually more used copies will make it to the market, and someone just interested in learning would do well to pick this textbook over the others available in my personal opinion. I have less experience with forensic psychology books, but Bartol and Bartol's *Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Research and Application* is also a good read.

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