BCP 3105 – Forensic and Prison Psychology

Course aim:

The course aims at providing students with basic concepts, principles, theories and techniques of applying the knowledge of psychology to the criminal justice system. The course also intends to equip students with the knowledge and skills required for dealing with individuals confined in prisons.

Course Content:

Topics include the following; definition of forensic psychology; psychology and the courts including evaluation of the confession made by a suspect, assessment of eyewitness testimony, involuntary and civil commitment, assessment of criminal responsibility, determination of insanity, assessment of competence to stand trial, psychology and police investigations, the psychologist as an expert witness, lie detection, prediction of future behavior of violent criminals; Psychology of criminal behavior including criminal behavior and how it develops, crime of rape, violence and aggression and the role of alcohol and in criminal behavior; Mental illness and crime including psychosis and offending and special conditions and unique defenses; Testifying in court; writing forensic reports and ethics of forensic psychology. Psychology and its role in prison; The Goals of imprisonment; The psychological effects of imprisonment; Understanding violence and aggression in prisons; Sex offenders in prisons; Prisoner and AIDS; Hostage taking in prison; Stress and working in prisons; Communication skills in prisons; Dealing with Offenders; Giving evidence in court.

Learning outcomes:
Students acquire knowledge and skills to with individuals in confinement.

Teaching methods:
The main mode of teaching is lecture and discussions. Students get fields visits to Selected prisons and interact with both the prison staff and the prisoners.

Mode of assessment:
Students are assessed through an examination, accounting for 70%. The 30% is contributed by coursework, which may be a set of tests and field experience reports.

Reading List


