Applied Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management in Law Enforcement

Course 1 of 6

Dates: November 16–20, 2026

Times: 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Format: In-Person *(See daily schedules below)*

Location: New Brighton Public Safety Building (upper level), 785 Old Highway 8 NW, New Brighton, MN

> *This syllabus is also the **Overview** page in Canvas. The MCPA ELC Student Handbook, the Absence Procedure for I/O and HRM, and Monday's readings are also available on the ELC Student Resources page at mnchiefs.org, in case you have trouble logging in to Canvas.*

Instructor	**Jana O'Leary Sullivan**, Kennedy & Graven jsullivan@kennedy-graven.com · 763-607-3994 (cell)
Instructor	**Natalie Bauer**, City of Woodbury natalie.bauer@woodburymn.gov · 651-233-0200 (cell)
MCPA Contact	**Stephanie Revering**, MCPA Training & Operations Director stephanie@mnchiefs.org · 612-490-6769 (cell)

Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to attend all portions of this weeklong in-person course. There is no online or asynchronous option for this class.

If you will be late or absent, text or call your instructors and the MCPA Training & Operations Director as soon as possible (contacts at the top of this page).

- **ELC attendance policy:** see the **MCPA ELC Student Handbook**.
- **How absences are handled in this course:** see the **Absence Procedure for I/O and HRM**, including makeup expectations for missed modules and panels.

Course Overview

This interdisciplinary graduate-level course combines key principles of Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management to address the complex personnel and organizational needs of modern law enforcement agencies. Students will explore how evidence-based psychological theories and HRM strategies can improve performance, selection, team dynamics, and overall agency effectiveness.

Emphasis is placed on applying research-based practices to real-world policing environments, with attention to legal compliance, ethical decision making, and the unique challenges of public safety work. Through case studies, applied projects, readings, panel discussions, and critical analysis, students will learn to design and implement organizational solutions that enhance employee wellbeing and operational effectiveness.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Analyze the organizational culture, structure, and challenges of law enforcement agencies using both I/O psychology and HRM frameworks.
- Design legally sound and evidence-based hiring, promotion, and selection systems tailored to policing roles and agency needs.
- Develop job descriptions that align with validated competencies and operational demands.
- Assess and improve team dynamics in high-pressure law enforcement environments.
- Address workplace stressors and develop interventions to support mental health, resilience, and long-term retention.
- Navigate labor relations, civil service constraints, and employment law to inform personnel decisions and policy development.
- Analyze organizational and personnel data to drive strategic decision-making.

Course Format

This course is delivered in person over five consecutive days. Class time includes instructor-led modules, guest speaker panels, group discussions, case studies, and hands-on exercises. The course is designed to be interactive: come prepared to share your experiences, ask questions, and learn from the other leaders in the room.

Canvas is our primary resource for readings, assignments, and course announcements. Please check Canvas regularly before and during the course week.

Before Class

Before the first day of class (Monday, November 16):

- Thoroughly read this syllabus, including the daily schedule and the assessment criteria.
- Read the **MCPA ELC Student Handbook**. You will sign the Student Acknowledgement Form in class on Monday.
- Read the **Absence Procedure for I/O and HRM**.
- Complete Monday's readings. They are also linked on the ELC Student Resources page (if you are having issues logging in to Canvas).

Before each day of class:

- Complete the required readings for that day. They are listed in the daily schedule below and found in Canvas under the **My Progress** tab. You may read ahead if you wish.

Bring each day: Laptop and charger

Daily Schedule

*Readings, Handouts, Presentations, and Assignments can be found in Canvas under **My Progress**.*

Day 1 — Monday, November 16, 2026

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
8:30–9:15	**Welcome and Orientation**	Introduction to the ELC. MCPA staff will guide students through Canvas, review the program structure, and discuss the Metro State University graduate pathway.		Jeff Potts, MCPA Executive Director Stephanie Revering, MCPA Training & Operations Director
9:15–9:30	Break			
9:30–10:30	**Introductions, Overview, and Ground Rules**	Instructors introduce the course syllabus. The group takes part in introductory exercises and sets group norms together.		Jana Sullivan Natalie Bauer
10:30–12:00	**Module 1: Industrial-Organizational Psychology 101**	Introduction to basic I/O psychology theories.	"Understanding Organizational Psychology: Key Concepts and Applications" (Kessi & Sumarni, 2023) "How Self-Determination Theory Explains Motivation" (Cherry, 2026) "Engage Your Workforce" (McKinsey Quarterly, n.d.)	Natalie Bauer
12:00–1:00	Lunch			

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
1:00–3:00	**Panel: "A Supervisor's Playbook"**	This speaker panel will explore lessons learned as a police supervisor including what they wished they knew at the beginning.		Matt DuRose, West Hennepin PD Melissa Chiodo, Inver Grove Heights PD Bill Steiner, Coon Rapids PD Tony Paetznick, New Brighton PD
3:00–3:15	Break			
3:15–4:30	**Module 2: Professional Development**	The importance of, and strategy behind, guided professional development from an executive coaching perspective.		Dr. Laura Pendergrass, Martin-McAllister

Day 2 — Tuesday, November 17, 2026

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
8:30–12:00	**Module 3: Supervisory Skills**	Communication, documentation, emotional intelligence, performance management, discipline, and handling complaints and internal affairs.		Jana Sullivan
12:00–1:00	Lunch			
1:00–2:15	**Panel: "Beyond the Bargaining Table"**	How to build labor relations with unions and maintain existing relationships.		Mark Schneider, LELS General Counsel Sheila Huber, City of Mankato Tammy Funk, City of Woodbury
2:15–2:30	Break			

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
2:30–3:30	**Module 4: Trauma-Informed Leadership**	Applying principles of safety, trust, and empowerment to support teams and handle workplace stress effectively.	“What Is Employee Engagement and How Do You Improve It?” (Gallup, n.d.) “The Heart of Resilience: Trauma-Informed Leadership in a Burnout Era” (Jacobs, 2026)	Erin Holznagel, League of MN Cities
3:30–4:30	**Module 5, Part 1: HRM and Legal Issues**	Current employment topics: First Amendment and social media, employee medical issues, Brady/Giglio, and the Data Practices Act.		Jana Sullivan

Day 3 — Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
8:30–9:30	**Module 6: Background Checks & Pre-employment (and return to work) Physical Agility Test**	Requirements and best practices for background checks and physical requirements, including medical exams and physical ability testing.		Jana Sullivan
9:30–10:15	**Module 7: Job Design**	Fundamentals of job design and analysis.		Natalie Bauer
10:15–10:30	Break			
10:30–11:00	**Module 8: Recruitment & Hiring**	Group Activities and discussion about hiring strategies from both an HRM and I/O perspective		Jana Sullivan Natalie Bauer

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
11:00–11:45	**Module 9: Psychological Testing**	Psychological testing for pre-employment, promotions, and fitness for duty.	The Relationship Between Organisational Stressors and Mental Wellbeing Within Police Officers; A systematic Review" (Purba & Demou, 2019)	Dr. Laura Pendergrass, Martin-McAllister
11:45–12:45	Lunch			
12:45–1:45	**Module 10: Promoting Wellness as a Police Leader**	The tools, roles, and supports needed to promote a holistic and healthy workplace.		Matt Langer, MSP (ret.)
1:45–2:45	**Module 5, Part 2: HRM and Legal Issues**	Continued discussion of current employment topics: First Amendment and social media, employee medical issues, Brady/Giglio, and the Data Practices Act.		Jana Sullivan
2:45–3:45	**Module 11: Data-Driven Strategy**	Gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data to inform strategic decisions.		Natalie Bauer
3:45–4:30	**Project Work Time**	Work on the capstone project. See the capstone rubric in Canvas.	**Capstone project**	

Day 4 — Thursday, November 19, 2026

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
8:30–10:15	**Module 12: Respectful Workplace Training**	How to recognize bias and discrimination, prevent harassment, and communicate with mutual respect.	"DEI in the Workplace: A Science-Based Guide for Organizational Leaders" (Cox et al., 2026)	Jana Sullivan

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
10:15–10:30	Break			
10:30–12:00	**Panel: "Workplace Culture"**	How modern organizations create positive environments and foster inclusivity.	"How to Manage an Insecure Leader" (Yip & Gruda, 2026)	Kelly McCarthy, Mendota Heights PD Todd Millburn, Edina PD Carson Thomas, Rosemount PD Tony Gruening, Brooklyn Center PD
12:00–1:00	Lunch			
1:00–2:15	**Module 13: Sexual Assault in the Workplace**	Hostile work environments through the lens of sexual harassment and assault.		Jessica Bastil, Special Agent, BCA
2:15–2:30	Break			
2:30–3:30	**Module 14: League of Minnesota Cities Overview**	How the League of Minnesota Cities supports local governments through HR assistance, advocacy, policy analysis, and training.		Joyce Hottinger, League of MN Cities Garrett Johnson, League of MN Cities
3:30–4:30	**Module 15: Workplace Violence**	Identifying workplace violence issues, including threats, intimidation, and harassment.		Michelle Frascone, Special Agent, BCA/BTAM

Day 5 — Friday, November 20, 2026

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
8:30–12:00	**Capstone Presentations**		**Capstone presentation**	
12:00–1:00	Lunch			
1:00–2:30	**Capstone Presentations**		**Capstone presentation**	

Time	Module	Key Topics	Reading or Project Assigned	Instructor(s)
2:30–4:00	**Panel: "Preview of Future Courses"**	Students ask the panel prepared questions and meet future ELC instructors. See the facilitated questions rubric in Canvas.	**Facilitated questions**	Erika Scheider, Roseville PD Neil Bauer, Wyoming PD Jay Henthorne, Richfield PD Dr. Lisa Sorenson, Sorenson Consulting Sean Zauhar, Apple Valley PD Blair Anderson, St. Cloud PD (ret.)

Activities may change to accommodate guest speakers or the needs of the class; changes will be announced in Canvas.

Assessment and Completion Criteria

This course is graded Pass/Fail. Students must meet the standard in every category below to pass the course.

If the Facilitated Questions Assignment or the Final Capstone Project does not initially meet the passing standard, you will receive feedback from the instructors and an opportunity to revise and resubmit.

Category	Overview	Passing Standard
Attendance	Students attend all five days of class. MCPA records attendance daily: 1 point per day (0.5 for a half day), 5 points total.	Attend at least 4 of 5 days (no more than one absence per week, per the ELC attendance policy)
Participation	Students are expected to participate in class discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with classmates. Contributions should be thoughtful, introspective, and move forward the learning of course objectives.	Actively participate in class discussions and activities
Reading Completion	Students display knowledge of the provided material, referencing content when appropriate.	Complete all required readings, as determined by the instructor

Category	Overview	Passing Standard
Facilitated Questions Assignment	Students will ask questions of the final panel that incorporate at least three concepts learned in class. See the grading rubric in Canvas.	Submit at least five questions, ask at least one at the panel, and earn 80% or higher on the rubric
Final Capstone Project	A completed presentation that demonstrates integrated use of course concepts or methods. See the grading rubric in Canvas.	80% or higher on the rubric

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Confidentiality and Trust

Much of the learning in this course will come from sharing real leadership experiences, including situations involving employees, discipline, complaints, and other sensitive workplace matters. For these conversations to be meaningful, everyone needs to feel comfortable speaking openly.

What is shared in the classroom stays in the classroom. Take the lessons back to your agency, but do not share other participants' stories or details that could identify the people or agencies involved. Use good judgment when discussing sensitive matters, and do not share confidential, protected, or non-public information.

Citation and A.I. Statement

Work completed for this course is expected to have an element of academically researched content and sources. Any idea, quote, fact, or theory that is sourced from outside the student's own thinking or experience is expected to be properly cited. While the instructors will not adhere to a strict APA standard for citation, proper credit should be given to the author and to where the information was found.

The instructors acknowledge that artificial intelligence (A.I.) can be used responsibly as a supporting tool for brainstorming and idea generation. Students are expected to maintain personal authorship of their work and be transparent about their use of A.I., citing it as necessary. Students should verify all facts and maintain their critical thinking skills when using A.I.

Work that is found to be unoriginal and uncited, or that is generated purely by A.I. rather than by the student, will be discounted and graded accordingly, or may result in an incomplete for the course.

For guidance with APA citation style, see the Purdue OWL APA Formatting and Style Guide (7th Edition).

ELC Policies

Attendance, confidentiality, conduct, technology, accommodations, and other program policies are in the **MCPA ELC Student Handbook**. Printed copies of the Student Acknowledgement Form (the last page of the handbook) will be provided, and you will sign it in class on Monday.