

## Individual Assessment Course Syllabus

### Forensic Psychology (FP 6020 BLA, Fall I, 2011)

**Instructor:** Brenda Frechette, Ph.D.

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**Phone:** 415 279-9639

**Office hours:** By appointment,  
email and/or telephone

**Dates of Class:** Course begins online **September 6**, meets on the weekends of **September 10 & 11** and **October 22 & 23**, and concludes on **October 26**. There will be weekly instruction online throughout the term.

#### **Final Date to Drop the Class:**

To receive a “W” grade a student must officially drop this class by the date listed below that corresponds to this course’s term and length. Students may not withdraw from this course after this date. If a student chooses to discontinue course work after the final drop date, the student may receive an “F” grade for the course.

Fall Session I (7.5 week courses): 10/10/11

Fall Session II (7.5 week courses): 11/30/11

Fall Full Term (15 week courses): 11/14/11

#### **Required Texts:**

**Kaplan, R. M. (2008) *Principles of Psychotherapy: Psychological Testing: Principles, Applications, and Issues, 7th Edition*** New York: Wadsworth ISBN-13: 9780495095552

This is the eBook provided for the course. This syllabus will be updated with forensic assessment readings at the time class commences. These will be forensic assessment readings and available either through the library electronic resource or in your eCollege doc share.

**eBook access and links are available at the course eCollege website. Students should familiarize themselves with the eBook use resources and the VitalSource Bookshelf website and tutorials to develop competence in using the eBook format.**

#### **DVD’s or Videos required:**

Students will need to locate the following videos to use for assessment write up:

*The Soloist*

*Aileen Wurnos: Life and Death of a Serial Killer.* (these are her 2002 interviews) for full assessment (see assignment grid for due date).

Please locate these in advance so that you have enough time to complete the assignments.

#### **Recommended Texts :**

Ackerman, Marc J. (1999). *Essentials of Forensic Psychological Assessment*. New York:

- John Wiley and Sons ISBN: 0471331864
- Chesney-Lind, M. & Pasko, L. (2004) *The Female Offender: Girls, Women, and Crime*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Grisso, T. (2003) *Evaluating Competencies: Forensic Assessments and Instruments*. New York: Kluwer/Plenum.
- Hare, R. D. (1999). *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us*. New York: Guilford Press. ISBN: 1572304510
- Meloy, J. R. (2002) *The Psychopathic Mind: Origins, Dynamics, And Treatment*. Oxford: Jason Aronson.
- Meloy, Reid (2000). *Violence Risk and Threat Assessment: A Practical Guide for Mental Health and Criminal Justice Professionals*. Specialized Training Services: San Diego, CA. ISBN: 0-9703189-0-1
- Morrison, James (2007). *Diagnosis Made Easier: Principles & Techniques for Mental Health Clinicians*. Located on the Argosy Library NetBooks link.
- Peck, M.S. (1983) *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Samenow, S. (2004) *Inside The Criminal Mind*. New York: Crown.
- Shea, S. C. (2002) *The Practical Art of Suicide Assessment: A Guide for Mental Health Professionals and Substance Abuse Counselors*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 0471237612
- Zuckerman, E. L. (2010) *Clinician's Thesaurus: The Guide to Conducting Interviews and Writing Psychological Reports: The Clinician's Toolbox, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.* New York: Guilford Press. ISBN: 1572304375

### **Course Description:**

Introductory graduate course focusing on individual assessment in forensic settings and contexts. What should be included in a good clinical assessment will be covered including risk assessment and considerations for civil commitment procedures. The differences between clinical and forensic assessment will then be delineated including assessing for trial competency, standards for NGI (Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity), and court requests for psychiatric evaluation (4011.6). Accepted standards of assessment practice will also be reviewed for specialized forensic populations.

### **Program Outcomes: Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology:**

#### **Program Outcome One:**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical concepts and methodological approaches to the psychological bases of behavior as it relates to the practice and application of forensic psychology.

#### **Program Outcome Two:**

**A.** Students will be able to distinguish and utilize the underlying theories guiding the interface between the legal system and psychology.

**B.** Students will be able to establish and analyze the interaction between psychology and the law in all major aspects of criminal and civil justice system.

#### **Program Outcome Three:**

Students will demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate the existing literature and body of knowledge in assessment, evaluation and research methods in forensic psychology.

#### **Program Outcome Four:**

Students will use leadership, consultative, and ethical knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to succeed as a part of a professional team, capable of expanding the role of psychologists within society.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Students will gain an understanding of the theoretical foundation and clinical method of assessing individuals.
- Students will learn what types of specific assessments might occur in forensic settings and how forensic assessments vary from clinical assessments.
- Students will gain additional competence in structuring a clinical interview, mental status examination, performing a thorough risk assessment, and differential screening process when evaluating individuals in forensic settings.
- Students will be exposed to instruments that are generally utilized only in forensic settings to determine an individual's risk of recidivism, or to determine sociopathic characteristics.
- Students will gain specific exposure in recognizing malingering and deception.

**MISSING CLASS POLICY: Attendance is required for all four days of in class weekend meetings. If you have another commitment conflict, please reschedule that commitment OR choose to take this class at a later date. Missing a day of class will result in not passing the course.**

### **Methods of Instruction:**

This course will be delivered in a **blended format**, including in class lecture and discussion, video, and role-plays combined with online instruction. In addition to the two required weekends on campus, students are required to participate online on a weekly basis for the term of the course.

### **Course Assignments and Student Expectations:**

- Students will be expected to attend class regularly and be ready to discuss required readings.
- Participation in class discussion and group work (e.g. in-class vignettes and/or role play exercises) is required.
- There will be a midterm take home exam.
- Weekly readings and online participation is required. On the day the course commences log onto eCollege and a detailed listing of assignments will be provided.
- **Late assignment policy:** Each day an assignment is late 10% of points will be deducted. No assignment graded after being 5 days late. Assignment due dates will be listed on eCollege. The final assignment (due last day of class) will not be accepted after that date, UNLESS prior discussion with the instructor has occurred with a request of an Incomplete. Incompletes are considered under rare circumstances.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

**An assignment grid with due dates will be provided on eCollege.**

### **First Class Weekend:**

#### *Saturday*

- Introductions. Course overview and expectations.
- Key elements of a clinical assessment.
- Conducting a mental status exam.

#### *Sunday*

- Civil commitment procedure
- Differentiating forensic assessment from general clinical assessment.
- Penal code driven evaluation

- Overview of assessing for NGI (not guilty by reason of insanity) and 4011.6 (court ordered psychiatric evaluations.)

### **Second In Class Weekend:**

#### ***Saturday***

- Practice with forensic assessment.
- More on incompetence assessment.
- Psychopathy.
- Malingering and/or factitious disorder.

#### ***Sunday***

- Risk assessment (suicide and violence).
- Special population considerations.

### **GRADING:**

**Assignments with grading structure will be provided on eCollege.**

#### **Grading Criteria for Assessments:**

A=90+ Assessment is in appropriate format as suggested by instructor, well organized, thought out, provides excellent picture of client's presentation.

B=80-89 Assessment is well organized and thought out, but is missing one component of format OR picture of client is only adequate or is somewhat limited.

C=70-79 Assessment is disorganized, client presentation is inadequate, grammar is poor.

F=<70 Evidence of plagiarism or assessment not submitted.

#### **Grading Criteria for Participation:**

A=90+ Student actively participated in discussions in >80% of class sessions; nearly all comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings.

B=80-89 Student actively participated in discussions in >70% of class sessions; most of the comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from assigned readings.

C=70-89 Student participated in discussions in >60% of class sessions, comments/questions demonstrate only a surface level understanding of topics

F=<70 Poor understanding of course topics and demonstration that course materials have not been read.

### **Instructor Bio:**

Dr. Frechette has worked in the community mental health field for 37 years, primarily specializing in psychiatric crisis and addiction work. She currently works in the California prison system as a psychologist at a 50 bed crisis unit treating inmates who have become suicidal or unable to function because of an acute mental illness. For ten years prior to this she was the supervisor of Marin County's psychiatric emergency service, served as that county's disaster mental health coordinator, as well as supervising their forensic unit (jail mental health, a case management unit for the severely mentally ill with criminal charges, and starting up and coordinating mental health court.) As an addiction specialist, she was a therapist on NIDA addiction studies at the San Francisco Veteran Administration and UCSF; a director of an inpatient chemical dependency unit, as well as outpatient intensive treatment and aftercare; a director of a crisis response unit, and a director of an outpatient detoxification program. Dr. Frechette's therapeutic style is primarily phenomenological as she has been trained in brief therapies, hypnosis, systems theory, biofeedback, somatics, and cognitive behavioral therapy. She received her Masters degree at Northern Arizona University and her Doctorate degree at California Institute of Integral Studies. She currently is licensed in California as both a psychologist and as a marriage and family therapist. Dr. Frechette has been working as an educator offering training and workshops, as well as acting as adjunct faculty at numerous universities, for the past twenty years.

### **Academic Policies**

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2009)*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Scholarly writing: The faculty at Argosy University is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing, free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. You may be asked to submit your course assignments through "Turnitin," ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison

report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

### **Library**

All resources in Argosy University's online collection are available through the Internet. Students can access the online collection by logging into the student portal and clicking on the library link. Library Resources: Argosy University's core online collection features over **48,889 full-text journals and 23,000 electronic books** and other content covering all academic subject areas including Business & Economics, Career & General Education, Computers, Engineering & Applied Science, Humanities, Science, Medicine & Allied Health, and Social & Behavior Sciences. Many titles are directly accessible through the Online Public Access Catalog at <http://library.argosy.edu>.

In addition to online resources, Argosy University's onsite collections contain a wealth of subject-specific research materials searchable in the Online Public Access Catalog. Catalog searching is easily limited to individual campus collections. Alternatively, students can search combined collections of all Argosy University Libraries.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act Policy**

It is the policy of Argosy University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a student with disabilities needs accommodations, the student must notify the Director of Student Services. Procedures for documenting student disability and the development of reasonable accommodations will be provided to the student upon request.

Students will be notified by the Director of Student Services when each request for accommodation is approved or denied in writing via a designated form. To receive accommodation in class, it is the student's responsibility to present the form (at his or her discretion) to the instructor. In an effort to protect student privacy, the Department of Student Services will not discuss the accommodation needs of any student with instructors. Faculty may not make accommodations for individuals who have not been approved in this manner.

### **Argosy Communication:**

If you choose to use an email address other than the assigned Argosy email, please be advised that you do so at your own risk. Any difficulty receiving Argosy emails will be your responsibility.

### **The Argosy University Statement Regarding Diversity**

Argosy University prepares students to serve populations with diverse social, ethnic, economic, and educational experiences. Both the academic and training curricula are designed to provide an environment in which students can develop the skills and attitudes essential to working with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

**Instructional Contact Hours/Credit**

Students can expect 15 hours of instructional engagement for every 1 semester credit hour of a course. Instructional engagement activities include lectures, presentations, discussions, group-work, and other activities that would normally occur during class time. Instructional engagement activities may occur in a face-to-face meeting, or in the classroom.

In addition to instructional engagement, students can expect to complete 30 hours of outside work for every 1 semester credit hour of a course. Outside work includes preparing for and completing readings and assignments. Such outside work includes, but is not limited to, all research associated with completing assignments, work with others to complete a group project, participation in tutorials, labs, simulations and other electronic activities that are not a part of the instructional engagement, as well as any activities related to preparation for instructional engagement.

At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph above shall be applied for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.