

## Individual Assessment Course Syllabus

### Forensic Psychology (FP 6020 BLA, Fall I, 2010)

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

**Dates of Class:** Course begins online **September 7, 2010**, meets on the weekends of **September 18 & 19** and **October 16 & 17**, and concludes on **October 27, 2010**. There will be weekly instruction online throughout the term.

#### Required Texts:

Eckerman, M. J. (2010). *Essentials of Forensic Psychology Assessment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. John Wiley & Sons. (eBook)  
ISBN# 9780470551684

[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:

*Soloist* for assignment due on October 5<sup>th</sup>..

*Aileen Wurnos: Life and Death of a Serial Killer*. (these are her 2002 interviews) for full assessment due on October 27<sup>h</sup>.

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

#### Recommended Texts (but not required):

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.

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

**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.

Session I (7.5 week courses):

Deadline for withdrawal “W”: October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010

**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.

**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 class.

**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:**

WEEK	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Week One	<i>Morrison, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4</i> <i>Read online lecture</i>	<i>1. Sign into discussion group online and introduce yourself (by Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>.)</i>
Week Two	<i>Morrison Chapters 5, 6, 7,8</i> <i>Read online lecture</i>  <i>Skim through Zuckerman to become familiar with the layout of the book. Zuckerman is primarily a good resource, but not something you actually read through cover to cover.</i>	<i>Read online info on Torticelli case.</i>  <i>We will meet in class the weekend of 9/18 &amp; 9/19.</i> <i>Please bring Morrison/Zuckerman to weekend class.</i>
Week Three	<i>Morrison Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. .</i>	<i>Interview an acquaintance and gather their history. Write a short two page summary using the format provided in class. Send your interview write up to me at <a href="mailto:bfriendly@earthlink.net">bfriendly@earthlink.net</a> by 9/27 at midnight.</i>
Week Four	<b>Ackerman Chapters</b>	<b>Chief complaint, hx of presenting problem, and MSE on The Soloist. Due 10/4</b>
Week Five	<b>Meloy</b> <b>Online readings on suicide</b>	<b>Civil commitment assignment due by 10/11</b>
Week Six	<b>Ackerman</b>	<b>Meet 10/16 &amp; 10/17 (Would recommend starting to work on your Wurnos assessment by 10/12)</b>
Week Seven	<b>Final exam &amp; Wurnos assignment</b>	<b>Final due by 10/25</b> <b>Wurnos due by 10/27 (last day of course)</b>

- 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 final take home exam which will be due one week after the last class meeting (October 25th at midnight.) This needs to be submitted to instructor electronically.
- Online participation is required. There will be four short assignments online (see weeks 1, 3, 4, & 5) each worth 25 points. Week 1 just requires you to log in and introduce yourselves. Expectations for other assignments will be explained at the first class meeting.
- One clinical assessment will also be assigned. You will be writing an assessment on Aileen Wuornos (a woman found guilty of serial murder). It will be due by midnight on October 27<sup>th</sup>. It should be submitted electronically to instructor. Details on how this assessment should be done will be discussed at the first class meeting and through online instruction.
- **Late assignment policy:** Points will be deducted if assignments are turned in late. Assignment due dates are listed. No assignment will be accepted if more than one week late. (Last assignment—Wurnos—will not be accepted after last day of class which is October 27<sup>th</sup>.) Assignments lose 10% of points per day late.
- One can potentially earn up to 400 points (100 points for exam, 100 points for the clinical assessment, 100 points for the online assignments (25 points each) and 100 points for participation.)

## COURSE OUTLINE

**Week One Online: Begins Sep 7** Instructor and student introductions/expectations. Begin readings (Morrison). Read info posted online. Sign into discussion group to introduce yourself by Sunday, Sep12.

**Week Two Online:** Review assignment grid and readings assigned.

**First Class Weekend (Sep 18 & 19):** Read Morrison's, *The First Interview* and familiarize yourself with Zuckerman's *Clinical Thesaurus* prior to the first class meeting. **Please bring the Zuckerman book to class as you will be using it in to aid you in doing assessments that weekend.** The Zuckerman book is a great reference book and not really the kind of

book you read cover to cover---but do familiarize yourself with its layout as well as the key elements that are expected in a good clinical assessment.

***Saturday (Sep 18)***

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

***Sunday (Sep 19)***

- Risk assessments: Suicide, danger to others, substance abuse.
- Civil commitment procedure
- Differentiating forensic assessment from general clinical assessment.
- Overview of assessing for NGI (not guilty by reason of insanity) and 4011.6 (court ordered psychiatric evaluations.)

**Week Three Online:** Acquaintance interview. Due 9/27 midnight.

**Week Four Online:** Chief complaint and Mental Status exam assignment. Due 10/4 midnight.. This is your assessment on the video The Soloist.

**Week Five Online:** Readings. Civil commitment assignment due 10/11 midnight.

**Second In Class Weekend (October 16 & 17):** Read Meloy's *Violent Risk and Threat Assessment* and Ackerman's *Forensic Assessment* prior to class. **Also bring Zuckerman book to class again. (I'd recommend from 10/11 to 10/16 to begin working on your Wurnos assessment.)**

***Saturday (Oct 16)***

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

***Sunday (Oct 17)***

- Risk assessment
- Special population considerations.

**Week Six Online: Work on Wurnos assessment and take home final.**

**Class officially ends October 27<sup>th</sup>. Final is due 10/25. Wurnos due 10/27.**

**GRADING:**

Assessment One      100 points

**A** 381-400

Online assignments	100 points (25 pts each)	A-	360-380
Final Exam	100 points	B+	347-359
Participation	100 points	B	333-346
<b>Total Class Points: 400</b>		B-	320-332
		C	281-319
		F	<280

### **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.

### **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, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2001)*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<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.

Additionally, Argosy University considers resubmission of a work produced for one course in a subsequent course or the submission of work done partially or entirely by another to be academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the instructor regarding how much help may be received in completing an assignment, exam or project and what sources may be used.

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 are responsible for maintaining an electronic copy of any work submitted, because 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.

### **ADA Policy**

It is AU/San Francisco Bay Area Campus policy not to discriminate against qualified students with a documented disability in its educational programs, activities or services. If you have a disability-related need for accommodations in this class, contact the Campus Director of Student Services at 510-215-0277.

**Your instructor is responsible for delivering this curriculum in a format that will ensure the objectives are met and measured. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways depending upon the experience, orientation, technological acumen, emphasis and preferences of the instructor as well as the resources available. Your instructor is also required to ensure that the course Outline include details regarding assignments and method of instruction.**

### **MACP APA Style Requirements**

Minimum required elements of APA style for written assignments in first year courses include the following:

- Cover page that meets APA style requirements of elements and formatting (i.e., title of paper, name, course number/course name, Argosy University, semester or term and year, running head in left header, and page number in right header)
- Body of paper with critical voice (e.g., synthesis of opinions/ comments) supported by paraphrasing of credible sources using the two styles of APA citing

(out-of-text and in-text) with correct punctuation; avoid use of 1<sup>st</sup> person singular “I” (except personal reflection papers) and 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular “you;” use of third person plural “we” acceptable to reflect universal human experience

- Quoted passages to include author, year, and page number; emphasis on paraphrasing with minimal use of quotations to support critical voice
- Reference page that meets APA style requirements to include appropriate sources (e.g., no Wikipedia), references that match citations (e.g., no references listed that are not also cited), and correct formatting/punctuation
- APA style formatting to include 1” margins, running head in left header, page number in right header, Times New Roman 12 point font, left justification of all passages, indentation of 5 spaces for new paragraphs, 1 ½ line spacing and double sided pages (modified APA in spirit of promoting “green” for MACP program)
- Grammatical and punctuation errors edited to address incomplete sentences, run-on sentences, awkward sentences, inconsistent verb tense, inconsistent pronoun use, redundancy of ideas/words, use of extremes or superlatives (e.g., “always,” “never,” “very,”) and conversational or idiomatic language