

## Individual Assessment Course Syllabus

### Forensic Psychology (FP 6020 BLB, Fall I, 2009)

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

#### **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.

**Dates of Class:** Course begins online **September 8, 2006**, meets on the weekends of **September 26 & 27** and **October 10 & 11**, and concludes on **October 28, 2009**. 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): October 11, 2009

Fall Session II (7.5 week courses): December 2, 2009

Fall Full Term (15 week courses): November 14, 2009

#### **Required Texts:**

Ackerman, Marc J. (1999). *Essentials of Forensic Psychological Assessment*. New York: John Wiley and Sons ISBN: 0471331864 .

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, J. (1995) *The First Interview: Revised for DSM-IV*. Guilford: New York.

Zuckerman, E. L. (2005) *Clinician’s Thesaurus: The Guide to Conducting Interviews and Writing Psychological Reports, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.* New York: Guilford Press.  
ISBN: 1572304375

There are newer versions of Morrison and Zuckerman, but they are pretty similar (older or newer versions are acceptable for the class.)

**DVD's or Videos required:**

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

*A Beautiful Mind* 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

**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.

### **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.

**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:**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>READINGS</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT DUE</b>
<b>Week One</b>	<i>Morrison, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4</i> <i>Read online lecture</i>	<i>1. Sign into discussion group online and introduce yourself (by Friday, 9/10)</i> <i>2. Read online info on Torticelli case, watch Crime of Insanity on <a href="http://www.pbs.org">www.pbs.org</a>, and then sign onto online discussion group to discuss reactions to this case by 9/14 at midnight.</i>
<b>Week Two</b>	<i>Morrison Chapters 5, 6, 7,8</i> <i>Read online lecture</i>  <i>Zuckerman also has helpful sections on conducting and writing up interviews</i>	<i>Interview an acquaintance and gather their history. Write a short two page summary using the format provided online for Week Two. Send your interview write up to me at <a href="mailto:bfriendly@earthlink.net">bfriendly@earthlink.net</a> by 9/21 at midnight.</i>
<b>Week Three</b>	<i>Morrison Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Bring Morrison/Zuckerman to weekend class.</i>	<i>Meet in class 9/26 &amp; 9/27</i>
<b>Week Four</b>	<b>Ackerman Chapters</b>	<b>Chief complaint, hx of presenting problem, and MSE on The Beautiful Mind. Due 10/5</b>
<b>Week Five</b>	<b>Meloy</b> <b>Online readings on suicide</b>	<b>Meet in class 10/10 &amp; 10/11</b> <b>Violence assessment due by 10/13</b>
<b>Week Six</b>	<b>Ackerman</b>	<b>Final due by 10/19 at midnight</b>
<b>Week Seven</b>	<b>Selected chapters</b>	<b>Wurnos assignment due by 10/27 at midnight</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 19th at midnight.) This needs to be submitted to instructor electronically.
- Online participation is required. There will be four short assignments online (see weeks 1, 2, 4, & 5) each worth 25 points. Week 1 & 2 assignments will be explained online. Expectations for other assignments will be explained at the first class meeting on September 26.

- 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 28<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 8** Instructor and student introductions/expectations. Begin readings (Morrison). Read assessment info posted online. Sign into discussion group to introduce yourself by Friday, Sep11. Also go to [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org) to watch a one hour video entitled A Crime of Insanity. Log onto discussion thread to discuss your reaction by Monday, September 14.

**Week Two Online:** Read online lecture. Interview an acquaintance and write an interview summary using format presented online. Due Sep 19.

**First Class Weekend (Sep 26 & 27):** 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 26)*

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

### *Sunday (Sep 27)*

- 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 Four Online:** Chief complaint and Mental Status exam assignment. Due 10/5. This is your assessment on the video A Beautiful Mind.

**Week Five Online:** Will meet for 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend this week. Also a brief risk assessment will be due after weekend class on 10/13 by midnight.

**Second In Class Weekend (October 10 & 11):** Read Meloy's *Violent Risk and Threat Assessment* and Ackerman's *Forensic Assessment* prior to class. Also bring Zuckerman book to class again.

**Saturday (Oct 10)**

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

**Sunday (Oct 11)**

- Risk assessment
- Special population considerations.

**Week Six Online: Readings and FINAL DUE OCTOBER 19.**

**Week Seven Online: Oct 27:** Completion of Wournos assessment. Class closure, final issues. Class officially ends October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**GRADING:**

Assessment One	100 points	<b>A</b>	381-400
Online assignments	100 points (25 pts each, Wk 2,3, 4 & 5	<b>A-</b>	360-380
Final Exam	100 points	<b>B+</b>	347-359
Participation	100 points	<b>B</b>	333-346
		<b>B-</b>	320-332
		<b>C</b>	281-319
		<b>F</b>	<280
<b>Total Class Points: 400</b>			

### **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.

### **Library**

*All resources in Argosy University's online collection are available through the Internet. The campus librarian will provide students with links, user IDs, and passwords.*

Library Resources: Argosy University's core online collection features nearly 21,000 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>. Detailed descriptions of online resources are located at <http://library.argosy.edu/misc/onlinedblist.html>.

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. Students are encouraged to seek research and reference assistance from campus librarians.

Information Literacy: Argosy University's Information Literacy Tutorial was developed to teach students fundamental and transferable research skills. The tutorial consists of five modules where

students learn to select sources appropriate for academic-level research, search periodical indexes and search engines, and evaluate and cite information. In the tutorial, students study concepts and practice them through interactions. At the conclusion of each module, they can test their comprehension and receive immediate feedback. Each module takes less than 20 minutes to complete. Please view the tutorial at <http://library.argosy.edu/infolit/>

### **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, 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.

**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.

### **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.

### **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.