

ARGOSY UNIVERSITY SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA
COURSE SYLLABUS: FP6540
Forensic Psychology Seminar - Fall 2008
September 2 – December 13, 2008

Course Title: Forensic Psychology Seminar

Course Number: FP6540

Instructor: Neil Ross (510) 848-5306 Preferred
(510) 217-4749 AU
Nrossausfba@comcast.net

Office Hours:
Email, Phone, By Appointment
Tues, Weds, Thurs: 11-1PM

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 (indicated by bold type). Students may not withdraw from this course after the date 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):

Fall Session II (7.5 week courses):

Fall Full Term (15 week courses):

Required texts:

Roberts, A.R. (2003) *Critical Issues in Crime and Justice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. ISBN: 0761926860

For first week of class, week of 9/2/07, please:

Read Roberts text: Part I

Recommended texts for reference:

Baird, B. (1999). *The internship, practicum, and field placement handbook: A guide for the helping professions*. (2nd Ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Ed.). (2001). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Please note that there may be other additional readings for this course. Hard copy required readings may be given to you in class. Links to electronic copy required readings will be provided in the appropriate seminar module.

Prerequisites for Course: Successful completion of twenty-one (21) units in the MAFP program at AUSFBA.

Course Description:

The Forensic Psychology Seminar (a blended Course) is the capstone or culminating experience for students in the final semester of their candidacy for the Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology at AUSFBA.

The Forensic Psychology Seminar provides students the opportunity to integrate their coursework experience and knowledge of the field of forensic psychology in self-directed independent study through: (1) a major research paper; or (b) forensic fieldwork placement.

The Forensic Psychology Seminar will facilitate student knowledge-sharing of forensic professional development issues; experience and expertise conducting professional presentations; improvement student skills in areas of providing and receiving of constructive professional feedback; integrating knowledge and application of ethical issues as they pertain to forensic research and/or practice (via the field placement); increasing students' ability to synthesize forensic research with a professional work setting experience and/or within an independent research endeavor; and to explore and discuss several "frontier" areas of forensic psychology.

Course Objectives:

At the successful completion of the Forensic Psychology Seminar students will have developed the requisite skills to:

1. Analyze, synthesize and evaluate a major research topic in forensic psychology;
or
2. Apply and evaluate major forensic psychological theory, concepts of forensic practice methodology ethics, and program evaluation models to the experience of a field placement in a forensic agency or organization.
3. Write and orally present competently a major research paper or field placement report to the student's peers, faculty and colleagues.
4. Analyze, synthesize, evaluate and apply current and important topics and issues in forensic psychology and practice through active participation in seminar activities, independent research and observation, online discussion boards, and peer interaction and debate.

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 forensic psychologists and practitioners within society.

Methods of Instruction – This course will be delivered in a **blended format**, including four Seminars on-campus, Friday and/or Saturday one-day seminars combined with weekly online instruction. In addition to the four required Fridays on campus, students are required to participate online via eCollege at <http://www.myeclassonline.com/> **on a weekly basis** during the entire term of the course. The online component will include lectures, reading assignment, and class discussion on the online Discussion Board.

This course begins online on September 1, 2008, meets four times, usually monthly until the semester concludes on December 13, 2008.

Seminar Meeting Schedule:

Students and the instructor will decide on which Fridays and or Saturdays monthly during the semester the Seminar will meet and will so decide on the basis of students' schedules, weekend class commitments, travel and convenience. The Seminar will be comprised of both Day and Weekend MAFP program students. Friday Seminar meetings may be scheduled to accommodate Weekend program students the day before their weekend classes so they do not have to travel to campus an extra day a month, particularly those who may fly in from out of the Bay Area.

Please email me ASAP your preference for Fridays and/or Saturdays in September, October, November, and the first two weeks of December, and which dates you are UNABLE to attend.

However, if consensus cannot be reached, the instructor will decide on a monthly Friday and/or Saturday date each month.

Research Paper: In and about an area of forensic psychology theory, practice and/or research of major and central importance in the field and addressing a “cutting edge” issue or phenomenon in the field.

- Development of a Topic of Research
- Submission and Approval of Research Proposal
- History and Relevance of the Topic in Law and Forensic Psychology
- Current Status of Research and Findings
- Areas of Controversy
- Critique and Analysis of Existing Research
- Development of Original Ideas and/or Interpretations
- Suggestions for Further Research or Practice
- Extensive Relevant Bibliography
- Submission of Paper and Presentation in Forensic Psychology Seminar.

[Instructor is available at any time for consultation regarding the choice and completion of

the research paper.]

Field Placement: The focus the Forensic Psychology Seminar involves research, policy development, program planning and evaluation, administration, observation and participant observation, training, and other non-clinical activities in a forensic agency, organization, institution or program serving or offenders or victims. The field placement will involve:

- A natural history of the placement setting
- The application of criminal or civil laws and procedures
- An integration of forensic psychological knowledge and principles
- The application of ethical principles where appropriate
- Recognition and analysis of issues of consultation and communication with forensic and other professionals
- Addressing program development, implementation and evaluations issues
- The application and synthesis of relevant research to the placement setting and activities.
- Analyzing approaches, methods and interventions for service, assessment and/or treatment with offenders and/or victims
- Submission of Report and Its Presentation in Forensic Psychology Seminar.

[For both research papers and field placements students must provide weekly reports of actual progress on these assignments. The instructor's experience in the Seminar is that it is often too easy to put off work which leads to mediocre results and poor grades]

Content Areas:

1. Research Paper topics and Field Placement Sites to be chosen by students and approved by the seminar instructor.
2. Students will submit a weekly journal or report of their activities and progress with the expectations and assignments of the seminar. Office hours, telephone and email consultation will be available for students and the instructor at their mutual convenience.
3. Students and the instructor will confer about course content other than that relating to the Research Paper and Field Placement to be included in the Forensic Psychology Seminar. Such topics might include detailed exploration of a forensic psychology issue or topic, media presentations, in-depth group discussions and debates.
4. Students will be required to post weekly on the Forensic Psychology Seminar website and Discussion Board, and the postings will involve journal and progress reports as well as discussions of topics and issues presented by the instructor and through suggestions from seminar members.

[The instructor is available at any time for consultation regarding the choice and completion of the field placement.]

Weekly Schedule:

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The course weekly schedule for readings, Discussion Group postings, in-class assignments will be posted online on 9/2/2008 and then every Sunday thereafter beginning September 7, 2008. The instructor will be circulating and handing out many materials and articles for reading assignments. The initial reading assignments are listed above under Required Texts.

Student Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

Class Participation: Active, thoughtful, productive, relevant, and thought-provoking Participation in class and online in the Forensic Psychology Seminar. **(40%)**

Research Papers: A comprehensive research paper and literature review (outline, above) of the student's research topic written in APA Format is required; OR

Field Placement Report: A comprehensive qualitative research report (outline, above) and literature review, if appropriate, of the student' field placement experience and analysis written in APA Format is required. **(40%)**

Presentations: The Forensic Psychology Seminar involves the oral presentation of the student's Research Paper or Field Placement Paper. Students will be required to post their written Research Paper or Field Placement summaries online the week before the presentation date. The oral presentation, then, will be a time to present and explore the papers in more detail and with greater nuance and should not be read *verbatim*. For the oral presentations, students are recommended to use either an LCD projector with Power Point or an overhead projector if they would enhance the presentation important Ways. The completed papers themselves will be emailed in electronic (attachment) form to the instructor by December 20, 2008. **(30%)**

Criteria for Class and Online Participation

Grade	
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 >80% of class sessions; most of the comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings
C = 70 – 79	Student participated in discussions in >70% of class sessions; comments/questions demonstrate a surface level understanding of course topics
F = <70	Student participated in <70% of class sessions; comments/questions did not demonstrate an understanding of course topics, or student did not participate in class discussions.

Criteria for Class Presentations:

Grade	
A = 90+	Presentation is well organized and provides excellent coverage of the topic area; informative visual aids provided to the instructor and classmates
B = 80 – 89	Presentation is well organized and provides adequate coverage of the topic area
C = 70 – 79	Coverage of material is marginal; presentation is slightly disorganized
F = <70	Presentation is disorganized and does not provide adequate coverage of the topic area, or presentation was not completed by student.

Criteria for Research Papers and Field Placement Papers:

Grade	
A = 90+	Paper is in appropriate APA format, well thought out and provides excellent coverage of material
B = 80 – 89	Paper is well thought out, but is missing one component of APA format OR coverage of material is adequate
C = 70 – 79	Insufficient number of references provided AND limited coverage
F = <70	Paper is disorganized AND coverage is not adequate AND does not conform to APA format, or there is evidence of plagiarism , or paper not submitted

Grading

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
69 below	F

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