

ARGOSY UNIVERSITY SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

COURSE SYLLABUS: FP6010

Psychology and the Legal System

Fall 2007

Wednesdays 2:00-5:00 PM

September 7, 2007 – December 15, 2007

Course Title: Psychology and the Legal System

Course Number: FP6010

Instructor: Neil Ross (510) 848-5306 - Preferred
(510) 837-3739

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30 to 4:00 PM
Thursdays 10 AM -12 Noon

Required Text:

Wrightsman, L.; Greene, E.; Nietzel, M.T. & Fortune, W.H. (2007). *Psychology and the Legal System, 6th Ed.* Thompson Learning: Belmont, CA. ISBN: 0534521061

Course Description:

This course, *Psychology and the Legal System*, is designed as an introduction to the relationship of and interaction between the fields of psychology and the administration of justice, criminal and civil. The course will explore the historical and the research contributions of psychology to the justice system involving competency, insanity, juvenile justice, family courts, risk assessments, police psychology, eyewitness and expert testimony, and correctional services. Selected topics will be covered in more detail including psychopathy, dangerousness and professional forensic ethics.

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 Full Term (15 week courses): November 12, 2007

Fall First Session (7 ½ week courses): October 8, 2007

Fall Second Session (7 ½ week courses): November 29, 2007

Course Objectives:

After the successful completion of this course students will have developed the skills to:

1. Describe and analyze the professional roles and responsibilities that psychologists and forensic services personnel provide throughout the administration of justice.
2. Analyze the legal concepts and terminology about which psychologists are expected to make interpretations, to validate and to testify.
3. Demonstrate and integrate knowledge of the diversity of psychological research which impacts the legal system and its forensic psychological components.
4. Analyze and integrate the statutory and case law that governs the interface of law and the behavioral

- sciences and mental health practice.
5. Describe and analyze the ethical and sociocultural issues that arise in the practice and application of forensic psychology.
 6. Integrate psychological research and theory with their applications to the legal system in areas of expert and eyewitness testimony, jury selections, criminal justice personnel selection, child abuse and child custody issues, criminal profiling and polygraphy, and criminal sentencing.

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.

Methods of Instruction:

This course will be delivered in a **weekday format**, including lectures and discussions, and media presentations videos, and role-plays combined with regular reading and out-of-class assignments. Students are required to attend classes weekly on Mondays from 2:00PM-5:00PM. This course semester begins on Monday, September 7, 2007 and concludes on December 15, 2007. Our first class will meet Monday, September 10, 2007. *[At that time we will discuss adjusting our schedule to accommodate any Monday holidays]*

Content Areas

1. History of psychology and the law
2. Law and psychology: symbiosis or adversarial
3. Case law and statutes relating to forensic psychology
4. The psychologist as expert witness
5. Assessment, evaluations, testing, and the law
6. Psychology and civil proceedings: litigation, custody, competency
7. Forensic psychology and law enforcement and corrections
8. Psychological research and the legal system: eyewitness testimony, jury selection. criminal profiling, polygraphy.

Schedule of Course Content:

Introduction and Comments:

As you have read and surmised from the course Syllabus and the text, we have much to do in this course. Since most of us will be working in one professional capacity or another in the areas of forensic services and the administration of justice, it is imperative that we have a working knowledge of the principles, methodology and vocabulary of those systems. This would be the case even if we were working in the areas of victim advocacy, child protective services, divorce mediation, or with clients who were court mandated to services.

If we decide to pursue an education and career in counseling and treatment services, including non-forensic client services, there is little question that our caseloads will be comprised of clients with actual or potential legal problems. Such might include domestic violence, child custody, a DUI, shoplifting, substance use/abuse, civil litigation or divorce, disturbing the peace, and so on. Whereas at the clinic I worked I saw many, many severely disturbed and dangerous clients, in my private practice I saw people who punched a meter maid, had a DUI, were diverted for domestic violence, were “peeping Toms”, shoplifted, were victims of abuse, neglect, and violence, including “hate crimes”, were arrested for solicitation, and so on. Knowledge about how the civil and criminal systems operate is imperative for all clinicians as well as those of us who work in the administration of justice and victim and offender advocacy arenas.

Your textbook was written originally by the “dean” of American academic forensic psychology, Lawrence Wrightsman, and his colleagues and is the best introduction to *Psychology and the Legal System*. Professor Wrightsman, of the University of Kansas, is an esteemed forensic psychologist and researcher who continues to teach, research and write avidly in his older years. His other book, *Forensic Psychology*, I am sure you will encounter in other courses here at Argosy. Professor Wrightsman has semi-retired and his colleagues have updated the historical Wrightsman text, now including Professor Wrightsman’s name in the title: “*Wrightsmans’ Psychology and the Legal System*”, quite an honor.

We will review the content of this textbook in class, assignments, and examinations. However – you are responsible for mastering most the material in the Wrightsman textbook. It is written well, clearly, and cogently. Our in-class lectures and assignments will focus on complementary, supplementary, and “cutting edge” theory and research in this field not touched upon in the text or not in enough detail and elaboration.

Enjoy this course, its subject matter, the wonderful history and people involved in this most exciting and basic discipline in behavioral science, which we call forensic psychology, the application of psychological theory, research and practice to the administration of justice.

Week #1: Nature, Quality, Philosophy and History of Psychology and the Law.

1. Introductions by class members
2. Assignments of teams, topics, and due dates for literature review, term papers and presentations.
3. Course modifications and changes.
4. Handouts for following class meeting.
5. Lecture and online discussion: Nature, Quality, Philosophy and History of Behavioral Science and the Law: The Great Debate.
6. Assignment:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 1 and 2 **{BY this class – reading assignments to be completed before each class meeting of the course}**

Week #2:

1. Review of Week 1

2. Teams: Discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and online discussion: Formal Roles in the Administration of Justice
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapters 2 – *The Legal System and Its Players* and any handouts or other assignments distributed last week before this class week.
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #1

Week #3: Psychological Theory and Crime

1. Review of Week 2
2. Teams: Discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and online discussion: What and who make the criminal?
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 3 -- *Psychology of Crime* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #2

Week #4: Law Enforcers

1. Review of Week 3 and examination
2. Teams: Meet, discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and online discussion: It started with Peel
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 4 – *Psychology of Police* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Weeks #3

Week #5: The Witness

1. Review of Week 4
2. Teams: Meet, discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and online discussion: *Rashomon*
5. Examination: Weeks 1-5
6. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 5 – *Crime Investigation: Witnesses* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #4

Week #6: Arrest and Investigation

1. Review of Week 5 and examination
2. Teams: Meet, discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and discussion: “Who’s the culprit?”
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 6, -- *Identification and Evaluation of Criminal Suspects* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #5

Week #7: Detention, Bail, Prosecution, Defense, and Plea

1. Review of Week 6
2. Teams: Meet, discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting
4. Lecture and discussion: A Speedy Trial?
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 7 – *Between Arrest and Trial* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #6

Week #8: Criminal Responsibility

1. Review of Week 7
2. Teams: Meet, discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting
4. Lecture and discussion: *Competere* and *Mens rea*
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 8 – *Forensic Assessment in Criminal Cases: Competence and Insanity* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #7

Week #9: Civil Responsibility

1. Review of Week 8
2. Teams: Meet, discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting
4. Lecture and discussion: Who is the injured party?
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 9 – *Forensic Assessment in Civil Cases* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #8

Week #10: The Trial

1. Review of Week 9
2. Team Presentations and Moderating Discussion
3. Handouts for following class meeting
4. Lecture and discussion: Guilty or Not Guilty
5. Examination
6. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 10 – *The Trial Process* before class meeting
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #9

Week #11: *Bona patria I*

1. Review of Week 10
2. Team Presentations and Moderating Discussion
3. Handouts for following class meeting

4. Lecture and discussion:
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 11 -- *Jury Trials I: Jury Representativeness and Selection* before class meeting.
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #10

Week #12: *Bona patria II*

1. Review of Week 11
2. Team Presentations
3. Handouts for following class meeting
4. Lecture and discussion: "A jury consists of twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer!" – Robert Frost
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 12 -- *Jury Trials II: Concerns and Reforms* before class meeting.
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #11

Week #13: Victimology

1. Review of Week 12
2. Handouts for following class meeting
3. Team Presentations
4. Lecture and discussion: Who is harmed by Crime?
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 13 -- *Psychology of Victims* before class meeting.
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #12

Week #14: Child and Juvenile Justice

1. Review of Week 13
2. Handouts for following class meeting
3. Team Presentations and Moderation of Discussion
4. Lecture and discussion: The Innocence of Youth
5. Assignments:
 - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 14 – *Children, Adolescents and the Law* before class meeting.
 - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #13

Week #15: Criminal Sanctions and Rehabilitation

1. Review of Week 14
2. Team Presentations and Moderation of Discussion
3. Examination
4. Lecture and discussion: *Dura lex sed lex*
5. Course Wrap-Up
6. Assignments:

- a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 15 – *Punishment, Sentencing and Corrections* before class meeting
- b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #14
- c. Submit papers to instructor by Monday, December 18, 2006

Student Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures:

Class Participation: Students are expected to regularly and actively participate in class discussions, raise issues and questions, and offer ideas and answers raised by others in class including the instructor. The instructor has one rule: There are no mistakes that can be made in class! We do not learn anything before we learn it! We did not walk without falling down a lot! We are human and not prescient and omniscient! So say, ask, comment anytime you wish! OK? It is our responsibility as students of the field and professionals to listen to others, not interrupt, and to be exemplars of politeness in classes. **(30%)**

Examinations: There will be three examinations – short-answer, essay question that should not take more than an hour each at the class meeting Class #5, Class #10, and Class #15. **(30%)**

Papers: During Class#1, students will be randomly assigned to teams of two or three students to complete a literature review and term paper on a topic in *Psychology and the Legal System*, also randomly assigned, and to present during class time (the class date also randomly assigned) beginning with Class #11 and through Class #15. **(30%)**

Presentations: Students will co-present a team, class presentation of approximately one-half hour, including discussion, of their assigned literature review and topic in the field of *Psychology and the Legal System*. **(10%)**

Students are strongly urged to be in contact with the instructor at **any** time before, during and after the course regarding course content and process, expectations, confusion, ideas, and clarifications nrossausfba@comcast.net; (510) 848-5306

Criteria for Class 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 Presentation

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 Paper

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.

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.