

**ARGOSY UNIVERSITY SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS: FP6010 Online**  
**Psychology and the Legal System**  
Fall 2007 – Weekend Program  
**ONLINE**  
September 7, 2007 – October 24, 2007

**Course Title:** Psychology and the Legal System

**Course Number:** FP6010

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-4PM  
Thursdays 10-12Noon  
Or by appointment, phone or email

**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 and interaction between the field of psychology and the administration of justice, criminal and civil. The course will explore the historical and procedural contributions of psychology to the justice system including 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 explain 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:**

For students in the weekend MAFP program, this course will be delivered in an **online format** at eCollege.com -- <http://www.myeclassonline.com/> -- for the entire 7.5 week term of the course. The course begins on September 7, 2007 and concludes on December 15, 2007. Lectures and Assignments will be posted by the instructor each Sunday night and all work for the week is to be completed by the following Sunday at midnight PDT. Reading assignments of various kinds, online lectures, online Discussion Group topics, and other resources will be posted each Sunday.

### **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. Forensic psychology and victims of crime
9. Counseling and treatment of victims and offenders
10. 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-attachments for following class meeting.
5. Lecture and online discussion: Nature, Quality, Philosophy, Roles and History of Behavioral Science and the Law: The Great Debates.
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. No handouts-attachments this week
4. Lecture and online discussion: Psychology and the Law: Basic and Applied Research
5. Assignments:
6.
  - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapters 3 and 4 and any handouts or other assignments distributed last week before this class week.
  - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #1 before class meeting

### **Week #3:**

1. Review of Week 2
2. Teams: Discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and online discussion: Investigation and Identification
5. Examination: Weeks 1-3
6. Assignments:
  - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapters 5 and 6 before class meeting
  - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #2 before class meeting

### **Week #4:**

1. Review of Week 3 and examination
2. Teams: Discuss and report
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and online discussion: The Administration of Justice
5. Assignments:
  - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapters 7 and 10 before class meeting
  - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #3

### **Week #5:**

1. Review of Week 4
2. Team presentations and Moderating Discussion Group
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and online discussion: Forensic Psychological Assessments
5. Examination: Weeks 4-5
6. Assignments:
  - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 8 and 9 before class meeting
  - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #4

### **Week #6:**

1. Review of Week 5 and examination
2. Handouts for following class meeting.
3. Team presentations and Moderating Discussion Group
4. Lecture and online discussion: A Jury of One's Peers
5. Assignments:

- a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 11 and 12 before class meeting
- b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #5

### **Week #7:**

1. Review of Week 6
2. Team presentations and Moderating Discussion Group
3. Handouts for following class meeting.
4. Lecture and discussion: Victims, Minors, and the Law
5. Assignments:
  - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapters 13 and 14
  - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #6

### **Week #8:**

1. Review of Week 7
6. Team Presentations and Moderating Discussion Group
7. Lecture and discussion: *Dura lex sed lex!*
8. Assignments:
  - a. Read: Wrightsman text: Chapter 15
  - b. Read any handouts or other assignments from Week #7

### **Student Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures:**

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to regularly and actively participate in online class discussions (the Discussion Group), raise issues and questions with each other and the instructor, and offer ideas and answers posted by others in the Discussion Group including the instructor. The instructor has one rule: There are no mistakes that can be made in this class! We do not know 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, respond, comment anytime you wish! OK?

(There is a human tendency for us all to pat each other on the back about our course posts; that is fine, yet, so is honest critique. That is what academic study is all about! As well, there is a tendency in discussions to offer one's opinions, beliefs, attitudes to discussion topics, e.g., "What grandma told me about 'bad people'". Our discussions need primarily to be based on *empirical evidence* and other materials presented in course readings and lectures, NOT beliefs and opinions. (25%)

**Examinations:** There will be three examinations – involving short-answer, essay question that should not take more than an hour each at the beginning of Week #3, Week #5, and Week #8 (i.e., Week 7.5).

There will be a 24 hour time limit for completion of the examinations from the time of emailing to when they are due back to the instructor.(30%)

**Papers:** During this course, students will be randomly assigned to teams of two to 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 and post their papers during Weeks 5-8 (the week also randomly assigned).(30%)

**Presentations:** Teams will moderate the online discussion during their week's posting of papers. (15%)

### Criteria for Class Participation

Grade	
A = 90+	Student actively participated in discussions in <b>&gt;80%</b> of class sessions; <b>nearly all</b> comments were <b>thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings</b>
B = 80 – 89	Student actively participated in discussions in <b>&gt;80%</b> of class sessions; <b>most</b> of the comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings
C = 70 – 79	Student participated in discussions in <b>&gt;70%</b> of class sessions; comments/questions demonstrate a surface level understanding of course topics
F = <70	Student participated in <b>&lt;70%</b> of class sessions; comments/questions did not demonstrate an understanding of course topics, or <b>student did not participate</b> in class discussions.

### Criteria for Class Presentation

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

### Criteria for Paper

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

**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.**