

**ARGOSY UNIVERSITY SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS: FP6010**  
**Psychology and the Legal System**  
Fall 2006 – Wednesdays 2:00-5:00 PM

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

**Course Number:** FP6010

**Instructor:** Neil Ross (510) 848-5306  
[nrossausfba@comcast.net](mailto:nrossausfba@comcast.net)

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays – 1:30PM to 4:00PM  
(510) 837-3739

**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.

**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.

**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 Wednesdays from 2:00-5:00PM. This course semester begins on Tuesday, September 5, 2006 and concludes on December 16, 2006. Our first class will meet Wednesday, September 6, 2006. *[At that time we will discuss adjusting our schedule to accommodate the Wednesday before Thanksgiving if we want to change that class meeting.]*

### **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:**

*[Students will receive the course schedule and reading and other assignments for the course from the instructor mid-August, 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? **(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](mailto:nrossausfba@comcast.net); (510) 848-5306

### **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 OR coverage of material is <b>adequate</b>
C = 70 – 79	Insufficient number of references provided AND <b>limited</b> coverage
F = <70	Paper is disorganized AND coverage is not adequate AND 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

### 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.**