

Individual Assessment Course Syllabus

Forensic Psychology (FP 6020 A, Fall, Day Program 2006)

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Office hours: By appointment,
email and/or telephone

Dates of Class: Course begins **September 5th** and ends on **December 16th. 9:30 am to 12:30 pm Thursday.** (course does not meet on Thanksgiving week.)

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, 6th Ed.* New York: Guilford Press.
ISBN: 1572304375 (Highly recommended)

DVD's or Videos required:

Students will need to locate the following video to use for assessment write up: *Monster* (with Charlize Theron) and *Aileen Wurnos: Life and Death of a Serial Killer*. (these are her 2002 interviews) for full assessment due on date to be discussed first week in class. 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.

Methods of Instruction:

This course will be delivered through a combination of in class lecture, discussion, video, and role-plays.

Course Assignments and Student Expectations:

- 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 the last class that we meet December 16. This needs to be submitted to instructor electronically.
- There will be a number of short assignments that will aid you in developing both interviewing skills, assessment development, and write up. Some of these will occur in class and some will be take home assignments to be turned in on the following class.
- One clinical assessment will be assigned. You will be writing an assessment on Aileen Wuornos (a woman found guilty of serial murder). Details on how this assessment should be done will be discussed at the first class meeting and through online instruction.
- Points will be deducted if assignments are turned in late. One can potentially earn up to 400 points (100 points for exam, 100 points for the clinical assessment, 100 points for the short assignments and 100 points for participation.)

COURSE OUTLINE

Read the first three chapters in Morrison prior to attending the first class. We will be discussing the general course overview at the first course meeting. Initially this course will focus on conducting general psychological interviews and writing assessments (i.e. getting history, mental status exam, provisional diagnosis, suicide risk, etc). After you have built your skills in this area, we will focus on particular assessments performed in a forensic setting (i.e. incompetency to stand trial, not guilty by reason of insanity, civil commitment, etc.) A more detailed syllabus delineating what will be covered over each session will be given to you the first day of class.

GRADING:

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

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.

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.

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), 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.