

Individual Assessment Course Syllabus

Forensic Psychology (FP 6020 BLA, Fall I, 2006)

Instructor: Brenda Frechette, Ph.D.

Email: bfriendly@earthlink.net

Phone: 415 507-2971

Office hours: By appointment,
email and/or telephone

Dates of Class: Course begins online **September 5, 2006**, meets on the weekends of **September 9 & 10** and **October 7 & 8**, and concludes on **October 25, 2006**. There will be weekly instruction online throughout the term.

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 videos to use for assessment write up:

She's So Lovely (with Sean Penn) for assignment due on September 17th.

Monster (with Charlize Theron) and *Aileen Wurnos: Life and Death of a Serial Killer*. (these are her 2002 interviews) for full assessment due on October 6th.

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 in a **blended format**, including in class lecture and discussion, video, and role-plays combined with online instruction. In addition to the two required weekends on campus, students are required to participate online via Embanet-

Interlearn at <http://online.argosyu.edu> on a weekly basis during the entire term of the course.

Course Assignments and Student Expectations:

- Students will be expected to attend class regularly and be ready to discuss required readings. **SEE OUTLINE BELOW FOR READING ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS.**
- 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 one week after the last class meeting (October 22nd at midnight.) This needs to be submitted to instructor electronically.
- Online participation is required. There will be four short assignments online (see weeks 2, 3, 4, & 5) each worth 25 points. Week 2 questions will be explained online. Expectations for the assignments will be explained at the first class meeting on September 9.
- One clinical assessment will also be assigned. You will be writing an assessment on Aileen Wuornos (a woman found guilty of serial murder). It will be due by 8am on October 15th. It should be submitted electronically to instructor. 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 online assignments (25 points each) and 100 points for participation.)

COURSE OUTLINE

Week One Online: Begins Sep 5 Instructor and student introductions/expectations. Begin readings (Morrison). Read assessment info posted on embanet.

First Class Weekend (Sep 9 & 10): Read Morrison's, *The First Interview* and familiarize yourself with Zuckerman's *Clinical Thesaurus* prior to the first class meeting. **Please bring the Zuckerman book to class as you will be using it in to aid you in doing assessments that weekend.** The Zuckerman book is a great reference book and not really the kind of book you read cover to cover---but do familiarize yourself with its layout as well as the key elements that are expected in a good clinical assessment.

Saturday (Sep 9)

- Introductions. Course overview and expectations.
- Key elements of a clinical assessment.
- Conducting a mental status exam.

Sunday (Sep 10)

- Risk assessments: Suicide, danger to others, substance abuse.
- Civil commitment procedure
- Differentiating forensic assessment from general clinical assessment.
- Overview of assessing for NGI (not guilty by reason of insanity) and 4011.6 (court ordered psychiatric evaluations.)

Week Two Online: Sep 11 Building an assessment. Facts versus opinion. Assessment review assignment. Due Sep 17. Log onto embanet. Read attached assessments under Week 2 lecture. Answer questions.

Week Three Online: Sep 18 Chief complaint and Mental Status exam assignment. Due Sep 24.

Week Four Online: Sep 25 Determining incompetence to stand trial and not guilty by reasons of insanity. Mental statute assignment. Due Oct 1.

Week Five Online: Oct 1 Risk assessment and civil commitment review. Vignette discussion. Due by Oct 6.

Second In Class Weekend (October 7 & 8): Read Meloy's *Violent Risk and Threat Assessment* and Ackerman's *Forensic Assessment* prior to class. **Also bring Zuckerman book to class again.**

Saturday (Oct 7)

- Practice with forensic assessment.
- More on incompetence assessment.
- Psychopathy.
- Malingering and/or factitious disorder.

Sunday (Oct 8)

- Risk assessment
- Special population considerations.
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Week Six Online: Oct 9 Writing a forensic assessment. Wurnos assessment due by October 15, 8am (send electronically.)

Week Seven Online: Oct 15 Completion of final exam and feedback on assessments.

Week Eight Online: October 22nd FINAL DUE ON OCT 22nd, 8AM. Class closure and final issues. **Class ends October 25th..**

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.