

ARGOSY UNIVERSITY  
San Francisco Bay Area Campus

**Course Syllabus**

**Course Title**

Professional and Ethical Issues in Forensic Psychology

**Course Number**

FP6500

**Semester**

Spring, 2007

**Instructor**

William Pickens, MA

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**Required Texts**

Wrightsman, L. W. & Fulero, S. M. (2005). *Forensic Psychology* (2nd edition).  
Wadsworth. ISBN 0-534-63225-4

*APA Ethics Code*-can be retrieved at <http://www.apa.org/ethics/>

*Forensic Specialty Guidelines*-can be retrieved at <http://www.unl.edu/apls/foren.pdf>

**Course Description**

This course is designed to introduce students to professional ethics, standards, state laws, and board of psychology rules which apply to the different roles and obligations of practitioners in forensic psychology. The primary foci of the course will be on knowledge of the content and application of professional ethics and legal standards in such areas as dual relationships, informed consent, confidentiality, record keeping, malpractice and professional liability. Students will be introduced to the standards of competent practice in specific areas such as risk assessment, custody evaluations, trial consultation, discrimination, expert witness to name a few.

**Relationship to Argosy University Mission and Curriculum**

As future leaders for enhancing change, students gain knowledge of the structure and administrative practices of the professional associations and state regulatory authorities providing leadership in forensic psychology.

This course will assist students in learning to embed the multicultural, historical, and global perspectives in critical thinking. This differentiated perspective is the portal to expanded awareness and knowledge of geopolitical and socio-cultural /environmental dynamics operating in the field of psychological theory, research, clinical practice, and public policy.

Special attention will be focused on issues specifically related to diversity, to childhood and adolescents, and to aging illness and death. To address these three key areas, students will be required to first engage in assessment and evaluation of personal value systems as it relates of each the aforementioned areas. Within the context of the self-examination of personal values and beliefs, students will be introduced legal and ethical standards relative to diversity, childhood and adolescents, and aging and death through a combination of lecture, class discussion, readings and vignettes.

### **Course Objectives**

- 1) Ability to identify, use, and critique legal and ethical issues in forensic psychology.
- 2) Students will become familiar with the different ethical obligations required of psychologists engaged in various roles within the legal and criminal justice systems.
- 3) Awareness of personal values and distinctions between personal values, legal standards, professional ethical principles applied in forensic psychology.
- 4) Review a diverse set of practical examples of potential ethical violations and discuss in class the proper outcomes with colleagues and instructor in structured classroom sessions. The three special focus topics will be included in these exercises.
- 5) Students will come to understand practice obligations such as record keeping, confidentiality; and the extent of privilege protections and their obligations under the duty to warn.

### **Methods of Instruction**

This course will be delivered in 15 afternoon sessions on Thursdays from 1400 to 1700hours. It will include classroom lectures, discussion, video, role plays and student presentations. All exams, assignments, and papers will be administered and/or due on their respective dates. No late work will be accepted without prior permission from the instructor.

### **Content Area**

The course follows the text at the pace of approximately one chapter per week:

#### **Week 1**

Chapter 1

#### **Week 2**

Chapter 2 and 3

**Week 3**

Chapter 4 and 5

**Week 4**

Chapter 6

**Week 5**

Chapter 7

**Week 6**

Chapter 8

*Midterm Exam*

**Week 7**

Chapter 9

**Week 8**

Chapter 10

**Week 9**

Chapter 11

**Week 10**

Chapter 12

**Week 11**

Chapter 13

**Week 12**

Chapter 14 and 15

**Week 13**

Chapter 16

*Final Paper due*

**Week 14**

No new readings

Final Paper Due

Vignettes Exercises and class presentations

**Week 15**

Class presentations and review

*Final Exam*

## **Student Evaluation**

Criteria for determining a student's grade will be as follows:

- 1) Class participation: 15%
- 2) Midterm Exam: 25%
- 3) Final Exam: 25%
- 4) Paper: 25%
- 5) Class presentation: 10%

## **Grading Criteria**

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 and 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 *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* (2001). Students are encouraged to purchase this manual 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 may be asked to submit your course assignments through “Turnitin,” ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), an online resource established to help educators to 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.**