



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA CAMPUS

999-A Canal Boulevard • Point Richmond, California 94804-3547 • phone 510-215-0277 • fax 510-215-0299

## COURSE SYLLABUS

**Course Title:** The Psychology of The Victim

**Course Number:** FP - 6525

**Required Texts:**

1. Victimology. Sgarzi, Judith & McDevitt, Jack Prentice Hall (2002) ISBN: 0134372867
2. Social and Psychological Consequences of Violent Victimization Ruback, R. Barry Sage Publications, (2001) Thousand Oaks, California ISBN: 0-7619-1041-7.
3. Understanding Violence & Victimization. Meadows, Robert. Prentice Hall (2004) ISBN: 0131119672
4. (OPTIONAL TEXT) - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Shapiro, Francine. Guilford Press (2001) ISBN: 1572306726

**Course Description:** Introductory graduate course focusing on the psychology of victims and the social context of victimization. Various types of victimization including violent, sexual, psychological, child abuse and domestic partner abuse will be studied. Theoretical etiological and social-psychological factors will be presented. A special emphasis will be placed on the evaluation and treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the theoretical connections between early and sustained experiences of trauma as an antecedent to criminal behavior.

**Prerequisite Knowledge or Courses:** Graduate Status

**Course Objectives:**

- Students will learn to interpret and define the social construction of victimization in American society as reflected in popular culture and mass media.
- Students will become familiar with the common psychological effects of trauma and the most common mental health diagnoses found in persons who experience victimization.
- An overview of a variety of treatment techniques used to ameliorate trauma specific conditions will be introduced and evaluated.
- Students will gain a working understating of the commonalities between victims and offenders and will consider the complexities of working with individuals who are both.
- While most victims of violent crime are men, special populations of victims will be evaluated, including children, women and cultural minorities.



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The psychological and schematic effects of working with traumatized individuals will be evaluated along with popular theoretical conceptions of vicarious trauma.

**Methods of Instruction:** FP-6525 is a blended, on-line/on-campus course.

**Content Areas:** American society today is obsessed with victimization. While theories about early childhood trauma are often presented as “explanations,” for criminal behavior, these theories are not generally supported empirically. While America imprisons more criminals than any other country, we as a society, do little to support crime victims. Forensic practitioners must constantly be aware of the essential dichotomy between victim and offender and offender as victim. Trauma as a psychological diagnosis remains an extremely common but largely misunderstood phenomenon. In the history of psychological theory, the development of a shared phenomenology of trauma and subsequently appropriate clinical technique is a recent event. An exploration of trauma and victimization is essential to the development of a professional forensic perspective. Forensic practitioners will spend substantial time working with offenders who are themselves experienced both as victims and those who victimize.



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## **Schedule:**

### **Section – 1**

#### **The Social Context & Consequences of Victimization (Victimology)**

- The social psychology of victimization
- Victimization as a social phenomenon
- Representation of victims in media
- Hollywood & Victims
- "News"
- Societal responses to victims
- Service value allocation between victims & offenders
- Addressing Personal Responsibility
- Raising a Nation of Victims & Predators

### **Section - 2**

#### **Psychological Effects of Trauma & Victimization (Psychology of Trauma)**

- Levels of victimization (Degrees of Victimization)
- Trauma based diagnoses
  - PTSD
  - ASD
  - DSM Criteria
- Specific Phobias, Adjustment Disorders, Repetition Compulsions etc.

### **Section – 3**

#### **Treatments for Trauma Based Conditions**

- Cognitive Therapy
- Medications
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Dissociative behaviors
- EMDR



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## **Section - 4**

### Dialectics In Trauma & Victimization, The Forensic Dichotomy

- Assessing offenders with history of trauma
- Assessing offender recidivism risk based upon counter phobias due to trauma
- Dynamics of Sexual predation
- Reaction formation type behaviors
- The difficulty in managing an individual who is simultaneously victim & offender
- Cluster-B Disorders – Borderline Personality Disorder and Severe Personality Disordered Persons

## **Section – 5**

### Disaster Response

- Critical Incident's Defined –
- Stress – Distress Cycle
- CISD – History and Controversy around Lay & Professional “Debriefing”
- Mitchell Model Debriefing

## **Section – 6**

### Crime Profiles

- Statistical Overview of Occurrences of Violent Crime
- Trends in Criminal Behavior & Victimization
- Profiles of Violence and Victimization

## **Section – 7**

### Special Considerations for Women & Youthful Offenders

- Trauma history and correlations
- Trauma cycles
- Domestic Violence
  - Most common call for police service
  - Lengthy history of permissive social culture
  - Multiple contributing psychological factors that provoke & maintain
- Prostitution
- Evaluating Childhood sexual & physical abuse as possible antecedents to criminal behavior, statistics and profiles.



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## Section – 8

### Vicarious Effects of Working With Victims

- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious PTSD
- Altered World View
- Emergency Responder Exhaustion Syndrome.

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

#### **Criteria for Class Participation**

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



**Criteria for Class Presentation**

Grade	
A = 90+	Presentation is well organized and provides excellent 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, <b>or student did not complete presentation.</b>

**Criteria for Papers**

Grade	
A = 90+	Paper is in an appropriate APA format, well thought out and provided excellent coverage of material.
B = 80 – 89	Paper is well thought out, but is missing one component of APA format OR coverage of material is adequate.
C = 70 – 79	Insufficient number of references provided AND limited 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 request 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



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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 for 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 who serves as the Disability Services Coordinator.

**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.**