

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Introduction to Forensic Psychology**

#### **Course Description**

BS 225. Introduction to Forensic Psychology. 3 hours credit. Prerequisite: AJ 121 and BS 160 with a C or better. This course will enable the student to understand the relationship between psychology, law, and ethical issues demonstrating how psychological research and theory can inform and influence the legal system.

#### **Course Relevance**

This course is a prerequisite to higher level classes allowing the student to advance to that position. This course will expose the student to various career possibilities such as law, psychology, forensics, or many other opportunities. This course will enable the student to be better citizens in regard to jury duty or case witnesses.

#### **Required Materials**

Blackburn, R. (1998). *Psychology of criminal conduct: theory, research, and practice*.  
Wiley

#### **Learning Outcomes**

The intention is for the student to be able to

1. Analyze the role of psychological theory in the investigative process
2. Apply skills of the forensic psychologist to the investigation process, within the legal and ethical frameworks
3. Interact with government agencies

#### **Primary Learning PACT Skills that will be DEVELOPED and/or documented in this course**

Through the student's involvement in this course, he/she will develop his/her ability in the following primary PACT skill areas:

1. Critical Thinking
  - The student will develop critical thinking and analytical skills through written assignments and other activities conducted in class and develop workable solutions and outcomes applied to psychological paradigms and judicial case law.

#### **Secondary skills (developed but not documented):**

Team Work  
Ethical Conduct  
Historical Interpretation  
Writing  
Speaking

Effective Citizenship  
Problem Solving  
Reading  
Listening  
Computer Literacy

### **Major Summative Assessment Task(s)**

These learning outcomes and the primary learning PACT skills will be demonstrated by

1. Completion of a research paper which analyzes case studies to show what part psychological theory played in the investigative process
2. In class role modeling of the forensic psychologist applying psychological knowledge to the investigative process, interacting with government agencies and complying with the legal process

### **Course Content**

- I. Themes – Key recurring concepts that run throughout the course:
  - A. Psychological/medical theory compared to judicial standards
  - B. Application and consistency of legal vs. mental health issues and punishment
- II. Issues – Key areas of conflict that must be understood in order to achieve the intended outcome:
  - A. Differences in schools of psychological theory
  - B. Variations in the judicial process in federal and state jurisdictions
- III. Concepts – Key concepts that must be understood to address the issues:
  - A. Importance of historical figures in Forensic Psychology
  - B. Different perspective and application of case law in the judicial system
  - C. Legal and psychological terminology of the course
- IV. Skills/ Competencies – Actions that are essential to achieve the course outcomes:
  - A. Reading
  - B. Writing
  - C. Analytical thinking
  - D. Computer/data base literacy
  - E. Ability to compare and contrast
  - F. Memorization of terms
  - G. Application of concepts

### **Learning Units**

- I. Forensic psychology history
  - A. Relationship between psychology and law
  - B. Conflicts between psychology and law
  - C. The future relationships between psychology and law
- II. Forensic psychologists
  - A. Roles and responsibilities
  - B. Temptations of psychology
- III. Psychology and law enforcement

- A. Police education
  - B. Police evaluation
  - C. Criminal profiles
  - D. Insanity and legal competency
  - E. Psychologist role in insanity cases
  - F. Risk assessment
  - G. Syndrome evidence
  - H. Child abuse and custody decisions
- IV. Court room decisions
- A. Confessions
  - B. Eye witness
  - C. Jury selection
  - D. Case formation
  - E. Discrimination
  - F. Sexual harassment in the courts
  - G. Death penalty trials
  - H. Appeals
  - I. Supreme court vs. American Psychological Association (APA) briefs

### **Learning Activities**

Lecture, instructor-led class discussions, group study, field trips, library research, various audio/visual aids, case studies, guest speakers, and presentations by the student. The student will be required to examine professional journals in this course.

### **Grade Determination**

The student will be graded on satisfactory completion of assessment tasks, research, papers, tests, daily work, class participation, attendance, out-of-class assignments, and other methods of evaluation at the discretion of the instructor.