Professional Practice Seminar:
Forensic Psychology

William Halikias, Psy.D. Spring 1998 PY 705

General Overview

This Seminar focuses on the practice of forensic psychology with an emphasis on the context for a relationship between the law and behavioral sciences. Psychologists who work effectively with the legal system combine an understanding of the law with pertinent clinical information to communicate psychological findings in the adjudicative arena.

Methods

Following a general overview of the legal and court systems this seminar focuses on eleven pertinent issues for clinical psychologists who provide services to legal professionals:
• Ethical considerations in forensic psychology
• Competency in the criminal process
• Mental status at the time of offense
• Sentencing and rehabilitation
• Civil commitment and civil competencies
• Compensation for mental or emotional injuries
• Discrimination and entitlement issues
• Child abuse
• Children in divorce proceedings
• Juvenile justice
• Clinical reports and expert testimony

With each of these venues, students will learn how to appreciate relevant clinical and legal issues, and how to communicate important psychological findings to courts and legal professionals.

This class uses readings, discussion, lectures, student and instructor presentations, video documentaries, and field trips to explore the field of forensic psychology.

Required Text


Verification

1) Verification is based in part on active discussion, presentations, and overall participation in the class process. Students must integrate assigned readings into their class participation.

2) Adequate learning in this class is unlikely if you miss three or more classes.

3) Completion of assigned readings and projects are critical for adequate learning and participation in this class.

4) Each student will do one presentation on a topic relevant to forensic psychology.

5) A term paper is due the last day of class on a topic of relevance to forensic psychology. This paper must be written in a professional style and tone, integrate aspects of class discussion and readings, and be written according to APA style.

Extensions are not given in this class except when a student discusses this request with me before the last day of class and encounters special circumstances (physical illness, birth of a child during the semester, death in the family) that are outside the range of normal and expected graduate student stress.

Class Outline and Reading Assignments

Class #1: Introduction
Class #2: Law & the Psychologist

Melton pp. vii - xiv; 1 - 63.


Class #3: Ethical Considerations in Forensic Psychology

Melton pp. 64 - 116.


Class #4: Competency to Stand Trial

Melton pp. 119 - 185.


Class #5: Mental State at Time of Offense

Melton pp. 186 - 248.


Class #6: Sentencing & Rehabilitation

Melton pp. 249 - 293.


Class #7: Civil Commitment


Class #8: Civil Competencies; Compensation for Mental Injury

Melton pp. 337 - 382.

Class #9: Discrimination & Entitlement
Melton pp. 383 - 413; 506 - 515.


Class #10: Juvenile Delinquency


Class #11: Child Abuse
Melton pp. 441 - 482.


Class #12: Children in Divorce
Melton pp. 483 - 505.


Class #13: Clinical Reports & Expert Testimony
Melton pp. 519 - 546.


Class #14: Sample Reports
Melton pp. 547 - 613.


Class #15: Termination & Evaluation of Class

Paper Due
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Office Hours: Monday 3:30 - 4:30 Sign-up sheet located in Antioch Psychological Services.