

# Welcome to PSY 368 Forensic Psychology

My name is **Tess Neal**, and I am your instructor. In this course, we will focus on the assessment and treatment of people who interact with the legal system. This course focuses on the ways in which psychologists do clinical work (assessment and treatment) to help courts make informed decisions about cases. Be sure to view the Course Tour video to become familiar with course navigation, submitting assignments, checking your grades, etc. to ensure a successful experience.

## Course Number

PSY 368

## Course Title

Forensic Psychology

## Credits

3

## Prerequisites

- Prerequisite(s): PSY 101; PSY 290 or minimum 45 hours

## Faculty

**Name:** Tess M.S. Neal, Ph.D.

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**Email address:** [tess.neal@asu.edu](mailto:tess.neal@asu.edu)

**Course Assistants:** Cassandra Hamza and Ashley Trow

**Course Assistant email addresses:** [chamza@asu.edu](mailto:chamza@asu.edu), [ashley.trow@asu.edu](mailto:ashley.trow@asu.edu)

**Office hours:** Mondays 4-4:30pm AZ time (with course assistant Cassandra Hamza), Wednesdays 1-1:30pm AZ time (with Course assistant Ashley Trow), or at other times by appointment. To meet on a Monday, Wednesday, or any other time, students must sign up at least 24 hours in advance. To sign up for a Monday appointment, email Cassandra ([chamza@asu.edu](mailto:chamza@asu.edu)) at least 24 hours in advance of that week's session. To sign up for a Wednesday session, email Ashley ([Ashley.trow@asu.edu](mailto:Ashley.trow@asu.edu)) at least 24 hours in advance of that week's session. To sign up for an alternative timeslot, email either of the course assistants. Office hours will be offered online or in person, depending on the student's preference for each meeting.

## Required Textbooks

Huss, M. (2013). *Forensic Psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Wiley. ISBN: 978-1118554135

Ewing, C.P. & McCann, J.T. (2006). *Minds on Trial: Great Cases in Law and Psychology*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0-19-518176-x

## Catalog Description

Clinical practice of forensic psychology: the assessment and treatment of people who interact with the legal system. Focuses on the ways in which psychologists do clinical work (assessment and treatment) to help courts make informed decisions about cases.

## Course Overview



This course will provide you with an introduction to forensic psychology – the application of psychological science or professional psychological practice to the law to inform a pending legal decision (APA, 2013; Neal, under review). “Forensic” comes from the Latin word for “court,” and “forensic psychologists” are psychologists who help courts make decisions about people when some question related to psychology is involved. Thus, forensic psychologists typically are involved in cases “pre-adjudication,” which means before the legal decision is made, and they help courts make informed decisions about cases. Forensic psychologists provide services (e.g., assessment, treatment, presentation of research) explicitly for the purposes of informing a legal decision (e.g., performing a child custody evaluation to inform the court’s upcoming decisions about parenting time and rights in a divorce decree, conducting competency restoration treatment services in an attempt to restore trial competency so that the defendant can be adjudicated “competent” and move forward with their ongoing legal case, providing a summary of the research data about factors that contribute to a false confessions or mistaken eyewitness identifications while the case is ongoing). In this course, we will learn about how forensic psychology developed as a field and the major ways in which psychologists are involved in both the criminal and civil court systems. For example, in the criminal justice system, psychologists help resolve legal questions about defendants’ competency to stand trial, sanity at the time of offense, risk of future violence, and risk of future sex offenses. In the civil justice system, psychologists help resolve cases involving sexual harassment, child custody, and personal injury, among other issues.

## Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to think critically and analyze the issues presented in forensic psychology.
- Identify and discuss landmark cases that demonstrate the practical role of forensic psychology.
- Explain the unique challenges that forensic psychologists face clinically, legally, and ethically.
- Analyze how the law can be therapeutic or anti-therapeutic for the people most directly affected by it.
- Apply the concepts learned in the course to current real-life cases.
- Discover how to become a forensic psychologist and identify various careers in forensic psychology.

## Notes About this Course

This paragraph contains secret information that will only be helpful to *homo sapiens* (i.e., humans). If you are not a member of this group, feel free to skip this paragraph. Research indicates that people learn material better and retain it longer when they actively participate in the learning process, so I encourage you to do just that. You will not learn as much in your classes passively listening and mindlessly reading the text or memorizing definitions. I strongly encourage you to talk about what you are learning with others, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to your daily life. To encourage this kind of learning, we will be asking questions, engaging in written conversations, watching videos clips of clients showing the symptoms of the disorders we learn about and discussing the legal and ethical issues involved in these cases, and reading voraciously. Please note that classes will not always closely follow the books. Although I will discuss some of the concepts covered in the book, much of the materials each week is intended to get you more involved with the material and to give you additional information. Thus, we'll do a variety of things: lectures, discussions and activities, case studies, exercises and demonstrations, brief writing assignments, and videos among other things.

Forensic psychology is a fascinating application of psychology every single day in courtrooms around the world. To help you learn to understand how psychologist help inform legal decisions, you will be reading the assigned readings and answering reading questions as “homework” on selected topics. (This is also a way to help you digest the material.) I will provide 10 reading prompts/questions. You need to complete all 10 of these assignments in your reading journal for full credit (each is worth 2% of your final grade). In grading these assignments, I will look for a concise, accurate, and sophisticated analysis based on the reading material. And oh yeah – the material covered in our course is often both thought provoking and awesome, so feel free to clap a little or do a little dance when we cover something cool.

Any of the material covered in class lectures, class activities, and assigned readings will be fair game for the exams. There will be 50 questions on each exam, and each is worth 20% of your final grade. The third exam - the final - is non-cumulative (covers only the last third of the course). I will provide you with a study guide for each exam. You will come to love these study guides. In the past, the study guides have been the subject of love poems. Okay, not really. But they help on the exams.

None of the materials from this course (the lectures, the slides, the videos, etc.) are to be used outside of this course. They are all copyrighted material. I hold the copyright to all the material I created, and others hold the copyright for the other material we’re using in the course. This means you may not edit any of the materials in this course or use them for any purposes outside of this course.

## **Honors Enrichment Contracts**

Students taking this course for honors enrichment will participate in a “*Forensic Psychology in Literature*” reading group that will meet virtually for one hour every week over the course of the class. The group will choose which book(s) to read from a list developed by Dr. Neal of literature reflecting forensic psychology issues. Each member of the honors reading group will be expected to develop questions prior to each meeting based on the reading for that segment (such as 1-2 chapter of the novel) and then pose questions to the group and participate in discussion when other group members pose their questions. At the end of the book / reading group, each honors student will write a short summary (~1 page) about forensic psychology in the book(s).

## Course Topics, Schedule & Grading

Activities used for instruction and assessment of learning include: textbook and supplemental readings; written responses to reading questions; discussion activities; case scenarios; and exams.

ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS	DUE DATE
		All assignments are due at 11:59 P.M. on the date listed below
<b>WEEK 1: Forensic Psychology &amp; Expert Witness Testimony</b>		
Discussion Post #1.1 Introduction	1	Friday 03/17
Discussion Post #1.2 Syllabus Quote	1	Friday 03/17
Discussion Post #1.3 What is Forensic Psychology?	1	Friday 03/17
Reading Journal #1	2	Friday 03/17
Reading Journal #2	2	Sunday 03/19
<b>WEEK 2: Competency to Stand Trial</b>		
Reading Journal #3	2	Friday 03/24
Discussion Post #2.1	1	Sunday 03/26
Discussion Post #2.2	1	Sunday 03/26
Exam 1	20	Monday 03/27
<b>WEEK 3: Insanity &amp; Diminished Capacity</b>		
Reading Journal #4	2	Friday 03/31
Discussion Post #3.1	1	Sunday 04/02
Discussion Post #3.2	1	Sunday 04/02
Discussion Post #3.3	1	Sunday 04/02
<b>WEEK 4: Psychopathy &amp; Violence Risk Assessment</b>		
Reading Journal #5	2	Friday 04/07
Discussion Post #4.1	1	Sunday 04/09
Discussion Post #4.2	1	Sunday 04/09
Discussion Post #4.3	1	Sunday 04/09
"Reading" Journal #6 (i.e., Study Guide 2 Responses)	2	Sunday 04/09
Exam 2	20	Monday 04/10

**WEEK 5: Child Custody**

Reading Journal #7	2	Friday 04/14
Discussion Post #5.1	1	Sunday 04/16
Discussion Post #5.2	1	Sunday 04/16

**WEEK 6: Civil Commitment**

Reading Journal #8	2	Friday 04/21
Discussion Post #6.1	1	Sunday 04/23
Discussion Post #6.2	1	Sunday 04/23

**Week 7: Sexually Violent Predator Commitment**

Reading Journal #9	2	Friday 04/28
Discussion Post #7.1	1	Sunday 04/30
Discussion Post #7.2	1	Sunday 04/30
Discussion Post #7.3	1	Sunday 04/30
Exam 3	20	Monday 05/01

**Week 7.5: Careers in Forensic Psychology**

Reading Journal #10	2	Tuesday 05/02
Discussion Post #8.1	1	Tuesday 05/02
Discussion Post #8.2	1	Tuesday 05/02

**Grading**

Final grades consist of graded discussion post assignments (20%), graded reading journal responses (20%), and 3 exams (20% each). Grades can be determined with this chart:

	<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Raw Final Grade Percent</u>
Reading journal responses	_____ (out of 20) = _____	
Discussion posts	_____ (out of 20) = _____	
Exam 1	_____ (score out of 100%) x .20 = _____	
Exam 2	_____ (score out of 100%) x .20 = _____	
Exam 3 (Non-Cumulative Final Exam)	_____ (score out of 100%) x .20 = _____	
<b>FINAL GRADE</b> (total from above) = _____		

Grade	Percentage
A	90 – 100%
B	80 – 89%
C	70 – 79%
D	60 – 69%
E/F	Below 60%

## Grading Procedure

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Graded assignments will be available within one week of the due date via the Gradebook.

## Communicating With the Instructor

This course uses a discussion board called "Hallway Conversations" for general questions about the course. Prior to posting a question, please check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts. If you do not find an answer, post your question. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Email questions of a personal nature to your instructor or assigned TA. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

## Online Course

This is an online course. There are no face-to-face meetings. You can log into your course via MyASU or <https://my.asu.edu>.

## Email and Internet

ASU email is an [official means of communication](#) among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

## Course Time Commitment

This three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. Please expect to spend around 18 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course.

## Late or Missed Assignments

Notify the instructor BEFORE an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and the assignment will not be submitted on time. Published assignment due dates (Arizona Mountain Standard time) are firm. Please follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practices](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment [due to University-sanctioned activities](#).

## Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, MUST be submitted to the designated area of Blackboard. Do not submit an assignment via email.

## Drop and Add Dates/Withdrawals

This course adheres to a compressed schedule and may be part of a sequenced program, therefore, there is a limited timeline to [drop or add the course](#). Consult with your advisor and notify your instructor to add or drop this course. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: [Withdrawal from Classes](#), [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal](#), and a [Grade of Incomplete](#).

## Grade Appeals

Grade disputes must first be addressed by discussing the situation with the instructor. If the dispute is not resolved with the instructor, the student may appeal to the department chair per the [University Policy for Student Appeal Procedures on Grades](#).

## **Student Conduct and Academic Integrity**

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>. Additionally, required behavior standards are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures, Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications policy](#), and outlined by the [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#). Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions.

[Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference](#) by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per [Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior](#).

Appropriate online behavior (also known as netiquette) is defined by the instructor and includes keeping course discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board posts may be deleted by the instructor.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts [incident reports](#) from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Prohibition of Commercial Note Taking Services**

In accordance with [ACD 304-06 Commercial Note Taking Services](#), written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the notetaker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, and the date.

## **Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to complete the course evaluation. The feedback provides valuable information to the instructor and the college and is used to improve student learning. Students are notified when the online evaluation form is available.

## **Syllabus Disclaimer**

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Please remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

## **Accessibility Statement**

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA) of 2008, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

[Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations](#). Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are [responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation](#) to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact the DRC by going to <https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>, calling (480) 965-1234 or emailing DRC@asu.edu. To speak with a specific office, please use the following information:

**ASU Online and Downtown Phoenix Campus**      **Polytechnic Campus**  
**University Center Building, Suite 160**            **480-727-1165 (Voice)**  
**602-496-4321 (Voice)**

West Campus Tempe Campus 480-965-1234 (Voice)  
University Center Building (UCB), Room 130  
602-543-8145 (Voice)

## Computer Requirements

This course requires a computer with Internet access and the following:

Web browsers ([Chrome](#), [Internet Explorer](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#), or [Safari](#))

Adobe Acrobat Reader (free)

[Adobe Flash Player \(free\)](#)

**Microphone (optional) and speaker**

# Technical Support

This course uses Blackboard to deliver content. It can be accessed through MyASU at <http://my.asu.edu> or the Blackboard home page at <https://myasucourses.asu.edu>

To monitor the status of campus networks and services, visit the System Health Portal at <http://syshealth.asu.edu/>.

To contact the help desk call toll-free at 1-855-278-5080.

## **Survival Guide for This Class**

This is an online course. To be successful:

- take the class seriously
  - expect to work hard throughout the entire course
  - be organized and manage your time (do not procrastinate)
  - check the course daily
  - read announcements
  - read and respond to course email messages as needed
  - complete assignments by the due dates specified
  - communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
  - create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
  - draw examples from your personal experiences to illustrate the topics
  - have fun learning!!!