

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

Melton, G. B., Petrila, J., Poythress, N. G., & Slobogin, C. (1997).
Psychological evaluations for the courts: A handbook for mental health

professionals and lawyers. (2nd ed.). NY: Guilford. (ISBN 1-57230-236-4)

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.

Bersoff, D., Delahunty, J., Grisso, T., Hans, V. P., Poythress, N. G., & Roesch, R. G. (1997). Training in law and psychology: Models from the Villanova Conference. American Psychologist, 52 (12), 1301 - 1310.

Goodman-Delahunty, J. (1997). Forensic psychological expertise in the wake of Daubert. Law and Human Behavior, 21 (2), 121 - 140.

Class #3: Ethical Considerations in Forensic Psychology

Melton pp. 64 - 116.

Committee on Ethical Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists (1991). Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists. Law and Human Behavior, 15 (6), 655 - 665.

Class #4: Competency to Stand Trial

Melton pp. 119 - 185.

Roesch, R., Hart, S. D., & Zapf, P. A. (1995). Conceptualizing and assessing competency to stand trial: Implications and applications of the MacArthur Treatment Competence. Psychology and Public Policy, 2 (1), 96 - 113.

Class #5: Mental State at Time of Offense

Melton pp. 186 - 248.

Clark, C. R. (1997). Sociopathy, malingering, and defensiveness. In R. Rogers (Ed.), Clinical assessment of malingering and deception (pp. 68 - 84). NY: Guilford.

Hahn, P. W., & Clayton, S. D. (1996). The effects of attorney presentation style, attorney gender, and juror gender on juror decisions. Law and Human Behavior, 20 (5), 533 - 554.

Class #6: Sentencing & Rehabilitation

Melton pp. 249 - 293.

Beck, J. C., & Shumsky, R. (1997). A comparison of retained and appointed counsel in cases of capital murder. Law and Human Behavior, 21 (5) 525 - 538.

Hare, R. D., McPherson, L. M., & Forth, Adelle, E. (1988). Male psychopaths and their criminal careers. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 56 (5), 710 - 714.

Heilbrun, K. (1997). Prediction versus management models relevant to risk assessment: The importance of legal decision-making context. Law and Human Behavior, 21 (4), 347 - 359.

Class #7: Civil Commitment

Melton pp. 297 - 336.

Borum, R. (1996). Improving the clinical practice of violence risk assessment. American Psychologist, 51 (9), 945 - 956.

Davis, D. A. (1976). On being detectably sane in insane places: Base rates and psychodiagnosis. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 85 (4), 416 - 422.

Class #8: Civil Competencies; Compensation for Mental Injury

Melton pp. 337 - 382.

Cunnien, A. J. (1997). Psychiatric and medical syndromes associated with deception. In R. Rogers (Ed.), Clinical assessment of malingering and deception (pp. 23 - 46). NY: Guilford.

Class #9: Discrimination & Entitlement

Melton pp. 383 - 413; 506 - 515.

Pankratz, L., & Binder, L. M. (1997). Malingering on intellectual and neuropsychological measures. In R. Rogers (Ed.), Clinical assessment of malingering and deception (pp. 223 - 236). NY: Guilford.

Kronholz, J. (1997, May 14). Educators say proposed law boosting ability to punish disabled kids doesn't go far enough. Wall Street Journal, p. A1.

Class #10: Juvenile Delinquency

Melton pp. 417 - 440.

Lynam, D. R. (1996). Early identification of chronic offenders: Who is the fledgling psychopath? Psychological Bulletin, 120 (2), 209 - 234.

Heilbrun, K., Hawk, G., & Tate, D. C. (1996). Juvenile competence to stand trial: Research issues in practice. Law and Human Behavior, 20 (5) 573 - 578.

Class #11: Child Abuse

Melton pp. 441 - 482.

Levine, M., & Battistoni, L. (1991). The corroboration requirement in child sex abuse cases. Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 9 3 - 20.

Fisher, C. B. (1995). American Psychological Association's (1992) Ethics Code and the validation of sexual abuse in day-care settings. Psychology and Public Policy, 1 (2), 461 - 478.

Rabinowitz, D. (1995, September 29). Wenatchee: A true story. Wall Street Journal, p. A14.

Class #12: Children in Divorce

Melton pp. 483 - 505.

Halikias, W. (1994). Forensic family Evaluations: A model for professional practice. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 50 (6), 951 - 964.

Halikias, W. (1994). The Guardian Ad Litem for Children in Divorce: Conceptualizing Duties, Roles, and Consultative Services. Family and Conciliation Courts Review, 32 (4), 490 – 501.

Class #13: Clinical Reports & Expert Testimony

Melton pp. 519 - 546.

Johnson, J. (1994, May 16). Witness for the prosecution. The New Yorker, 42 - 51.

Schmitt, R. B. (1997, June 17). Who is an expert? In some courtrooms, the answer is 'nobody'. Wall Street Journal, pp. A1, A8 - 9.

Class #14: Sample Reports

Melton pp. 547 - 613.

Silverglate, H. (1997, November 11). Science and the Au Pair trial. Wall Street Journal, p. A15.

Class #15: Termination & Evaluation of Class

Paper Due

Contacting Me			
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