

2016

# 642 Psychological and Legal Aspects of Forensics

Kelly Bohnhoff  
bonhoffk@xavier.edu

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**Xavier University**  
**College of Social Sciences, Health and Education**  
**School of Nursing**  
**Spring 2016**

**Course Number:** NURS 642: PSYCHOSOCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF FORENSICS

**Prerequisite:** Graduate Standing

**Credits:** 2

**Course Description:**

This course provides a comprehensive review of the behaviors, emotional responses and cognitive decision-making of both perpetrators and victims, during and after a crime. The course examines the nature of the relationship between victims and perpetrators and the forensic nurse. Emphasis will be placed on the elements related to victimology and the psychosocial and legal implications of violence and criminal acts on individuals and families. The course will address the expanded and collaborative roles of the forensic nurse in working with the medical and criminal justice systems in addressing issues that affect victims and perpetrators. Issues of competence and treatment of mentally ill offenders as they move through the criminal justice system and psychiatric hospitalization will be reviewed.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Discuss various categories of mental illness/disorders and implications for the forensic nurse.
2. Explain the legal processes (i.e., felony/misdemeanor charges) and forensic evaluation in regard to mentally ill perpetrators as they move through the criminal justice system.
3. Discuss the ethical dilemmas and practice issues in relation to the forensic nurse in the role of the expert witness.
4. Examine boundary issues for the forensic nursing in working with various forensic populations or groups.
5. Differentiate between malingering, factitious disorders, and mental illness.
6. Describe the relationship between mental illness and criminal behavior.
7. Identify the challenges and techniques necessary for the forensic nurse while working with the forensic populations and groups.
8. Discuss possible relationships between mental illness and criminal behavior.

**Class Date and Time:**

**Thursdays, beginning 01/14/2016 – 3/3/2016, from 4:00-6:59 PM-Cohen Room 187.**

**Faculty Assigned:**

Kelly Bohnhoff, PhD, RN, MFT, CTS  
Assistant Professor  
Cohen Room 127  
Cell: 513-237-1413  
E-mail: [bohnhoffk@xavier.edu](mailto:bohnhoffk@xavier.edu)

**Required Texts:**

The Games that Criminals Play, Allen and Bosta; Rae John Publishers.  
Handouts will be provided in Canvas.

**Teaching Strategies:**

Due to the uniqueness and nature of this course, a variety of teaching and learning strategies will be used. A climate of inquiry, collegial critique and sharing resources is encouraged. The primary approaches to learning will

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include but are not limited to lecture, class discussion, audiovisuals, student presentations, reading assignments posted in Canvas, and a scholarly paper.

**Student Responsibilities:**

Students are responsible for:

1. Reading and critically reflecting on material related to class content.
2. Discussing and analyzing forensic content and relating this information to various areas of practice.
3. Attending all classes and diligently preparing prior to class in order to share insights and experiences concerning assigned readings and activities, practice and personal experiences related to the forensic sciences.
4. Submitting all written assignments on time and according to stated requirements.
5. Notifying the professor as needed for assistance in facilitating and understanding of course content or any concerns/problems.
6. Seeking out the course faculty ahead of time to clarify any required assignment in a timely manner prior to the date due.

**Written Assignments:**

All written assignments should be submitted on the day assigned. Five points will be deducted for any paper not submitted on the date due. Written assignments should be professional in appearance, typed, grammatically correct, free of typographical errors, include scholarly language, and follow APA (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) format. All written assignments should be submitted in Canvas. The writing skills laboratory is available for students requiring assistance in this area.

**Class Participation and Attendance:**

Class seminar and open critical dialogue is a major part of this course [see % evaluation for class participation]. Attending class alone and asking questions will not be viewed as critical thinking or prudent inquiry in this course. Students are expected to attend all classes as scheduled. Collaborative educational activities are designed to promote an environment that supports a community of learning where both teacher and students share. For the success of this course, each student's contribution is valuable and necessary. Our wisdom is enhanced by the presence and voice of each and every member of the class.

Consequently, in anyone's absence our potential is diminished. If an absence is unavoidable due to extenuating circumstances, the student is expected to notify the faculty prior to the missed class. Keep in mind that there are no unexcused absences in the school of nursing. Students will be required to negotiate plans for make up of any excused absence with the course faculty or receive points deducted from the final grade. The course faculty will determine final decision of the number and whether or not points will be deducted from the final grade.

**Grading Scale:**

94 and up	=	A	80-82	=	B-
90-93	=	A-	76-79	=	C+
87-89	=	B+	70-75	=	C
83-86	=	B	Below 70	=	F

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**Evaluation Methods/Course Requirements:**

<b>Individual Student Presentation [Role as Educator]</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Scholarly Paper [Analysis and Application]</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Class participation and Attendance</b>	<b>30%</b>
	<b>100%</b>

**Xavier Mission**

Xavier is a Jesuit Catholic University rooted in the liberal arts tradition. Our mission is to educate each student intellectually, morally, and spiritually. We create learning opportunities through rigorous academic and professional programs integrated with co-curricular engagement. In an inclusive environment of open and free inquiry, we prepare students for a world that is increasingly diverse, complex and interdependent. Driven by our commitment to the common good and to the education of the whole person, the Xavier community challenges and supports students as they cultivate lives of reflection, compassion and informed action.

**Academic Honesty (from student handbook)**

“The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record, including letters of recommendation.

All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

Penalties for violations of this policy may include a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.”

**Caveat**

The schedule and procedure in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances as well as class learning needs and desires.

**Students with Disabilities**

Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me by sharing their Accommodation Letters with me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Disability related information is confidential. If you have not previously contacted Disability Services, I encourage you to do so by phone at 513-745-3280, in person on the Fifth Floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 514, or via e-mail to Cassandra Jones at jonesc20@xavier.edu, to coordinate reasonable accommodations as soon as possible as accommodations are not retroactive.

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**Social Media**

Social media and the internet provide an important medium for sharing information and offers easily accessible methods for mass communication. Nursing students must be aware of the risks and consequences associated with social networking. On-line social networking (e.g., Face book, MySpace, Twitter, blogs, etc.) are open, publicly accessible sites. Unprofessional or unbecoming online behavior undermines not only the nursing student's reputation, but may also have negative implications for Xavier University, and the profession of nursing. Certain violations in the use of social media may expose the offender to criminal and civil liability. Refer to the student handbook or the handbook policy addendum for more information and to view the Social Media Policy <http://www.xavier.edu/nursing/current-students.cfm>

**Additional Resource**

Office of Student Success

Location: 514 Conaton Learning Commons

Phone: 513-745-3036

Email: studentretention@xavier.edu

The Staff in the Office of Student Success is available to assist students to make the most of their Xavier experience. Personal staff consultations, success coaching, referrals to on-campus Solution Centers, and guiding students to effectively navigate their college experience are central to our work. Please visit [www.xavier.edu/student-success](http://www.xavier.edu/student-success) to learn more or visit us in the Conaton Learning Commons.