Course Objectives

1. To provide an overview of the literature regarding forensic assessment, with special emphasis on issues relating to civil forensic practice.

2. To familiarize students with appropriate roles for the advocate, the consultant and the independent expert in forensic practice.

3. To continue an examination of research methodology and its pitfalls in investigating and guiding forensic assessment.

4. To prepare students for functioning as expert witnesses.

5. To provide students with a solid foundation in the ethics of forensic practice.

Course Description

The schedule outlined below is tentative and provided to assist you in planning your reading. Topics do not always fit neatly into 3 hour blocks, and the pace may be slowed or accelerated depending upon class response. You are strongly encouraged to begin reading immediately, as class sessions will be of limited value if you have not first read the material.

Jan. 28 Child Custody
(Special guest speaker will be Michael C. Gottlieb, Ph.D.)

Readings:

Melton et al., Ch 16


Feb. 4

Civil Commitment

(We will take this opportunity to review the final exam example from forensic Assessment I [David Rule])

Readings:

Melton et al., Ch. 10


Feb. 11

Civil Competencies

Readings:

Melton et al., Ch. 11


Feb. 18

**Evaluating Juveniles**

**Readings:**

Melton et al. Ch 14


Feb. 25 Profiles/Evaluating Framework

Readings:


Law Enforcement Evaluations


Mar. 3 Personal Injury

Readings:

Melton et al., Ch. 12


**Mar. 17**

**Employment Discrimination/Sexual Harassment**

**Readings:**

Melton et al., Ch. 13


**Mar. 24**

**Evaluating Child Maltreatment**

**Readings:**
Melton et al., Chapter 15


Mar. 31 Expert Witness Testimony

Readings:

Melton et al., pp. 526-546


Apr. 7

**Ethical Dilemmas**

Readings:

Melton et al., Ch. 4


***FINAL***

(Will be distributed and is due no later than May 5, 2008)

Apr. 14-May 5

***MOCK TRIALS***

(Will meet in the Courtroom of the CJ Center)
Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. SHSU policy is that no student will be penalized for three or fewer hours of absence. However, a major portion of the learning objectives will be met through class discussion.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. 30% of your grade will be based upon a final examination. This will be take-home and you will be expected to apply everything you have learned about forensic assessment to date.

2. 30% of your grade will be based on a research proposal that you are to develop based upon the literature review you did during Forensic Assessment I. This is expected to be a polished product that could be used as a thesis/dissertation proposal. The paper should be prepared in APA format. Although you are not required to conduct the research, it is expected that the project would be practical in your current environment and a suitable population potentially available. Papers may be submitted to me by e-mail. The final product is due April 21, 2008; half a letter grade will be deducted for late papers; papers will not be accepted after April 28, 2008.

3. 30% of your grade will be based on your participation in mock trials to be conducted at the end of the semester. These will involve the participation of both real and mock attorneys. Cases used will be sanitized versions of forensic evaluations you have actually conducted. Your grade will be based upon the effort you put forth and your understanding of the basic principles of expert testimony.

4. 10% of your grade will be based upon class participation. Class attendance is required and you are expected to come prepared to discuss materials in the assigned readings.

Professionalism

Attendance, punctuality, adherence to ethical standards, and the quality of your interactions with colleagues and supervisors all determine your level of professionalism, which in turn signals your readiness to advance to greater participation in forensic evaluations.
**Instructor Evaluations**

Each student will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester. This instructor takes these evaluations very seriously and constructive criticism is appreciated. Changes in class format and techniques are regularly made in response to student comments.

**Academic Dishonesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty. During this course you will be involved in forensic evaluations and be privy to very sensitive material. Careful compliance with all ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality is essential. Substantiation of any unethical conduct would result in a failing grade.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with the instructor so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I may best help you. All disclosures of disabilities are kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

**Religious Holidays**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a)(2) defines religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. . . .” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be
penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after that absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and the instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to the instructor a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will negotiate with the student how any missed work can be achieved.

Visitors in the Classroom

Given the highly confidential and sensitive materials discussed in class, visitors not assigned to the Psychological Services Center and/or registered for the class will not be allowed.

Required Supplies

Students are required to purchase the course text book.

Classroom Rules of Conduct

To avoid disruption, all students are expected to appear for class in a timely manner. All cell phones, pagers, etc. should be turned off during class.