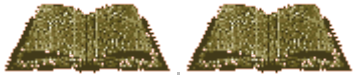
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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section



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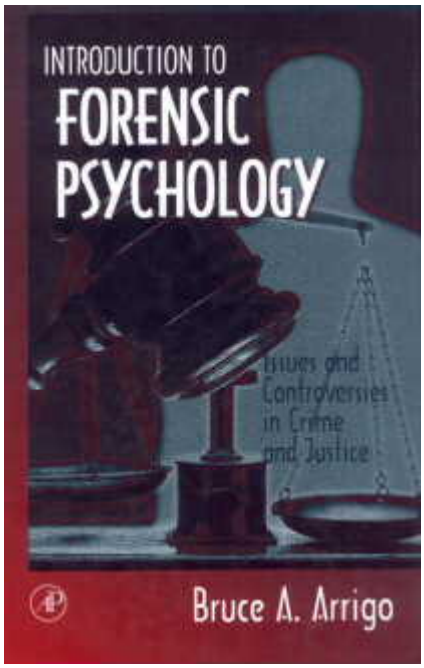
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AN INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Issues and Controversies in Crime and Justice, 1st Edition, *by* Bruce A. Arrigo. Hard Bound, 6" x 9".
Academic Press, Harcourt Place, 32 Jamestown Road, London NW1 7BY, UK. xviii + 367 pages, ISBN 0-12-064350-2. Price $59.95

Click cover to buy from Amazon



Bruce A. Arrigo



BRUCE A. ARRIGO is Professor of Criminology and Forensic Psychology and Director of the Institute of Psychology, Law, and Public Policy at the California School of Professional Psychology-Fresno. Prior to his career in academe, he was a community organizer and social activist for the homeless, the mentally ill, the working poor, the frail elderly, and the chemically addicted. He is the author of more than 60 journal articles, academic book chapters, and scholarly essays exploring theoretical and applied topics in critical criminology, criminal justice and mental health, and the sociology of law. His recent scholarship has appeared in such periodicals as *Criminal Justice and Behavior; Crime, Law, and Social Change; Justice Quarterly; International Journal of Law and Psychiatry; Critical Criminology; Journal of Offender Rehabilitation; Social Justice; Law and Psychology Review*; and the *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of 4 books. His most recent book-length projects include *Madness, Language, and the Law* (1994); *The Contours of Psychiatric Justice* (1996); *Social Jurtice/Criminal Justice: The Maturation of Critical Theory in Law, Crime, and Deviance* (1998); and, with T. R. Young, *The Dictionary of Critical Social Science* (1999). Professor Arrigo is also the editor of the peer-reviewed quarterly *Humanity and Society* and the founding editor of the periodical *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*. Professor Arrigo may be contacted by clicking here.

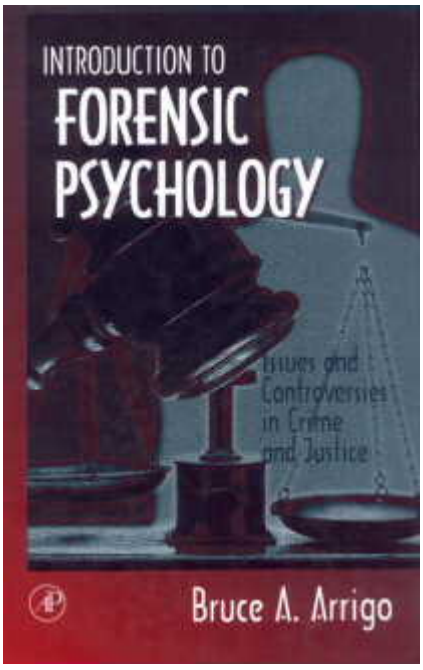
Bruce A. Arrigo is Professor of Criminology and Forensic Psychology and Director of the Institute of Psychology, Law, and Public Policy at the California School of Professional Psychology, Fresno, California. During his career, he explored, from the practical and theoretical points of view, many problems that arose while preparing penal laws and applying them. He is the author of more than 60 journal articles, academic book chapters, scholarly essays, and of 10 books prior to this one. He is a well-known and appreciated criminologist, who focuses his attention also in environmental and social reasons of crime.

View this book on Amazon

In his *Introduction to Forensic Psychology*, Prof. Arrigo affords in 12 chapters the main topics of psychology inside the law and the application of the law in his country. The matter is divided into four parts (adult forensics, juvenile forensics, civil forensics and family forensics), and each part is examined from three different diachronic points of view, that is from the arrest (Police and Law Enforcement) to the judgement (Court and the Legal System) and finally to the punishment (Corrections and Prison Practices).

The style of the book is didactic, as the book was written for students and practitioner, but based on reader-friendly prose. It is therefore a pity that the pleasure of reading is diminished by printing, as characters are too small.

Publisher's Blurb



Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Issues and Controversies in Crime and Justice is an original approach to understanding how psychologists impact the research, practice, and policy of crime, law and justice. Written specifically for students, lay professionals, and practitioners, the text systematically examines police, court, and correctional aspects of forensic psychology. By further subdividing the text into the adult, juvenile, family and civil components of forensic psychology, the author brings the interdependence and overlap among these dimensions and the three broad thematic areas themselves into sharp, clear, and compelling focus. Contained within each of the 12 substantive chapters are series of timely issues or controversies that provocatively capture the significance of these relationships. Selected topics include

incarceration of the mentally ill, the police as mediators in prison, competency to stand trial, treatment refusal rights, police stress and suicide, and sex offender treatment.

Introduction to Forensic Psychology presents the debates about psychology, crime, law, and the intersections in an accessible, jargon-free fashion. It is a cross-disciplinary text relevant to the fields of psychology, law, criminal justice, social work, and public policy.

For one living and working outside the U. S. A., it is difficult, or impossible, to understand some criminal or juridical situations that strongly require the intervention of a professional psychologist, or, better, it is really impossible to verify the results of such intervention, or, in other words, to understand the reasons and the scopes of such interventions.

As far as I can understand, many juridical situations need to be corrected, and the humanism of Prof. Arrigo is always present to explain and interpreted in such a way, that one can reach the conclusion that the wisdom is the only means to obtain good laws and their fair application. Other situations cannot be understood at all. "On any given day", says the author on page 235, "over 100,000 mentally ill individuals are incarcerated in prisons and jails throughout the United States". The reason is the deinstitutionslization of the state hospitals, so that the mentally ill who commits a crime is now incarcerated. It happens that these individuals be found guilty and sometimes executed, although the execution of a mentally ill person is unconstitutional. More often, it happens that these persons do not receive psychiatric attention in jail or prison. It is obvious that the fight cannot be won.

The hard work of Prof. Arrigo of introducing the study of the human mind (this is the meaning of the word "psychology") in the juridical system, with the aim of improving penal laws and procedures, and, at the same time, of assuring a right punishment to a criminal, finds some historical and social obstacles, that, in this moment, cannot be afforded.

More than two centuries ago, Cesare Beccaria wrote a booklet entitled "*Dei delitti e delle pene*" ("Crime and punishment"). Many suggestions and opinions contained in this booklet are still valid, and could be usefully applied in a system created by a society as violent as that of the United States.

The effort of Prof. Arrigo should be encouraged. His book represents the approach of psychology to crime and law, from the highest standpoint of a scholar who understood that the juridical system of his Country could be ameliorated.

All who read this review should read the book, just to be familiar with the enormous problems created in the American society by some criminal situations, from capitalism without control to unjustifiable juvenile violence. For professional psychologists, the book is recommended as a guide line for their job.

-Giusto Giusti
Professor Giusto Giusti is the Chairman of Legal Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Via Montpellier - 1, Rome 00133, Italy. The list of his publications can be seen at www.legalandsocialmedicine.com. He has edited an exhaustive Treatise of Legal Medicine (six volumes, about 8500 pages) CEDAM, Padua (1998-99). His Email is gvgiusti@hotmail.com



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