Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: https://catalog.uvu.edu/

Semester: Spring
Course Prefix: CJ
Course Title: Introduction to Forensic Science

Year: 2025
Course and Section #: 1350-601
Credits: 3

Course Description

Studies Forensic Science and multiple forensic disciplines as they correlate with criminal investigations. Teaches the identification and importance of multiple types of physical evidence typically found at a crime scene and how that evidence is used to provide a link between the victim, suspect, and crime scene. Explains the proper techniques needed to document a crime scene and physical evidence. Provides the process of taking the evidence from the scene and the scientific analysis of the evidence, which is completed at the crime laboratory.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:
☐ General Education Requirements
☐ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
☐ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
☒ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
☐ Elective Core Requirements in Program
☐ Open Elective
Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Travis Ashdown

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Discuss the historical aspects of forensic science and how they have evolved into current forensic practices.
2. Identify the various types of physical evidence typically found at a crime scene.
3. Explain the principles of crime scene documentation.
4. Explain the role of science as applied to criminal investigations.
5. Indicate proper collection and scientific analysis for various types of physical evidence collected at a crime scene.

Course Materials and Texts

Access to Canvas

Forensic Science: From the Crime Scene to the Crime Lab, 4th edition by Richard Saferstein, Prentice Hall 2019

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy
Homework, in-class activities, and quizzes (45% of final grade): Homework assignments and quizzes related to each topic are required. Students must complete them by the due date. All homework assignments can be downloaded and printed from Canvas. Students must be in class to turn in their assignments. Some topics have hands-on components that will take place during classtime,

Tests (each 15% of final grade): Tests will be given throughout the course. Lecture material and all reading assignments are subject to testing.

Final Exam (25% of final grade): The final examination will be comprehensive, based on material covered during the entire course.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments
Required readings use chapters from the course text that align with the lectures below.

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion
- Introduction to Forensic Science – Students learn the findamentals of forensic science, including how to define a forensic scientist, the disciplines of forensics, case law surrounding forensics, and learn about the CSI Effect.
- Searching/Securing the Crime Scene – Students will learn the proper steps for securing and documenting the crime scene. Topics include scene searches, sketches, and note taking.
- Recording the Crime Scene – Students learn the proper way to visually record a crime scene. Topics include photography, laser scanning, and videography.
- Physical Evidence – Students learn what makes something evidence and how to recognize these items at a crime scene.
- Death Investigations – Students learn the proper methods for investigating death scenes over two weeks.
- Collection of Evidence & Packaging – Students learn how to package items of physical evidence and discuss analysis/comparison of evidence items.
- Crime Scene Reconstruction – Students learn about current techniques to create a crime scene reconstruction.
- Fingerprints – Students learn the basics of fingerprints including the fundamentals of processing and analysis.
- Firearms and Toolmarks - Students learn the basics of impression evidence, specifically firearms and toolmarks. Students will learn to analyze and compare footwear imprints.
- Drugs and Toxicology – Students will be given an overview of forensic toxicology and drug analysis.
- DNA and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis – Students will learn the basics of biological evidence at crime scenes - bloodstain pattern analysis, DNA analysis, and how each occurs. Students will learn how to measure bloodstains and how mathematics is used in this interpretation.
- Fire and Post-Blast Investigations – Students will learn about hwo investigations are completed on fire and explosive scenes, specifically challenges relating to these types of crime scenes.

- Computer and Mobile Forensics – Students learn the basics of digital forensics and what examinations are possible with today's technology. Students learn about certifications required to perform digital examinations.
- Trace Evidence and Documents – Students will learn the basics of trace evidence examinaition, including analysis of paint, glass, soil, hairs, and fibers. Students also learn basic techniques utilized in forensic document examination.

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

AI programs are not a replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing, thinking, and researching are crafts that you must develop over time to develop your own individual voice. At the same time, you should learn how to use AI and in what instances AI can be helpful to you.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:
- Brainstorming and refining your ideas
- Fine tuning your research questions
- Finding information on your topic

The use of generative AI tools **is not permitted** in this course for the following activities:
- Drafting an outline
- Checking grammar and style
- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool
- Writing any class assignments
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments
- You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

The UVU Forensic Science Program is also keeping up with artificial intelligence chat bots such as ChatGPT. Believing the technology is here to stay, and will only grow, they feel it's important to understand both its strengths and limitations. AI is already proving its usefulness in brainstorming writing ideas, simplifying complex topics, and performing rudimentary research. They believe AI is a tool with potential usefulness for writers. However, AI is also fraught with serious issues. It possesses accuracy problems while simultaneously sounding very confident about its incorrectness. It also frequently generates fake citations and quotations. It cannot understand the complexities and contexts of human communication. Finally, the way AI is trained on other texts poses several ethical questions

about copyright and intellectual theft of property (along with uncritically inheriting the biases of the texts it's trained on).

TO BE CLEAR, copying the exact wording of an AI chatbot is considered plagiarism and means that a student will be held accountable for violating academic integrity. **Any assignment completed through using AI will automatically receive a ZERO grade. If a student continues to violate this policy, they will receive an overall failing grade for the class.** Although many citation guides are already presenting ways to properly use and cite AI, they do not currently believe that citing AI in your work is in line with the standards of academic writing that value knowing the exact author(s) or sources that informed your writing.

Using Remote Testing Software
☐ This course does not use remote testing software.

☒ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities
Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](#) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at [DHHservices@uvu.edu](#)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity
At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by

not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in UVU Policy 541: *Student Code of Conduct*.

Equity and Title IX
Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation
UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.
To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a specially dedicated space for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.