The Purpose of This Course

This course examines the principals, theories and practices of forensic science utilized within the law enforcement community and the American legal system. Forensic science is the study and application of science to the process of law and involves the collection, examination, evaluation and interpretation of evidence. Students will gain a basic understanding of the scientific and analytical approach to determining the value of evidence as it relates to the court of law.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students should have an understanding of:

- Understand the history and development of forensic sciences
- Demonstrate the procedures for securing, assessing and processing crime scenes and evidence
- Define the handling, value, and capabilities of DNA evidence
- Describe the various types and analysis methods of physical and trace evidence
- Recognize and analyze blood spatter
- Become familiar with Forensic anthropology and time since death determination

This course is part of a larger educational experience, and as such we will attempt to align the course with the overall vision for the college whose purpose states we should pursue and share knowledge through study, inquiry and creation in order to empower the individual and enrich society.

The core values of the College of Charleston state we strive for EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE that furthers intellectual, creative, ethical and social development through a broad range of programs centered on the liberal arts and sciences, and that we are a STUDENT-FOCUSED COMMUNITY that embraces mutual respect, collaboration and diversity for the welfare of the individual and the institution.

Honor Code: Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.
Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration—working together without permission—is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others’ exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php

OAKS is the College of Charleston’s course management system. Course material, study tools, and additional information will be provided for students on OAKS. You can access OAKS through the College of Charleston MyCharleston website. Go to https://my.cofc.edu/, login into MyCharleston using your system login ID and password. Once you are in the “MyCharleston system, click on OAKS icon at the top of the page, and you will be taken to the OAKS site. The course material will be under the Student tab for MyCourses.

Success in Class is Based on the Following:

Everyone learns at a different pace and style. I have tried to give as many options for the best possible learning experience. If you are having any difficulties with any portion, please come and speak with me.

Pre-Class Reading: Forensic Science, 5th Edition: An Introduction to Scientific and Investigative Techniques - It is abbreviated as IFS in the course outline. All pre-class readings are indicated in the course topics below. Read ahead to be ready for the class discussions. You will be able to participate in the lecture portion if you have a brief understanding of the material. This is an interactive class and your participation is essential. You will be asked to participate in the discussions each day. You are always encouraged to ask questions and contribute ideas to class.

Chapter review assignments: To help you better understand the material and prepare for the exams, questions from the end of the chapter will be assigned. They will be turned in at the beginning of the next class period. The assigned questions will be posted in OAKs. Although essential for the final exam as well, chapter review assignments will not be accepted after the exam for that material. (15 points each)

Exams: There will be three-chapter tests over the material from the lectures and the texts. If you need to be out of town on official College of Charleston business, tests may be taken ahead of time if prior approval is obtained. Each test will be worth a potential 100 points, 40% towards the final grade. The exams will be a combination of basic key concept questions similar to your pre-class reading, homework, and our in-class discussions. Electronics are not permitted for use during tests or final.

No make-up exams will be permitted unless you contact me PRIOR TO THE EXAM. My email is listed on the syllabus, it comes directly to my phone and is checked prior to each class at a minimum. So, there is very rarely a situation where a student should not be able to reach me prior to the exam. Missed exams, without a University approved absence, will result in a zero score for that exam.

Practical: After the exams we will have a hands-on activity where participation is mandatory. It will focus on some or all topics covered in the exam. 3 practicals 50 points each 15% of grade
**Final:** There will be one final at the end of the semester worth 200pts, 20% of your grade. It will include all material covered in the semester previously tested and new material.

Absence from the final exam will result in the grade of "X" being assigned which converts to an "F" within 48 hours unless an excused absence has been granted by the dean in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. Requests for an alternate final exam time must be processed through the Office of Undergraduate Studies no later than 5 p.m. on the last day of class. If you arrive late to the final examination, you will be required to have an admission slip from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

**Term Paper:** This course is designed to give a very broad overview of Forensic Science. You will choose a topic that interests you dealing with Forensic Science. More information will be given out on OAKs at a later time.

**Science in the News:** These are short one-page summaries of an interesting article you found in the popular science press or other forensic journal about something that is an issue / development in Forensic Science. These are optional assignments that will be posted to the OAKs discussion board. (10 points each added to Chapter review assignments final grade max 30 pts)

**Course Grade: Course Assignments and Points**

Each section of the course allows you to earn points towards your final grade in the course. I will ask a lot of you in this class and I am confident that you are up to the challenge. There is no curve in this class; your grade depends only on your own effort put forth in the class. Grades will be assigned based on the total points you have accumulated.

**Grading** All grading will be assigned based on a weighted scale:

- Three In-Class Exams (100 pts each)  
- Final Exam (200 points)  
- Chapter Review assignments (100)  
- Practical (150 points)  
- Term Paper – topic of your choice (100 points)  
- Course Participation (50 points)  

Total 900 points 100%

- Bonus : Science in the news Max 30pts

**Grading Scale and Expectations:** A (93.5-100), A- (90-93.49), B+ (88.5-89.9), B (83.5-88.49), B- (80-83.49), C+ (78.5-79.9), C (73.5-78.49), C- (70-73.49), D+ (68.5-69.9), D (63.5-68.49), D- (60-63.49), F (<60)

**Final Grades:** FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) prevents me from posting grades and from emailing you or telling you your grade over the phone. You may consult MyCofC to obtain your final grade.

**Office Hours:** I encourage you to see me as the first person that you go to when you are in need of additional help in my class. Please feel free to email me at any time which is the most effective / efficient way to reach me. I will also be happy to meet with you before class time by appointment.

**Email:** Email is considered an official method for communication at the College of Charleston. If a student wishes to have email redirected from their official college issued account to another email address, they may do so, but at their own risk. Having email redirected does not absolve the student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her College account. Students are expected to check
their College of Charleston official email on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of College related communications.

**Attendance Policy:** Being in class is an essential component of our course. All the good stuff is going to happen in the interactions between us as we work through the material. If for whatever reason you cannot make it to class, it is your responsibility to communicate that to me and arrange to get any missed work or material from one of your fellow students. Students must provide a valid and documented excuse from the Undergraduate Dean’s Office in the case of missing an exam. Acceptable excuses include illness, personal tragedy or circumstances beyond the student’s control. Attendance is part of your course engagement grade for this class and your attendance record will always be available to you on OAKS. *Four* absences from this course, excused or unexcused, will result in your receiving a WA grade for the course.

Please note that an Absence Memorandum from the Office of Undergraduate Studies only verifies your documentation for missing a class. It does not entitle you to make up or be excused from any work, assignment, quiz, or test. You should obtain notes from a classmate, read the associated material in the text, and then come ask me questions.

**Tardiness:** Showing up late to class is both disrespectful and prevents you and your fellow students from being fully engaged in the course. If you arrive late for a quiz, test, or the final exam, instructions will not be repeated, nor will you receive additional time to complete the assignment. Any work missed will be given a zero and averaged into the final grade. Showing up in the last quarter of the class meeting time will be treated as an absence.

**Snap Students:** The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply for services at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.

**Electronics Device Policy:** Devices whose usage is prohibited in class at any time are: pagers, radios, TV, CD, DVD, and MP3 players and similar devices. Devices that are *allowed to be used at certain times* during class, except during tests, exams and quizzes are cell phones, laptops, handheld computers, PDAs, electronic pens, calculators, and similar devices. The sound must be off unless otherwise specified by the instructor. During tests, exams, and quizzes no electronic devices are allowed to be on or in sight, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

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### Tentative Semester Schedule
*(subject to change)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read before class:</th>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Introductions, Syllabus, Course Design; Chapter 1: Justice and Science &amp; Chapter 2: Evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/15</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 3</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Crime Scene Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 14</td>
<td>Conclusion Chapter 3: Crime Scene Investigation &amp; Chapter 14: Fingerprints</td>
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<td>W</td>
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<td>Exam 1 (6:00 – 7:00) ; Lab 1 - (7:15 – 8:30)</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 4 &amp; IFS Chapter 5</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Bloodstain Patterns &amp; Chapter 5: Medicolegal Investigations of Death</td>
<td>Paper topic</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2/12</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 6 IFS Chapter 9</td>
<td>Chapter 6: Postmortem Toxicology &amp; Chapter 9: Biological Evidence</td>
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<td>IFS Chapter 9</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Biological Evidence conclusion</td>
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<td>W 2/26</td>
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<td>IFS Chapter 10</td>
<td>Chapter 10 : DNA Typing</td>
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<td>IFS Chapter 11</td>
<td>Chapter 11: Drugs and Poisons</td>
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<td>W 3/13</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 17</td>
<td>Chapter 17 : Trace Evidence and Microscopy</td>
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<td>W 3/25</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 17 cont</td>
<td>Chapter 17 : Trace Evidence and Microscopy cont Exam review</td>
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<td>W 4/1</td>
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<td>Exam 3 (6:00 – 7:00) ; Lab 3 - (7:15 – 8:30) Paper Due</td>
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<td>W 4/8</td>
<td>IFS Chapter 12 IFS Chapter 13</td>
<td>Chapter 12: Arson and Fire Investigation Chapter 13: Explosives and Improvised Explosive Devices</td>
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<td>IFS Chapter 15</td>
<td>Chapter 15 : Firearms and Tool Marks <strong>Last Day of class</strong></td>
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<td>W 4/29</td>
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<td><strong>Final Exam 7:30 – 10:30pm</strong></td>
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