

CJ 531 (CSI)

Techniques of Crime Scene Investigation

Fall Semester 2007

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Telephone: 936-294-4413

Class hours: Monday 11-12.50hs

Lab Hours: Tuesday 13-16.50hs

Office Hours: Monday 14-17.30hs (other times by e-mail appointment)

e-mail: dag006@shsu.edu

Classroom: CFS 102

Classroom: CFS 219

Required textbooks

- a) Bevel, T and Gardner, RM (2002). Bloodstain Pattern Analysis: With an Introduction to Crime Scene Reconstruction, by CRC Press.
- b) Gardner, RM (2005). Practical Crime Scene Processing and Investigation by CRC Press.

Supplementary textbooks

Eliopoulos, LN (1993). Death investigator's handbook. A field guide to crime scene processing, forensic evaluations, and investigative techniques, by Paladin Press.

Course description

The Techniques for Crime Scene Investigation course is an advanced comprehensive review of contemporary techniques for the identification, collection, preservation, and evaluation of evidence found at the crime scene. Indeed, the assistance of different items of physical evidence in the reconstruction of a crime is studied. The course includes the application of CSI theory in various applied scenarios and the basis for scientific research.

Objectives

- 1) Recognition of items of evidentiary value at the crime scene
- 2) Understanding the proper procedures for processing indoor and outdoor crime scenes through the development of criteria and evaluation skills.
- 3) Understanding the proper techniques for collection and preservation of physical evidence at the crime scene.
- 4) Understanding of the value and the limitations of evidence, such as body fluids, firearms, impressions, glass, and trace materials discovered at the crime scene.

- 5) Gaining advance knowledge in the interpretation of blood pattern evidence.
- 6) Demonstrate the proper techniques for diagramming and photographing a crime scene.
- 7) Understand how to hypothesize the sequence of events at a crime scene based upon interpretation of physical evidence.
- 8) Demonstrate the appropriate safety techniques that are used in the collection of potentially bio-hazardous evidence.
- 9) Integration of theory and research by the exploration of crime scene literature.

Examinations and Assignments

There will be one written final examination, in accordance with university policy. The final examination is *comprehensive* and may be based upon any information from anytime during the course. The written final examination will be composed of multiple choice questions, true-false questions, fill in the blank questions, and/or short answer questions. The final examination and tests may be composed of any combination of the aforementioned question types or may be composed of only two or three of the question types. In addition to the written examination there will be a final laboratory-based proficiency test. This proficiency test will consist in the analysis/reconstruction of a crime scene. Evidence will be collected, preserved and analyzed to reconstruct the event. Students will be required to apply their acquired knowledge to process this evidence and analyze it using techniques that are widely accepted by the scientific community.

Assignments will consist of lab reports, a written paper and oral presentations.

Lab reports will summarize data and address pertinent questions. Successful completion of lab reports will require the student to apply advanced knowledge acquired in class to CSI techniques. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. The instructor reserves the right to refuse late work, but will make reasonable accommodations for students who experience unfortunate circumstances.

Students will write a research paper on an assigned CSI topic. This research paper must be fully referenced and cite published studies in the peer reviewed scientific literature. Students will present their findings orally during a Forensic Science Seminar at the close of the semester. A second oral presentation on another topic will be made during class. This second presentation will be on a CSI topic selected by the student and approved by the instructor. The student may

elect to present a case report or reports pertaining to CSI. This presentation can be made from the peer reviewed scientific literature.

The total combined weight of the lab reports will be 20% of the final grade. The written paper will comprise 30% as will the two oral presentations (combined). The laboratory-based proficiency test will account for 10% of the final grade and the remaining 40% will be based on the performance in the final examination.

	Number	Scope	Timeframe	Weight of Grade
Lab Reports	Variable	Non-comprehensive	Throughout term	20%
Written Paper	1	Defined	Variable	15%
Oral Presentations	2	Defined	Variable	15%
Lab Proficiency Test	1	Comprehensive	End of term	10%
Final Examination	1	Comprehensive	End of term	40%

Material for the final exam and tests may come from class material, supplemental reading material or class discussion that was not covered in the reading material. *In other words, attendance and active participation in class is extremely important in order to complete the course successfully and receive a good grade.*

If a student is absent from the laboratory he/she may not be given an opportunity to make up the laboratory exercise, even if prior notice has been given the instructor. No make-ups will be given for the final exam unless arrangements have been made prior to the exam date. It is the student's responsibility to monitor the accuracy of the grades.

Deadlines for assignments, lab reports and other important announcements such as test times and locations will be announced either in class or by email. As a result, students *must* read their SHSU email in order to remain current.

Grading Policy

Final grades will be based upon the following scale: 90 plus average an "A"; 80 to 89 a "B"; 70 to 79 a "C"; 60 to 69 a "D"; and below 60 an "F". Students should not count on a curve of the final grade. The instructor reserves the right to modify the grading scheme to accommodate for a missed test or final examination in extenuating circumstances.

The instructor reserves the right to assign a final exam grade of 0% should she deem the absence was not properly handled or was unjustified. Appeals will be handled in accord with University Policy Statement 900823, Academic Grievance Procedures for Students.

Attendance policy

Attendance will be recorded in keeping with University policy. Students are expected to attend class. Class attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 800401. In accordance with university policy, students will not be penalized for absences of up to three hours as long as examinations and other assigned work have not been missed. If a student is absent it is their responsibility to obtain the class material and remain current with information distributed during class. Occasionally changes in schedule may be announced in class. *These changes apply to all students, even those who were absent from class.* One letter grade may, at the discretion of the instructor, be deducted from students' final grade if they miss more than four classes. There will be no distinctions between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. Students are expected to be on time to class. After the beginning of the class, late students may be counted as absent.

Academic dishonesty

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

Disabled student policy

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.html

Services for disabled students

<http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html>

Student absences on religious holy day policy

<http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/scholasticrequirements.html#holyday>

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