

JUST A310

Introduction to Forensic Science

Fall 2009

Instructor: Jim Wolfe
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Class Location: University Center Room 143

Meeting Time: Fridays 09:30 – 12:15

Course Description

This course will provide a broad overview of forensic science and its relationship within the justice system. Forensic science is commonly defined as the application of scientific principles and methodologies to the resolution of legal issues. As such, there are many disciplines within forensic science, just as there are among the physical, medical and behavioral sciences. Much of this class will focus on the various areas of criminalistics, which typically involve the analyses done in government crime labs on physical evidence gathered in the course of a criminal investigation.

The course will be mainly a lecture course, though at times hands on exercises will be used to help familiarize the students with different types of physical evidence.

Required Text

Saferstein, Richard, **Forensic Science: From the Crime Scene to the Crime Lab**
1st Edition, Prentice-Hall, Inc, NY, 2009

Grading

The overall grade will be based on a combination of scores from quizzes, one written paper, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

Quizzes: There will be a short 15 point quiz given during each class (total of approx.13). The highest 10 scores will be used.

Written Paper: One paper will be required, the topic will be discussed as the class progresses..

Midterm: A midterm will be given on October 16.

Final: the class Final Exam will be held on December 11.

Grading Outline:

Quizzes: 150 points (15 points each)

Midterm: 100 points

Written Paper: 50 points

Final: 200 points

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

D = 60 – 69%

Fail = below 60%

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Course Schedule (as of 8/14/09 - subject to change -)

Date	Topic	Reading	
Aug. 28	Introduction, History of Forensic Science, Present Role of Forensic Science in The Legal System	Saferstein Chapter 1	
Sept. 4	Crime Scenes Scene response and Documentation	Ch. 2, 3	
Sept. 11	Crime Scenes Evidence Collection and Legal Considerations	Ch. 3, 4	
Sept. 18	Physical Evidence Overview of Analysis Identification/Comparison Significance of findings	Ch. 5, 6	
Sept. 25	Fingerprints Shoe/Tire Impressions Trace Evidence: Hairs, Fibers, Paint –	Ch. 7, 8	
Oct. 2	Firearms and Toolmarks Bloodstain Patterns	Ch. 8, 9	
Oct.9	Drugs and Toxicology	Ch. 10, 11	
Oct.16	Trace Evidence	Ch. 12, 13	Mid-Term Exam
Oct. 23	Trace Evidence Forensic Anthropology	Ch. 13	
Oct 30	Biological Evidence DNA Database	Chapters 14	
Nov. 6	DNA Forensic Medicine	Chapters 14 Ch. 5 (portion on pathology)	
Nov. 13	Arson and Explosives	Chapter 15, 16	
Nov. 20	Computer Forensics, Document Examination	Chapters 17, 18	
Nov. 27	Thanksgiving – HOLIDAY!		
Dec. 4	Forensic Science in the Courts, Role of the expert witness.		
Dec. 11	Final Exam		

UAA Safety: Your safety on campus is important. While relatively safe, the campus is NOT a sanctuary from crime and accidents still occur no matter how hard we try to prevent them. You are encouraged to be responsible for your own safety and to bring safety concerns to the attention of UAA faculty or staff, or to contact Campus Police at 786-1120 when you observe an unsafe environment. For your own safety, please also take the time to locate the nearest exit and emergency telephone when you are in campus buildings.