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CJUS 488.51: Forensic Science - Beyond the Crime Lab

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FORENSIC SCIENCE: BEYOND CRIME LAB

CJUS 488

Online (Moodle): Fall, 2014

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EXPECTED OUTCOMES

In this class students will learn the following things:

- The fundamental theories and practices of forensic science
- How conclusions are drawn from forensic evidence
- The roles of forensic scientists, police officers, attorneys, and others in a criminal investigation
- The types of questions and analyses addressed by a broad spectrum of forensic sciences
- The existence and nature of new and emerging forensic sciences
- The rigors of being an expert witness in a criminal trial.
- The application of forensic sciences to a variety of non-traditional questions, such as wildlife regulations enforcement, national security, and history.

ADMINISTRIVIA

Text and other materials: This semester, we will begin using Randall Skelton's *A Survey of the Forensic Sciences* (ISBN: 978-1-4357-6762-1). Dr. Skelton, a member of the Anthropology department here at UM, is essentially the developer of this course. We will use his text, which is more in alignment with lectures and assignments than previous textbooks. You can use the following link to purchase this text:

<http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/a-survey-of-the-forensic-sciences/14610386>

... or purchase at the bookstore for what I'm sure is more expensive

Email Addresses: For correspondence I will use email. If I send email to you, I will use the email address recorded in Moodle, which in most cases will be your official University email address. If you send email to me, I will reply to that message directly and my reply will go to whatever email address you sent the message to me from (more accurately, what your email program has embedded in the message as the "reply-to:" address). If you do not know how to access your official University email, instructions can be found at

<http://www.umt.edu/it/email/umconnect.aspx>

How Does This Class Work? You can expect to spend about as much time on this class as you would spend on a traditional “in the classroom” class, which I estimate to be in the neighborhood of about 6 hours per week for most students. The material is divided into 19 “Lectures”, of which two should be completed most weeks. Some weeks will be study weeks, in which only one lecture should be completed, and other weeks will be exam weeks where you are only expected to take an online exam. For each Lecture there are three main types of class materials on Moodle: Lecture text, Presentations, and Reviews. You should begin by reading the Lecture text for the lecture, then working through the Presentation for that lecture. If you have broadband capability you should use the narrated presentations, which simulate a classroom lecture experience. Finally, you should look through the Review document which contains questions that you should answer to test your knowledge of the subject matter of that lecture, looking up the answers to the questions you miss in the Lecture Text. Tests will be given that cover about 1/3 of the class material each.

Class Materials: The class materials are on the Moodle system. You should have been notified by email about how to access this system. Since you are reading this syllabus I assume that this process worked for you. All materials for successful completion of the class are on the Moodle system.

Attendance and Progress Policy: No class meetings will be held in a classroom, so attendance is irrelevant. However, continuous progress in the class is required. In other words, you can not put everything off until the last week and expect to finish the class successfully. If you have considered such a strategy, then online learning is probably not for you and I encourage you to take the traditional classroom-based version of this class, instead of the online version. Normally, we will cover approximately 2 lectures each week.

Academic Integrity: Students will be held to the provisions of the Student Conduct Code, online at <http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/CODE.htm>, with regards to cheating, plagiarism, abusive language, and other issues. Violations will not be tolerated.

Disabilities: Every effort has been made to make the online materials accessible to students with disabilities. If you have a problem accessing the materials, you should let your instructor know what accommodation you need. I assume that accommodation services and facilities will be provided by the Disability Services for Students office (see <http://www.umt.edu/dss/>). Ultimately, however, online classes may not be suitable for all students and if this is true for you I encourage you to take the traditional classroom-based version of this class.

Grading: 75% of your grade will be based on your three best out of four exams, and the remaining 25% on weekly assignments. The following scale will be used for assigning grades: A: 90-100%, B: 80-89%, C: 60-79%, D: 50-59%, F: under 50%. If

appropriate, I may assign + and -modifiers to these grades in special cases.

Exams: The Moodle system requires exams to be made available online for a certain limited time span. Normally the exam will be available between 12:01am Monday and 11:55pm Sunday of the week in which it appears in the class schedule. Moodle will give you two hours in which to take the exam. Experience has shown that you can't start the exam, go browse somewhere else or walk away for a period of time, then come back and continue the exam. I suggest allocating a block of time to take the exam during which you will be undisturbed. Exams will normally consist of about 50 objective questions.

Weekly Assignments: Each week, except for study weeks and exam weeks, an assignment is due. Assignments will normally send you to some resource on the World Wide Web, to complete some task, usually a tutorial or quiz. Each assignment is due Sunday at 11:55 PM of the week in which it is listed in the class syllabus/schedule. Assignments will be submitted using Moodle's uploading file system, and must be named and formatted as described in the instructions for each assignment. In general, I will grade assignments as either completed (full credit) or not completed (no credit), although there may be some assignments with different grading criteria and I will always deduct points for an assignment that is not done and submitted according to its instructions.

How To Do Well In This Class: The "secret for success" in an online class is strategic time allocation along with continuous engagement. In simple terms, allocate time for the class on a regular basis each week. In a traditional "in the classroom" class you attend lectures 2 or 3 times each week, read the required readings, review, study for exams, and probably do some homework assignments. Online classes are more flexible, in that you don't need to travel to the classroom at a scheduled time, but they are no less demanding of time or effort. Most authorities on online classes suggest that a student set aside regularly scheduled times each week to accomplish what the class requires that week.

Estimating that this class will require about 6 hours of your time each week you may choose to schedule one hour each day Monday through Saturday; or 2 hours each day on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; or 3 hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays; etc. The plan is up to you, but what is important is that you develop some plan of this sort (strategic time allocation) and stick with it. It is easy to let your online class slide until the last minute, and then you are confronted with the difficult task of trying to master all the material in a short time. To avoid this you should stick to your schedule, at least approximately, (continuous engagement) and tackle the material in manageable lecture-sized bites. In online classes it is especially unwise to wait until the last minute to turn in assignments or take online tests, because of the possibility of technology failure. For example, if you wait until one hour before the deadline for taking your online exam and find that Blackboard is down, or the Internet is slow that night, you

may find that you are unable to complete the test. If this happens your instructor will try to help you, but the responsibility to plan ahead for problems of this sort is yours.

CJUS 488: SCHEDULE

Week/Dates	Lecture	Readings from Text
Week 1: AUG 24 – AUG 30	1. Forensic Science and Criminal Investigations 2. The Scientific Method Assignment 1: Getting Acquainted with Moodle	Chapters 1 -4
Week 2: AUG 31 – SEPT 6	3. The Crime Scene, Crime Lab, and Criminalists 4. Firearms, Toolmarks, Prints Documents & Trace Assignment 2: An Investigation	Chapters 6, 8, 10-14, 16,17
Week 3: SEPT 7 – 13	5. Death Investigation, Toxicology, Serology and DNA 6. Forensic Anthropology and Odontology Assignment 3	Chapters 19 – 22, 24-28
Week 4: SEPT 14 – 20	7. Drugs and Explosives ***STUDY FOR EXAM***	Chapters 23, 31

Week 5: SEPT 21 – SEPT 27	MIDTERM 1	
Week 6: SEPT 28 - OCT 4	8. Forensic Botany, Entomology & Geology 9. Jurisprudence Assignment 4	Chapters 29, 46
Week 7: OCT 5 – 11	10. Forensic Psychology 11. Criminal Profiling Assignment 5	Chapters 38 -41
Week 8: OCT 12 – 18	12. Historical Forensics 13. Wildlife Forensics Assignment 6	Chapters 48, 49
Week 9: OCT 19 – OCT 25	14. Other Forensic Technologies: Forensic Knots, Linguistics, Phylogenetics, Mathematics, Economics, Meteorology, Hypnosis, Audio, Nursing, Pharmacy, Accounting, Art, Photography, Chiropractic and other medical practices ***Study for Exam***	Chapter 47

Week 10: OCT 26 – NOV 1	MIDTERM 2	
Week 11: NOV 2 – 8	15. Forensic Computer Science 16. Computer Networks & Security Assignment 7	Chapters 33, 34
Week 12: NOV 9 – 15	17. Surveillance and Biometrics 18. Homeland Security Assignment 8	Chapters 36, 45
Week 13: NOV 16 – 22	19. White Collar, Corporate, and Organized Crime ***Study for Exam***	Chapters 43, 44
Week 14: NOV 23 – NOV 29	THANKSGIVING VACATION	
Week 15: NOV 30 – DEC 6	MIDTERM 3	

Week 16: DEC 7– 13	FINAL EXAM	
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