

CRIJ-3301.001, Survey of Forensic Science  
Course Syllabus  
Fall, 2024 | 3 Semester Credit Hours

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Michael Ferguson

**UTT email:** [mferguson@uttyler.edu](mailto:mferguson@uttyler.edu)

**Office telephone:** 903.730.3927

**Office location:** CAS 134

**Office hours:** MWF 9:20a-10:00a; T/Th 1p-1:45p; or by appointment

## COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an overview of forensic scene disciplines, including a discussion of different fields in forensic science and the historical development of forensic science evidence. The course will explore the various types of scientific evidence and the respective fields that analyze each type of evidence.

## COURSE TIME AND LOCATION

2:00p - 3:55p, Monday and Wednesday, 08/26/2024 - 12/14/2024

Ratliff Building South, room 1031

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. *Distinguish* the different forensic disciplines and the legal system within forensic science.
2. *Compare/contrast* the types of evidence each forensic discipline examines.
3. *Discuss* the historical and print development of forensic science.
4. *Explain* how forensic scientists identify, collect, and analyze forensic evidence.
5. *Describe* common forensic analysis methodologies.
6. *Identify* the appropriate type of evidence for different forensic analyses.
7. *Apply* the scientific method to forensic evidence.
8. *Critique* how modern technology enhances and limits forensic analysis.
9. *Analyze* the influence of DNA evidence has had on forensic analyses from different fields.
10. *Identify* ethical considerations for forensic scientists.
11. *Identify* the roles of coroner, medical examiner, and forensic anthropologist within forensic science.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

**NOTE: You have access to a FREE e-copy of the textbook through the UTT Library!**

Bell, S. (2019). *Forensic Science: An Introduction to Scientific and Investigative Techniques*, Fifth Edition. Crc Press.

ISBN: 9781138048126

## RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

ISBN: 978-1-4338-3217-8

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students must have access to a computer or tablet with internet access to use UT-Tyler's Canvas LMS. Assignments and quizzes will be handled through Canvas. Additionally, students must have access to, and use of, a word processor (e.g., MS Word or Apple Pages) and presentation software (e.g., MS PowerPoint or Apple Keynote). Work uploaded to Canvas must be in one of the following file formats:

- Documents: .docx, .doc, .pages, or .pdf (.pdf is the preferred format)
- Presentations / graphs: .docx, .doc, .pptx, .ppt, .key, or .pdf (.pdf is the preferred format)

## ATTENDANCE

You can't learn if you're not in class. **Attendance in this class is mandatory.** University courses are about learning a wealth of material in a short period of time - with the goal of being able to think critically about the topics at hand. As such, attendance at lecture will greatly increase your ability to understand the field of criminal justice. Additionally, attendance will improve your quiz, project, and final exam grades. You will be allowed one unexcused absence. ***Your attendance in class counts as a quiz grade; each unexcused absence will reduce your attendance grade.***

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of due dates. Please note that quizzes, assignments, and tests will be available for several days, so missing a due date for any given quizzes, assignments, or tests will translate into a score of zero. There will be no extra credit or extensions to complete a quizzes, assignments, or tests.

1. **Anti-Plagiarism Certificate:** You must complete the free, online anti-plagiarism course from the School of Education at Indiana University - Bloomington. Upon completion of the IU course, you must earn at least 90% on the course's exam and upload a copy of your completion certificate to Canvas. **This certificate is worth 5% of your grade.**
2. **Quizzes:** Reading the assigned chapters puts concepts into action during each end-of-module laboratory activity. To help with retention and comprehension of the material, you will complete a short quiz each week. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. The quizzes are timed. You may take each quiz up to three times; your highest score earned will count towards your class average. **Quizzes are worth 25% of your grade.**
3. **Online Activities:** You will complete an online activity several times during the semester. The activities synthesize the course material into a cohesive project, activity, or writing assignment. **These activities are worth 25% of your grade.**
4. **Forensic Misconduct Presentation:** You will be randomly assigned to a team of six students. Each team will be given two high-profile cases of misconduct by forensic

investigators. Each team will thoroughly research the cases given. The groups will prepare and present (to the entire class) a 15–20-minute presentation on the cases researched. The presentations will take place the week before and the week after the Thanksgiving break. The order of presentations will be picked randomly by Mr. Ferguson. **Please note that team members are required to document specifically what work they did as part of the project so that some students don't end up doing all the work while others are shirkers. The forensic misconduct presentation is worth 20% of your grade.**

5. **Final Exam:** The final will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions taken from the material covered during the semester. **Your final exam is worth 25% of your grade.**

## EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY

Students who attend a National Night Out Block Party (the evening of Tuesday, 10/01/2024 in your neighborhood) and who submit to the instructor photographic proof of such will earn five extra points on the final exam grade. Note that for those who do not want to attend an NNO Block Party, attending an NNO Block Party is **not** required. Click [HERE](#) to see a short video about National Night Out.

## CENSUS DATE

The census date for the Fall, 2024, semester is **September 9<sup>th</sup>**. Drops/withdrawals after Census Date and before the Last Day to Withdraw will result in a grade of W. Courses dropped prior to Census Date will not appear on the student's record or the transcript. For more information on withdrawing from classes, see [THIS SECTION](#) of the UTT Catalog.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>This table contains the weekly schedule of activities for the course.</i>			
Week	Chapter	Topic(s)	<b>Assignments/FYI stuff</b> NOTE: unless otherwise indicated, all assignments and quizzes are due NLT <i>Sunday night at 11:59p.</i>
1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course introductions</li> <li>• Review syllabus</li> <li>• Justice and Science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to class, course overview, introductions.</li> <li>• Review <a href="#">Course Syllabus</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Anti-Plagiarism Certificate</a>. You must score ≥90% on the A-PC exam and upload your certificate to earn credit for this assignment.</li> </ul>
2	2	Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NOTE: University closed for the Labor Day holiday on Monday</b></li> <li>• Chapters 1 &amp; 2 Quiz</li> </ul>
3	3	Crime Scene Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive assignment to teams for forensic misconduct project (six students per team)</li> <li>• <b>Online Activity:</b> Crime Scene Sketch</li> <li>• Chapter 3 Quiz</li> </ul>
3	4	Bloodstain Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4 Quiz</li> </ul>
4	5	Death Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 5 Quiz</li> </ul>
5	7	Forensic Anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Online Activity:</b> Anthropology Picture Book</li> <li>• Chapter 7 Quiz</li> </ul>
6	8	Forensic Entomology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Online Activity:</b> U.S. Body Farms</li> <li>• Chapter 8 Quiz</li> </ul>
7	9, 10	Forensic Biology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Online Activity:</b> Identifying the Innocent</li> <li>• Chapters 9 &amp; 10 Quiz</li> </ul>
8	6, 11	Forensic Chemistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapters 6 &amp; 11 Quiz</li> </ul>
9	12	Arson & Fire Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Progress report on team project</b></li> <li>• Chapter 12 Quiz</li> </ul>
10	14	Fingerprints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 14 Quiz</li> </ul>

11	15, 16	Firearms, Toolmarks, and Impression Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapters 15 &amp; 16 Quiz</li> </ul>
12	17	Trace Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 17 Quiz</li> <li><b>Online Activity:</b> Locard's T-shirt Experiment</li> </ul>
13	13	Forensic Misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forensic misconduct team presentations (15-20 mins each)</li> </ul>
14	N/A	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	<b>No classes -- enjoy your holiday!</b>
15	14	Forensic Misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forensic misconduct team presentations (15-20 mins each)</li> </ul>
16	N/A	<b>Final Exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Final Exam</b> (comprehensive)</li> </ul>

### IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT COURSE MATERIAL

The material presented in this class covers concepts from the mundane to the contentious. It is imperative that all participants understand the importance of keeping discussions civil and appropriate. We will not have a class where individuals are belittled or berated because of a particular opinion on a topic. Ad hominem attacks are the refuge of those who are unable to discuss a position in a scholarly manner. Remember former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's take on this issue: "Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people." One of my favorite quotes on this topic is from [Larry Winget](#). He wrote,

To College Students: You don't need safe-zones to protect your fragile ego. You need big, new, scary ideas that challenge your beliefs and expand your thinking. You need ideas that will offend you, hurt your feelings, stomp on your toes, and make you mad. This is necessary for growth and learning. So stop being offended by everything. Stop being a victim. Grow up.

I'm not asking you to agree with one another; I'm asking you to be civil, thoughtful, and willing to listen. One of the primary ways you learn during your university education is by being exposed to multiple points of view and ideas other than your own. I encourage a spirited, lively, and scholarly discussion of the myriad topics we'll cover. I believe that groupthink is a horrible thing, so I encourage you to research the topic and present your ideas. Don't agree with others simply because it's the easy thing to do. Be yourself and be willing to stand up for your beliefs. Having written the paragraphs above, though, I need to make sure you understand something very important: if you make an assertion of fact, you need to check your source of information and be able to cite the source(s). [Just because something is on the Internet doesn't mean it's true.](#) Where did you find your information? Is it a valid, scholarly source? Did the author have a political or personal agenda? Did he or she play fast and loose with the facts? In the words of President Ronald Reagan, "trust, but verify!"

[Student Resources](#)

[University Policies and Information](#)