Forensic Science Internship

Course Description

This course is designed to bridge the gap between academic instructions and the forensic science industry by providing real world experience in forensic investigations. Students attend a 50-minute lecture every week on campus, plus spend five hours/week at a crime laboratory. Students will accompany crime scene investigators to actual crime scenes and participate in several hands on forensic exercises involving mock as well as real investigations.

Learning Objectives

• Identify the roll of a Crime Scene Investigation Unit in a crime laboratory
• Observe and participate in actual crime scene investigations
• Demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of crime scene photography
• Identify the use of fingerprints in the criminal justice system as well as the crime laboratory
• Understand the operations of firearms and safely conduct test firing to obtain known samples of bullets and casings
• Demonstrate the ability to conduct simple firearms examinations using a microscope.
• Identify the basics principles of a questioned document examination
• Understand the roll of blood stain pattern analysis and its roll in forensic examinations
• Safely conduct blood stain pattern analysis in a laboratory setting using human blood
• Identify the roll of drug and chemical analysis in a crime laboratory
• Identify the roll of DNA analysis in the crime laboratory
• Explain the legal requirements of a crime laboratory
• Explain laboratory accreditation, how it is achieved and maintained as well as why is it necessary
• Demonstrate the ability to write a report of analysis for a forensic examination
• Identify the different career fields in forensic science and how they interact
• Understand the roll of management in the forensic community
• Explain why ethics are important in the forensic community and demonstrate the ability to maintain scientific integrity when faced with an ethical dilemma in a crime laboratory.
Major Course Requirements and Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework and class assignments</td>
<td>4 assignments will be given during the semester for 20 points each. Assignments will be hands on analysis of fingerprints, firearms and blood spatter/DNA, as well as a photography assignment.</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship Participation and Journal</td>
<td>Five hr/wk, two points/hr for 13 weeks THERE IS NO MAKE-UP FOR MISSED INTERNSHIP HOURS</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Journal</td>
<td>Points will be awarded for participation in class discussion, group project involvement and maintaining a journal during the course of the semester.</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careers in Forensics</td>
<td>Five page essay describing the career outlook for forensic scientists, including forecasted job demand, job requirements, starting and top salaries and criteria for employment.</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>Written Examination</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
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Required or Recommended Readings

**Textbook:** *Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science* (10th Edition) is recommended but not required.

**Required Reading:** *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*

Course Policies

*Attendance/tardiness*

Students will be expected to attend every class session and lab assignment. Every attempt will be made to accommodate student schedules with regard to lab assignments at the Crime Laboratory.
**Background Investigation**

Due to the nature of this course and the location of much of the activities, a complete background investigation is required for all students prior to being allowed access to the Crime Laboratory of the Police Department. The background investigation will be conducted by the Police Department at no cost to the student. If a student fails to pass the background investigation, they will not be permitted to participate in the class. Background results will be communicated to the student prior to the final drop date. If a student commits an act during the semester that results in arrest or indictment, they are identified as a suspect in a criminal investigation or they violate the safety or security protocols of the police department, the security clearance of the student will be immediately revoked and participation in the remainder of the intern portion of the class will not be allowed. The student will be given an opportunity to withdraw or if they have accumulated sufficient points to pass the class they may continue with the lecture only portion of the class.

**Late work and Make-up Exams**

Due to the nature of this course, late work and make up exams are not permitted. However, the instructor will work with each student in scheduling all due dates.

**Extra Credit**

There will be no extra credit for this class.

**Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage**

Cell phones and electronic devices will be turned off or on silent during all instructions. Texting will not be permitted during class.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero for the assignment and dismissal from the class.

**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 7, 2014 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Classroom/professional behavior

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Much of this class will be conducted in a professional environment away from the university. Accordingly, all students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Dress will be casual but conservative, close toe shoes and long pants are required for all activities conducted at the Crime Laboratory.

Additionally, this class will be participating in exercises where firearms, explosives, human blood, dangerous chemicals and other hazardous material and situations are present. ANY ACT THAT IS DEEMED BY THE INSTRUCTOR TO BE UNSAFE WILL AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN YOUR DISMISSAL FROM THE CLASS.

Statement of Civility

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated. Classroom/professional behavior

Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html, and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage (http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the chair or director of the appropriate department or school, the Office of the College of Science and Engineering Dean, or the Office of the Provost.
Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
**Tentative Schedule**

1 Sep  Labor Day Holiday (no class)

8 Sept.  Introduction, Orientation to Police Department, Criminal History and Fingerprint checks, NCIC/TCIC Criminal Justice Practitioner training.

15 Sept.  Crime Laboratory Organization/Legal Considerations

22 Sept.  Crime Scene and Physical Evidence (Lab x 8)

29 Sept.  Fingerprint classification (Lab) (Practical)

6 Oct.   Latent prints (Lab) (Practical)

13 Oct.   Photography (Lab) (Practical)

20 Oct.  Firearms (Lab) (Range)

27 Oct.  Blood Stain Pattern Analysis (Lab) (Practical)

3 Nov.   DNA Analysis

10 Nov.  NAS Report

17 Nov.  Laboratory Accreditation (NAS Report Evaluation Due)

24 Nov.  Careers in Forensic Science

1 Dec.   Ethical Considerations in Forensics (Careers in Forensic Science Essay Due) (Journal Due)

8 Dec.   Final Examination