

FIS 305

Professional Issues in Forensic Science

Syllabus

SPRING 2009

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Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:45am, Room SL 148

Prerequisites

FIS 205 and 206 are usually required. Special permission may be granted to take the class under extraordinary circumstances. Open only to majors in FIS program or permission of instructor

Textbook

(NONE REQUIRED): The course will be structured around publications in the public domain which will be posted on ONCOURSE. Assigned readings from forensic science journals and the web will be posted on Oncourse.

Course Description

This course will focus on issues which the forensic scientist must be aware of when working in a forensic science laboratory in both the private and public sectors. These will include but not be limited to discussions of the following issues:

- Ethical responsibilities of a forensic scientist in conducting analyses, writing reports, and testifying in court.
- Examples of ethical problems which issues which have occurred and impact trust in forensic science laboratories
- Codes of Conduct and what they mean
- Development of a cultural awareness of how forensic sciences has evolved over the past 25 years
- Using the library and other resources to search the literature when conducting forensic science research
- The requirements for quality assurance systems and quality control to maximize the effectiveness of the laboratory work-product
- Accreditation of forensic science laboratories and the certification of forensic scientists
- Employment in a forensic science laboratory: search for opening, writing resumes, preparing for interviews, and following-up with employers.

Course Content

This course is designed to familiarize students in the Forensic and Investigative Sciences Program with some of the major professional issues that confront those who are beginning a career in forensic science. The following are the major topics of this course:

1. Ethics in forensic science
2. The development and culture of crime laboratories
3. The fundamental resources in forensic science research
4. Quality assurance, accreditation, and certification in forensic science
5. Preparation for a job interview with a forensic science laboratory

Course objectives

At the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the culture of the crime laboratory system in the US as shaped by the history and development of the system as an outgrowth of external influences such as the courts, professional organizations, and outside peer-group monitoring
2. Describe the major ethical systems used by forensic scientists today
3. Determine how ethical situations are handled by these systems
4. Describe how quality assurance and quality control are practiced in forensic science labs today
5. Describe the elements of accreditation and certification programs
6. Construct an effective resume targeted at a forensic science lab position
7. Effectively carry out a mock interview for a forensic science lab position

Organization

To the extent possible, this course will be taught as a discussion and seminar course.. All course materials will be put on the class Oncourse site. There will be a number of assignments in the course and they are described and explained on the Oncourse site. The course is scheduled to meet Tuesday and Thursday from 10:30 – 11:45 am; however, we will not be meeting during each “class period.” Some of the class periods will be set aside for you to work independently on your assignments in order to become engaged in all classroom discussions . Students will be expected to attend all classroom sessions.

Unless otherwise directed, all assignments must be turned in *via* the Oncourse site. You must use Microsoft Word for your written assignments. The format for papers is explained on the Oncourse site.

The Oncourse Site

Syllabus: This syllabus will be posted there

Announcements: Check this frequently. I will post upcoming events and changes to the class schedule here

Resources: All supplementary materials will be posted in this section. This will include readings and instructions on writing papers and case abstracts

Assignments: All class assignments will be posted in this section. Start dates and deadlines will be given and the assignment will be explained.

Grade book: Your grades will be posted in here and you will have access to them at all times

Drop Box: This is where you will upload assignments to me and will upload corrected assignments back to you. Only you and I can view your drop box

Web Content: I will post web addresses where you can get information about forensic science in general and sites that apply to particular assignments

Grading

Your grade for this course will be determined by your performance on all of the assignments: The components and point values are given below :

THIS ASSIGNMENT LIST WILL BE UPDATED

Assignment 1:	
PowerPoint presentation:	50
10 page paper:	100
Assignment 2:	
5 page paper:	75
Assignment 3:	
10 page paper:	100
Assignment 4:	
10 page group paper:	100
group oral presentation	75
Assignment 5:	
5 page paper:	50
Assignments 6 and 7:	
Resume:	25
Cover letter:	25
5 page paper	100
Total Points:	700

Assignment Policy: All assignments will have a posted due date and will be due on that date. Exception will be considered only due to extenuating circumstances and with proper documentation

Academic Misconduct

(Taken from Academic Handbook, 2001 and the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct)

http://www.indiana.edu/~deanfac/acadhb/acad_handbk_2001.pdf

<http://www.life.iupui.edu/Who/Dean/Code>

The Academic Handbook states that faculty members have the responsibility of fostering the “intellectual honesty as well as the intellectual development of students....The faculty member should explain clearly the meaning of cheating and plagiarism as they apply to the course....Should the faculty member detect signs of plagiarism or cheating, it is his or her most serious obligation to investigate these thoroughly, to take appropriate action with respect to the grades of students, and in any event to report the matter to the Dean of Students. The necessity to report every case of cheating, whether or not further action is desirable, arises particularly because of the possibility that this is not the student’s first offense, or that other offenses may follow it. Equity also demands that a uniform reporting practice be enforced; otherwise, some students will be penalized while others guilty of the same actions will go free.” (p. 172).

Academic Misconduct: *(from the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct)*

1. Cheating

A student must not use or attempt to use unauthorized assistance, materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. A student must not use external assistance on any "in-class" or "take-home" examination, unless the instructor specifically has authorized external assistance. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, the use of tutors, books, notes, and calculators.*
- b. A student must not use another person as a substitute in the taking of an examination or quiz.*
- c. A student must not steal examinations or other course materials.*
- d. A student must not allow others to conduct research or to prepare work for him or her without advance authorization from the instructor to whom the work is being submitted. Under this prohibition, a student must not make any unauthorized use of materials obtained from commercial term paper companies or from files of papers prepared by other persons.*
- e. A student must not collaborate with other persons on a particular project and submit a copy of a written report which is represented explicitly or implicitly as the student's individual work.*

f. A student must not use any unauthorized assistance in a laboratory, at a computer terminal, or on field work.

g. A student must not submit substantial portions of the same academic work for credit or honors more than once without permission of the instructor to whom the work is being submitted.

h. A student must not alter a grade or score in any way.

2. Fabrication

A student must not falsify or invent any information or data in an academic exercise including, but not limited to, records or reports, laboratory results, and citations to the sources of information.

3. Plagiarism

A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the origin ality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following:

a. Quotes another person's actual words, either oral or written;

b. Paraphrases another person's words, either oral or written;

c. Uses another person's idea, opinion, or theory; or

d. Borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, unless the information is common knowledge.

4. Interference

a. A student must not steal, change, destroy, or impede another student's work. Impeding another student's work includes, but is not limited to, the theft, defacement, or mutilation of resources so as to deprive others of the information they contain.

b. A student must not give or offer a bribe, promise favors, or make threats with the intention of affecting a grade or the evaluation of academic performance.

Faculty Action

If a faculty member has information that one of his/her students committed an act of academic misconduct, the faculty member is required to hold an informal conference with the student. The conference should be prompt and private. If the faculty member concludes that the student is responsible for the misconduct, then the faculty member is authorized to impose an appropriate academic sanction (i.e., lower or failing grade on the assignment, assessin g a lower or failing grade

for the course).

After reporting the information to the Dean of Students, he/she will review the information to determine if additional sanctions should be applied.

Sanctions are outlined in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct. This document appears on the web at the following address: <http://www.life.iupui.edu/Who/Dean/Code/>

Policy on Student Academic Misconduct

Faculty are required to report all incidents of academic misconduct to the Dean of Students. For information about policies and procedures, including due process requirements, see the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, especially part III: Student Misconduct and Part IV: Student Disciplinary Procedures. The code is accessible on the internet at <http://www.life.iupui.edu/Who/Dean/Code>

If you need any special accommodations due to a disability, please contact Adaptive Educational Services at (317)-274-3241. The office is located in CA 001E

THIS SCHEDULE IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

<u>Class Period</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Jan. 13	In class lecture: Introduction to the course
Jan. 15	In class discussion: Crime laboratory organization and culture What is it like to work in a crime laboratory in 2008?
Jan. 20, 22	No class. Work on assignment 1 Topic outline for Assignment 1 due on January 22.
Jan. 27, 29	In class presentations on assignment 1 First draft of assignment 1 papers due at 5pm, January 30 Introduce Assignment 2:
Feb. 3, 5	No class. Work on assignment 2
Feb. 10, 12	In class lectures
Feb. 17, 19	No class: American Academy of Forensic Sciences meeting First draft of assignment 2 papers due at 5pm, February 23
Feb. 24, 26	In class lectures Introduce Assignment 3:

Introduce Assignment 4:

- Mar. 3, 5 No class. Work on assignment 3
- Mar.10, 12 First draft of assignment 3 papers due at 5pm, March 13
- Mar 17, 19 Semester Break
- Mar. 24, 26 In class Discussions
- Mar. 31 Out of class work on assignment 4
- Apr. 2 In class presentation on assignment 4
First draft of assignment 4 papers due at 5pm, April 3
Introduce Assignment 5:
- Apr. 7, 9 In class: mock trial snippets
Introduce Assignment 6: Resumes and Interviews
- Apr. 14, 16 In class: presentation on job hunting strategies
First draft of assignment 5 papers due at 5pm, April 17
Introduce Assignment 7:
- Apr. 21, 23 In class: Lecture on interviewing techniques; mock interview demonstration
- Apr. 28, 30 Last day of class. Wrap-up. Course evaluations