

202:327 – Forensic Theory & Policy

Primary Instructor: Kimberlee Moran, MSc, RPA (k.moran@camden.rutgers.edu; SCI302; 856-203-0687)

| Wk | Date | Time | Subject |
|---|---------|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | Sept 07 | Anytime | Welcome, Course overview, Useful resources, History of forensic science (recorded) |
| <p>Due Sept 11: start-of-class survey and to choose a type of forensic science that you will follow over the course of the semester. See the Assignments tab in Sakai for details.</p> | | | |
| 2 | Sept 14 | 6 – 7.30pm 7.30-8.30pm | Making Science Forensic: methodology, protocols, & procedures The rainbow that is forensic science (forensic science specialties) |
| <p>Due in class on Sept 21: Watch an episode of CSI or any forensic show before next week's class. Prepare two powerpoint slides – one with the name of the show and a brief summary of the episode; the other with at least 5 incorrect things that happened. Why were they incorrect? (technology doesn't exist, incorrect procedure, resolution too quick, etc). Submit the slides to Sakai before class.</p> | | | |
| 3 | Sept 21 | 6 – 7pm 7-8.30pm | CSI presentations Forensic science, the media, and the CSI effect |
| <p>Due Sept 25: Reaction Essay 1 due (read http://goo.gl/gWv1yu).</p> <p>Due in class Sept 28: Find a journal article on your chosen type of forensic science and read it. You will be asked about it in class. Submit the journal article to Sakai before class.</p> | | | |
| 4 | Sept 28 | 6 – 7pm 7-8.30pm | Review of reaction papers / survey Journal articles & Writing Basics |
| 5 | Oct 05 | 6 – 7.15pm 7.15-8.30pm | From crime scene to court & Crime scene investigation |
| <p>Due Oct 9: Short paper outlines & Bibliographies. (See Assignments Tab in Sakai; upload to Sakai)</p> | | | |

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| 6 | Oct 12 | 6-8.30pm | Forensic science & the criminal justice system: policy, standards, and regulation |
| 7 | Oct 19 | 6-8.30pm | Forensic science and human rights |
| Due Oct 23: Short paper (3-5pg) drafts. (See Assignments Tab in Sakai; upload to Sakai) | | | |
| 8 | Oct 26 | Anytime | MID-TERM – NO CLASS |
| Due in class Nov 2: paper peer review due (See Assignments Tab in Sakai). Bring a hard copy of your reviewed paper to class. Upload a version to Sakai, too, before class. | | | |
| 9 | Nov 2 | 6 – 7.30pm 7.30-8.30pm | Paper discussion Preparing expert testimony for court |
| Due Nov 6: 3-5pg paper due (See Assignments Tab in Sakai; upload to Sakai) | | | |
| 10 | Nov 9 | 6-8.30pm | Watch “Forensics on Trial” in class & discussion |
| Due Nov 10: Reaction Essay 2. Submit to Sakai. | | | |
| 11 | Nov 16 | 6-8.30pm | Forensic Science Policy Debates |
| Due Nov 16: required FEMA courses (See Assignments Tab in Sakai; upload to Sakai). Optional courses due by the last day of class. | | | |

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| 12 | Nov 21 (Tues) | 6-8.30pm | Mass fatality incidents |
| Due Nov 27: Expert Witness Statements (See Assignments Tab in Sakai; upload to Sakai) | | | |
| 13 | Nov 30 | 6-8.30pm | Mock trial |
| 14 | Dec 7 | 6-8.30pm | Mock trial & end of semester party |

Forensic Science Theory & Policy (202:327) – Fall 2017

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

All sessions will be held in XXX unless otherwise informed.

I. Teaching Faculty:

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SCI 302

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II. Class Description:

Since the late 19th century, forensic science has played an important role within criminal justice. Recent media attention has thrust forensics reluctantly into the spotlight to both positive and negative effect. This course aims to introduce the theoretical framework of forensic science from both an academic and practitioner viewpoint. Students will be familiarized with a range of forensic techniques, forensic terminology, and forensic procedures and protocols. We will examine the strengths and weaknesses of a number of common forensic techniques as well as the pitfalls of relying too heavily on forensic evidence. Finally, we will consider a number of related disciplines and issues, such as evidence admissibility, the CSI effect, human rights, and forensic regulation to gain a broader understanding of forensics' modern role and future development within criminal justice. This class is a writing intensive course.

III. Educational Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be able to articulate how forensic science is structured and regulated in the USA
- Understand what the CSI effect is and how it affects forensic science
- Know what sort of sources are considered authoritative within forensic research
- Verbally communicate both opinion and fact within forensic science policy-making
- Understand the difference between opinion and fact within forensic science policy-making
- Structure a forensic science research paper and a scientific report
- Critically assess forensic evidence

IV. Weekly Session Descriptions

Session 1: Welcome, Course overview, Useful resources, History of forensic science. *Our class will begin virtually. Videos for this session and its follow-up assignments will be available on Sakai. The instructor will send out details prior to class. This session will provide an introduction to the course (Video 1) and the assignments for the semester (Video 2). A number of useful forensic resources will be covered such as key texts, journals, online databases, and networking sites (Video 3). The course will officially start with an overview of the history of forensic science and major milestones for the discipline (Video 4). Students will be required to complete a start-of-class survey and to choose a type of forensic science that*

they will follow throughout the semester. Finally students will need to log into Sakai and acknowledge that they have watched each video.

Session 2: Making Science Forensic: methodology, protocols, & procedures. *What differentiates “science” from “forensic science?” This session will cover the protocols, procedures, and the theoretical framework that governs forensic scientists. How should a forensic expert approach evidence? Is there a difference between working for the prosecution or the defense?*

Session 3: Writing Basics. *These days, all professors complain that students don’t know how to write and rely too heavily on the internet for research. This session will cover some writing basics. We will have “fun” with grammar and do some in-class writing activities. Finally, we will visit the library to learn what sorts of research resources are available and the difference between a good reference and a bad one.*

Session 4: Forensic science, the media, and the CSI effect. *The recent glut of forensic television series, both fictional and “factual,” has caused a noticeable impact on the discipline. As these series prove to be hugely popular, how have they influenced our views of forensic science? From the “educated” jury to the unquestioning public defender, the media portrayal of forensic expertise has a lot to answer for. How do we combat this influence both in the jury, and in ourselves? This session will explore the pros and cons of the “CSI effect” and how we can effectively work alongside it.*

Session 5: From crime scene to court & Crime scene investigation. *This session will cover the full process of a criminal investigation in New Jersey from the moment a crime is reported, to the examination of the crime scene, to the submission of evidence in the lab, to the presentation of evidence in a court of law. We will also look at where investigations can break down forensically. Most often associated with forensic science, crime scene investigation is not science at all. Rather it is the methodology by which a scene is processed and evidence is collected for later analysis by forensic scientists. We will examine this methodology in a number of jurisdictions and in scenarios ranging from a common burglary to a large-scale terrorist attack. We will discuss documentation of the scene, identifying and preserving evidence, chain of custody, and several illustrative case studies such as the OJ Simpson case.*

Session 6: Forensic science & the criminal justice system – policy, standards, & regulation. *Federal agencies, commissioned reports, and case law have all played a role in the admissibility and regulation of forensic evidence. This session will explore the Daubert trilogy, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the infamous 2009 NAS report, and the 2016 PCAST report. We will discuss issues surrounding cognitive bias, standards, and the state of forensic science practice in the USA.*

Session 7: Forensic science and human rights. *Forensic techniques such as forensic anthropology and archaeology are frequently used to recover and identify victims of human rights abuses who have been interred in mass graves. We will discuss several cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights, the International Criminal Court, and the International Court of Justice. The second half of the session will look at the human rights implications of DNA and fingerprint databases and how forensic techniques can impinge on privacy rights.*

Session 8: MID-TERM

Session 9: Preparing expert testimony for court. *This session will focus on the culmination of all investigations and forensic analyses – the criminal trial. Specifically, we will examine the role of expert witnesses. Many of the topics from previous sessions will be reviewed such as the CSI effect on juries, the Daubert criteria, and the NAS report. Finally, we will cover the expert witness statement. Students will create a case in which they served as the scientist. They will draft an expert witness statement that will be examined and cross-examined in the mock trial on the last day of class. Statements will be due a week before the last class*

Session 10: Forensics on Trial. *This was a NOVA special from several years ago that highlight some problems with forensic science that led to miscarriages of justice. We will discuss the issues and students will produce a 1-page reaction paper to be handed in the next day.*

Session 11: Forensic Science Policy Debates. *Students will be put into teams. We will discuss several current issues related to forensic science and criminal justice policy. Students will utilize the features of the “Discovery Classroom” to research these issues and to prepare short presentations. Students will present their arguments in class.*

Session 12: Mass fatality incidents. *A mass fatality incident is one in which the number of casualties exceeds the local resources. These can be either natural disasters or man-made events. We will look at several types of mass fatality incidents and the response framework. We will also cover the national Incident Management System (NIMS) and the role of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Finally, we will investigate several recent mass fatality incidents and the role of forensic scientists in the subsequent investigations.*

Session 13: Mock trial. *The final sessions for this course will be a mock trial in which each student will appear as an expert witness to be examined and cross-examined.*

Session 14: Mock trial & end of semester party. *The final sessions for this course will be a mock trial in which each student will appear as an expert witness to be examined and cross-examined. As our last session for the semester, we will have a holiday celebration and I encourage students to bring in festive fare.*

V. Writing:

This course has been given a “W” designation as it is a writing-intensive course. Students are encouraged to submit drafts of papers and witness statements prior to the assignment due date in order to develop their writing skills. Students are also encouraged to make use of the Rutgers Learning Center and the Writing Tutors on staff. All writing submissions must be done via the course SAKAI site and should be in .pdf, .doc, or .docx format. Coverpages, bibliographies, images and graphs/tables are in addition to the page limit. Late submissions will have 10% deducted from the final grade for every day late. The first class session will cover some writing basics, resources, and instructor expectations. It is advised that students use “The Brief Penguin Handbook” as a writing resource guide.

VI. Textbooks:

No textbook is required for purchase. Readings will be posted on Sakai either under “Resources” or as an announcement. It is essential that you check your Rutgers e-mail as all course announcements will be sent there.

VII. Class Participation:

Participation in each class by the student is crucial to exemplify the student's understanding of the material. Each student is expected to read any assigned material in advance and come to each class prepared to discuss the topic. Where possible, students will be allocated reading material prior to class. This information will be disseminated via Sakai.

VIII. Assessment:

The assessment for this course consists of **twelve** (12) components each contributing to the final grade as outlined below. All assignments are listed and described on the course's Sakai site and all submissions should be electronic. In cases of large file sizes, the assignment can be stored on Google Drive or Dropbox and a link to it can be submitted to Sakai. All submissions must be compatible with PC computers (e.g. files extensions .pdf, .doc, .docx, .ppt, .pptx, etc).

The assignments are as follows:

- 1. Start-of-class survey& choose a type of Forensic Science (Sept 11)**
- 2. CSI exercise & presentation (Sept 21)**
- 3. Reaction Essay 1 (Sept 25)**
- 4. Journal article exercise (Sept 28)**
- 5. Short paper outline & Bibliography (Oct 9)**
- 6. Short paper draft (Oct 23)**
- 7. Mid-term Exam (Oct 26):** this exam will be taken online via Sakai. A notification will be sent out when the exam is available. It will consist of multiple choice, True/False, short answer, and essay questions. We will discuss the mid-term in class.
- 8. Short paper peer review (Nov 2)**
- 9. Short paper final draft due (Nov 6)**
- 10. Reaction Essay 2 (Nov 10)**
- 11. FEMA courses (Nov 16)**
- 12. Expert Witness Statements (Nov 27)**

IX. Evaluation and Grading:

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| Start-of-class survey& choose a type of Forensic Science | 5% |
| CSI exercise & presentation | 5% |
| Reaction Essay 1 | 5% |
| Journal article exercise | 5% |
| Short paper outline & Bibliography | 5% |
| Short paper draft | 10% |
| Mid-term exam | 10% |
| Short paper peer review | 10% |
| Short paper final draft due | 10% |
| Reaction Essay 2 | 5% |
| FEMA courses | 10% |
| Expert Witness Statements | 10% |

Class Participation & Attendance

10%

Total

100 points

X. Attendance:

Please make every effort to be present for class on time. If you do not attend class you will miss information that is not always available in the text or elsewhere that you will be responsible for on assessments; you will miss information as to schedule changes that may arise. In addition, class discussion and participation is a vital component of this class and absence will affect your final grade.

XI. Late Assignments:

Unless you have a legitimate excuse, absence, or emergency, you may not make-up any missed work and will thus receive a 0 for that assignment. Late assignments will not be graded and the student will receive a 0 for the assignment turned in late.

XII. Academic Policies:

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University Code of Academic Integrity (<https://fas.camden.rutgers.edu/faculty/faculty-resources/academic-integrity-policy/>). Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. All writing assignment should be an original work by a student. Students are highly recommended to educate themselves on the subject; <http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/whatisplagiarism.html> Forensic science is a profession that is internally maintained by ethics and personal integrity.

XIII. Classroom Courtesy:

Please do not catch up on sleep, search your wireless internet connection, text message your friends, listen to your iPod, read the newspaper or other unrelated materials, during class. Please turn cell phones off during class. This class involves the discussion of issues that can get heated. Please be respectful of those with different opinions from your own.

XIV. Students with Disabilities:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>