

California State University, Sacramento
Criminal Justice Division
Criminal Justice 4
General Investigative Techniques
Spring Semester 2008

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 10:15 to 11:15am, Alpine Room 114

SYLLABUS

Required Text

Criminal Investigations by Charles Swanson, Neil Chamelin, Leonard Territo, and Robert Taylor, 9th edition, McGraw-Hill.

Course Description

This is an introductory course in criminal investigations. Information covered in this course includes the fundamentals involved in the investigation of crimes, interrogation and interviewing techniques, crime scene management, surveillance techniques, and use of scientific aids.

Prerequisite: None

Course Goals

The student will become familiar with those techniques involved in the investigation of crimes; interviewing of victims and witnesses and the interrogation of suspects; organization and procedure involved in the investigation of crimes; crime scene searches; surveillances; use of scientific aids, and other relevant sources of information.

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of critical ethical issues relating to criminal investigation.
2. Identify the three conceptual stages in a criminal investigation (determining a crime committed, identifying responsible party, proving guilt) and identify associated activities for each stage.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate actions for first responders at crime scenes.
4. Identify the three distinct functions for crime scene investigation (coordination and management; scene search, collection and preservation of physical evidence and general area investigation) and specify the tasks performed in each function.
5. Identify appropriate methods for performing the foregoing tasks.
6. Describe the three functional roles of evidence and categorize evidences by primary function given appropriate background information.
7. Capacity to identify relevant tests and examinations for linking and associating physical evidence.
8. Ability to identify criteria for prioritizing cases for investigation and alternative strategies to full follow-up investigation.
9. Ability to identify the problems associated with witness memory and to select interviewing techniques and strategies for minimizing these problems.

10. Ability to identify key information sources and data systems available to investigators, strategies for their use and the legal or administrative privacy restrictions imposed upon their use.
11. Ability to define the investigator's role during the trial process and explain the relationship between investigative process and knowledge of law relating to both corpus delicti and rules of criminal procedure.
12. Expressing the foregoing skill through a relevant writing assignment.

Method of Instruction

This course explores the topics required to meet the learning objectives using a combination of lectures, videos, discussions, and assigned readings. These assignments will usually cover current events that illustrate issues covered in the text.

I do expect students to complete reading assignments **before** the lecture dates and to participate in discussions. Be prepared to do this. I encourage the expression of views and opinions supported by analysis, synthesis and integration of course materials. I strongly encourage questions, and I reward discussion, analysis and critical thinking. I do invite guest lecturers. *Please note that video material and guest lecturer topics are likely to appear on exams.*

Course Requirements

- Attendance is required. Students with more than two absences may have their grades reduced.
- Classroom participation in group discussions, role playing and oral presentations are required.
- Both a mid-term and final examination will be taken on days scheduled by instructor. Exams may consist of true/false, multiple-choice questions and essay questions.
- Two essays, subject matter to be determined by the instructor, will be required. These essays must be typed, double space, and 12-point font, and no more than five pages in length. You will be graded on the content of your essays, command of the topic, your ability integrate ideas, evidence of original thought or analysis, and the logic of your ideas. Papers will not be accepted late. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade. For information see the University Policy Manual on Plagiarism.
- There are no extra-credit options for this course.
- Cell and laptop use during class time is disturbing to fellow students. Please refrain from cell phone use and non-class related laptop use. I have a wife, five grown children, three grandchildren, and many responsibilities, and yet I still manage to go a couple hours without communication with friends, family and work. You can too!

Grading Policy

Attendance/Participation	10%
Written Assignment 1	20%
Written Assignment 2	20%
Midterm Examination	25%
Final Examination	25%

Grading Scale

	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69
A 93-100	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62

Course Calendar

Week 1	January 29 & 31, 2008	Class Orientation/ Begin Chapter 1
Week 2	February 5 & 7, 2008	Chapter 1: The Evolution of Criminal Investigations
Week 3	February 12 & 14, 2008	Chapter 2: Legal Aspects of Investigations
Week 4	February 19 & 21, 2008	Chapter 3: Investigation Process
Week 5	February 26 & 28, 2008	Chapter 3: Investigation Process (cont) Essay Assignment #1 on February 28
Week 6	March 4 & 6, 2008	Chapter 4: Physical Evidence
Week 7	March 11 & 13, 2008	Chapter 5: Interview & Interrogation Essay Assignment Due on March 13
Week 8	March 18 & 20, 2008	Chapter 5: Interview & Interrogation (cont)
Week 9	March 25 & 27, 2008	Midterm Examination
Week 10	April 1 & 3, 2008 SPRING BREAK	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
Week 11	April 8 & 10, 2008	Chapter 6: Field Notes & Reporting
Week 12	April 15 & 17, 2008	Chapter 7: Follow-up Investigations
Week 13	April 22 & 24, 2008	Chapter 8: Crime Lab Essay Assignment #2 on April 24
Week 14	April 29 & May 1, 2008	Chapter 8: Crime Lab (cont)
Week 15	May 6 & 8, 2008	Chapter 9: Injury & Death Investigations Essay Assignment #2 Due on May 8
Week 16	May 13 & 15, 2008	Chapter 9: Injury & Death Investigations (cont) Review
Week 17	May 22, 2008 (7:30am class) May 20, 2008 (9:00am class)	Final Examination – 8:00 to 10:00am

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Essay Grading Rubric

I. Structure (25%)

A. Excellent:

1. Opening paragraph defines purpose of essay clearly and succinctly, allows the reader to predict what follows and establishes a clear theme for essay.
2. Paragraphs begin and end with transitions and focus on single concept or idea.
3. Body of essay develops on the opening theme in a coherent and logical progression of ideas that facilitates the reader's understanding and maintains the reader's interest.
4. Arguments and conclusions are internally consistent and always supported with evidence or logic.
5. Writer makes frequent and effective use of examples to support his/her underlying argument.
6. Closing paragraph sums up writer's points and links back to opening.
7. Overall the essay reflects conscious use of structure and organization, which facilitates the reader's understanding.

B. Acceptable:

1. Opening paragraph addresses a purpose.
2. Writer makes paragraph breaks in appropriate places.
3. Body of essay stays on general topic introduced in essay.
4. Writer makes some use of logic and evidence.
5. Writer makes some use of examples to support his/her argument.
6. The essay reflects some overall structure and organization.

C. Unacceptable:

1. Opening paragraph does not relate to any clear theme, nor does it relate to the remainder of essay.
2. Writer fails to break writing into paragraphs at appropriate places.
3. Body of essay wanders among topics without apparent purpose.
4. Writer makes assertions without evidence, logic or examples or uses evidence, logic or examples that clearly fail to support assertions.
5. The essay lacks structure and reflects no planning or organization. It shifts from one topic to another at random.

II. Language Usage (25%)

A. Excellent:

1. Writing contains no grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors
2. Writer makes extensive use of active voice.
3. Writer consistently uses appropriate tense.
4. Writer uses varied sentence structures. Worker appropriately uses a rich vocabulary and varied vocabulary.
5. Writer appropriately uses a rich vocabulary and varied vocabulary.

B. Acceptable:

1. Writing contains some minor grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors.
2. Writer primarily uses active voice, but occasionally lapses into passive voice where active voice would better serve his/her objectives.
3. Writer sometimes uses present tense to describe past events or other errors in tense.
4. Writer repeatedly uses simple sentence structure.
5. Writer repeatedly uses the same words or phrases; vocabulary shows no richness or variety.

C. Unacceptable

1. Writing contains numerous grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors.
2. Writer never uses active voice.
3. Writer demonstrates no awareness of tense, mixes tense in sentences.
4. Writing contains sentence fragments.
5. Writing contains slang or obscene terms without quotation marks or other significant misuse of words.

III. Content and analysis (50%)

A. Excellent

1. The essay directly addresses the question or assignment.
2. Writer demonstrates extensive and sophisticated understanding of the material covered in the essay.
3. The writer demonstrates innovative and original analysis of the issue.

B. Acceptable

1. The essay primarily addresses the question or assignment, but misses some aspects of the question.
2. Writer demonstrates moderate knowledge of facts but only limited insight into causes, relationships or other complex analysis.
3. The essay describes more than it analyzes.

C. Unacceptable

1. The essay is not responsive to the question or assignment.
2. The facts or conclusions are erroneous.