

Criminalistics I (CJSA 1308 9T1)

CREDIT

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 hours lecture, 0 hour lab)

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face

PREREQUISITE/CO-REQUISITE:

None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to the field of Criminalistics. Topics include the appreciation of scientific and technical methods in the investigation of crime including location, identification, and handling of evidence for scientific analysis

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Describe the various roles of the Forensic Scientist from the crime scene technician, to the medical-legal forensic pathologist to the court room testimony of a criminal case.
- Explain and apply the scientific method to both research and to the actual crime scene.
- Explain and utilize the Locard's Theory and different crime scene search patterns.
- Demonstrate understanding of the actual participation of a mock crime scene and complete the on-scene investigation to include a written report.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: **Theresa Johnson**

Email: theresa.johnson@gccisd.net

Office Phone: **281-420-4500 x84270**

Office Location: **Room E270**

Office Hours: **7AM-3:30PM**

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Forensic Science Today by Dr. Henry C. Lee and George M. Taft (2nd Edition)

Approved: August 2024

Lawyers & Judges Publishing Company, Inc. Tucson, Arizona

a. ISBN number is 13: 978 1 933264 87 5



**LAMAR INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY**

PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE POLICY

Participation is assessed through exercises completed in class. Activities may consist of class assignments, group activities and individual analysis of information from various sources including the text. However, six unexcused absences will result in a 50% grade reduction in the Participation/Attendance Grade

DROP POLICY

If you wish to drop a course, you are responsible for initiating and completing the drop process by the specified drop date as listed on the Academic Calendar. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an "F" in the course.

STUDENT EXPECTED TIME REQUIREMENT

For every hour in class (or unit of credit), students should expect to spend at least two to three hours per week studying and completing assignments. For a 3-credit-hour class, students should prepare to allocate approximately six to nine hours per week outside of class in a 16- week session OR approximately twelve to eighteen hours in an 8-week session. Online/Hybrid students should expect to spend at least as much time in this course as in the traditional, face-to-face class.

COURSE CALENDAR

Below schedule subject to change.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS (Due on this Date)	ASSIGNMENTS (Due on this Date)
Week 1	Course Introduction Scientific Method Forensic Science Careers Forensic Pathology Cause and Manner of Death Crime Scene Investigation I (Basics)	Ch 1, 2 8/28/26	Assignment 1: Cause and Manner of Death Assignment 2: Crime Scene Investigation I 8/28/26
Week 2	Crime Scene Investigation II Physical Evidence Search Patterns Documentation of Evidence Fingerprints	Chapters 3 and 4 9/4/26	Assignment 3: Crime Scene Investigation II Assignment 4: Fingerprints Fingerprint Lab Activity 9/4/26

Week 3	Trace Evidence Hair, Fibers, Glass, Soil Drug Evidence Controlled Substances Toxicology Overview	Chapters 5 and 6 9/11/26	Assignment 5: Trace Evidence Assignment 6: Drug Evidence 9/11/26
Week 4	Forensic Serology Bloodstain Pattern Analysis DNA Evidence CODIS Innocence Project Cases	Chapters 7, 8, 9 9/18/26 EXAM covers Ch 1-9	Assignment 7: Forensic Serology Assignment 8: DNA Evidence Assignment 9: Bloodstain Patterns EXAM 1 9/17/26

Week 5	Questioned Documents Handwriting Analysis Forgery Imprints and Impressions Casting Techniques	Ch 10 and 11 9/25/26	Assignment 10: Questioned Documents Assignment 11: Imprints and Impressions 9/25/26
Week 6	Tool Marks Firearms Evidence Ballistics Cartridge Cases Firearms Identification Lab	Ch 12 10/2/26 CRIME SCENE PROJECT DUE 10/2/26	Assignment 12: Tool Marks and Firearms 10/2/26 CRIME SCENE PROJECT DUE 10/2/26
Week 7	Mock Crime Scene Processing Evidence Collection Crime Scene Report Writing Courtroom Testimony Preparation Course Review	EXAM 2 cover ch 10-12	Written Crime Scene Report EXAM 2 10/8/26 FINAL EXAM 10/9/26 ALL LABS DUE BY 10/7/26
Week 8	GCCISD FALL BREAK	10/12-10/16/2026	ALL GRADES DUE and FINALIZED

COURSE EVALUATION

- 2 Unit Tests 35%
- Course Project 10 %
- Class Assignments 20 %
- Final Exam 15 %
- Lab/Online Exercise 10 %
- Participation 5 %
- Attendance 5 %

GRADE SCALE

- 90-100 A
- 80-89 B
- 70-79 C
- 60-69 D
- 0-59 F

LIT does not use +/- grading scales

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students found to be committing academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, or collusion) may receive disciplinary action. Students need to familiarize themselves with the institution's Academic Dishonesty Policy available in the Student Catalog & Handbook at

<http://catalog.lit.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=80#academic-dishonesty>.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The latest technical requirements, including hardware, compatible browsers, operating systems, etc. can be online at <https://lit.edu/online-learning/online-learning-minimum-computer-requirements>. A functional broadband internet connection, such as DSL, cable, or WiFi is necessary to maximize the use of online technology and resources.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal antidiscrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. LIT provides reasonable accommodations as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to students with a diagnosed disability. The Special Populations Office is located in the Eagles' Nest Room 129 and helps foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment by maintaining partnerships with faculty and staff, as well as promoting awareness among all members of the Lamar Institute of Technology community. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator at (409)-951-5708 or email specialpopulations@lit.edu. You may also visit the online resource at [Special Populations - Lamar Institute of Technology \(lit.edu\)](#).

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of all registered Lamar Institute of Technology students to access, read, understand and abide by all published policies, regulations, and procedures listed in the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook*. The *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* may be accessed at www.lit.edu. Please note that the online version of the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* supersedes all other versions of the same document.

AI STATEMENT

Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) recognizes the recent advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, have changed the landscape of many career disciplines and will impact many students in and out of the classroom. To prepare students for their selected careers, LIT desires to guide students in the ethical use of these technologies and incorporate AI into the classroom instruction and assignments appropriately. Appropriate use of these technologies is at the discretion of the instructor. Students are reminded that all submitted work must be their own original work unless otherwise specified. Students should contact their instructor with any questions as to the acceptable use of AI/ChatGPT in their courses.

STARFISH

LIT utilizes an early alert system called Starfish. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails from Starfish regarding your course grades, attendance, or academic performance. Faculty members record student attendance, raise flags and kudos to express concern or give praise, and you can make an appointment with faculty and staff all through the Starfish home page. You can also login to Blackboard or MyLIT and click on the Starfish link to view academic alerts and detailed information. It is the responsibility of the student to pay attention to these emails and information in Starfish and consider taking the recommended actions. Starfish is used to help you be a successful student at LIT.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES/INFORMATION

1. No DISRUPTIONS will be tolerated, and, in this classroom, we will respect one another's right to learn.
2. No food, drinks, or use of tobacco products in class.
3. Cell phones, headphones, and any other electronic devices must be turned off while in class.
4. Do not bring children to class.
5. Do not walk out of class early without talking to me before the class begins.
6. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL BE DEALT WITH MOST STRICTLY! - An automatic F for the semester, plus a report will be filed.
7. No late assignments will be accepted. All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard.
8. Makeup exams will not be given, unless arranged for in advance. If you miss an exam (including the final) for any reason, without making arrangements with me prior to the exam, you will receive a zero on that exam. All exams will be taken on Blackboard.
9. If you wish to drop a course, the student is responsible for initiating and completing the drop process. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an 'F' in the course.
10. Attendance is expected and required. Participation/Attendance – Participation is assessed through exercises completed in class. Activities may consist of class assignments, group activities and individual analysis of information from various sources including the text. However, six unexcused absences will result in a 50% grade reduction in the Participation/Attendance Grade.
11. Additional class policies as defined by the individual course instructor.
12. Students will learn to explain the various aspects of theory and practice related to crime scene investigation.
13. Critical Thinking Analysis – Analyze a current and or past criminal case using the Scientific Theory or concept from the beginning call to court completion from a crime scene perspective.
14. Research and Practical Application Project – Students will research a past felony crime issue / topic of major significance and then complete a practical crime scene investigation to include search, photographing, sketching discovery and collection of evidence, written report and prepare for testifying in a mock court room case. The assignment will consist of a research report and presentation. The research report must be submitted on Blackboard.
15. The Course Calendar is subject to change without prior notice.

