

Spring 2020

FRSC 201-002: Introduction to Forensic Science

David Fisher

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FRSC 201: Intro to Forensic Science
Spring 2020 Syllabus
Fridays 8:30-11:20a
CKB 330

[NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#): All Students should be aware that the Department of Chemistry & Environmental Science (CES) takes the University Code on Academic Integrity at NJIT very seriously and enforces it strictly. This means that there must not be any forms of plagiarism, i.e., copying of homework, class projects, or lab assignments, or any form of cheating in quizzes and exams. Under the University Code on Academic Integrity, students are obligated to report any such activities to the Instructor.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description: Forensic Science is the application of science to the law. This course introduces students to the many disciplines of forensic science and how they are used in our criminal justice system. Students will be introduced to the science behind these disciplines and how forensic science techniques are used in crime laboratories throughout the United States and abroad. Guest lecturers and practitioners will offer insights into their day-to-day investigative work and how they face technological challenges and success. The scientific method will be emphasized throughout the course.

Number of Credits: 3

Prerequisites: none

Course-Section and Instructor

Course-Section	Instructor
FRSC 201-002	David Fisher
F 8:30-11:20am	Office: 385 Tiernan Hall
Central King Building 330	Office Hours: M 1-2p, W 4-5p & by appt.
	Ph: 973-596-5295; email: dfisher@njit.edu

Required Textbook:

Title	Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science (12 th ed.)
Author	Richard Saferstein
Edition	12
Publisher	Pearson
ISBN #	978-0-13-447759-6

and additional readings as assigned.

University-wide Withdrawal Date: The last day to withdraw with a **W** is Monday, April 6, 2020. It will be strictly enforced.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Identify forensic science procedures and technologies used to examine and analyze physical evidence
- Evaluate the significance of physical evidence in a criminal investigation
- Identify applications of the scientific method when examining forensic evidence
- Communicate appropriate conclusions based on scientific data
- Apply critical thinking skills using methods of scientific inquiry through discussing recent high profile cases
- Discriminate between generally accepted science and “junk science”
- Describe how science is used in the criminal justice system
- Understand how data influences legal decisions and shapes scientific reporting requirements
- Be able to identify cognitive bias and its impact on the forensic sciences
- Understand forensic science failures and ethical violations

POLICIES

All CES students must familiarize themselves with, and adhere to, all official university-wide student policies. CES takes these policies very seriously and enforces them strictly.

Grading Policy: The final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

Class Participation	5%
Quizzes	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Term Paper	20%
Final Exam	30%
Extra Credit for attending Forensic Conferences (AAFS, NJAFS)	5%/conference
Extra Credit for Forensic Science Seminar Attendance	1%/seminar

Your final letter grade in this course will be based on the following:

A	90-100	C	70-76
B+	87-89	D	60-69
B	80-86	F	<60
C+	77-79		

Attendance Policy: Attendance at classes will be recorded and is **mandatory**. Each class is a learning experience that cannot be replicated through simply “getting the notes.” After one unexcused absence, each subsequent absence will result in your class participation score being lowered by one percentage point. (All excused absences need to go through the Dean of Students). You are expected to read the relevant chapter and/or reading assignment prior to the lecture. Students who participate in lecture will receive points towards their class participation grade.

Quizzes: 10 Quizzes will be given during the semester. These will be taken on-line through Canvas. You will have until the beginning of the following class to complete the quiz on your own time. The quizzes will cover the reading and lecture. You will need to download Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor as the quizzes will be given through these platforms. You will also need a computer and good internet connection when taking the quizzes.

Term Paper: The term paper assignment is for you to select a modern criminal case that has been previously adjudicated and discuss how the forensic science in the case played a critical role in the outcome of the case. The term paper is designed to evaluate your writing skills and your understanding of the forensics that were used in the trial. The term paper should be 5-6 pages in length, double spaced, using Times New Roman 12 point font. You must get approval from me for your case before the midterm. No two people may choose the same topic. The term paper is due on the last day of class and must be turned in using Turnitin.com. (Turnitin.com is a software program that analyzes papers for plagiarism).

1. Analyze a relevant criminal case involving Forensic Science.
2. Develop a topic for the paper.
3. Create an appropriate design.
4. Identify and show how forensic science impacted the case.
5. Provide credible academic and peer reviewed sources (at least 3). Ok to use other (i.e. news articles, etc.) sources in addition.
6. Communicate effectively through scholarly writing.

Exams: There will be one midterm exam held in class during the semester and one comprehensive final exam. The following exam periods are tentative and therefore possibly subject to change:

Midterm Exam	March 6, 2020
Final Exam Period	TBD

The final exam will test your knowledge of all the course material taught in the entire course.

Forensic Science Seminar Series: Throughout the semester we will have outside speakers who are experts in their respective forensic fields. These seminars will be held on Fridays at 11:30am. On those dates where we will be having seminars, class will start one hour later at 9:30am. Students are required to attend seminars.

Makeup Exam Policy: There will normally be **NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES OR EXAMS** during the semester. In the event that a student has a legitimate reason for missing a quiz or exam, the student should contact the Dean of Students office and present written verifiable proof of the reason for missing the exam, e.g., a doctor’s note, police report, court notice, etc. clearly stating the date AND time of the mitigating problem. The student must also notify the CES Department Office/Instructor that the exam will be missed so that appropriate steps can be taken to make up the grade.

Cellular Phones: All cellular phones and other electronic devices must be switched off during all class times. Such devices must be turned in during exams.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Accommodation of Disabilities: Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (*formerly known as Disability Support Services*) offers long term and temporary accommodations for undergraduate,

graduate and visiting students at NJIT.

If you are in need of accommodations due to a disability please contact Chantonette Lyles, Associate Director at the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services at 973-596-5417 or via email at lyles@njit.edu. The office is located in Fenster Hall Room 260. A Letter of Accommodation Eligibility from the Office of Accessibility Resources Services office authorizing your accommodations will be required.

For further information regarding self-identification, the submission of medical documentation and additional support services provided please visit the Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) website at:

- <http://www5.njit.edu/studentsuccess/disability-support-services/>

Important Dates (See: [Fall 2019 Academic Calendar, Registrar](#))

Date	Day	Event
January 21	T	First Day of Classes
January 31	F	Last Day to Add/Drop Classes
March 15-22	Su-Su	Spring Break
April 6	M	Last Day to Withdraw
April 10	F	No Classes - Good Friday
May 5	T	Friday classes meet (Last Day of Classes)
May 6-7	W-R	Reading Days
May 8-15	Th-F	Final Exam (TBD)

Course Outline

Lecture	Date	T	Assignment
1	Jan 24	Introduction; Professional Practice; History of Forensics	Ch. 1; Q0
2	Jan 31	Ethics; <i>Forensic Science Seminar</i>	ABC Code of Ethics ; Q1
3	Feb 7	The Crime Scene; Physical Evidence	Ch 2-3; Q2
4	Feb 14	Tour of 9/11 Museum	Q3
5	Feb 21	AAFS meeting; Drugs & Forensic Toxicology	Chs 12-13; Q4
6	Feb 28	Computer Forensics; <i>Forensic Science Seminar</i>	Ch. 19; Q5
7	Mar 6	DNA; Midterm (term paper topics due)	Ch 16
8	Mar 13	Forensic Nursing; <i>Forensic Science Seminar</i>	Handout; Q6
9	Mar 20	Spring Break	
10	Mar 27	The Microscope; <i>Forensic Science Seminar</i>	Ch 8; Q7
11	Apr 3	Firearms / Toolmarks; Veterinary Forensics	Ch 9; Q8
12	Apr 10	Passover/Good Friday; no class	
13	Apr 17	Death Investigation; <i>Forensic Science Seminar</i>	Ch 5; Q9
14	Apr 24	Arson Investigation; <i>Forensic Science Seminar</i>	Ch 17; Q10
15	May 1	NJAFS Seminar	
16	May 5 (Tues)	Courtroom Testimony; Review	
17	TBD	Final	

Updated by David Fisher - Jan 24, 2020
Department of Chemistry & Environmental Sciences
Course Syllabus, Spring 2020
