



# Course Syllabus: CJFS 3410

## Crime Scene and Death Investigation

### Fall 2023

#### 1.0 Course Information

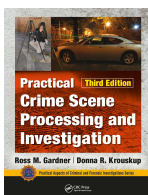
**Location:** DSC 205 & CS Training House

**Time:** R; 8:00 – 11:00 am

**Credit Hours:** 4 Credits

**Course Prerequisite(s):** CJFS 3400

#### 1.1 Required Texts/Items



**Title:** Practical Crime Scene Processing and Investigation, 3rd Ed. 2019.


**Authors:** Gardner & Krouskup.

**ISBN:** 9781138047785

#### 2.0 Instructor and Contact Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Jamie Spaulding

**Contact:** [✉ jspaulding02@hamline.edu](mailto:jspaulding02@hamline.edu)

 (651) 523–2237

**Office:** GLC 219W

**Office Hours:** M, 12–2pm; R, 2:30–4pm

*Note:* I also maintain an open door policy, feel free to stop by my office.

#### 3.0 Course Description

This course will provide students with the basic competencies required of a crime scene examiner and crime scene team. This course will focus on developing a consistent team-based approach to the processing of a crime scene. During the class, emphasis will be given to aspects such as entering and securing the crime scene; documentation; note taking; searching for physical evidence; chain of custody; collection and packaging of evidence; crime scene safety and processing of evidence. Procedures will be emphasized to ensure that evidence is protected and recovered for future laboratory examination such as latent prints, trace evidence, impression evidence, and biological materials in accordance with known standards. Mock crime scenes are incorporated into this course to facilitate student application of knowledge in practical casework. Crime scenes will also focus on the development of specialized skills and techniques, such as those needed to investigate deaths potentially caused by blunt force injury, gunshot wounds, sharp force injury, and various other mechanisms of homicide.

#### 3.1 Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the roles and responsibilities of a crime scene investigator.
2. Describe the necessary provisions at a crime scene.

3. Demonstrate knowledge in planning and properly documenting a crime scene.
4. Produce a comprehensive notebook on crime scene processing.
5. Work individually and collaboratively to identify, collect, and preserve evidence at a scene.
6. Identify and discuss the value of collected evidence from crime scenes.
7. Describe steps necessary to conduct a final assessment of the crime scene.
8. Produce a thorough crime scene report.
9. Discuss potential challenges posed by death scene investigations and complex crime scenes.
10. Create proper written scene documentation and reports with verbal presentations.

### **3.2 Hamline Plan Learning Objectives (C)**

This course fulfills the disciplinary breadth collaboration (C) requirements of the Hamline Plan. As a course focused intentionally on collaboration, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the potential benefits of and barriers to collaboration.
2. Critically evaluate how differences in individual characteristics and behavioral styles can impact collaboration and the functioning of a group.
3. Make meaningful contributions on collaborative projects.

### **3.3 Assessment of Learning Objectives**

Throughout the course, coursework has been intentionally designed to measure the learning objectives of both the course (C) and the Hamline Plan (H). The following table outlines the specific assignments which evaluate student achievement of each learning objective throughout the course.

| <b>Learning Outcomes</b> | <b>Specific Relevant Assessments</b>               |
|--------------------------|--|
| C1                       | Lab Exercises; Exams                               |
| C2                       | Lab 1; After Hours Crime Scene                     |
| C3                       | Lab Exercises (Notebooks)                          |
| C4                       | Lab 2  |
| C5                       | After Hours Crime Scene                            |
| C6                       | Lab Exercises; Exams                               |
| C7                       | Lab 10; After Hours Crime Scene                    |
| C8                       | After Hours Crime Scene                            |
| C9                       | Lab 10; Exams                                      |
| C10                      | Lab Exercises                                      |
| H1                       | After Hours Crime Scene; Peer/Team Evaluation Form |
| H2                       | After Hours Crime Scene; Peer/Team Evaluation Form |
| H3                       | After Hours Crime Scene; Peer/Team Evaluation Form |

## 4.0 Course Assessment

| Assignment                                     | Points Possible |
|--|-----------------|
| Active Engagement                              | 50              |
| Lab Notebook/Crime Scene Reports (10 x 50 pts) | 500             |
| After Hours Crime Scene                        | 100             |
| Peer/Team Evaluation Form                      | 50              |
| Midterm Exam                                   | 100             |
| Final Exam                                     | 200             |
| <b>Total Points</b>                            | <b>1000</b>     |

### Letter Grade Distribution:

|    |        |         |   |         |         |    |        |         |
|----|--------|---------|---|---------|---------|----|--------|---------|
|    |        |         | A | 93-100% | ≥930    | A- | 90-92% | 900-929 |
| B+ | 87-89% | 870-899 | B | 83-86%  | 630-669 | B- | 80-82% | 800-829 |
| C+ | 77-79% | 770-799 | C | 73-76%  | 630-669 | C- | 70-72% | 700-729 |
| D  | 67-69% | 670-699 | D | 63-66%  | 630-669 | D- | 60-62% | 600-629 |
| F  | <60%   | ≤599    |   |         |         |    |        |         |

## 5.0 Course Policies

### 5.1 Grading

All work is due at the start of class on the date indicated in the schedule listed below. Work submitted after the due date will be docked 15% initially and an additional 10% every day thereafter, weekends included. Late work will not be accepted five (5) days after the deadline. Grades will be maintained in Canvas. Students are responsible for tracking their progress throughout the semester and notifying the instructor of any errors.

If at any point you feel that your work has not been properly graded, you may request a re-grade within one week of receiving the grade.

### 5.2 Attendance and Make-Up Policy

Consistent with Hamline University guidelines, students absent from regularly scheduled examinations because of authorized university activities or extenuating circumstances (major family situation, hospitalization or other serious issues, religious observance, *etc.*) will have the opportunity to take them at an alternate time. Please inform the instructor as soon as possible in such an event to arrange extensions prior to absence.

### **5.3 Active Engagement and Participation**

Students will be assessed on their ability to respond orally in real time to in-class questions and discussions. Students are expected to make informed and constructive contributions to the in-class discussions, and to maintain an environment that is respectful and inclusive. Differences of opinion are expected and welcome, but should be expressed in a courteous manner. Cell phones are not to be used unless instructed to do so. Talking during lectures will also reduce participation grades.

### **5.4 Lab Reports and Notebook**

A lab notebook is required to be kept by all students. This notebook may be requested by the instructor at any time to be graded, however, it will not be collected after every lab exercise. The notebook should document all activities, observations, results, and conclusions in a contemporaneous manner and assist in writing the report. Refer to the notebook guidelines for further details on the structure and requirements for the notebook. The notebook will be graded based on the completeness of documentation for the respective lab activity. Violations of the notebook guidelines will also result in points deductions. Late submission of reports/notebooks will result in a grade reduction of 50%.

### **5.5 After Hours Crime Scene**

Teams will be set up by the instructor. Each team must designate a team lead. The team leader will be the primary contact during the crime scene, and will be responsible for relaying details to the rest of the team. The crime scene will take place on campus around 10:00 pm during the designated week of the semester. Each team will respond to the scene at this time and complete the investigation of the active crime scene.

During the week prior to the scene, each group should meet and generate a list of supplies and all other possible materials that they deem necessary to complete the crime scene investigation. The only item you will be given without request for the crime scene will be the camera kit as used in labs. Each team will receive 3 "Question Cards". A question card will allow the team to ask one question per card to the instructor. Only questions regarding procedure will be entertained. Once you are out of cards, the rest is up to you and your team. No further questions or comments can be directed toward the instructor.

Each team will submit a request for evidence examination, on some of the evidence which was collected at the crime scene, within 24 hours of the initial call. In return, the results of the requested evidence examination will be provided to the team lead. The completed final report, to include the results of the evidence examination, must be submitted in a sealed manila envelope within 120 hours of the initial call (1 report per team). Please note that submission times may fall on a weekend.

Report Requirements (These are guidelines - remember to apply all that you have learned thus far):

- Documentation (Only note taking will need to be included in the notebook. All other documentation will need to be included in the case report).
- Final sketches with measurements.
- Photographs.
- Narratives (formalization of your contemporaneous notes).
- All crime scene forms (photography log, chain of custody, entry/exit, etc.).
- Evidence submission forms to experts.
- Results and conclusions of analyses.

Each team will be graded on their performance throughout the entire process. Grading criteria will include:

- Planning.
- Group cohesiveness.
- Professionalism and attitude.
- How well the group handles the scene, resolves problems, and follows procedure.
- Notebooks (Individual).
- Case report (as a group).
- Anything else that plays a role in your performance.

## **5.6 Technology/E-Mail Policy**

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their computer is functioning and have backed up important documents. A problem with technology is not an acceptable reason for missed or late work. Important notices and corrections of errors will be sent to the Hamline email distribution list for the class to provide the fastest dissemination of the information. The instructor will make every effort to respond within one day to emailed questions or concerns.

## **6.0 Academic Honesty**

Students in the Department of Criminal Justice and Forensic Science are held to the most stringent professional code of ethics; violations can seriously jeopardize future employment prospects. The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. While I do not expect to encounter cheating or plagiarism this semester, it is important that you know the consequences. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated. *Failing to cite a source correctly in writing is plagiarism!* Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your

own, can result in disciplinary action. The Academic Honor Code Statement of Purpose reads as follows:

### **6.1 Academic Honor Code Statement of Purpose**

Every member of the Hamline University community – students, faculty, administrators, and staff – is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity at all times. The assumption that academic work is an honest reflection of one's knowledge and skills is fundamental to the integrity of Hamline University and to the value of a Hamline diploma. If students at an institution of higher education develop a reputation for receiving grades based on honest work, GPAs and academic degrees held by all students from that institution are valued more highly. The faculty subscribe to standards of academic honesty in their research and teaching. Every person in the University is responsible for adhering to the principles of the Academic Honor Code.

### **6.2 Violations and Sanctions**

Violations of the Academic Honor Code will be dealt with seriously. If a student is accused of engaging in academic dishonesty in a class, the faculty member may decide on a sanction for the student (e.g., assign a failing grade for an exam or the course). The student will be informed of the alleged violation, the evidence upon which the allegation is based, and the sanction to be imposed. The faculty member will file a violation form with the Office of the Dean where the course is housed, which will maintain a permanent record of reported student violations. Students may appeal to the Chair of the Department in which the class is housed. Should a student be dissatisfied with the decision of the Department Chair, the student may appeal to the appropriate academic Dean. The decision from that office will be final. Sanctions for students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty may include:

- Failing or receiving a lower grade on an exam, paper, or assignment
- Failing or receiving a lower grade for a course
- Academic suspension or expulsion

Please refer to the [Academic Honor Code](#) and [Student Conduct Code](#) online for the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions and further details.

### **7.0 Social Justice Statement**

Hamline University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran's status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. See the [Wesley Center website](#) for further details.

## **8.0 Special Accommodations**

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with [Steve Anderson](#); Director of Disability Resources (651-523-2740, West Hall 108) as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. Please see the [Disability Resources website](#) for further details. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disability Resources, please ensure submission of your accommodation letter within the first two weeks of class. Accommodations will only be provided after the letter is submitted to me and with sufficient lead-time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. Although I will receive the letter electronically, I expect you to initiate a conversation with me about the accommodations.

## **9.0 Adverse Weather Statement**

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact me as soon as possible. Similarly, if I am unable to reach our class location, I will notify you of any cancellation or change as soon as possible (1 hour before class starts) via email to prevent you from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, I may make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any scheduled activities.

## 10.0 Tentative Course Outline

Please note that this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

*Note:* Readings designated with □ will be provided on Canvas.

| Week        | Date  | Content/Material  | Assigned Readings | Meeting Location |
|-------------|-------|---|-------------------|------------------|
| 1           | 8/31  | Intro to CSI; Roles of Investigative Team<br><i>Lab 1: CS Equipment</i>   | Ch. 1 & 3         | DSC 205          |
| 2           | 9/7   | Documentation of Crime Scenes<br><i>Lab 2: Evidence Documentation</i>   | Ch. 2 & 8         | DSC 205          |
| 3           | 9/14  | <i>Lab 3: Crime Scene Photography</i>   | Ch. 6             | CSH              |
| 4           | 9/21  | Crime Scene Processing Methodology<br><i>Lab 4: CS Measurement/Diagramming</i>  | Ch. 4 & 7         | CSH              |
| 5           | 9/28  | Crime Scene Searching<br>Collection Techniques; Packaging of Evidence   | Ch. 5             | DSC 205          |
| 6           | 10/5  | <i>Crime Scene A</i>  | □                 | CSH              |
| 7           | 10/12 | <b>Midterm Exam</b>   |                   |                  |
| 8           | 10/19 | Biological Evidence; Sexual Assault<br><i>Lab 5: Presumptive Testing &amp; ALS Lab</i>                                | Ch. 9             | DSC 205          |
| 9           | 10/26 | Recovery of Footwear Impressions<br><i>Lab 6: Recovery of Impression Evidence</i>                                     | Ch. 11            | CSH              |
| 10          | 11/2  | Shooting Reconstruction<br><i>Lab 7: Trajectory Reconstruction</i>  | Ch. 12            | CSH              |
| 11          | 11/9  | Homicide Investigation<br><i>Crime Scene B</i>  | Ch. 15 □          | CSH              |
| 12          | TBA   | <b>After Hours Crime Scene</b>  |                   |                  |
| 13          | 11/23 | <b>No Class</b> - Thanksgiving Break  |                   |                  |
| 14          | 11/30 | Fingerprint Collection<br><i>Lab 8: Preservation of Fingerprint Evidence</i><br><i>Peer/Team Evaluation Forms Due</i> | Ch. 10            | CSH              |
| 15          | 12/7  | Investigative Technology<br>Course Recap; Review for Final Exam   |                   | DSC 205          |
| Finals Week |       | <b>Final Exam – Due 12/15; 2359 hrs</b>   |                   |                  |