



Undergraduate Course Syllabus

JUS 485: Forensic Law

Center: Online

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Description

An interdisciplinary course covering law, criminal justice, science, and technological issues in the evidentiary arena. Coverage in the course provides a broad-based assessment of expert witnesses, microanalysis, pathological evidence, admissibility and investigatory practice, ballistics, fingerprints, vascular/radar, and photographic techniques. Contrasted with criminalistics, subject matter of this course is primarily evidentiary. More particularly, the course will delve into the rules of evidence, which guide the admissibility of forensic evidence in a court of law. Examination includes threshold tests for reliability and admissibility, qualification of witnesses competent to testify, scientific rigor required for admission and case law determinations on the use and abuse of scientific evidence.

Course Outcomes

- Determine what “scientific evidence” is, and the rules of law and fact which guide its admissibility in a court of law
- Explain how scientific methods of criminal investigation are utilized in litigation, such as pathology, microanalysis, and use of experts, as well as emerging methods such as polygraph and voice stress analysis
- Read and comprehend relevant case law pertinent to forensic evidence
- Analyze specific provisions of evidentiary codes that relate to the introduction and use of forensic evidence in trial litigation
- Discuss new and emerging areas of forensic evidence and the many complexities that guide its admission into the courtroom
- Identify the role of judge and lawyer advocates in the use and assessment of forensic materials in the courtroom setting

Required Materials

Using your learning resources is critical to your success in this course. Please purchase directly through SNHU's online bookstore, [MBS Direct](#), rather than any other vendor. Purchasing directly from the bookstore ensures that you will obtain the correct materials and that the Help Desk, your advisor, and the instructor can provide you with support if you have problems.

Instructor Availability and Response Time

Your class interaction with the instructor and your classmates will take place in Blackboard on a regular, ongoing basis. Your instructor will be actively engaged within the course throughout the week. You will normally communicate with your instructor in the weekly discussions or the General Questions forum in Blackboard so that your questions and the instructor's answers benefit the entire class. You should feel free, however, to communicate with your instructor via SNHU email at any time, particularly when you want to discuss something of a personal or sensitive nature. Your instructor will generally provide a response within 24 hours.

Grade Distribution

Assignment Category	Number of Graded Items	Point Value per Item	Total Points
Discussions	8	25	200
Journal	1	200	200
Short Papers	6	33	198
Midterm Exam	1	200	200
Final Exam	1	200	200
		Total Course Points:	998

This course may also contain practice activities. The purpose of these non-graded activities is to assist you in mastering the learning outcomes in the graded activity items listed above.

University Grading System: Undergraduate

Total Points: 998				
Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Points	Points Equivalent	
			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
A	93-100	4	928	998
A-	90-92	3.67	898	927
B+	87-89	3.33	868	897
B	83-86	3	828	867
B-	80-82	2.67	798	827
C+	77-79	2.33	768	797
C	73-76	2	729	767
C-	70-72	1.67	699	728
D+	67-69	1.33	669	698
D	60-66	1	599	668
F	0-59	0	0	598
I	Incomplete			
IF	Incomplete/Failure*			
IP	In Progress (past end of term)			
W	Withdrawn			

*Please refer to the [policy page](#) for information on the incomplete grade process.

Grading Guides

Specific activity directions, grading guides, posting requirements, and additional deadlines can be found in the Course Information area in the Assignment Guidelines and Rubrics folder.

Weekly Assignment Schedule

The Learning Modules area in Blackboard contains one module folder for each week of the course. All reading and assignment information can be found in the folders. Assignments and discussion board posts during the first week of each term are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Assignments and discussion posts for the remainder of the term are due by 11:59 p.m. of the student's local time zone.

In addition to the textbook readings that are listed, there may be additional required resources within each module in Blackboard.

Module	Topics and Assignments
1	Forensic Science and the Legal Process <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapter 1 1-1 Discussion: Forensic Science and the Legal Process 1-2 Journal Entry: Forensic Evidence/Science and the Legal Process 1-3 Short Paper: Expert/Scientific Testimony
2	Forensic Science and Criminal Law <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapter 2 2-1 Discussion: Forensic Science and Criminal Law 2-2 Journal Entry: Forensic Evidence/Science and Criminal Law 2-3 Short Paper: Court Case

3	Hair and Fiber Evidence <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapters 3 and 4 3-1 Discussion Board: Hair and Fiber Evidence 3-2 Journal Entry: Hair and Fiber Evidence 3-3 Short Paper: Expert Witness Standards
4	Ballistics and Trace Evidence <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapters 5 and 6 4-1 Discussion: Ballistics and Trace Evidence 4-2 Exam: Midterm
5	Impression Evidence <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapter 7 5-1 Discussion: Impression Evidence 5-2 Journal Entry: Impression Evidence 5-3 Short Paper: O.J. Simpson Murder Case
6	Fingerprint and Blood Spatter Evidence <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapters 8 and 9 6-1 Discussion: Fingerprint Evidence 6-2 Journal Entry: Fingerprint Evidence 6-3 Short Paper: Blood Spatter Case Analysis
7	DNA Evidence <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapter 10 7-1 Discussion: DNA Evidence 7-2 Journal Entry: DNA Evidence 7-3 Short Paper: DNA-Nuclear
8	Forensic Anthropology and Entomology <i>Forensic Evidence: Science and the Criminal Law</i> , Chapter 11 8-1 Discussion: Course Reflection 8-2 Exam: Final

Attendance Policy

Online students are required to submit a graded assignment/discussion to Blackboard during the first week of class. If a student does not submit a posting to the graded assignment/discussion during the first week of class, the student is automatically withdrawn from the course for non-participation. Review the [full attendance policy](#).

Late Assignments Policy

Meeting assigned due dates is critical for demonstrating progress and ensuring appropriate time for instructor feedback on assignments. Students are expected to submit their assignments on or before the due date. Review the [full late assignment policy](#).

SNHU College of Online and Continuing Education Student Handbook

Review the [student handbook](#).

Diversity and Disability Statement

The College of Online and Continuing Education (COCE) at SNHU values diversity and inclusion. SNHU strives to create inclusive and welcoming academic environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that present barriers to your inclusion, please notify the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. We will work with you and your instructor to address needs and concerns. We encourage all students with known or suspected physical, medical, sensory, psychiatric, and/or learning disabilities to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in order to assess learning needs and take advantage of available academic accommodations and support services.

SNHU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, citizenship, marital status, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, veteran/military status, or genetic information in its programs and activities. Requests for disabilities accommodations within COCE should be directed to:

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

(866) 305-9430

(877) 520-8916 (fax)

drc@snhu.edu

We welcome COCE students, faculty, and staff to consult with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) on disability-related questions or concerns. We look forward to hearing from you.

Complaints regarding discrimination and accommodations should be directed to:

(603) 645-9664

(603) 645-9717 (fax)

adacompliance@snhu.edu

Academic Honesty Policy

Southern New Hampshire University requires all students to adhere to high standards of integrity in their academic work. Activities such as plagiarism and cheating are not condoned by the university. Review the [full academic honesty policy](#).

Copyright Policy

Southern New Hampshire University abides by the provisions of United States Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). Any person who infringes the copyright law is liable. Review the [full copyright policy](#).

SNHU College of Online and Continuing Education Withdrawal Policy

Review the [full withdrawal policy](#).

Southern New Hampshire University Policies

More information about SNHU policies can be found on the [policy page](#).

Assessment Calibration and Student Work Samples

For the purpose of continuous improvement of our educational training, Southern New Hampshire University's College of Online and Continuing Education may, on occasion, utilize anonymous student work samples for internal professional development and staff training. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your advisor. If you would like to withdraw permission for use of your work, please contact the assessment calibration administrator at assessmentcalibration@snhu.edu. See [this document](#) for more information.