

# INTRODUCTION TO THE FORENSIC SCIENCES IDH3931

## *Tentative Course Syllabus*

**Professor:** Dr. Jason Byrd

**Course location and time:** Tuesdays, Period 9 (4:05-4:55), Hume Room 119  
Thursdays, Periods 9-10 (4:05-6:00), Hume Room 119

**Final exam:** In class

**Office hours:** by appointment only

**Office location:** College of Veterinary Medicine, VC-80

**Email:** [jhbyrd@ufl.edu](mailto:jhbyrd@ufl.edu)

**Phone:** 352-294-4091

**Text:** *Forensic Science: Introduction to Scientific and Investigative Techniques*.  
Fourth Edition. (Edited by James and Nordby).

### **Goal:**

Students completing this course will gain an understanding of how various scientific disciplines can be applied to criminal and civil proceedings in a court of law. Students will also gain an understanding of the funeral process, legal requirements for Certification of Death and how law enforcement, crime laboratories, medical examiners and coroners are supported by the tax payer. Students will understand their legal rights as a tax payer to government sponsored forensic services.

### **Class Procedure, Course Requirements, and Grading:**

This course will address the various disciplines within the forensic sciences. Specifically, this course will focus on the application of the medical and natural sciences to forensics. The development of the medical examiner, coroner, and crime laboratory systems within the United States will be discussed as well as the scientific and non-scientific methods used to establish human identity, and the pathological conditions commonly found in forensic casework.

Students arriving after the start of the lecture period should quietly select a seat in the rear of the room so as not to disturb those students who arrived on time. All cellular telephones should either be placed in the "off" position or in a "silent" mode. The student's first failure to comply with this requirement will receive a warning and the second offense of this common courtesy will result in the student being asked to excuse themselves from the classroom for the duration of the class session.

Weekly attendance will not be required. However, failure to appear on the specified examination dates for two exams will result in a grade of 69% or below.

Grades will be based on three exams (100pts each), a comprehensive final examination (100pts), and a group presentation on Dissecting CSI (100pts).

### **GRADE SCALE:**

**90-100 = A**  
**86-89 = B+**  
**80-85 = B**  
**76-79 = C+**  
**70-75 = C**  
**60-69 = D**  
**Below-59 = F**

**Additional information on the University of Florida Grades and Grading Policies may be found at:**

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

**MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS WILL NOT BE GIVEN UNLESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE *PRIOR* TO THE EXAM DATE. IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND YOU ARE UNABLE TO TAKE THE EXAM ON THE DATE IT IS ADMINISTERED TO THE CLASS, A DOCTOR'S NOTE MUST BE PROVIDED IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO RETAKE THE EXAM.**

“Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting the accommodation”

**All students will be expected to adhere to the University of Florida's Academic Honesty Policy and Software use policy.**

**Critical Dates:**

Exam 1 – September 12

Exam 2 – October 10

Exam 3 – November 7

Final Exam – December 5

CSI Episode Selection Due – October 10

CSI Group Presentations – November 21, 28, and 30

**Topics:**

- What is “forensic science”
- Skills and qualifications of a forensic scientist
- Physical evidence and the chain of custody
- Application and acceptability in court
- Establishing the identity of the victim and suspect
- Scientific and non-scientific methods
- Medicolegal death investigation
- Medical examiner and coroner systems
- Estimation of the postmortem interval
- Crime scene processing

- Forensic pathology
- Forensic odontology
- Forensic anthropology
- Forensic entomology
- Forensic botany
- Forensic toxicology
- Fingerprint identification
- Alternate light sources
- Fire and arson investigation
- Clandestine grave detection
- Veterinary forensic science
- Wildlife forensics
- Mass fatality management
- Firearm and tool-mark analysis
- Bloodstain analysis
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*\*Note – The above list of topics does not necessarily constitute the order in which they will be presented. Each exam will cover 1/3 of the course material and will not be cumulative. The final exam will be cumulative for the entire course, including textbook readings.*