

**Sample Only**  
**Not Currently in Use**

**Investigative Processes**  
**CJI 550**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION**

This course is a masters-level, on-line core course within the Criminal Justice Institute at Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This course will provide an overview of investigative and crime scene processing theory, research, and practice and its application from the standpoint of criminal investigative personnel and other actors within the criminal justice system. Lecture and case studies will provide a learning environment for understanding and applying investigative processes including fundamentals, crime scene investigation, criminal intelligence and informants, physical evidence, testimonial evidence, documenting the investigation and testifying, crimes against persons, crimes against property, special investigations, and legal considerations.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**Entrance Competencies**

Students are expected to have appropriate undergraduate school preparation and a working knowledge of interpersonal communication and the criminal justice system in which they are associated, via academic experiences, in-service training, or employment. All students should be computer literate, be familiar with WebCT, have unrestricted access to a personal computer and the internet, and have the ability to effectively read and write in the English language.

**Exit Competencies**

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

- Demonstrate an understanding of basic investigative processes and crime scene processing theories, research, and practice.
- Articulate the role and activities of the criminal investigative personnel and other actors within the framework of the criminal justice system.
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of basic investigative processes and crime scene processing activities.

## **COURSE ACTIVITIES SUMMARY**

This course has four graded assignment areas: 1) term paper abstract 2) term paper, 3) final exam, 4) discussion leader, and 5) bulletin board participation. The point breakdown is as follows:

Term Paper Abstract 5

Term Paper 25

Final Exam 20

Discussion Leader 10

Bulletin Board Participation 40

Total 100

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Course Check-In and Student Home Page**

Every student must check-in with the instructor, via the WebCT email system, *NO LATER THAN* midnight of the last day of *WEEK 2* or the instructor will assume that the student has dropped the course. During check-in, please include the following:

- Postal mailing address
- Telephone number
- Preferred email
- Preferred name or nickname

Students are also required to set up their own personal home page within WebCT by clicking on “Study Tools” and then clicking on “Student Homepages.” Please include a brief biography and preferred contact information, which will be available to others in the class.

### **Term Paper (25 Points)**

The term paper will require each student to demonstrate their knowledge and assimilation of investigative processes and crime scene processing theory, research, and practice, as presented in the readings and lectures. Students are expected to write one concise and succinct term paper of *8-10 double spaced pages* without going over the 10-page maximum. These papers should synthesize major ideas and themes outlined in the readings and lectures and reflect critical analysis. For this project, students will choose a completed investigation that has been well documented in the media (Martha Stewart, O.J. Simpson, Washington, D.C. Sniper Case, Oklahoma City bombing, etc.) and detail the entire criminal investigative process used in the case, ensuring to incorporate major ideas and themes outlined in the readings and lectures. The student will discuss the evidence in detail and argue both sides of the case (prosecution and defense) in two separate sections of the paper, making sure to base arguments on the available evidence. The term paper should be prepared on a Microsoft Word document and emailed to the instructor, via the WebCT email system, *NO LATER THAN* midnight of the last day of *WEEK 9* or risk losing points (see Late Assignments section, below). Students are reminded that the term paper is *NOT a group activity*, but is considered an individual assignment; therefore, no collaboration of any kind will be permitted (see Academic Honesty section, below).

Grading of the Term Paper (Maximum of 25 points)

- 10 points for Content and Development (all relevant points are covered and thorough development of topic material)
- 5 points for Organization (a logical sequence is followed and organization of thought is apparent)
- 5 points for Format and Length (APA format, at least two references, and 8-10 pages in length)
- 5 points for Readability, Style, Punctuation, Grammar, and Spelling (good sentence structure, professional and academic vocabulary)

#### Minimum Format Requirements for the Term Paper

- 1) Font: Times [New] Roman
- 2) Font Size: 12-Point Type (bold and italic should be used only for special sections/text)
- 3) Margins: 1 inch for left, right, top, and bottom
- 4) Pages: Include page numbers
- 5) Spacing: Double spaced
- 6) Indentation: Indent paragraphs. Do not use double return.

#### How to Read Articles and Books

Many students have never received formal training and/or practice in how to efficiently obtain the most from reading assignments. The following are some questions to be considered for understanding and assimilating the reading assignments:

- What is the author's thesis or major point he or she is trying to make?
- What are the major assumptions the author makes (and expects you to accept) in arguing that thesis?
- What are the implications for theory, research, and practice?
- What are some important or useful concepts the author presents?
- How does the reading relate to previous readings?
- What are its strengths and weaknesses?

#### **Term Paper Abstract (5 Points)**

The term paper abstract will require each student to submit a two page abstract of their proposed term paper to the instructor, via the WebCT email, *NO LATER THAN* midnight of the last day of *WEEK 5*. The purpose of the abstract is to: 1) compel students to select and begin work on their papers midway through the course and 2) enable the instructor to provide feedback to students well before students submit their final paper.

### **Final Exam (20 Points)**

The final exam contains eight essay questions pertaining to investigative processes and crime scene processing theory, research, and practice. Each student will be required to answer four of the eight questions. The exam questions will be prepared on a Microsoft Word document and emailed to each student, via the WebCT email system, during *WEEK 8*. The student will be required to complete the exam on the same Microsoft Word document, save it as the student's first initial and last name (e.g., John Doe would save the exam as "JDoe"), and email the exam back to the instructor, via the WebCT email system, *NO LATER THAN* midnight of the last day of *WEEK 10* or risk losing points (see Late Assignments section, below). Students are reminded that *NO extra credit* will be given if more than four questions are answered. Students are also reminded that the final exam is *NOT a group activity*, but is considered an individual assignment; therefore, no collaboration of any kind will be permitted (see Academic Honesty section, below).

Grading of the Final Exam (Maximum of 20 points)

- 10 points for Content and Development (all points in the assignment are covered and thorough development of topic material)
- 5 points for Organization (a logical sequence is followed and organization of thought is apparent)
- 5 points for Readability, Style, Punctuation, Grammar, and Spelling (good sentence structure, professional and academic vocabulary)

### **Discussion Leader (10 Points)**

Each student will be required to facilitate *ONE weekly discussion* as a Discussion Leader during this course. The Discussion Leader will:

- Summarize and critically analyze the assigned readings and lectures for the week
- Correlate concepts within the readings and lectures to facets of investigative and crime scene investigation theory, research, or practice within their career arena
- Encourage discussion among the other students
- Incorporate relevant outside research into the discussion of the week

Discussion Leader assignments must be posted *NO LATER THAN* midnight of the first day of the week (see Late Assignments section, below).

### **Bulletin Board Participation (40 Points)**

Students are expected to contribute to bulletin board discussions on a weekly basis whether or not they serve as the Discussion Leader during a specified week. Participation in weekly bulletin board discussions includes *answering and discussing the Discussion Questions* following each lecture. It is also required that each student post *AT LEAST 10* substantive postings per week. General participation must be posted *NO LATER THAN* midnight of the third day of the week they are due or risk losing points (see Late Assignments section, below).

### **Chat Rooms**

Chat rooms will be reserved for guest instructors, special topics, group study sessions, or discussions with the instructor. Chat room sessions will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and scheduled at least one week before the scheduled chat.

## **GRADING CRITERIA**

### Grade Point Value

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

F = Below 70

Students are graded on achievement, rather than solely on effort. It is the responsibility of each student to prepare for each class and to communicate at a level that leaves the instructor with a clear impression that the student understands the material or have exhausted efforts within the time allotted to maximize their understanding of the material covered.

Examples of quality participation include but are not limited to: 1) using points as raised by the authors in the textbooks to highlight or illustrate a particular question, argument, or point; 2) drawing on one's work or life experiences to make a point within the context of the topic, text, or assignment; or 3) asking relevant questions in a way that reveals what is understood so as to isolate what requires further clarification.

## **WEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Week 1 – Overview and Fundamentals**

#### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 1, 13, and 24

Week 1 Lecture

#### Assignments

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

### **Week 2 – Sources of Information and Criminal Intelligence**

#### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 5, 7, and 8

Week 2 Lecture

#### Assignments

Course Check-In and Student Homepage Due

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

### **Week 3 – Physical Evidence**

#### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 2 and 3

Ogle (2004) Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9

Week 3 Lecture

#### Assignments

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

### **Week 4 – Testimonial Evidence**

#### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 4, 6, 10, and 11

Week 4 Lecture

#### Assignments

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

### **Week 5 – Documenting Investigations and Crime Scenes**

#### Readings

Ogle (2004) Chapters 3 and 4

Week 5 Lecture

#### Assignments

Term Paper Abstract Due

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

### **Week 6 – Crimes Against Persons**

#### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 14, 15, and 16

Ogle (2004) Chapters 10, 12, 15, and 16

Week 6 Lecture

#### Assignments

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

## **Week 7 – Crimes Against Property**

### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 17, 18, and 22

Ogle (2004) Chapters 8, 11, 13, and 14

Week 7 Lecture

### Assignments

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

## **Week 8 – Special Investigations**

### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 9, 19, 20, 21, and 29

Week 8 Lecture

### Assignments

Final Exam Emailed to Each Student by the Instructor

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

## **Week 9 – Legal Considerations**

### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 12, 23, 25, and 26

Week 9 Lecture

### Assignments

Term Paper Due

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

## **Week 10 – Putting it all Together and Conclusion**

### Readings

Osterburg & Ward (2000) Chapters 27, 28, and 30

Ogle (2004) Chapter 17

Week 10 Lecture

### Assignments

Final Exam Due

Discussion Questions

Weekly Bulletin Board Activities

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS**

### **Required Texts (to be purchased by students)**

- American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author. (ISBN: 1-55798-790-4)
- Osterburg, J. W., & Ward, R. H. (2000). *Criminal investigation: A method for reconstructing the past* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing (ISBN: 0870843303)
- Ogle, R. R. (2004). *Crime scene investigation and reconstruction*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. (ISBN: 0131119095)

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

- Fisher, B. A. J. (2004). *Techniques of crime scene investigation* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Lyman, M. D. (2002). *Criminal investigation: The art and science* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Turvey, B. (1999). *Criminal profiling*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

### **RECOMMENDED INTERNET WEBSITES**

- American College of Forensic Examiners International ([www.acfei.com](http://www.acfei.com))
- Crime and Clues (<http://www.crimeandclues.com/>)
- Crime Scene Investigator Net (<http://www.crime-scene-investigator.net/>)
- FBI ([www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov))
- FBI Crime Scene Search (<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/handbook/scene1.htm>)
- FBI Trace Evidence Recovery Guidelines  
(<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/fsc/backissu/oct1999/trace.htm>)
- National Institute of Justice Crime Scene Investigation  
(<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/178280.htm>)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

**Individual Student Responsibilities:** Each student is accountable for both individual assignments (readings, papers, and final exam) and a significant contribution to group activities (discussion leader and bulletin board postings). A student demonstrates accountability by completing all individual assignments in a timely manner and by attending and participating in all group activities. It is expected that students will perform professionally in preparing work for this class and maintain high standards of honesty and ethical behavior, per Nova Southeastern University and the Criminal Justice Institute policies and guidelines.

**Faculty Responsibilities:** The faculty is responsible for establishing a learning environment that encourages mutual trust and support to include theoretical content, synthesizing information, and encouraging students to apply the content of their learning to their workplace settings. The faculty guides, monitors, and evaluates the student's progress and is available for consultation and feedback.

**Academic Honesty:** All individual assignments must represent the student's original and independent work; therefore, academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes claiming another student's work as one's own, using published work without proper citations, and collaborating on exams or term papers. Academic dishonesty will be subject to the full extent of Nova Southeastern University disciplinary procedures.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments (missed deadlines for the final exam, term paper, discussion leader, and bulletin board postings) will disrupt the learning process of others and it prevents the creation of effective dialogue between the student and the instructor regarding the development of student knowledge and skills throughout the course. Therefore:

- All missed final exam and term paper assignments must be made up, and emailed to the instructor, via WebCT email, by midnight on the day following the class when the assignment was originally due. Final exam and term paper points will be reduced by 20% for each day they are late.
- All missed weekly bulletin board assignments must be posted by midnight on the day following the class when the assignment was originally due. All missed assignments will be reduced by one (1) point for each day of missed general participation (up to a maximum of 40 points), and five (5) points for each day of missed Discussion Leader facilitation (up to a maximum of 10 points).

**Attendance and Participation:** Regular attendance and participation in discussion leader and bulletin board activities are required for two reasons: 1) attendance and participation assist in identifying and absorbing nuances inherent in the readings and lectures, which will be ultimately assessed in the final exam, term paper, discussion leader, and bulletin board assignments; and 2) the quality of the class is contingent upon a student's ability to build on previous deliberations and analyses.

**Incomplete Grades:** It should be noted that students do not have a right to an incomplete grade; thus, incomplete grades will be granted only in cases of extreme hardship or emergency situations. Students requesting an incomplete grade must submit an email request to the instructor with full rationale before the last week of class. Should the instructor agree, all missed work is required to be submitted within 30 days following the last day of the course.