

Common Course Outline

CRJU 112

Criminalistics

3 semester hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

CRJU112 – 3 Credits – Criminalistics introduces students to crime scene investigation and the analysis of physical evidence typically found at crime scenes. The focus is on crime scene management, recognition, documentation, collection, preservation, and processing of crime scene evidence. CRJU113 is the laboratory associated with this course.

Prerequisites: ENGL 052 and RDNG 052 or ESOL 054 or ESOL 052

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Define forensic science or Criminalistics;
2. illustrate the importance and processes for securing crime scenes;
3. describe the methods for collecting evidence at crime scenes;
4. summarize the steps to be taken for thoroughly recording the crime scene;
5. outline the proper procedures for conducting systematic searches of crime scenes;
6. distinguish identification from comparison of physical evidence;
7. contrast class and individual characteristics of physical evidence;
8. state the proper techniques for the collection, preservation, and packaging of common types of physical evidence;
9. explain the concepts of fingerprints and fingerprint evidence;
10. categorize trace evidence including blood, hair, fiber, paint, glass, and soil;
11. identify essential elements of impression evidence including firearm, tool, shoe, and tire impressions;
12. interpret the elements of questioned document examination;
13. define the concepts of arson and explosion investigation and evidence;
14. describe forensic toxicology and processes used for detecting the presence of alcohol and drugs;
15. recognize the legal requirements for processing a crime scene and the handling of evidence; and
16. explain the rules for testifying in court as an expert.

Major Topics

- I. Introduction to forensic science
 - A. Definition
 - B. Major contributors to the development of forensic science
 - C. Role of the crime laboratory in criminal justice

- II. The crime scene procedures
 - A. Investigation procedures
 - B. Protecting the crime scene
 - C. Recordation of the crime scene
 - D. Search procedures
 - E. Legal considerations

- III. Physical evidence
 - A. Common types
 - B. Identification and comparison
 - C. Class vs. individualization
 - D. Collection, preserving, packaging

- IV. Fingerprint Evidence
 - A. Inked fingerprints
 - i. Patterns
 - ii. NCIC classification
 - iii. Henry Classification
 - B. Latent print development
 - i. Powder processing
 - ii. Chemical processing
 - C. Comparing fingerprints

- V. Trace evidence
 - A. Biological evidence
 - i. Blood evidence
 - ii. Blood spatter recognition
 - iii. Collection and preservation of blood evidence
 - iv. DNA tests and analyses
 - B. Hair evidence
 - C. Fiber evidence
 - D. Paint evidence
 - E. Glass evidence
 - F. Soil evidence

VI. Impression evidence

- A. Firearm evidence
 - i. Gunshot residue
 - ii. Projectile and casing examination
- B. Tool marks
- C. Shoe and tire impressions
 - i. Casting impression evidence
 - ii. Preservation of cast evidence

VII. Questioned document examination

- A. Handwriting analysis
- B. Collection of evidence
- C. Obtaining handwriting exemplars
- D. Mechanically produced documents
- E. Alterations, erasures, obliterations
- F. Pen inks

VIII. Arson and Explosion investigation

- A. Scene investigation
- B. Evidence collection

IX. Forensic Toxicology

- A. Alcohol detection
 - i. Breathalyzer
 - ii. infrared breath-testing devices
 - iii. implied consent law (*Schmerber v. California*)
- B. Identifying drugs and poisons
 - i. Screening
 - ii. Confirmation tests

X. Legal Considerations

- A. Searching the crime scene
 - i. Legal intrusion
 - ii. Consent
 - iii. Search warrant
- B. Seizing evidence
- C. Expert Witness Testimony
 - i. Testifying as an expert witness
 - ii. Rules and court procedures

Course Requirements

Grading/Exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

Written assignments: A minimum of one case study
A minimum of two examinations
A minimum of five quizzes
Attendance and participation

Other Course Information

CRJU112 is a criminal justice core course. It is taught in the classroom using a variety of instructional techniques that are intended to meet the varied learning styles of our diverse student population. This course is also a co-/prerequisite for CRJU113 (Criminalistics Laboratory).

Individual faculty members may include additional course objectives, major topics, and other course requirements to the minimum expectations stated in the Common Course Outline.