

# Syllabus for CJ& 240

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## Introduction to Forensic Science

**Course Overview:** This course is designed to afford the student with a broad overview and understanding of forensic science.

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to fundamental concepts in forensic science, beginning with historical perspectives and covering the use of forensics to investigate and solve crimes. Issues covered include the history and development of forensic science, crime scene evaluation, the crime lab, trace evidence, impressions, fingerprints, blood, and DNA. Students will learn to evaluate and distinguish sound scientific concepts and the mythological representations in popular media.

## Course Objectives:

In this course, learners...

- Identify and relate the historical development of science use of scientific techniques in the modern criminal justice system.
- Differentiate, identify, and explain the gaps between the realities of forensic science and how criminal science is portrayed in the media.
- Analyze and appraise natural science methods, current research, and application to the forensic law (i.e. DNA).
- Analyze and explore contemporary problems and trends in forensic science and the law.
- Analyze and appraise the forensic psychology methods, current research, and application to forensic practices (i.e. eyewitness identification).
- Analyze and appraise basic terms, concepts, and ideas of the methods of science.

**Class Format:** Online: Students are required to have an active internet connection and engage in the course room on a minimum of three days per unit week.

**Canvas:** This course includes a mandatory Canvas component. Discussions, quizzes, exams, and assigned papers and other coursework are to be submitted using this medium. The course syllabus and lecture slides will all be loaded onto Canvas. If you have any difficulties registering for Canvas, or any other Canvas difficulties, please use the following web site: [Canvas Home Page](#)

**Attendance:** Consistent attendance in this class is considered to be essential. The course meets online and requires that you are both active in the course room and aware of important dates associated with the course. Unit weeks in the course room will open and close according to the schedule listed in Blackboard (please see the associated unit dates). Once a unit closes, I **will not** reopen it for any reason. **Inasmuch, this course is not self-paced.** Therefore, regular attendance (a minimum of three days per unit week) within the course room is considered critical to the successful completion of the course. The dates of this course and the quarter are clearly outlined. Please make a conscious effort to remain informed regarding important course and EvCC deadline dates, which are outlined on the [EvCC homepage \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

**Classroom Participation:** Students are expected to read the textbook and other assigned periodicals prior to engaging in assessments. There are no re-takes of assignments and/or assessments. Also, I **am not** readily available to reset Canvas for you. Typical wait time is 24-48 hours from the point of notification. **If you wait until Saturday to engage in assignments you do so at your own risk!** I simply cannot guarantee that I will be available to assist you with your Canvas issues within this abbreviated time frame. If you experience a Canvas conflict, which prohibits your completion of an exercise, please review the Canvas help documents at: [Canvas Accessibility Home Page \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#) or 1-866-575-9027.

## **Textbook (required):**

- Lissitzyn, C.B & Vallen, M.W. (2018). *Forensic evidence in court: A case study approach (2nd ed)*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. ISBN: 978-1-5310-0223-7.

## **System of Evaluation**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>Syllabus Attestation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Creative Project</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Unit Quizzes</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Unit Web Field Trips</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>100</b>

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING:**

**Grade Scale** (in the percentage of points achieved):

A 100% to 94%

A- < 94%to 90%

B+ < 90%to 87%

B < 87%to 84%

B- < 84%to 80%

C+ < 80%to 77%

C < 77%to 74%

C- < 74%to 70%

D+ < 70%to 67%

D < 67%to 64%

D- < 64%to 61%

F < 61%to 0%

Note: I do not believe in contributing to "grade inflation." Your grade will reflect the total number of points that you achieve. My experience indicates that the amount of time and/or effort you put into reading and consistent Canvas participation will directly affect your overall achievement in this course.

### **Regarding grades:**

"A 'C' grade indicates that a student has made substantial progress toward meeting the objectives of the course and has fulfilled the requirements of the course. The grades above 'C' are used for those students who have demonstrated some degree of superiority. The highest grade, 'A' is reserved for those students who have excelled in every phase of the course. The 'B' grade is for students whose work is superior but does not warrant special distinctiveness of the 'A'. The 'D' is a grade for those students who have made progress toward meeting the objectives of the

course but have fulfilled the requirements in only a substandard manner. The 'F' is reserved for those students who have failed to meet or have accomplished so few of the requirements of the course that they are not entitled to credit."

### **Weekly Readings & Requirements:**

Note: each week has some combination of required videos, podcasts, and activities (such as discussion boards). Students need to check Canvas each week accordingly. What is listed below are the dates, weekly topics, and the list of required readings. Please note, this is subject to change on occasion for the betterment of the class. If you see an inconsistency that you are uncertain of between this document and Canvas then check with your professor in reference.

Course Session/Date	Module(s), Topics and Assignments	Required Readings
1	Introduction to forensics	Lissitzyn & Vallen, Intro and Chapter 1 Dr. Henry Lee, Cracking More Cases, Chapter 1
2	What is Forensic Evidence; From Collecting Evidence to the Trial	Lissitzyn, Chapter 2 & 3 Tyler, Viewing CSI and the threshold of guilt...
3	The Grant Case Study Closing Statements, Jury Instructions, Verdict, & Appeal	Lissitzyn & Vallen, Appendix

4	Scientific Method	Lissitzyn Vallen, Chapters 4 & 5  Frye, Kumhoe, Daubert cases Giannelli, Lab Fraud
5	Fingerprints and DNA: The Golden Standards  Up to Interpretation: Eyewitness Identification, Handwriting Analysis, and the Polygraph	Lissitzyn & Vallen, Chapters 6 & 7
6	Midterm Examination (units 1-5)	Lissitzyn & Vallen, Chapters 10 & 12
7	Blood Spatter and Crime Scene Reconstruction	Lissitzyn & Vallen, Chapter 11  Miller, "Crime Scene Investigation" Brodbeck, "Introduction to Bloodstain Pattern Analysis" Kettner et al. , "Impact Height and Wall Distance in Bloodstain Pattern Analysis" Lissitzyn & Vallen, Chapter 8
8	Firearms, Toolmark and Pattern Analysis	Ritter, "Firearm and Tool Mark Examinations"

		Lissitzyn & Vallen, Chapter 13
9	DNA and its role in exoneration	Garrett, B. & Neufeld P. "Invalid Forensic Science Testimony and Wrongful Convictions."
	Computer Forensics	
10	Final Examination	Lissitzyn, &Vallen Chapter 9

### **Instructor Availability: Course Policies:**

This is a web-based course. I am physically not located on the EvCC main or any of the branch campuses. I am available to talk with students, usually during the posted office hours (for brief questions and answers), or via email. It is your responsibility to request additional help so don't hesitate to contact me if you feel that you need some help or guidance.

Please keep in mind that as a Senior Associate instructor, I do work full-time outside of the course. This means that I may not be available immediately. However, I typically return emails within 24-48 hours (except on weekends and holidays).

### **Classroom Etiquette:**

Students are expected to abide by policies in the Everett Community College Student Rules and Responsibilities Handbook and to conduct themselves in a respectful, appropriate, honest manner.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):**

Everett Community College abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education "solely by reason of a handicap." Disabilities covered by the law include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities, psychological disabilities, health impairments, hearing, and sight or mobility impairments. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see me or the Center for Disability Services (located in Parks 267 right across from the bookstore) so that such accommodations may be arranged.

### **Policy on Sexual Harassment:**

It is the policy of Everett Community College to maintain a work and academic community which is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment violates state and federal law and will not be tolerated. Please refer to the Everett Community College catalog for definitions and procedures.

### **Policy on Diversity:**

University-level education is about broadening horizons and looking at academic issues from a variety of perspectives. With this in mind, the participants in this class are encouraged to bring their own life experiences and viewpoints to bear on classroom discussions and assignments. Along with the freedom to express one's own views comes the responsibility to respect the views of others. No student will be discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or political ideology.

### **Modification:**

The above schedule is subject to change at the sole discretion of the course instructor. As with most courses, this is an ambitious outline of discussion and reading. Please keep this in mind. Also, the outline, although detailed, may be subject to change due to unusual or extenuating circumstances. Students may be given notice of changes to the schedule.



## **Course Procedures:**

### **Extra Credit:**

I do not offer extra credit in this course.

### **Course Term Dates:**

Registration for this course requires the student to engage in the course term stated in the Everett Community College Calendar. I **will not** make exceptions to the scheduled dates to accommodate student vacations, medical/dental appointments, weddings, or planned leaves. This is an online course, which affords you access to the course room at any date or time. Please do not ask me to make an exception to the scheduled course dates to accommodate your exception to the posted course schedule.

## **Student Responsibilities:**

It is the student's responsibility to follow the [EvCC schedule](#) (Links to an external site.)[Links to an external site.of "Important Dates."](#) (Links to an external site.)[Links to an external site.](#)

### **Dates of Note (Winter Term):**

Classes begin

Final Examinations

### **Incomplete Grade Policy:**

In certain circumstances, the grade of "I" or "Incomplete" is granted to students making sufficient academic progress and experiencing extenuating circumstances. Sufficient academic progress is defined as having approximately 75% of coursework completed prior to the end of the term and enjoying a passing grade in the course at the time of the request. Students may choose to discuss the need for an "Incomplete" with their academic advisor or program chair. In all cases, the student

should initiate such a request directly with the course instructor. The decision to grant an incomplete grade request is at the discretion of the instructor.

- The last day to request an incomplete is:
- The last day to submit all of the completed assignments as described in the "Incomplete" agreement is
- An "I" can never be used in lieu of an "F", nor can an "I" be assigned because of excessive absences or missed assignments.
- A student receiving an "I" grade will automatically have the grade(s) for all assignments covered by the "I" grade changed to an "-0-" if assignments are not submitted within the Incomplete period.
- **I do not offer the 'V' grade (instructor withdrawal) in any of the courses that I instruct. Please see my notes above regarding STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES.**

### **Regarding Grades:**

"A 'C' grade indicates that a student has made substantial progress toward meeting the objectives of the course and has fulfilled the requirements of the course. The grades above 'C' are used for those students who have demonstrated some degree of superiority. The highest grade, 'A' is reserved for those students who have excelled in every phase of the course. The 'B' grade is for students whose work is superior but does not warrant special distinctiveness of the 'A'. The 'D' is a grade for those students who have made progress toward meeting the objectives of the course but have fulfilled the requirements in only a substandard manner. The 'F' is reserved for those students who have failed to meet or have accomplished so few of the requirements of the course that they are not entitled to credit."

### **Course Specific Grading and Assessment:**

Please see the grading chart on the last page of the syllabus for the specific points for each assignment and when assignments are due. **DO NOT** rely on the "what's due" header for due dates! Please enter and examine each and every course module on each and every unit week!

Please see the System of Evaluation (above) for the specific points for each assignment.

### **Test Review Documents:**

I do not prepare nor distribute test review documents. Please keep detailed notes throughout the term, which allows you to successfully compete in these exercises.

See: [Why you should take notes by hand \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

### **Quiz or test question challenges:**

Students that wish to challenge quiz or test questions or correct answers may do so in writing. The proper format for the challenge is a 300-500 word, APA style essay that details the questions that are disputed, the reason for the challenge, what error is noted within the question, how the question or answer should be formatted or denoted, and where the correct information is located. Challenges to quiz questions will be reviewed following the submission of such essay and not in lieu of. **There are no make-ups of quiz assignments.**

### **Assessment Makeups:**

There are no make-ups of quiz or web field trip assignments. Make-up tests (mid-term and final) are allowed only when circumstances beyond the student's control interfere with their ability to take the exam as scheduled. Make-up exams are only allowed for the mid-term examination and only in extreme circumstances (The instructor reserves the right to weigh the value of the excuse offered). As a matter of equity, full credit will not be given for late exams. In cases of undue hardship an "Incomplete" may be assigned – *Please see me right away if you have any trouble during the quarter meeting deadlines and need to discuss options.*

### **Discussion Board Grading Criteria:**

Discussion Boards are an important component of your coursework and will solidify your learning of the topics in each unit. Please refer to the Discussion Board Rubric at the end of the Syllabus for details on participation requirements and how grades will be determined. You can also access the rubric in Doc Sharing.

### **When posting on the discussion boards:**

- Communications must be professional and civil at all times. All posts must be done in an environment which is collaborative.
- The goal of the discussion is a free exchange of ideas and viewpoints with the freedom to disagree with one another in a respectful and thoughtful way.
- Reread messages and posts before sending them to ensure that your contributions are positive and diplomatic in tone and content.
- The discussion boards serve as your interactive classroom and discussion forum. Postings are required on three separate days during the unit week. Failure to do so results in affirmative point reductions.
- Saturday postings are automatically reduced to a 70% scoring threshold as this format and manner of participation is not conducive to the discussion medium.
- Postings that include proper APA style and application of the assigned course materials (readings & ancillaries) will receive the highest scores. Heuristic postings will receive the lowest scores.

### **DISCUSSION BOARD RUBRIC:**

#### **Grading Criteria**

#### **40%**

Breadth and Depth of Responses: Student responses should be detailed and **at least 100-150 words minimum**. When researching, citations must be used to give proper credit to the author. Responses should add to the discussion and should demonstrate the student's full understanding of the weekly topic. Proper APA style is required.

## **35%**

Timeliness & Frequency: Students must post at least 1 initial post and respond to at least 2 classmates for each Discussion topic. **Posts should occur across (at least) three days in the unit.** Posting discussion and peer responses on only one day or initial discussion response to the posted question on Saturday is not conducive to the stated requirements of this medium.

## **25%**

Clarity, Organization, Grammar, APA style (6th) and Mechanics: Student responses should be technically and grammatically correct with proper use of punctuation, grammar, and with a logical flow of ideas. Students **MUST** avoid texting language and should write in a professional tone and manner.

## **Requirements:**

The minimum expectation is that you will post one original substantive posting (150 words minimum) and at least two substantive postings in response to your classmates' posts (50-75 words each for each applicable Discussion topic) which further the Discussion **on at least 3 separate days** during the academic week. Generally speaking, a substantive response is one which shows that you have carefully considered and thought about the topic(s) and/or position taken by a classmate in the discussion. It further evidences that you have carefully reflected on your thoughts, feelings, and ideas on the issues as they relate to the course material and other resources relevant to the issue(s). Substantive posts contain mostly the original words, thoughts, and analysis of the author, assigned readings and independent research to the issue raised. Citations are required and assume a role in the overall content of the post and include proper attribution in APA format (6th).

## **Last Day Posting:**

Last day (Saturday) or single day postings are subject to a 70% ceiling. The reason for this is that the discussion board serves as your classroom and requires a

frequent exchange of ideas and dynamic interaction. Postings on Saturday do not allow others to access your original thoughts and to respond to you to create meaningful interaction. Posting only on one or two days does not meet the interactive requirements of the course. Therefore, posting(s) that occur on Saturday will be reduced according to the established scale.

### **Assignment Grading Criteria:**

The following criteria are used to evaluate your assignments:

1. Follows description as provided in the course,
2. Provides factually accurate information based on the textbook as well as reliable outside sources,
3. Meets length requirements as described in the project description,
4. Properly credits sources used,
5. Follows basic standards for college-level writing—that is, proper grammar, spelling, APA style and organization (no listing or long quotations),
6. Submitted by the deadline.
7. Submitted in MS Office format. **Papers or projects submitted in alternate formats will receive a zero score.**

There are writing assignments in this course. It is expected that your academic papers will conform to the standards for college-level writing and that you will properly cite your work (i.e., give credit to your sources) using APA style 6th.

### **Quiz Criteria:**

Quizzes for this course will be constructed in true/false and multiple choice queries. The quizzes must be completed within the specific unit week. There is **no make-up** for quizzes missed or not completed within the time frame allotted. While taking the quiz **DO NOT** refresh the web link or attempt to move back to a prior question. This will lock the quiz and you will be automatically exited from the quiz that you

are taking. During the first two weeks of the course, I will reset a quiz for you. Following this period of time, no resets of quizzes will be allowed.

If you choose to challenge a test or quiz question, **you must do so in writing**. The written document should outline the question that you are challenging, the nature of the challenge, where the correct information is located and cited, and why you feel that the information that you are presenting is more representative of a correct answer. **The established format is essay style, 300-500 words, citation references, cover and references pages**. Challenges will be reviewed following the receipt of such essays and not in lieu of.

### **Web Field Trips:**

Web Field Trips require the student to access a periodical then complete an assessment (quiz). The periodical is accessed via a hyperlink within the assignment. The assessment (quiz) component is accessed through the exercise component (i.e. Unit 2 Web Field Trip). A student must complete both of these components to receive any points for the exercise. It is the student's responsibility to access and take each of the assessments within the unit week assigned. Retakes or make-up are not allowed.

### **Communications:**

Communications in this course in all formats should be both professional and respectful. Criminal justice as both an academic discipline and career field requires that the student/practitioner exercise both respect and discretion in their communications. **Proper salutations** and netiquette represent an important component of all communications associated with this course and also the career field. In the CJ 232 course, students will maintain a zero balance score in their communications. Inasmuch, students **may lose points** when they fail to exercise proper communications with their peers and instructors. When points are deducted for improper communications, the student will be notified by the instructor of both the point deduction and reason associated to the deduction.

## Course Work Dispute:

There is a statute of limitations regarding grade disputes or appeals within 5 days following the closing of any unit folder. Appeals beyond this point are not timely and will not be considered or reviewed. It is a student responsibility to be engaged and participate in coursework. Failure to engage may result in a loss of points or possible inaccuracies in the student's overall course grade.

**Classroom Participation:** Students are expected to read the textbook and other assigned periodicals prior to engaging in assessments. There are no re-takes of assignments and/or assessments. Also, I **am not** readily available to reset Canvas for you. Typical wait time is 24-48 hours from the point of notification. **If you wait until Saturday to engage in assignments you do so at your own risk!** I simply cannot guarantee that I will be available to assist you with your Canvas issues within this abbreviated time frame. If you experience a Canvas conflict, which prohibits your completion of an exercise, please review the Canvas help documents at: [Canvas Help Documents](#) or 425-388-9367 or 1 -866-575-9027.

## Late Policy for Course Work:

Late assignments are discouraged. You have a full six days to complete each unit and those turned in on the 7th day or later are considered late. Unit assignments are due on Saturdays at 11:55 pm PST. If you have extenuating circumstances and would like to turn work in late without penalty, **you must contact me in writing prior to the due date**. All late assignments are subject to a 60% scale (maximum point scale for the assignment is 60% of the possible points available for the assignment) **regardless of the reason** for the instructor approved, late submission.

Emergencies will be considered for full credit (death in family, illness, car accident with injuries, etc.) **provided the student supplies documentation** of the "emergency" (i.e. emergency room bill, published obituary, police case report # and name of the officer investigating). See the missing unit week(s) section below for



more information. **Late assignments exceptions will not be considered absent this documentation.**

Assignments will not be accepted that were due prior to midterm after the midterm grade has been issued (i.e., Unit 5). In addition, assignments will not be accepted after the last day of class unless you have arranged for an Incomplete Grade.

Assignments that are more than 5 days past due will not be considered for evaluation.

### **Missed Unit Weeks:**

By enrolling in an online course, students agree to attend the instruction according to the established parameters. Inasmuch, the student best practices rule requires attendance on three or more separate days during the unit week. Missing a unit week represents a choice made by the student to not engage and achieve points. If you miss a unit you also lose the opportunity for the points that were contained within the unit. As mentioned above, I do not reopen units for any reason. The online medium allows you to access the course at any time (during the required timeframe) and from anywhere. If you suffer a documented emergency (hospital stay, death of a family member, vehicular accident with injuries) I will consider a modified point total **following** the submission of documentation (and not in lieu of) and a 300-500 word essay that explains why the emergency rendered you unable to participate in the unit on **any of the 6 days** that it was opened (not including cover and references pages, as well as the required documentation). Through experience, I have found that rarely do emergencies occupy the entire unit time frame. Student requests for compensation points must demonstrate a compelling case, which outlines their strict inability to access and complete the required coursework through the online medium.

### **Plagiarism Policy:**

Everett Community College considers academic honesty to be one of its highest values. Students are expected to be the sole authors of their work. Use of another

person's work or ideas must be accompanied by specific citations and references. Though not a comprehensive or exhaustive list, the following are some examples of dishonesty or unethical and unprofessional behavior:

- Plagiarism: Using another person's words, ideas, or results without giving proper credit to that person; giving the impression that it is the student's own work.
- Any form of cheating on examinations.
- Altering academic or clinical records.
- Falsifying information for any assignments.
- Submitting an assignment(s) that was partially or wholly completed by another student.
- Copying work or written text from a student, the Internet, or any document without giving due credit to the source of the information.
- Submitting an assignment(s) for more than one class without enhancing and refining the assignment, and without first receiving instructor permission. In cases where previous assignments are allowed to be submitted for another class, it is the responsibility of the student to enhance the assignment with additional research and to also submit the original assignment for comparison purposes.
- Assisting another student *with reasonable knowledge that the other student intends* to commit any act of academic dishonesty. This offense would include, but would not be limited to providing an assignment to another student to submit as his/her own work or allowing another student to copy answers to any test, examination or assignment

In essence, plagiarism is the theft of someone else's ideas and work. Whether a student copies verbatim or simply rephrases the ideas of another without properly acknowledging the source, it is still plagiarism. In the preparation of work submitted to meet course requirements, whether a draft or a final version of a paper or project, students must take great care to distinguish their own ideas and language from information derived from other sources. Sources include published primary and

secondary materials, electronic media, and information and opinions gathered directly from other people.

A discussion thread, computer program, marketing plan, PowerPoint presentation, and other similar work produced to satisfy a course requirement are, like a paper, **expected to be the original work of the student submitting it**. Copying documentation from another student or from any other source without proper citation is a form of academic dishonesty, as is producing work substantially from the work of another. **Students must assume that collaboration in the completion of written assignments is prohibited unless explicitly permitted by the instructor**. Students must acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted coursework. Students are subject to disciplinary action if they submit as their own work a paper purchased from a term paper company or downloaded from the Internet.

Everett Community College subscribes to a third-party plagiarism detection service and reserves the right to check all student work to verify that it meets the guidelines of this policy.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and **may result** in the following sanctions:

1st offense: Failure of the assignment in which the action occurred.

2nd offense: Failure of the class in which the action occurred.

3rd offense: University decision.

Procedures for processing plagiarism offenses are as follows:

### **Online Students:**

Charges of academic dishonesty brought against a student shall be made in writing by the instructor to the Dean's Office. The Dean's Office maintains a database of plagiarism offenses and a file of all plagiarism charges. When an offense has been committed, the Dean's Office sends the student a copy of the plagiarism policy and

a letter of the action taken and informs the Academic Department Chair, the Academic Advisor, and the course instructor of any plagiarism charges.