



**FS 790 Forensic Science Graduate Seminar  
Spring 2014  
Wesselkamper Science Center, Room 120**

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**Lecture:** Fridays, 1430 – 1520 hours

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1130 – 1230 hours (walk-in)  
Any other time by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this course is two-fold; first is to introduce the student to current events/topics of interest in the field of forensic science, and second is to prepare the student for public scientific presentations. The course content is designed to improve public speaking while learning to evaluate other speakers to determine effective ways to disseminate scientific information.

Each student will be assigned a topic on which a presentation will be given. The student will be given the topic two weeks prior to their presentation. Student presentations should be thirty minutes with a five to ten minute question and answer period. Directly following each presentation the class will convene to provide evaluation feedback to the presenter. Each student presentation will be open to the entire University student body, faculty and staff.

Over the duration of the semester each student will be required to attend at least two (2) outside scientific presentations; the topic of which must be approved by the instructor. The student will evaluate the presentation and submit a written report.

**MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Reasoning

- ① One purpose of the seminar program is to provide an opportunity for students to gain experience in making professional presentations. Another is to encourage students to interact with their peers and foster collegiality.
- ② Students should consult with both their research mentor and the faculty member directing the seminar program for advice on seminar preparation and presentation.
- ③ Students should practice their presentation with classmates and research mentor, if appropriate.

- Each student will be required to prepare a written evaluation of the seminar(s) attended; these evaluations will be maintained by the course director.

### Knowledge

- ✍ Outline current "hot-topics" of forensic science interest, conduct literature reviews to become familiar with the topic, develop a deeper understanding of the underlying issues under debate, and form an evidence (factual) based opinion about subject matter; Synthesize related scientific literature.
- ✍ Evaluate a scientific presentation for content, effective communications both verbal and nonverbal, and the effective use of supporting technologies, to name only a few.
- ✍ Evaluate how to effectively engage an audience.

### Practical skills

- ✍ Apply knowledge of current events and related topics to the evaluation of various analytical procedures, applications of these procedures to the appropriate types of evidence. And, to identify and pursue research in the analysis of various evidence and subjects associated with forensic evidence.
- ✍ Produce exemplary presentation of scientific subject matter in order to effectively communicate research design, which includes proper evidence controls (positive and negative), use of standards (SRMs, CRMs, etc.), proper use of the scientific method, presentation of data obtained through proper interpretation, and what constitutes a scientific opinion.

### Communication

- ✍ Present scientific facts and opinions in a clear and logical oral and written manner;
- ✍ Become more confident and comfortable with public speaking in order to disseminate scientific information to other scientists and "juries" by delineating analytical procedures, results, discussions and interpretations.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

None.

We are going to review various journal articles, which address current issues in many forensic science disciplines such as the NRC Report or bite marks, as an example. I will provide either photocopies of the various articles or require the students to perform literature searches and reviews based on assigned topics.

The foundation of this course is based on becoming familiar with the literature and the "state of the science" associated with various topics, and effective communication of issues related to these topics.

## TENTATIVE LECTURE SCHEDULE

Meeting	Lecture Topics – Subject to Change
1 1/17	<b>Introduction to Forensic Science Graduate Seminar Series.</b> What constitutes a graduate seminar course? Do you know how to evaluate a scientific presentation? What defines a high quality presentation? How can you improve your own public speaking?
2 1/24	<b>Topic 1: The Coming Paradigm Shift in Forensic Identification Science</b>
3 1/31	<b>Topic 2: Forensic Science as a Profession: Pros / Cons</b>
4 2/7	<b>Topic 3: How Forensic Science Fits into Higher Education: Is it a Discipline?</b>
5 2/14	<b>Topic 4: Confirmation Bias vs. Contextual Bias: What’s the Problem?</b>
6 2/21	<b>Topic 5: NRC Report: Obtainable Recommendations or Not!</b>
7 2/28	<b>Topic 6: Bullet Lead Analysis: What Went Wrong?</b>
8 3/7	<b>Topic 7: Crime Scene Reconstructions: Investigative vs. Adjudicative</b>
9 3/14	<b>Topic 8: Individualization: What’s the Process?</b>
10 3/21	<b>Topic 9: Bite Marks: Science or Debunk?</b>
11 3/28	<b>SPRING RECESS:</b>
12 4/4	<b>Student Presentation:</b> Topic TBD
13 4/18	<b>Student Presentation:</b> Topic TBD
14 4/25	<b>Student Presentation:</b> Topic TBD
15 5/2	<b>Student Presentation:</b> Topic TBD
16	<b>FINALS</b>

## EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

### Grading:

The final course grade is comprehensive and contributed by class discussions, announced and unannounced quizzes, oral exams, and a literature review and annotated bibliography with a written report. During all classroom discussions absolutely no electronic devices are allowed, this includes cell phones. You must silence your cellphone prior to the start of a class.

Activity	Points
Classroom Discussions	100 / week
Literature reviews and annotated bibliographies	100 / week
Presentation Attended with Written Report	100 / each
Presentation Given	500 / each

<b>Grading Scale</b>	
100% - 90%	A
89% - 80%	B
79% - 70%	C
69% - 60%	D
≤ 59%	F

The course grade depends solely on each student's individual performance, rather than any other personal reason. If the student misses a quiz due to an emergency, a make-up quiz or equivalent assignment must be requested in writing within one calendar week and must be accompanied by an official document and statement to prove the emergency; otherwise there will be no make-up quiz and the grade will be zero. There is no compromise of the grade for a verifiable emergency (medical or other) situation. All students must attend the final exam. Missing the final exam will lead to either a failing grade or an incomplete, but only due to an emergency. No make-up final exam will be given.

### **Student Success:**

In addition to attending lectures and performing laboratory experiments, students are expected to spend a considerable amount of time every week studying for this course. Students are encouraged to study in small, well organized groups. Peer-based teaching has proven to be a very valuable experience that results in a deeper understanding of course materials, which is reflected in higher individual performance and retention of course content.

### **Cheating:**

Each student is expected to complete the laboratory work independently. Submission of identical lab report or sharing data is treated as cheating. Cheating on an exam, homework or laboratory assignment will result in a zero for that particular assignment, or lead to a stricter penalty based on official University policy.

### **Statement of University Policy on Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words, or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the ideas or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotation all require proper citation to the original source.

Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism.

It is the student's responsibility to recognize the difference between statements that are common knowledge (which do not require documentation) and restatements of the ideas of others. Paraphrase, summary, and direct quotation are acceptable forms of restatement, as long as the source is cited.

### **REMINDERS OF IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES**

The following policies are summarized from the Student Handbook. Please remember, it is your responsibility as a student to review these and the other policies that your Handbook contains.

### **Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. The University assumes you are mature enough to be responsible for your own behavior. Any absence of two weeks or more will be reported to the Office of the Associate Provost and the Registrar. You should notify me

when illness prevents you from attending class and make arrangements to complete missed assignments. Notification may be done by calling me, or by leaving word at the Faculty Services (735-4739). Depending on your circumstances, I may modify deadlines of course requirements. Anyone who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing may receive a failing grade. Students with three or more unexcused absences will lose one letter grade.

### **Classroom Deportment**

- You are expected to be punctual; unexcused tardiness will be considered an absence.
- Smoking and alcoholic beverages are prohibited in all classrooms, whether or not class is in session.
- No pets are allowed in class. Exceptions will be made in the case of a seeing-eye dog.
- Personal audiovisual equipment not pertinent to the class is prohibited during class.
- Follow the University's "dress code" requiring footwear and appropriate shirts to be worn during all classes, as well as in the library, cafeteria, and administrative offices.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty, and by reporting incidences of academic dishonesty (such as theft of tests, records, and other confidential materials, altering grades, and/or plagiarism) to their instructors.

### **Freedom of Expression:**

Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in particular courses of study. They may be required to know thoroughly the specific bodies of knowledge or interpretations or theories set by the professor, but are free to reserve personal judgment as to the truth or falsity of them.

Students are expected to maintain the standards of academic performance articulated in course syllabi, supplemental readings, assignments, and Academic and Student Affairs policies. The instructor is considered the normal and competent judge of academic work. Students have an appeals process in the rare cases of unjust grading and evaluation by the procedure detailed in the Academic Grievance section of the Student Handbook.

### **ADA Accommodations:**

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act (2008), Chaminade University of Honolulu offers accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you would like to determine if you qualify for ADA accommodations, please contact the Counseling Center at (808) 735-4845. Once your documentation is submitted, the assessments will be reviewed and the student will be notified.

If one qualifies for ADA accommodations an ADA contract will be signed by the student. Please remember that once you have signed an ADA agreement, you need to contact the ADA coordinator each semester (including summer sessions) to identify which instructors you want notified of your accommodations. This is to ensure your privacy. Faculty will be informed of the accommodations you are to receive but not the nature of your disability. From the time that appropriate documentation is received by the ADA Coordinator, please allow 2 to 3 weeks to process your paperwork. Processing time may vary pending the volume of requests received. You can find more information at [http://www.chaminade.edu/student\\_life/sss/counseling\\_services.php](http://www.chaminade.edu/student_life/sss/counseling_services.php)