



Chaminade
University
OF HONOLULU

Course Syllabus

Chaminade University Honolulu

3140 Waiialae Avenue - Honolulu, HI 96816

www.chaminade.edu

Course Number: FS 455
Course Title: Medicolegal Death Investigation
Department Name: Forensic Sciences
School Name: Natural Sciences and Mathematics
Term: Spring 2021
Course Credits: 3
Class Meeting Days: Tuesday
Class Meeting Hours: 5:30 PM – 8:20PM
Class Location: Ching 254 and /or online



Instructor Name: Charlotte Carter
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Office Location: 207 Eiben Hall
Office Hours: By appointment only

University Course Catalog Description
FS 455 Medicolegal Death Investigation (3)

Covers the operations of medicolegal death investigation including field and morgue duties, relationships with law enforcement, hospitals, emergency services, and health systems. Students will be responsible for learning medical terminology, common medicines, medical procedures (particularly emergency medical intervention), decomposition, and the recognition and documentation of medical paraphernalia related to procedures. Also covered will be scene interview techniques, evidence recovery, photography, and postmortem fingerprinting.

Course Learning Outcomes and Linkage to Program Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Course Learning Outcomes	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4
1. Demonstrate reason and rationale for why medicolegal death investigations are conducted	X	X	X	X
2. Use medical and anatomical terminology in written reports and oral communication.			X	X
3. Understand the various forensic disciplines and how they can assist in a death investigation		X	X	
4. Interact professionally and ethically in a forensic community/context		X		
5. Understand how to conduct a basic death investigation	X	X	X	X

Marianist Characteristics & Native Hawaiian Values

Education is an integral value in both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture and this class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. Both recognize the transformative effect of a well-rounded, value-centered education on society, particularly in seeking justice for the marginalized, the forgotten, and the oppressed, always with an eye toward God (Ke Akua). This is reflected in the 'Olelo No'eau (Hawaiian proverbs) and Marianist core beliefs:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana) E ola au i ke akua ('Olelo No'eau 364) May I live by God
2. Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na'auao) Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono ('Olelo No'eau 1957) Acquire skill and make it deep
3. Educate in Family Spirit ('Ohana) 'Ike aku, 'ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohana 'ohana ('Olelo No'eau 1200) Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped; such is a family relationship
4. Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha) Ka lama kū o ka no'eau ('Olelo No'eau 1430) Education is the standing torch of wisdom
5. Educate for Adaptation and Change (Aina) 'A'ohē pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi ('Olelo No'eau 203) All knowledge is not taught in the same school

This class will focus on an education in the forensic sciences as an education in service, justice, and peace. This characteristic will be obvious to you very early in the class when we discuss all of the challenges associated with the investigation of death. You will learn that most forensic scientists are public servants that conduct science for the benefit of society. Death Investigators respond to death scenes, gather information, guide the community in their grief, and recover evidence so that justice can be served and peaceful society can flourish.

Required Learning Materials

Medicolegal Death Investigator: A Systematic Training Program for the Professional Death Investigator, by Steven C. Clark, Mary Fran Ernst, William Haglund, and Jeffrey Jentzen, Occupational Research and Assessment, Inc, 1996

Optional Learning Materials

Death Investigator's Handbook, Vol. 3, by Louis N. Eliopoulos, Paladin Press, 2007

Forensic Pathology, by Vincent DiMaio and Dominic DiMaio, CRC Press, Second Edition, 2001

Course Website:

Course materials will be made available through Canvas. Students are required to use the canvas course for this class.

Shared Google Drive – You will receive a link to a shared Google Drive named FS 455 Medicolegal Death Investigation. This drive will be used to house narrated lecture presentations and other materials.

[Zoom](#) - We will use Zoom teleconferencing if necessary . Information about getting started with Zoom, joining a meeting, and Zoom features can be found on their [frequently asked questions page](#).

Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Notes
1	11 January	Syllabus review Introduction	Sections 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, & 37
2	18 January	Communication	Sections 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
3	25 January	Interactions with Families	Sections 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, & 26
4	1 February	Taking the “First Call”	Sections (3, 4, & 6)
5	8 February	Starting at the scene	Sections 27, 28, 29, & 30
6	15 February	Scene Documentation	Sections 31, 33, & 38
7	22 February	Exam 1 in Canvas	
8	1 March	Evidence and Property	Sections 39, 40, & 41
9	8 March	Scientific Knowledge	Sections 32, 35, 36, 37, 48, 49, & 50
10	15 March	Scientific Knowledge	Sections 32, 35, 36, 37, 48, 49, & 50
11	22 March	Spring Recess	
12	29 March	Finishing up an Investigation	Sections 13, 14, 34, & 37
13	5 April	Other	Sections 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 51, & 52
14	12 April	Exam 2	Sections 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 51, & 52
15	19 April	Mock Death Scene/Calls	
16	26 April	Mock Death Scene/Calls	
17	3 May	Death Scene Reports Due	

Assessment

All grades will be posted in Canvas within one week of assignment/exam submission. Attendance grades will be posted to Canvas on a weekly basis. Your grade will be kept current all semester. You are encouraged to contact me at charlotte.carter@chaminade.edu at any time to discuss your grades. I strongly encourage you to check your grades regularly.

Photography & Confidentiality

As a student in this class you will have the privilege of viewing photographs of decedents, death scenes, etc. None of the photographs used in this course are for distribution or use outside the course. Any sharing, viewing, downloading, distribution, posting, etc. of these highly confidential images will result in an grade of F for the course.

Attendance and Participation Marks (AP)

Students are required to attend and participate in course discussions (in person and/or online). Students may request a written version of this task only for valid absences and/or participation in weekly discussion boards may be used for online portions of this course.

Midterm Exams

Each student will complete 2 computerized exams. The examinations will be administered through the course Canvas site.

Mock Death Calls

Students will work in small groups (3-5 students) to ask questions as though it was a death notification call to an investigator. These calls will have your instructor act as the reporting party. Each member of the group must participate and provide reasoning/justification for assuming or releasing jurisdiction for that particular call. This will be done via Zoom in the event that classes are online.

Final Exam

Students will write an investigation report based on a mock death scene. This includes a scene description and a description of the decedent within the scene.

Homework/Quizzes

Students will be assigned homework and/or quizzes through the course Canvas site.

AP	120 points/30%
Homework/Quizzes	80 points/20%
Exam #1	50 points/12.5%
Exam #2	50 points/12.5%
Mock First Calls	50 points/12.5%
Mock Death Scene	50 points/12.5%
Total	400 points/100%

Letter Grade Scale

100% - 90% A – Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative

89% - 80% B – Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner

79% - 70% C – Average grade indicating a competent grasp of subject matter

69% - 60% D – Inferior work of the lowest passing grade, not satisfactory for fulfillment of prerequisite course work

≤ 59% F – Failed to grasp the minimum subject matter; no credit earned.

Late Work Policy

Requests for extensions due to extenuating circumstances (documented computer or medical problems, for example) will be considered but in general work received after the deadline will be graded with a penalty of 10% per day late.

Instructor and Student Communication

Questions for this course can be emailed to the instructor at charlotte.carter@chaminde.edu. Online, in-person and phone conferences can also be arranged as are safe to do so.

Technical Assistance for Canvas Users

- Search for help on specific topics at help.instructure.com
- [Chat live with Canvas Support 24/7/365](#)

- Watch this [video to get you started](#) with online guides and tutorials
- Contact the Chaminade IT Helpdesk for technical issues: helpdesk@chaminade.edu or call (808) 735-4855

Tutoring and Writing Services

Chaminade is proud to offer free, one-on-one tutoring and writing assistance to all students. Tutoring and writing help is available on campus at Kōkua `Ike: Center for Student Learning in a variety of subjects (including, but are not limited to: biology, chemistry, math, nursing, English, etc.) from trained Peer and Professional Tutors. Please check Kōkua `Ike's website (<https://chaminade.edu/advising/kokua-ike/>) for the latest times, list of drop-in hours, and information on scheduling an appointment. Free online tutoring is also available via Smarthinking. Smarthinking can be accessed 24/7 from your Canvas account. Simply click Account – Notifications – Smarthinking. For more information, please contact Kōkua `Ike at tutoring@chaminade.edu or 808-739-8305.

Cell phones, tablets, and laptops

Out of consideration for your classmates, please set your cell phone to silent mode during class. Students are encouraged to bring laptops or tablets to class as the instructor will assign online activities and readings that will require the use of a laptop or tablet. Laptops and tablets should not be misused, such as checking distracting websites. Use your best judgment and respect your classmates and instructor.

Disability Access

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Any student who believes that they may need accommodations must first register with the Counseling Center. Registration with the Counseling Center begins the process of determining whether the student meets the requirements for a documented disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), even if accommodations may not be needed for this particular class. The contact information for the Counseling Center is (808) 735-4845, 739-4603, or by email at counselingcenter@chaminade.edu. It is important for students to contact the Counseling Center as soon as possible so that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion and to allow your instructor(s) to plan accordingly. Students will be required to provide written documentation to the Counseling Center in order for a determination to be made as to whether the requirements for a documented disability under the ADA are met.

Failure to provide written documentation through the Counseling Center will prevent your instructor from making the necessary accommodations, instructors cannot provide accommodations unless they have been prescribed by the Counseling Center. Once you have received an official notice of accommodations from the Counseling Center, it is also very important to discuss these accommodations directly with your instructor so that they can better support your needs. If you have specific questions regarding your individualized accommodations you may speak directly with your instructor and/or you may contact the Counseling Center.

Title IX Compliance

Chaminade University of Honolulu recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. Sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse will NOT be tolerated at CUH. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, we encourage you to report this matter promptly. As a faculty member, I am interested in promoting a safe and healthy environment, and should I learn of any sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, I must report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources by visiting Campus Ministry, the Dean of Students Office, the Counseling Center, or the Office for Compliance and Personnel Services.

Attendance Policy

The following attendance policy is from the Undergraduate Catalog.

Students are expected to attend regularly all courses for which they are registered. Students should notify their instructors when illness or other extenuating circumstances prevents them from attending class and make arrangements to complete missed assignments. Notification may be done by emailing the instructor's Chaminade email address, calling the instructor's campus extension, or by leaving a message with the instructor's main office. It is the instructor's prerogative to modify deadlines of course requirements accordingly. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing may receive a failing grade. Unexcused absences equivalent to

more than a week of classes may lead to a grade reduction for the course. Any unexcused absence of two consecutive weeks or more may result in being withdrawn from the course by the instructor, although the instructor is not required to withdraw students in that scenario. Repeated absences put students at risk of failing grades.

Students with disabilities who have obtained accommodations from the Chaminade University of Honolulu ADA Coordinator may be considered for an exception when the accommodation does not materially alter the attainment of the learning outcomes. Federal regulations require continued attendance for continuing payment of financial aid. When illness or personal reasons necessitate continued absence, the student should communicate first with the instructor to review the options. Anyone who stops attending a course without official withdrawal may receive a failing grade or be withdrawn by the instructor at the instructor's discretion.

Academic Conduct Policy

From the Undergraduate Catalog: Any community must have a set of rules and standards of conduct by which it operates. At Chaminade, these standards are outlined so as to reflect both the Catholic, Marianist values of the institution and to honor and respect students as responsible adults. All alleged violations of the community standards are handled through an established student conduct process, outlined in the Student Handbook, and operated within the guidelines set to honor both students' rights and campus values.

Students should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the ideals of the University. This includes knowing and respecting the intent of rules, regulations, and/or policies presented in the Student Handbook, and realizing that students are subject to the University's jurisdiction from the time of their admission until their enrollment has been formally terminated. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more details. A copy of the Student Handbook is available on the Chaminade website.

For further information, please refer to the Student Handbook.