

## FRSC 201: Intro to Forensic Science

*Fall 2025*

*6:00-8:50pm*

*FMH 207*

### Course Syllabus

**NJIT Academic Integrity Code:** All Students should be aware that the Department of Chemistry & Environmental Science (CES) takes the University Code on Academic Integrity at NJIT very seriously and enforces it strictly. Students are asked to practice extra care and attention in regards to academic honesty, with the understanding that all cases of plagiarism, cheating, multiple submission, and unauthorized collaboration are subject to penalty. Students must properly cite and attribute all sources used for papers and assignments. Students may not collaborate on exams or assignments, directly or through virtual consultation, unless the instructor gives specific permission to do so. Posting an exam, assignment, or answers to them on an online forum (before, during, or after the due date), in addition to consulting posted materials, constitutes a violation of the University's Honesty policy. Likewise, unauthorized use of live assistance websites, including seeking "expert" help for specific questions during an exam can be construed as a violation of the honesty policy. All students should be familiar with the [NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#).

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Description:** Forensic Science is the application of science to the law. This course introduces students to the many disciplines of forensic science and how they are used in our criminal justice system. Students will be introduced to the science behind these disciplines and how forensic science techniques are used in crime laboratories throughout the United States and abroad. Guest lecturers and practitioners will offer insights into their day-to-day investigative work and how they face technological challenges and success. The scientific method will be emphasized throughout the course. Finally, a large portion of the course will include interactive learning during class including mock crime scenes searches, in class discussions, student presentations, virtual labs and more.

**Number of Credits:** 3

**Prerequisites:** None

#### Course-Section and Instructor

Course-Section	Instructor
FRSC 201-103	Prof. Claudia Sroka
Tuesday: 6-9pm	Office: <a href="https://njit-edu.zoom.us/my/cs468">https://njit-edu.zoom.us/my/cs468</a>
FMH 207	Office Hours: By appointment only.
	Ph: 551-235-0179; email: <a href="mailto:cs468@njit.edu">cs468@njit.edu</a>

**Required Textbook:**

<b>Title</b>	Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science (13 <sup>th</sup> ed.)
<b>Author</b>	Richard Saferstein and Tiffany Roy
<b>Edition</b>	13
<b>Publisher</b>	Pearson
<b>ISBN #</b>	978-0-13-521831-0

and additional readings and videos as assigned. You must also have a computer with a reliable internet connection, webcam, and a microphone.

**University-wide Withdrawal Date:** The last day to withdraw with a **W** is **Monday, November 10, 2025**. It will be strictly enforced.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Identify forensic science procedures and technologies used to examine and analyze physical evidence
- Evaluate the significance of physical evidence in a criminal investigation
- Identify applications of the scientific method when examining forensic evidence
- Communicate appropriate conclusions based on scientific data
- Apply critical thinking skills using methods of scientific inquiry through discussing recent high-profile cases
- Discriminate between generally accepted science and “junk science”
- Describe how science is used in the criminal justice system
- Understand how data influences legal decisions and shapes scientific reporting requirements
- Be able to identify cognitive bias and its impact on the forensic sciences • Understand forensic science failures and ethical violations

## **POLICIES**

**All CES students must familiarize themselves with, and adhere to, all official university-wide student policies. CES takes these policies very seriously and enforces them strictly.**

**Grading Policy:** The final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

<b>Attendance/Class Participation</b>	5%
<b>Class Assignments</b>	15%
<b>Exams (15% per Exam)</b>	45%
<b>Final Exam</b>	35%

Your final letter grade in this course will be based on the following:

<b>A</b>	90-100	<b>C</b>	70-76
<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>D</b>	60-69
<b>B</b>	80-86	<b>F</b>	<60
<b>C+</b>	77-79		

**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance will be recorded and is **MANDATORY**. Each class is a learning experience that cannot be replicated through simply “getting the notes.” After one unexcused absence, each subsequent absence will result in your class participation score being lowered by one percentage point. (All excused absences need to go

through the Dean of Students). You are expected to read the relevant chapters and/or reading assignments prior to the lecture.

**Quizzes/Exams:** Quizzes and exams will be taken on-line through Canvas. Both quizzes and exams will cover the readings and lecture. Quizzes will be taken at the **beginning** of class and will be completed on your own time. You will need to download Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor as the exams will be given through these platforms. You will also need a computer, webcam, and good internet connection when taking the exams. The Final Exam will be comprehensive and will test your knowledge of all the course material taught in the entire course.

<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Final Exam Week (Date TBD)</b>
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**Makeup Exam Policy:** There will normally be **NO MAKE-UP EXAMS** during the semester. In the event that a student has a legitimate reason for missing an exam, the student should contact the Dean of Students office and present written verifiable proof of the reason for missing the exam, e.g., a doctor’s note, police report, court notice, etc. clearly stating the date AND time of the problem. The student must also notify the instructor that the exam will be missed. A written assignment will be given in place of any missed exam.

**Cellular Phones:** All cellular phones and other electronic devices must be switched off during all class times, unless requested to be used for an in-class assignment. Such devices must be turned in during exams.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Accommodation of Disabilities:** Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (*formerly known as Disability Support Services*) offers long term and temporary accommodations for undergraduate, graduate and visiting students at NJIT. The OARS office goal is to enhance the educational experience for students with disabilities at NJIT. OARS is committed to promoting accessibility, inclusivity and awareness as a resource to all members of NJIT.

If you need an accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services at OARS@NJIT.EDU or visit us in Kupfrian Hall 201 to discuss your specific needs. A Letter of Accommodation Eligibility from the office authorizing student accommodations will be required.

For further information regarding self-identification, the submission of medical documentation and additional support services provided please visit the Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) website at <https://www.njit.edu/accessibility/>.

**Important Dates** (See: [Fall 2025 Academic Calendar](#))

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
September 2	First Day of Classes
September 8	Last Day to Add/Drop a Class
October 2	Wellness Day
November 10	Last day to Withdraw
November 25	Thursday Classes Meet
November 26	Friday Classes Meet
November 27-November 30	Thanksgiving Recess

December 11	Last Day of Classes
December 12	Reading Days
December 14-20	Final Exams

## *Course Outline*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1	September 2	Introductions; What is Forensic Science?	Read Chapter 1
		A Brief History of Forensics	
2	September 9	Ethics & What Would You Do Hypotheticals	Read <a href="#">ABC Code of Ethics</a>
		Watch Episode 1 of Netflix " <a href="#">How to Fix a Drug Scandal</a> " Series	
3	September 16	<b>Ethics Presentations</b>	
4	September 23	New Jersey International Association for Identification Educational Conference (Cape May, NJ; Class will not meet)	
		<b>Watch One of the Three Documentaries Assigned</b>	<b>Complete Response Paper</b>
5	September 30	The Crime Scene w/Interactive Search of Virtual Scene	Read Chapter 2; <b>Crime Scene Assignment</b>
		<b>Exam 1</b>	
6	October 7	Physical Evidence; Crime Scene Reconstruction	Read Chapter 3; <a href="#">Federal Rules of Evidence, Article VII</a> ; & Chapter 4
		Blood Spatter Analysis	
7	October 14	Death Investigation	Read Chapter 5
8	October 21	Fingerprints; Firearms and Toolmarks	Read Chapter 6; Read Chapter 9
			<b>Ballistics Assignment</b>
9	October 28	Drugs; Serology	Read Chapter 12; Read Chapter 15
		<b>Exam 2</b>	

10	November 4	DNA and Forensic Genetic Genealogy	Read Chapter 16
11	November 11	Fire Investigation: Arson or Accidental?	Chapter 17; Arson Assignment
12	November 18	Document Examination	Read Chapter 18; Forgery Assignment
		Bias: Are We Guilty of It?	
13	November 25	No Class (Thursday Classes Meet)	
14	December 2	Forensic Psychology	
		Introduction to Jurisprudence; Expert Testimony; <b>Exam 3</b>	
15	December 9	Digital Forensics	Read Chapter 19; Chapter 20
16	TBD	Final Exam	

*Updated by Claudia Sroka - September 2, 2025  
Department of Chemistry & Environmental Sciences  
Course Syllabus, Fall 2025*