

THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

FRSC 201: Intro to Forensic Science Spring 2025 M/W 10:00-11:20am GITC 1400 Course Syllabus

## **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

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <u>NJIT Academic Integrity Code</u>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

### **STATEMENT on AI**

The usage of artificial intelligence (AI) is permitted in this course. If and when students use artificial intelligence in this course, the AI must be cited as is shown within the <u>NJIT Library AI citation page</u> for AI.

Course-Section	Instructor
FRSC 201-002	Prof. David Fisher
M/W 10:00-11:20am	Office: Tiernan Hall Room 323A
	Office Hours: W at 11:30am & by appt.
	Ph: 973-596-5295; email: <u>dfisher@njit.edu</u>

#### Required Textbook:

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

#### and additional readings and videos as assigned.

**University-wide Withdrawal Date:** The last day to withdraw with a **W** is Monday, April 7, 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:

Class Participation	5%
Assignments	15%
Exams (15% per exam)	45%
Final Exam	35%

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

Α	90-100	с	70-76
B+	87-89	D	60-69
В	80-86	F	<60
C+	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.

**Exams**: Exams will be taken on-line through Canvas. Exams will cover the readings and lecture. 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.

Exams	Feb 26; Mar 31; and Apr 16	
Final Exam	Final Exam Week (Date TBD)	

**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.

## **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.

If you are in need of accommodations due to a disability please contact Chantonette Lyles, Associate Director at the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services at 973-596-5417 or via email at lyles@njit.edu. The office is located in Fenster Hall Room 260. A Letter of Accommodation Eligibility from the Office of Accessibility Resources Services office authorizing your 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/studentsuccess/accessibility

#### Important Dates:

Date	Event
Jan 21	First Day of Classes
Jan 27	Last day to add/drop a class
March 16-22	Spring Break
April 7	Last day to withdraw
May 7	Last day of classes/Friday classes meet
May 8-9	Reading Days
May 10-16	Final Exams

# **Course Outline**

Week	Date	Торіс	Assignment
1	Jan 22	Introduction; Professional Practice (will meet remotely)	Read Ch1 & Summary of NAS Report
2	Jan 27	A Brief History of Forensics (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fF2wXgYd8o)	Watch Netflix " <u>How to Fix a Drug</u> <u>Scandal</u> " series
	Jan 29	Quality Assurance; Ethics	Read <u>ABC Code of Ethics</u>
3	Feb 3	Ethics Presentations (in class prep)	
	Feb 5	Ethics Presentations	
4	Feb 10	Ethics Presentations	Read Ch2
	Feb 12	The Crime Scene w/interactive search of virtual scene	
5	Feb 17	AAFS Meeting, Baltimore, MD (class will not meet)	Extra credit will be given if you attend the conference
	Feb 19	AAFS Meeting, Baltimore, MD (class will not meet)	(1% of total grade/day)
6	Feb 24	Evidence identification, collection, processing, and chain of custody	Read Ch3 & Federal Rules of Evidence #702
	Feb 26	Exam 1	Read Ch4
7	Mar 3	Crime Scene Reconstruction; Bloodstain Pattern Analysis (BPA)	Read Ch5
	Mar 5	Death Investigation; the autopsy	Read Ch6
8	Mar 10	Fingerprints	Read Ch9
	Mar 12	Firearms and Toolmarks	
	Mar 16-22	Spring Break	Read Ch12
9	Mar 24	Drugs	
	Mar 26	Forensic Science Summit with Office of Public Defender	
10	Mar 31	Exam 2	Read Ch15
	Apr 2	Serology	Read Ch16
11	Apr 7	DNA	Read Ch17
	Apr 9	Fire Investigation In class fire scene: Arson or Accidental?	
12	Apr 14	View "I am Evidence" Documentary Film (Class will not meet)	Response Paper
	Apr 16	Exam 3	Read Ch18
13	Apr 21	Forensic Document Examination	Read Ch19-20
	Apr 23	Digital Forensics	
14	Apr 28	Introduction to Jurisprudence; Courtroom Testimony	
	Apr 30	Bias: Are we guilty of it? / Human Factors	
15	May 5	Review for Final; Last Day of class	Study for Final
	TBD	Final Exam	