

## FRSC 201: Intro to Forensic Science

*Spring 2025*

*6:00-9:00 pm*

*CKB 215*

### Course Syllabus

**NJIT Academic Integrity Code:** 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 201-102	Prof. Claudia Sroka
Tuesday: 6-9pm	Office: <a href="https://njit-edu.zoom.us/my/cs468">https://njit-edu.zoom.us/my/cs468</a>
	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 Tuesday, April 1, 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>Class Participation/Attendance</b>	5%
<b>Assignments/Quizzes</b>	60%
<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.

**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.

Final Exam	Final Exam Week (Date TBD)
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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.

## 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](mailto: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** (See: [2025 Academic Calendar](#))

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
Apr 29	Last day of class
May 8-9	Reading Days
May 10-16	Final Exams

## Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	Jan 21	Introduction; What is Forensic Science?	Read Chapter 1
		A Brief History of Forensics	
2	Jan 28	Ethics & What Would You Do Hypotheticals	Read <a href="#">ABC Code of Ethics</a>
		Watch Netflix " <a href="#">How to Fix a Drug Scandal</a> " series	
3	Feb 4	<b>Ethics Presentations</b>	Read Chapter 2
4	Feb 11	The Crime Scene w/Interactive Search of Virtual Scene	
		<b>QUIZ 1</b>	
5	Feb 18	American Academy of Forensic Science Meeting (Baltimore, MD; class will not meet)	Read Chapter 3; <a href="#">Federal Rules of Evidence, Article VII</a> ; & Chapter 4
		<b>Watch "I am Evidence" Documentary</b>	<b>Complete Response Paper</b>
6	Feb 25	Physical Evidence; Crime Scene Reconstruction	Read Chapter 5
		Bloodspatter Analysis; <b>QUIZ 2</b>	
7	Mar 4	Death Investigation; Guest Speaker	
8	Mar 11	Fingerprints; Firearms and Toolmarks	Read Chapter 6; Read Chapter 9
9	Mar 18	<b>Spring Break</b>	Read Chapter 12; Read Chapter 15
10	Mar 25	Drugs; Serology	Read Chapter 16 & Chapter 17
		<b>QUIZ 3</b>	
11	Apr 1	DNA and Forensic Genetic Genealogy	
		Fire Investigation: Arson or Accidental?	Read Chapter 18; <b>Arson Assignment</b>
12	Apr 8	Document Examination	<b>Forgery Assignment</b>
		Bias: Are We Guilty of It?	
13	Apr 15	Forensic Psychology	Read Chapter 19; Chapter 20
		Introduction to Jurisprudence; Expert Testimony; <b>QUIZ 4</b>	
14	Apr 22	Digital Forensics	
15	Apr 29	Last Day of Class	Study for Final
	<b>TBD</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	

*Updated by Claudia Sroka - January 16, 2025  
 Department of Chemistry & Environmental Sciences  
 Course Syllabus, Spring 2025*