

Syllabus - Fall 2025
Advanced Forensic Investigation (ANTH 457.101) - 2100
Prerequisites: ANTH 357 (Introduction to Forensic Crime Analysis)

Instructor: Jennifer L. Anderson, MS
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Office Hours: Any time before/after class on Monday or by appointment
Course Classroom: LA 3329
Class Meeting Time: Mondays, 5:30 PM – 810PM

Course Overview

Crime scenes are much like archaeological sites in the sense that both are non-renewable resources. Investigators have one opportunity to collect data, be it artifacts or evidence, through techniques that are “destructive” to the scene as a whole. While crime scene analysis and archaeology may seem like different disciplines, they both seek to document areas of interest in their entirety before they are disturbed and preserve recovered items in perpetuity. For these reasons, the documentation, search, recovery, and packaging techniques used in forensic investigations and archaeology are identical.

Drawing from this archaeologically informed perspective, this course follows *Introduction to Forensic Crime Analysis* (ANTH 357) and will provide students with practical skills that are required to collect, process, evaluate, and package evidence recovered from the scene of a crime. Building on the same topics covered in ANTH 357, students will take a more in-depth look at issues surrounding the admissibility of scientific evidence in court, courtroom testimony, evidence presentation techniques, crime scene documentation, biological analyses of physical evidence, chemical analyses of physical evidence, blood spatter pattern interpretation, questioned document testing procedures, illegal drug analyses, trace evidence examination, and scientific report writing.

Learning Objectives

Among other things, by the end of the semester students will be able to:

- Articulate the application of archaeological documentation, search, recovery, and packaging techniques in forensic investigations.
- Assess the admissibility of scientific evidence according to standards established by Frye and the Federal Rules of Evidence.
- Interpret blood spatter and blood stain patterns.
- Properly recover impression evidence recovered from a variety of surfaces.
- Demonstrate an understanding of forensic serology as it relates to DNA analysis of human and non-human sources of evidence.
- Critically review notes, photographs, sketches, and reports that document a mock crime scene.
- Identify sources of trace evidence and evaluate its “individuality.”
- Classify fingerprints using the Henry system.
- Evaluate items of evidence and select appropriate latent print processing techniques.
- Properly document evidence using standard report forms and property sheets.

Required Reading Material

Gardner, Ross M.

2012 Practical Crime Scene Processing and Investigation. Boca Raton, Florida: CRC Press. (2nd / 3rd Edition)

Grading Policy

50% Mock crime scene

20% Assignments

20% Cumulative Lecture Examination

10% Courtroom Testimony Evaluation

The grading scale is as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage Range</u>
A	93%+
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	70-76.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	0-59.99%

Mock Crime Scene

Toward the end of the semester, students will be presented with a fake crime scenario. Students will also be responsible for “collecting, processing, and packaging evidence,” and submitting a formal report, sketches (final and rough draft) and photographs.

All items must be submitted as one final PDF file. Points will be deducted if not within this format. No late work accepted.

Cumulative Lecture Examination

The exam will test your knowledge and understanding of the lecture topics and lab exercises covered throughout the semester. The format of the exam may include true-false, multiple choice, fill-in the blank, short-answer, and photo identification questions.

If taken via Blackboard, the exam shall have the following restrictions:

- Must be completed in one sitting
- 1-hour (60 minutes) time frame
- Questions will be presented one at a time
- No back-tracking is allowed.

Assignments

Assignments announced in class are due the following class day at 1159 PM. Due dates are also listed on the weekly schedule included in the syllabus but may be modified based upon material covered in class. Each assignment is worth 10 points and make up 20% of your final grade. Handwritten work will not be accepted.

Attendance

Attendance is documented at the beginning of each class. Late arrivals (15 minutes late or more) will be marked as absent. Each class that you miss will result in a five-point deduction from your final grade. Leaving class early will result in the loss of attendance points. You are responsible for obtaining all information that you missed while absent. I will not email copies of class notes, lecture material, or instructions for assignments and papers. You must get this information from a classmate. You must attend your scheduled section of the class.

Missed Exams/Quizzes/Assignments due to Religious Holidays, University Sponsored Events or Sporting Occasions

Religious absences are excused, but prior notification is appreciated. Absences due to sporting events are excused but require notification from your coach as well as submission of the standard sporting notification forms. These are required ONE WEEK in advance of your leave. Failure to provide advanced notification will result in an automatic score of “0.” Submission of forms after an absence will not be accepted. Assignments must be submitted prior to the student’s absence.

Examination/Lab Make-Up Policy

If you are ill and cannot make the exam, no make-up will be given *without* a notification from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Your make-up exam will be different from that administered to your classmates and may be entirely essay. Scheduled doctor’s appointments, tests, or procedures do not exempt you from an exam. If a student fails to appear for a scheduled make-up test, the grade of “0” will be recorded. Laboratory exercises cannot be made up.

Assignment Make-Up Policy

No papers or assignments will be accepted late. Failure to submit an assignment on the specified due date, at the specified time will result in a score of “0.” Handwritten submissions are unacceptable and will result in the score of “0.” If you choose to submit your assignment to the department in anticipation of missing a class, the assignment *must be* dated, and time-stamped by the department staff receiving it. Failure to receive a time-stamp will result in a score of “0.”

Cell Phones, Laptop Computers, Smart Watches and Recording Devices

PLEASE BE CONSIDERATE OF YOUR FELLOW CLASSMATES. IF YOU NEED TO TAKE A CALL. PLEASE DO STEP OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

DUE TO THE SENSATIVE NATURE OF SOME OF THE POWERPOINT TOPICS, PLEASE DO NOT TAKE ANY PICTURES OF A POWERPOINT SLIDE WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION FROM THE INSTRUCTOR.

Online/Classroom Etiquette

In the classroom, you are expected to be respectful and refrain from **extraneous conversations, laughing, passing notes, etc.** You are also expected to stay awake and not complete assignments or readings for other classes. **At the end of each class, there will be a clean-up period.** You may not leave until the counters are wiped down, trash is discarded and chemicals/supplies are returned to the lockers.

Communications

I will try to respond to all email communications within 24 – 48 hours. Please keep in mind that there may be a slight delay in email response due to my work schedule, job training or possible court appearances. **You must communicate using your Towson email account and you are expected to check your account regularly for pertinent information pertaining to class.**

Lab Policy

For purposes of protecting your well-being, the equipment, and the collections curated in the lab, **food and drink are absolutely** prohibited. Failure to comply could result in a laboratory citation from the University’s Environmental Health and Safety team and/or the State of Maryland. Food containers, travel mugs, bottles, etc. must be in your backpacks or you will be asked to leave them outside of the room. Failure to comply will result in a one-point deduction from your final grade for each offense.

Pregnancy

Please be aware that those enrolled in this class could be exposed to chemicals, lead, and other things that may pose a potential risk to a developing fetus. If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, please see me immediately. I have paperwork that you will need to review with your physician.

End of Semester Responsibilities

Should there be a discrepancy in the final grade that I have awarded you and the grade that you feel you should have received, you will need to submit all graded assignments and exams to me for follow-up review. Without these documents, a change in your awarded grade will not be considered. Please ensure to maintain your documents from the mock crime scene. Students have successfully used these in job interviews to show they are able to properly document crime scenes and process associated evidence.

Blackboard

Course material is posted on the blackboard site. You are responsible for checking the Blackboard site and your Towson email account regularly for course announcements.

Disability and Support Services

Students who have, or suspect that they might have, a disability should seek services through Disability Support Services. Students must be registered with DSS and receive written authorization to obtain disability-related accommodations. The office is located at 7720 York Road, 410-704-2638. Please note that given the bench work and projects, it may not be possible to take quizzes and exams at the Testing Center.

Inclement Weather/ Canceled Classes

It is possible that classes could be canceled at the last minute due to bad weather, court obligations, illness, etc. In the event that class is cancelled, homework assignments, quizzes, and exams will be proctored or scheduled for the next class meeting. In the event class is cancelled, notification will be posted on Blackboard and sent to your Towson email account. If you travel a great distance to attend class, you should check your user account and Blackboard regularly for course related information.

Letters of Recommendation

I do not take recommendation requests lightly, as they are a reflection of myself, the department, and the University. Therefore, specific requirements must be met before a recommendation letter is written. These include having strong attendance within class and a passing grade of at least a B+. For written recommendations, students should submit a description of the program to which they are applying; the degree progress report; career aspirations; how the programs to which you are applying will help you meet your career goals. References will be sent directly to the schools. Due to my busy work schedule, students are required to provide me with at least two months' notice for letters.

Academic Integrity

The faculty of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Criminal Justice expects students to demonstrate academic integrity at all times. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any class. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, any form of cheating or unapproved help on an exam or academic exercise, copying someone else's written work without citation, presenting fabricated information as legitimate, any unauthorized collaboration among students, or assisting someone to cheat in any way. Penalties for academic dishonesty are determined by the individual faculty member. The *minimum* penalty in for academic dishonesty in this class is receiving a zero on the assignment. Students who are charged with academic dishonesty must remain enrolled in the course and cannot withdraw. Instructors will file a report of academic dishonesty with the Office of the Student Conduct and Civility Education, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and to the Chair's Office in the department. For more

information on academic integrity, see the TU Student Academic Integrity Policy (<http://catalog.towson.edu/undergraduate/appendices/appendix-f-code-student-conduct/>) and the College of Liberal Arts' Academic Integrity and Appeals Information, (<http://www.towson.edu/cla/acadviolations>).

We also encourage students to make use of campus resources to learn more about academic integrity and how to avoid academic dishonesty, such as the resources provided by Cook Library and the Writing Center (<http://www.towson.edu/writingcenter>).

***Note: Failing to cite sources or cite them appropriately constitutes an academic integrity violation.*

Emergency Statement

In the event of a University-wide emergency, course requirements deadlines and grading schemes are subject to changes that may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, a revised attendance policy, and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme. In the case of a University-wide emergency, please refer to the following about changes in this course:

- Course Blackboard Page
- Email me at JLAnderson@towson.edu
- For general information about any emergency situation, please refer to www.towson.edu, call 410-704-2000, or utilize the TU Text Alert System: This is a service designed to alert the Towson University community via text messages to cell phones when situations arise on campus that affect the ability of the campus to function normally. Sign up: <http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/>

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

WEEK 1

8/25 Topic: Syllabus Review, Paperwork
Homework: Property Sheet with Backpack Contents
Readings: Ruslander - Searching and Examining a Major Case Crime Scene located at: <http://www.crime-scene investigator.net/searchingandexamining.html#>
Gardner – Chapters 1, 2, 3 (have read for week 2 and reading guide questions completed).

WEEK 2

9/01 **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

WEEK 3

9/08 Topic: Evidence Packaging, Paperwork Continued
Homework: Description of Photograph
Readings: Ruslander - Searching and Examining a Major Case Crime Scene located at: <http://www.crime-scene investigator.net/searchingandexamining.html#>
Gardner – Chapters, 4, 5, 6

WEEK 4

9/15 Topic: Crime Scene Sketches & Photography
Homework: Crime Scene Sketches (with Body), Crime Scene Notes
Readings: Gardner – Chapters 7, 8, 12

WEEK 5

9/22 Topic: Latent Fingerprint Processing – Powders
Homework: Property Sheet, Lab Report
Readings: Gardner – Chapter 9
Science of Fingerprints, Chapters 12, 13 <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19022/19022-h/19022-h.htm> Chapters 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14, Latent Print Processing Guide (on Blackboard). Print and bring to class.
Resource: Latent Fingerprint Processing Techniques - Selection & Sequencing Guide
<https://www.cbdiai.org/start-interactive-chemical-reagent-program.html>

WEEK 6

9/29 Topic: Latent Fingerprint Processing – Chemicals
Homework: Property Sheet and Lab Report with Items Processed in Class
Readings: Gardner – Review Chapter 9, Latent Print Processing Guide (on Blackboard).

WEEK 7

10/06 Topic: Latent Fingerprint Processing – Chemicals Part II
Homework: Property Sheet and Lab Report with Items Processed in Class
Readings: Gardner – Review Chapter 9, Latent Print Processing Guide (on Blackboard).

WEEK 8

10/13 Topic: Footwear & Tiretracks
Homework: Property Sheet, Lab Report
Readings: Gardner – Chapter 9, <http://www.forensicsciencesimplified.org/fwt/index.htm>

WEEK 9

10/20 Topic: Bloodstain Pattern Analysis/Body Fluids
Readings: Gardner –Chapter 11, 13,
<http://www.forensicsciencesimplified.org/blood/BloodstainPatterns.pdf>

WEEK 10

10/27 Topic: Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Part II

WEEK 11

11/03 Topic: Firearm/Toolmarks, GSR Testing
Readings: Gardner – Chapters 10, 14

WEEK 12

11/10 Topic: Courtroom Testimony
Instructions: Mock Crime Scene Scenario
Readings: Ashlock, Stevee. Expert Witness: Effective Courtroom Testimony, p. 13-17. Forensic Magazine. February/March 2010

WEEK 13

11/17 **MOCK CRIME SCENES**

WEEK 14

11/24 **Topic: Cumulative Lecture Exam – Black Board**

WEEK 15

12/01 **MOCK PROCESSING CLASS #1**

WEEK 16

12/08 MOCK PROCESSING CLASS #2

WEEK 17

12/15 DUE: *COURTROOM TESTIMONY EVALUATIONS & MOCK CRIME SCENE MATERIALS (NO EXCEPTIONS- @ 630PM)*