

## COURSE SYLLABUS

# FRNSC 100: Introduction to Forensic Science

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH STUDENT TO CAREFULLY REVIEW THIS DOCUMENT.

### Credits

This course is worth three (3) credits.

### Prerequisites

There are no required prerequisites for this class; however, some of the science you will learn in this class requires the understanding and application of basic mathematical concepts. No background in natural sciences is presumed.

### Course Attributions/Designations

This is a General Education (GenEd) course and will fulfill three (3) Natural Science (GN) general education credits. This is also a prescribed course for FRNSC majors.

### General Education Learning Objectives

- CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL THINKING – the habit of mind characterized by comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating a conclusion. It is the intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.
- INTEGRATIVE THINKING – the ability to synthesize knowledge across multiple domains, modes of inquiry, historical periods, and perspectives, as well as the ability to identify linkages between existing knowledge and new information. Individuals who engage in integrative thinking are able to transfer knowledge within and beyond their current contexts.

### Description

This course is designed for students to step into the role of a criminalist – one who performs the scientific examination of evidence - as they process a case from start to finish over the semester. Students begin by learning a scientific approach to crime scene investigation, evidence collection, and transport. They then follow the collected evidence as it is disseminated throughout the crime lab for examination and analysis. Disciplines such as forensic serology, trace evidence, impression evidence, drug chemistry, toxicology, and DNA will be discussed. Students will learn about the examinations performed by crime lab professionals; the scientific principles from disciplines such biology, chemistry, physics, and math those exams entail; and the instrumentation commonly used in the lab to complete those examinations and analyses. Once the evidence has been processed, students will use critical thinking skills to interpret the evidence within the context of the case. They will reconstruct the crime as

it could have occurred guided by the results and conclusions generated from their analyses. Students will also explore the role of various scientific disciplines outside of criminalistics (anthropology, entomology, pathology, etc.) as they are used in modern forensics, as well as the role of forensic science in society and the criminal justice system.

## Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe crime scene procedures and technologies used to reveal, collect, process, and transport crime scene evidence.
- Identify the role of the criminalist within the broad scope of forensic science and science in general.
- Describe the forensic roles that scientists from fields outside of criminalistics play in the investigation and criminal justice process.
- Explain categories of evidence (direct, circumstantial, testimonial), their limitations, and value in a criminal investigation.
- Compare the generalist versus specialist philosophies of forensic science, and explain how each informs the way forensic science is approached.
- Explain how to identify and scientifically examine different types of physical evidence, such as glass, soil, hair, fibers, paint, controlled substances or drugs, blood, DNA, etc.
- Describe identification, enhancement, collection, and analysis techniques for impression and pattern evidence.
- List characteristics of handwriting and document analysis.
- Recall historical developments and landmarks of forensic science.
- Illustrate critical thinking by obtaining results and collecting facts, and then drawing conclusions from those results and making decisions based on the facts presented.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the underlying scientific principles for analyses performed and instruments used in forensic science and the science lab.
- Demonstrate quantitative literacy by solving numerical problems and performing numerical manipulations, and interpreting tabulated, graphical, and/or statistical data.
- Identify the limitations of forensic science in what it can and cannot prove.
- Describe the differences between presumptive and confirmatory testing, and demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate application of each to evidence.
- Relate forensic science principles and technological advances to real-world applications.
- Explain the importance of ethics in science.
- Summarize how the legal field influences forensic science and vice versa.
- Describe the role of forensic science in the criminal justice system, as well as its role in society at large.

## Course Instructor: Katie Mantz

Please visit your Canvas Inbox for all course-related email, including messages to your instructor(s) and fellow students. Every attempt will be made by the instructor to respond to email questions within 48 hours. **Only send email through Canvas and not to webmail. I WILL NOT respond to comments left on assignments, quizzes, or exams.**

## Materials

Houde, J. N. (2006). Crime Lab: A Guide for Nonscientists (Second ed.). Rollingbay, WA: Calico Press, LLC. ISBN: 978-0965828666

**It is HIGHLY recommended that you purchase the e-book.** You can buy it on amazon.com for the Kindle or the Kindle app, on Barnes and Noble for the Nook or Nook app, or on iBook if you use Apple products. You do not need to buy a new device to read the book - just download the free app onto your computer or device. The e-book should cost approximately \$6 USD.

If you choose to buy the paper book instead of the e-book, no due date extensions will be granted for late work because your book has not arrived yet. The paper book costs about \$30 USD, so it is remarkably more expensive than e-book. If you still decide to purchase a physical copy, make sure you purchase the second edition and not the first. They are not the same. All online instructor provided reading and activities on the Canvas website, unless specifically stated to the contrary, are testable materials.

## Assignments & Grading

This class is assessed on a 1000-point scale. You will be assessed on three broad categories: quizzes, exams, and assignments.

**Letter grades: The following are minimum cutoffs for each grade (yes, I round up)**

Grade	Percent	Points
A	93%	929.5
A-	90%	899.5
B+	87%	869.5
B	83%	829.5
B-	80%	799.5
C+	77%	769.5
C	70%	699.5
D	60%	599.5
F	<60%	<599.49

Points are assessed as follows:

Quizzes	Number of Assignments	Points Available for Each	Total Points Available	Percent of Final Grade
Start Here Quizzes	6	Varies	40	4%
Academic Integrity	6	Varies	30	3%
Case Notes	1	30	30	3%
Modules	15	10	150	15%
FSPP	10	5	50	5%
Quiz Total			300	30%

Exams	Number of Assignments	Points Available for Each	Total Points Available	Percent of Final Grade
Exam 1	1	100	100	10%
Exam 2	1	100	100	10%
Exam 3	1	100	100	10%
Exam Total			300	30%

Assignments	Number of Assignments	Points Available for Each	Total Points Available	Percent of Final Grade
Case Notes	11	20	220	22%
Evidence Summary	1	40	40	4%
Drawing Conclusions	1	40	40	4%
Timeline of Events	1	40	40	4%
Career Assignment	1	30	30	3%
Education Assignment	1	30	30	3%
Assignment Total			400	40%

Total Points Available	Points Available	Percent of Grade
Quizzes	300	30%
Exams	300	30%
Assignments	400	40%
Total	1000	100%

## Dropping this Course

**If you decide to drop this course for any reason - poor grade, no time, don't need it, hate it - YOU must drop yourself from the class using Lionpath.** You must drop the class by the late drop deadline (see the Due Dates page in the Start Here module for the late drop date) or you will be awarded whatever grade you've earned in the class by the final deadline. I will not drop you from the class. If you have questions about whether or not you should drop, talk to your academic advisor.

## COMPLETING YOUR WORK

**Assignments in this class are open book and open note. They are not open friend or open internet.** Your grade should be a reflection of your work - not that of your friends and classmates. **NO COLLABORATION is allowed between you and fellow classmates or others unless authorized by the instructor. Unless otherwise noted, authorized collaboration includes discussing this coursework with the instructor, TA or CAs, or with classmates in the moderated chatroom space Piazza, which is available on Canvas.** If you are caught collaborating with others or facilitating the academic dishonesty of others by sharing your work with others, you will be subject to sanctions as allowed by the Academic Integrity policies of the university. Note that using "tutoring" websites like chegg, course hero, quizlet, etc. count as unauthorized collaboration or facilitation of academic dishonesty. You will be brought up on allegations if you are caught using one of these websites.

Please refer to the calendar and the module pages often for deadlines and due dates. **It is your responsibility to manage your time wisely, and to make sure your computer and internet are working properly before you begin quizzes and exams.**

**DO NOT wait until the day before your work is due to begin.** This never works out well for those who try it. Believe me, there is a noticeable difference in quality between the work done in a timely manner and the work done in a panic by students who waited until the last minute. The grades are usually a reflection of this as though who rush struggle to give the work the attention it deserves.

**Late quizzes and exams will not be accepted without prior permission from the instructor or in the rare case of an unavoidable emergency. What constitutes an emergency is up to the discretion of the instructor.**

**You have up to 5 days to submit late work for a grade.** For every 24 hours a written assignment is late, 10% will be taken off the grade for that assignment. This rule only applies to work in the "assignments" category (case notes and other written assignments that are not quizzes or exams). On the 6th day late, the work will be marked as a 0.

So, for a case notes assignment that is one day late, 1 point will be taken off the final grade of that assignment. If you score 8 out of 10 on the assignment, the final score will end up as 7 out of 10 because 1 point was deducted for lateness. An assignment submitted three days late would lose 3 points, and 8 out of 10 becomes 5 out of 10, taking the assignment grade from a B to a F.

Very late work may be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Students with long-term or serious illnesses, or experiencing catastrophic life events, have been granted extensions in the past. Doctor's notes or other documentation may be required. Again, extensions are not guaranteed, and are granted on a case-by-case basis by the instructor.

**NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE FINAL DEADLINE (LAST DAY OF CLASS) WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT FROM THE INSTRUCTOR.** Once the final deadline expires, any missing work will be given a score of 0.

**You will have only one chance to take a quiz or exam.** Quizzes and exams cannot be paused or saved. The quizzes and exams are open note and open book (not open friend nor open internet!). There will be

a time limit for the quizzes and exams, therefore it is ill advised to try and complete the quizzes and exams without reading first. You will not have time to do the reading while taking the assessment. The time limit for each quiz or exam will be indicated in the directions.

**You may not resubmit assignments once they have been graded, but if you catch a mistake before we grade your work, you can correct the error and resubmit the assignment.** We will grade the most recent version that you have uploaded. Note that this applies to assignments submitted before the due date/deadline has elapsed. If you resubmit after the deadline, your most recent submission will be considered late in accordance to the Late Work Policy.

## **COURSE FORMAT**

This course has been designed for you to step into the role of a forensic scientist as you process a case from start to finish - crime scene to court room - and to teach you to think like a scientist - identifying problems, asking the right questions, analyzing data, and critically thinking to make connections and interpret results.

The textbook provides the details of the case - victim(s), suspect(s), scene details, lab exams, etc. - and then supplemental information about the case is provided to you by your instructor to help you better understand the processes and procedures used by real forensic scientists.

Throughout the semester, you will work the case! Your job as the criminalist (a scientist who examines physical evidence) is to document the process of evidence collection at the crime scene and then follow the analysis of the evidence once it gets back to the lab. You will document the crime scene, evidence collection, and evidence analysis in case notes. At the end of the semester, we will discuss probable versus possible, critical thinking, and how to think like a scientist. You will coalesce your case notes into a summary and then conduct a reconstruction/final report in which you will interpret the evidence you have analyzed throughout the semester in order to come up with your version of how the crime occurred. In other words, you will tell us whodunit!

### **Time Management and Realistic Expectations**

**You are responsible for managing your time wisely.** Make sure you plan your schedule accordingly around work, extracurricular activities, family obligations, and other classwork.

**You should expect to spend, at a minimum, 5 – 6 hours per week on this course and up to 9 hours for weeks with multiple written assignments.** Every semester I have a handful of students who take on too much and it inevitably ends poorly – if you are a parent, work full time, are involved in sports or extracurricular activities, and/or are attempting 7 or 8 classes, you may be taking on too much.

**Penn State anticipates that you should spend 3 hours per week doing work for each credit taken.** If you are taking seven 3-credit courses, that's approximately 63 hours per week (21 credits x 3 hours per credit = 63 hours). 63 hours for class + 40 hours for fulltime work = 103 hours per week. Add in 6 hours per night for sleep, and that's another 42 hours, so 103+42=145 hours. There are 168 hours in a week, which leaves you 23 hours in the week that are not school, work, or sleep; that means you will have about 3 hours per day to dedicate to anything else that is not school, work, or sleep – like eating, family time, clubs, sports, or Netflix.

**This is not meant to discourage you from working hard to achieve your goals; instead, it is to ask you to really think about time limitations and setting realistic goals.** There will likely be several weeks where you can manage everything just fine, but inevitably at some point in the semester (often the last few weeks before finals) everything (papers, projects, group work) becomes due all at once in multiple classes and the delicate balance you've maintained completing course work in all your classes gets thrown off-kilter. Students find themselves overwhelmed, struggling, and incapable of working up to their potential, which often results in assignments being turned in late or not at all, lowered grades on quizzes or exams, and panicked emails sent to me begging for due date extensions. If you find yourself in this situation and end up sending me that panicked email, you will find that, while I am extremely empathetic to your predicament, **no due date extensions will be granted for poor, wishful, and/or unrealistic time management.**

**I urge you to speak with an advisor who can help you navigate your way forward if you are concerned you may be taking on too much or if you are trying to determine if your current schedule and goals are realistic.** You aren't doing yourself any favors by taking 8 classes at once to "graduate on time" if you end up not passing two or three courses and have to retake them. This is also damaging to your GPA, as Penn State does not replace the grade of a repeated course – if you get an F or D, you can retake the class, but that F or D will remain calculated in your GPA even after retaking the course for a higher grade.

## Modules

This course is broken into fifteen modules. Refer to the calendar, module pages, or Due Dates page for due dates and deadlines. These due dates are not flexible. You have work due weekly. Work always becomes available on Monday and is due the following Monday. If you are taking this course during a summer session, these due dates will change to accommodate the condensed schedule.

Each module contains reading, online labs and activities, and written work. Written work may be in the form of case notes worksheets, guided exercises, or short papers. Points for assignments vary according to the difficulty and expected time and attention you will need to put into an assignment to complete it successfully.

Each module contains a 10 point quiz on the text and/or instructor provided material. Ten of the modules contain expert interviews and/or professional profiles. The modules that contain a professional profile have a 5 point quiz on just the professional profile.

## Topics Covered

**(Note: One per week in fall and spring semesters. Topics are condensed to 3 per week during summer sessions)**

Week 1	What is forensic science; crime scene investigation – scene management and approach
Week 2	Crime scene investigation – processing the scene, evidence collection methods
Week 3	Crime scene investigation – packaging and transport of evidence
Week 4	Forensic biology/serology; collecting evidence samples from victims/suspects
Week 5	Evidence intake and initial examination at crime lab
Week 6	Lab instrumentation
Week 7	Trace evidence
Week 8	Blood

Week 9	DNA
Week 10	Drug chemistry and toxicology
Week 11	Impression evidence; toolmarks and firearms
Week 12	The courtroom, ethics, and credibility
Week 13	Reconstruction and drawing conclusions from results
Week 14	Reconstruction and critical thinking
Week 15	Forensic science in the “real world;” social/legal impacts

## Reading

Each module contains assigned reading. Some of the reading is from your textbook and some will be from online articles, websites, or content provided by the instructor on the course content website. All material from the reading is testable unless otherwise indicated.

If you have a paper book, the page numbers are listed. If you are using an e-book (recommended), the page numbers may differ from the physical paper book. In that case, the chapter titles and/or headings are given to provide you with starting and stopping points.

## Online Labs or Activities

Online labs or other activities help emphasize important points from your reading, or help expand your understanding of the science being used to examine evidence. Most of this content is hosted on third-party websites that we do not control. If the content on one of these websites becomes unavailable or you have trouble accessing it, email the instructor immediately for assistance. We will help you troubleshoot as best we can. If you choose to skip the activity and move on to the quiz without seeking assistance, and are unable to answer quiz questions because of it, points will not be given back. You **MUST** contact one of us to troubleshoot before "giving up and moving on" if you cannot access a site in order for points to be granted for missed questions.

If you do not already have a YouTube account, you may need to create one to watch many of the videos.

The content of these labs and activities is testable material unless otherwise indicated.

## Case Notes and Written Work

In modules 1-11 you will have homework assignments in the form of case notes. While each module's case notes covers a different area of the crime scene or crime lab (toxicology, DNA, drugs, etc.), they are all part of the same case and will all have the same case number – PSUCL-01.

Most of these assignments require you to fill in the provided worksheets/outlines and then submit the work for grading on Canvas. **All of the case notes must be typewritten and submitted as a Microsoft Word or pdf document. If you submit your work in a format that is unreadable (bad file, .pages, html link, etc.), your work will be given a 0. If we can't read it, we can't – and won't - grade it.** The same goes for anyone who uses Google Docs. If it does funny things to the document format and alters the assignment or makes it unreadable, the assignment may lose points or not be graded. YOU are responsible for making sure your work is submitted properly and legible/readable.



**You will need Microsoft Word in order to complete the assignments for this class. As a Penn State student, you receive free access to Office 365 online at <https://office365.psu.edu/>.** Every single student gets use of the Microsoft Office platforms using this app; therefore, no excuses of “But I don’t have Word.” or “But I use a Mac.” will be accepted for why your work is not in the proper format. If we cannot read it, we cannot grade it.

It is important to keep up with case notes assignments throughout the semester - you will need this information to be complete and accurate to do the assignments in modules 12-14.

**If you are having difficulty with any of the case notes, ask questions before you submit them - not after!**

### **Evidence Summary Assignment**

In module 12 you will aggregate the results of the case notes that you have taken throughout the semester. Your summary will go over each piece of evidence by discussing the analyses performed on them and the results of those tests.

### **Drawing Conclusions Assignment**

In module 13, you will use the summary from module 12. Using your critical thinking skills, you will draw conclusions about the evidence in this case. Is it probative? Can it be associated with other evidence or people from the crime scene? Is your assumption about the evidence supported by science?

### **Timeline of Events (Reconstruction) Assignment**

In module 14, you will use the assignment completed in module 13 to reconstruct the timeline of events from the crime scene, as well as discuss some alternate theories of the case. Based on the conclusions you come to in module 13, your timeline may vary greatly from those of your fellow classmates. This is expected and acceptable, as long as your timeline is backed up by your scientific interpretation of the evidence.

### **Forensic Science Professional Profiles**

The majority of the textbook is dedicated to criminalistics, but there are many other sciences that can be included under the forensic science umbrella. There are ten forensic science specialties discussed throughout the course. Each of these will include short reading assignments, a possible online activity or lab, and a 5 question, 5 point quiz.

### **Forensic Science Career Assignment**

Part of exploring any profession is understanding what it takes to be a part of it. You will examine job postings for crime scene, crime lab, and forensic specialty work in order to explore what it takes to enter the forensic science field. This is also an opportunity to see how the courses you take and the skills you develop in the classroom are directly applicable to your career once you leave Penn State.

## **Forensic Science Education Assignment**

As you will see from the Career Assignment, the educational requirements for jobs in the forensic science field vary widely depending on the type of work you want to do. For the Education Assignment, you will examine different degree options in relation to the job postings you analyzed during the Career Assignment to explore the differences between these degrees and why certain degrees may be necessary for some jobs but not others.

## **Quizzes**

Each module has a 10 question, 10 point quiz that you will have 10 minutes to complete. The quizzes contain multiple choice and true/false questions. All material in the module - except for the professional profile - is fair game for the quiz.

Quiz questions are randomly drawn from a question bank specific to the module in which you are taking the quiz. Each bank may have up to 50 questions. The questions are pulled from the textbook reading, Canvas page reading, articles and third party website information, videos, and online labs/activities. While the quiz is open book, it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you take some notes to use on your quiz and exams as you complete each module. Students who try to do the reading and take the quiz simultaneously generally run out of time because there is not enough time to do both.

Each professional profile has a 5 question, 5 point quiz that you will have 10 minutes to complete. The quizzes contain multiple choice and true/false questions. These quiz questions will only be on the information in the professional profile - no other content from the module will be in the 5 point quiz. Quizzes are open book and open note - they are not open friend. Make sure your work is your own.

All quizzes will be available on Canvas. Check the calendar and module pages for due dates.

## **Start Here and Academic Integrity Quizzes**

There are 6 Start Here module and 6 Academic Integrity module quizzes. These quizzes are designed to make sure you have read the introductory material for this course. Students often lose points because they are unaware of due dates, do not know how to read grader comments on their assignments, or are unaware of the Late Work Acceptance policy. Emphasis is also placed on Academic Integrity. Online does not mean lawless – the same rules that govern an in-person course when it comes to cheating and ethics apply online.

These quizzes are repeatable – they have no time limit and you may take them until you get a 100% on each one - up until the due date deadline expires.

## **Case Notes Quiz**

The formatting of case notes in forensic science is guided by some very strict standards and guidelines. In the world of forensic science, case notes are considered a legal document, and if they are done incorrectly, they can get thrown out of court. You will be introduced to the basics of proper case notes documentation in this class. The format you are being asked to follow is a barebones version of what anyone entering a law enforcement or forensics profession will encounter. This is also a good

introduction to the handwritten version of case notes you will encounter in FRNSC 210 if you intend to pursue the forensic science major at Penn State.

Every semester, students needlessly lose points on their case notes assignments because they refuse to follow the format (or simply ignore the directions). This quiz is designed to make sure you understand the format that is required for case notes - especially the date and time.

## Exams

You will have three exams, each worth 100 points. Exams have 100 multiple choice and true/false questions. The questions are drawn from the question banks used to make the module quizzes. It is likely you will see some of the same questions on your exam that you had on a previous quiz - these will be mixed in with new questions you have not seen before.

**You will have 1 hour (60 minutes) to complete each exam.** While the exams are open book, **it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you take some notes to use on your exams as you complete each module.** It is also HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you study for this exam the same as you would any other. If you are unfamiliar with the material, you will have trouble finishing the exam on time - there is not enough time to look up every single answer in your notes or on Canvas while taking the exam.

## Extra Credit

**There is no guaranteed extra credit opportunity offered in this course.** Occasionally an exit survey may be offered (in addition to the SRTE) or a relevant current event may be presented along with a short quiz or writing assignment. These will never be worth more than 1% of the final grade. The choice to offer extra credit is entirely up to the discretion of the instructor. **No extra credit assignments will be created for individual students.**

## Lectures

The instructor will have VoiceThread or Kaltura lectures throughout the modules for you to watch. A VoiceThread or Kaltura lecture is like a PowerPoint lecture - you watch the slides while I talk over them. However, **these are NOT traditional lectures. They will vary in length and complexity depending on the subject matter being discussed and there is not a lecture for every module.** These lectures are designed to help explain concepts and assignments that students have struggled with in the past. It is worth your while to watch them with your full attention - do not do other work, watch Netflix, or engage in other distractions. Lectures are considered testable material unless otherwise stated.

## Class Discussion on Piazza

There are no discussion boards or group projects *required* in this class. That being said, students in previous classes have expressed a desire for there to be some sort of voluntary discussion forum where they can post questions or discuss assignments with fellow students. I have set up Piazza so that you can do just that. These forums will be monitored, so do not use them to cheat. Pointing a student to the correct section of the textbook to find and answer is acceptable – telling them the answer is not. This is the **ONLY** place where students are authorized to “collaborate” within this course.

## Course Policies and Expectations

The Instructor will:

- Provide clear and concise information on all assignments and assessment methods
- Respond to queries within 24-48 hours via email
- Treat all students fairly and respectfully
- Do everything reasonably possible to facilitate learning
- Uphold the level of academic excellence expected of all Penn State faculty
- Conduct themselves respectfully in online discussions and contribute constructive relevant knowledge

The Students will:

- Be actively engaged in the course by reading and using the required textbooks and online resources
- Read course material assigned before engaging in homework, quizzes, exams, or exercises
- Be actively engaged in the course by interacting with the instructor, CA/TA, and online classmates (when permitted)
- Communicate to instructors and assistants via Canvas email in a professional and respectful manner
- Ask questions and/or ask for help if they do not understand a concept, topic, assignment, or directions
- Be expected to maintain the highest levels of academic integrity, honesty, ethical behavior, and honor throughout the course
- Be familiar with the University and ECoS academic integrity policy, as well as the policies specified for this course and the consequences that may arise for violating these policies.
- Be expected to complete and submit all assessments by the date specified by the instructor
- Be expected to immediately notify both the instructor and coordinator via email and/or if an unavoidable emergency prevents the timely submission of an assignment or completion of an assessment. The instructor will determine what constitutes an unavoidable emergency.
- Understand that late, incomplete, or missing assignments and/or incompleteness of assessments will adversely affect their grade
- Conduct themselves respectfully in online discussions and contribute constructive relevant knowledge
- Be expected to complete quizzes and examinations alone, individually, without assistance from other individuals

### Late Work Policy

Late quizzes and exams will not be accepted without prior permission from the instructor.

**You have up to 5 days to submit late work for a grade.** For every 24 hours a written assignment is late, 10% will be taken off the grade for that assignment. This rule only applies to work in the "assignments" category (case notes and other written assignments that are not quizzes or exams). On the 6th day late, the work will be marked as a 0.

So, for a case notes assignment that is one day late, 1 point will be taken off the final grade of that assignment. If you score 8 out of 10 on the assignment, the final score will end up as 7 out of 10 because 1 point was deducted for lateness. An assignment submitted three days late would lose 3 points, and 8 out of 10 becomes 5 out of 10, taking the assignment grade from a B to a F.

Very late work may be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Students with long-term or serious illnesses or experiencing catastrophic life events have been granted extensions in the past. Doctor's notes or other documentation may be required. Again, extensions are not guaranteed, and are granted on a case-by-case basis by the instructor.

**NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE FINAL DEADLINE (LAST DAY OF CLASS) WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT FROM THE INSTRUCTOR.** Once the final deadline expires, any missing work will be given a score of 0. Grades must be turned around quickly in accordance with university policy – this cannot be done if late work is accepted.

**If you experience technical difficulties with the Canvas website, you should contact Canvas support immediately.** Just click the "Help" link on the left-hand side of your dashboard. Please email the coordinator describing the issue you are having and with whom you spoke when you contacted Canvas support so that they may provide the instructor with the reason for the late/missed assignment. It is entirely up to the discretion of the instructor whether to grant an extension or not.

**\*\*If you are active duty military:** if you are in training, deployed, or may deploy during the semester, tell the instructor at the beginning of the semester. We recognize that your time is not your own and that you may abruptly be put to a schedule that does not allow you to complete the classwork within the deadlines. Again, if there is a possibility of this, let the instructor know NOW at the beginning of the semester. We can make some accommodations for you if you let us know up front. The quick email is worth it - every semester I have a reservist or someone in the National Guard email in a panic because they get called up unexpectedly.

Read more about the Late Work Acceptance Policy on the Canvas page of the same name.

## Technical Requirements

Standard World Campus computer technical specifications are assumed for this course. Please test your computer for requirements. Course material will be provided in the form of videos, online labs, and Word and pdf documents. There are some websites you will use where **you may need to have the latest versions of java and Adobe flashplayer on your web browser** in order for the content to play. It is up to you to make sure that the computer you choose to use for this course is compatible with the materials being provided. Office365 online through Penn State or the Microsoft Office suite on your computer will be needed to complete assignments.

## Resources

Find extensive information and links to many resources, including the Penn State library, web conferencing, course tools, writing help, and much more on the [Resources](#) page.

## Library Resources Information Guide

This guide is intended for students who are using the library online to help guide the experience and make the library website easier to understand and use! Click here to access the [Online Students Use of the Library](#) website.

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity — scholarship free of fraud and deception — is an important educational objective of Penn State. **Academic dishonesty can lead to a failing grade or referral to the Office of Student Conduct.**

**I DO NOT TOLERATE CHEATING OR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY OF ANY KIND. IF YOU ARE CAUGHT, YOU WILL BE CHARGED WITH AN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION.** This is not lip service – if I catch you, I will file charges. I'm *that* instructor. In forensic science, your ethics and integrity can literally be the difference between life and death. I will not be a party to any dishonorable behavior. Minor-to-moderate violations most often result in a 0 for that assignment. Repeated or major violations may result in 0s for assignments and a lowering of the final course grade. Egregious breaches of academic integrity may result in an XF grade for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating
- plagiarism
- fabrication of information or citations
- facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others (this includes posting course material to online “tutoring” and “homework help” websites)
- unauthorized prior possession of examinations
- submitting the work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor and securing written approval
- tampering with the academic work of other students

In cases where academic integrity is questioned, procedure requires an instructor to notify a student of suspected dishonesty before filing a charge and recommended sanction with the college. Procedures allow a student to accept or contest a charge. If a student chooses to contest a charge, the case will then be managed by the respective college or campus Academic Integrity Committee. If a disciplinary sanction also is recommended, the case will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

All Penn State colleges abide by this Penn State policy, but review procedures may vary by college when academic dishonesty is suspected. Information about Penn State's academic integrity policy and college review procedures is included in the information that students receive upon enrolling in a course. To obtain that information in advance of enrolling in a course, please contact us.

Additionally, World Campus students are expected to act with civility and personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights, and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for oneself and others, and a civil community.

You MUST complete the academic integrity module for this course and you are expected to abide by the information provided there and by the university. If you are unsure if something is considered an AI violation – ASK!

### **Additional Policies**

For information about additional policies regarding items such as Penn State Access Accounts; credit by examination; course tuition, fees, and refund schedules; and drops and withdrawals please see the [World Campus Student Policies](#) website.

### **Accommodating Disabilities**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 814-863-1807 (V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit the [Office for Disability Services](#) website.

In order to receive consideration for course accommodations, you must contact ODS and provide documentation (see the [documentation guidelines](#)). If the documentation supports the need for academic adjustments, ODS will provide a letter identifying appropriate academic adjustments. Please share this letter and discuss the adjustments with your instructor as early in the course as possible. **You must contact ODS and request academic adjustment letters at the beginning of each semester.**

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

Mental health services are available to help you maintain your academic success. Visit the [student website](#) today to learn more or to speak with a mental health advocate who can help you address concerns including anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, and stress. If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis situation, please call your local emergency service.

### **Privacy Notice**

In order to protect your privacy, course access is limited to those individuals who have direct responsibility for the quality of your educational experience. In addition to the instructor, a teaching assistant, course designer or college administrator may be provided access in order to ensure optimal faculty availability and access. Technical staff may also be given access in order to resolve technical support issues.

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