

Physical Aspects of Forensic Science



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL TEXAS

Instructor: Assistant Professor Tammy Bracewell, PhD
Class Location: FH 203
Class Duration: August 27-December 14, 2018, 9:30am-10:45am
Office Hours: FH 217M, Tuesdays 8:00-9:30, 10:45-12:00 & 5:30-6:00, Thursdays 8:00-9:30 10:45-12:00, or by appt. If you know you would like to meet with me it is always best to schedule an appointment, even if it is during office hours. This ensures you are given priority over walk-ins.

Email:

- tammy.bracewell@tamuct.edu or Canvas inbox *** preferred***
- When messaging/emailing, always identify yourself and what course you are in. In general, when communicating electronically you should use complete sentences and be very clear about what you are asking or saying to avoid miscommunication.
- I check my email several times a day. I check Canvas at least once a day. These are the two best ways to reach me. If you need to talk to me outside of office hours please email or message me.

*****Note: This syllabus is subject to revisions when necessary throughout the semester.**

Students will be notified of any changes via Canvas.***

MODE OF INSTRUCTION AND COURSE ACCESS

This class meets face to face with some online components and resources. As this class has online components, students must be able to access Canvas. Students can access Canvas on the Texas A&M-Central Texas website: www.tamuct.edu. Log in with your TAMUCT issued ID and your password. If you have difficulty using Canvas, contact Help Desk Central 24/7 by phone at (254) 519-5466 or live chat at <http://hdc.tamu.edu>.

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

Username: Your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT e-mail address)

Password: Your MyCT password

Technology Support.

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

For issues with **Canvas**, select “chat with Canvas support,” submit a support request to Canvas Tier 1, or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953, links to all are found inside of Canvas using the “Help” link.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION

This is a lecture class with online components. Most communication between the instructor and students will be in person. However, students can contact me via Canvas and email. All students are able to schedule a telephone conference or meet with me during office hours.

I will check and reply to student emails on a daily basis – students should expect a response within 24 hours. Any deviations from this will be announced on Canvas. Checking Canvas frequently is important as this is where any class announcements will be posted.

It is HIGHLY recommended that you go into your “settings” in Canvas, select “notifications”, and elect to receive emails when announcements are made. You are responsible for obtaining information in a timely manner.

My preferred method of electronic student interaction is via Canvas. All students should identify the class they are in, use proper salutations and signatures, identify a question, be succinct, and maintain professionalism in any correspondence. Deviations from these guidelines will likely not receive a response. Additionally, students should check the syllabus before asking questions that are likely answered in the syllabus. If the answer is in the syllabus, that is what the response email will reference.

Copyright Notice.

Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and Texas A&M University-Central Texas’ Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

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911 Cellular:

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text

message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management) [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

COURSE INFORMATION

1.0 Catalogue Description

Physical Aspects of Forensic Science. (3-0) This course provides the non-science student a basic understanding of the specialty field of forensic science. The course focuses on the physical (non-biological) aspects of forensic science.

2.0 Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you should be able to demonstrate an understanding of physical aspects of forensic science.

1. Understand basic crime scene procedures.
2. Understand the role of forensic scientists and crime scene investigators.
3. Understand the different applications of forensic science.
4. Demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of processing physical evidence.
5. Demonstrate the ability to process a crime scene.

3.0 Required Textbooks

Houck & Siegel (2015). Fundamentals of Forensic Science (3rd ed). Elsevier: Oxford.

Note: This is the same book I use in the Spring biological aspects course. If you plan on taking that course I recommend keeping your book.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Supplementary material may take the form of handouts, oral presentations, and references from your instructor, presentations by students, and articles we read. Supplementary materials are handed out in class or posted to Canvas.

REQUIRED COURSE WORK

I. Assignments (100 points)

There will be 10 assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will cover reading material and videos that we watch. There are no makeup assignments. Each assignment is worth 10 points. Some of these assignments will be in class and some you will take home. If it is an in class assignment and you are absent, you will not receive credit.

II. **Labs 5 (100 pts)**

There will be 5 labs this semester. You must be in class to complete and obtain credit. If you miss class you will receive a zero for the assignment. No make-up labs will be provided. See course information regarding late assignments for more information.

II. **Mock Crime Scene (200 points)**

You will be split into teams and be required to work a mock crime scene. Working the mock crime scene will include processing, collecting, and interpreting evidence. The mock crime scene will be outside. Additionally, evidence processing will most likely take place outside. A rubric will be provided later in the semester.

III. **Midterm Exam (100 points)**

IV. **Final Exam (100 points)**

OTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE COURSE

I. Late assignments: Late assignments will generally not be accepted. In the event a student misses a class for a legitimate reason (work or medical) advanced notice is required to make up any work. Documentation (including date and time) will be required for any make up assignments. There are very few reasons that late notice may be acceptable such as you were in a severe car accident and just regained consciousness.

In the event you have an excused absence and miss an in class assignment your make-up assignment will be in the form of a summary of the current chapter we are covering in class. The summary should be no shorter than one page, double spaced. If you have an excused absence on the date of the midterm you can take make up the exam on the date of the final. If you have an excused absence on the date of the final you must, as with any other missed assignment, provide advanced notice. The only available date where students can make up the final for an excused absence is 12/13.

In the event you have an excused absence and miss the hands on exercise your make up assignment will be in the form of a 5-7 page research paper. If you miss a portion of the hands on exercise there is no make-up. You will not receive credit for that portion of the assignment.

II. Supplementary Material: Additional information may be given that supplement the topics to be addressed. This supplementary material is designed to broaden the educational experience and create more variety to the usual lecture/discussion format of class presentations. You are responsible for all information in the supplementary material.

III. Extra Credit: Extra credit is not available in this class.

IV. Punctuality: Please be ON TIME to this class. Excessive tardiness is a distraction to the entire class and will not be tolerated. Occasionally things may come up and you may run late. In this instance please enter as quietly as possible and take the first available seat. If tardiness becomes a reoccurring problem a policy of no admittance after a certain time frame will be implemented.

V. Civility: While this is a forensics class it is inevitable that some sensitive topics (race, religion, etc...) will be discussed. All students are expected to treat each other with respect. You may disagree but you must do so with civility. Rude and degrading behavior will not be tolerated.

VI. Posting of Grades: All student grades will be posted in the Blackboard grade book and students should monitor their grading status through this tool.

VII. Miscellaneous: You are not permitted to record this course. This includes taking photos of powerpoints.

- Stay OFF your phones! Your phones should be on SILENT (not vibrate). If you are on call or have some other reason for needing your phone you may leave it on the table on SILENT. If you must take a call, take it outside without disturbing the class.
- You may eat/drink. Please clean up after yourself.
- GRAPHIC. This class contains a lot of graphic material. You will not be warned when graphic images will appear, just anticipate at a minimum of every few slides. We will also be discussing classes. If you have any negative reactions to the content please step outside if necessary. If you have any personal experiences that you think I should be aware of please let me know. This would include if you were a victim or a relative of a victim of a violent crime and are worried about triggering memories.
- Do not record the class (if you have an accommodation let me know). This includes taking photos of me or slides.

VIII. Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion:

Final course grades will be assessed on the following scale:

Assignment	Points	My Grade
Exam 1	100 points	
Exam 2	100 points	
Assignments	100 points	
Mock Crime Scene	200 Points	
Labs	100	
Total	600	
537-600 points	A	
477-536 points	B	
417-476 points	C	

357-416 points	D
<357points	F

At the end of the semester there will be NO curve and no extra points given. It is up to YOU to ensure you have the grade you want.

6.0 Course Calendar¹

Week	Topics/Reading	Due Dates
8/28	Introduction	
8/30	Chapter 1	
9/4	Chapter 2	
9/6	Chapter 2	Assign 1
9/11	Chapter 3-Bring item of clothing	Lab 1
9/13	Chapter 3	Assign 2
9/18	Chapter 19	Assign 3
9/20	Chapter 19-Bring items from home!	Lab 2
9/25	Chapter 20	Assign 4
9/27	Chapter 20	Lab 3
10/2	Chapter 21	Assign 5
10/4	Chapter 21	Assign 6
10/9	Catch-up day	
10/11	Review	
10/16	Midterm Exam	
10/18	No Class-please check Canvas	
10/23	Chapter 22	Assign 7
10/25	Chapter 22	Lab 4
10/30	Chapter 15	Lab 5
11/1	Chapter 15	Assign 8
11/6	Chapter 17	Assign 9
11/8	Chapter 17	Assign 10
11/13	Hands on-1 st team	

11/15	Hands on 2 nd team	
11/20	Hands on Exercise	
11/22	No Class-Thanksgiving	
11/27	Hands on Exercise	
11/29	Presentations	Final Report
12/4	Chapter 18	
12/6	Review/Chapter 24	
12/11	Final Exam-Cumulative 12/11	
12/13		

Important University Dates:

August 27, 2018	Add, Drop, and Late Registration Begins for 16- and First 8-Week Classes.
August 27, 2018	Classes Begin for Fall Semester
August 29, 2018	Deadline for Add, Drop, and Late Registration
September 3, 2018	Labor Day-University Closed
September 12, 2018	Deadline to drop 16-Week Classes with No Record
October 5, 2018	Deadline for Graduation Application for Ceremony Participation
October 12, 2018	Deadline for Fall Admissions Applications
November 1, 2018	Deadline for GRE/GMAT Scores to Office of Graduate Studies
November 9, 2018	Deadline to Drop 16-Week Classes with a Quit (Q) or Withdraw (W)
November 12, 2018	Veterans Day (Observed) - No Class
November 16, 2018	Deadline for Final Committee-Edited Theses with Committee Approval Signatures to Office of Graduate Studies for Fall Semester
November 22, 2018	Thanksgiving-University Closed
November 23, 2018	Thanksgiving-University Closed
December 1, 2018	Student End of Course Survey Opens (16- and Second 8-Week Classes)
December 14, 2018	Commencement Ceremony Bell County Expo Center 7:00 p.m.
December 14, 2018	Deadline for Applications for \$1,000 Tuition Rebate for Fall Graduation
December 14, 2018	Deadline for Fall Degree Conferral Applications to the Registrar's Office.
December 14, 2018	Deadline to Withdraw from University for 16- and Second 8-Week Classes
December 14, 2018	Fall Semester Ends
December 17, 2018	Student End of Course Survey Closes (16- and Second 8-Week Classes)

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a Drop Request Form

[https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest

evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Academic Accommodations

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Office of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion web page [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html>].

Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from US Department of

Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit the Student Affairs web page [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html>]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines online, please visit the website [<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>].

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.

Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored on campus include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or have any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at (254) 519-5796, or by emailing Dr. DeEadra Albert-Green at deeadra.albertgreen@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Writing Center

Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (TAMUCT) is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. This semester, the UWC is also offering online only hours from 12:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via WCOonline at [<https://tamuct.mywconline.com/>]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu for any assistance needed with scheduling.

Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!

If you have any questions about the UWC, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

University Library

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 85,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at

A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our Library website [<http://tamuct.libguides.com/index>].