COURSE OUTLINE

JUST 408 – INVESTIGATION OF DEATH

Prepared by: Susan E. Buckley
JUST 408 – INVESTIGATION OF DEATH

A. **TITLE:** Investigation of Death

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** JUST 408

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3 credit hours

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** No

E. **COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall

G. **HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:** 2 hours lecture, 2 hours lab per week

H. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**
   This course is a comprehensive study of death investigations including the first responding officer’s duties, the investigation at the scene, detectives’ duties, case management, manners and modes of death, and identifying suspects. The course also presents recent statistics and trends related to murder.

I. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-COURSES:** Prerequisites: Forensic Photography (JUST300), Latent Print and Impressions (JUST301), and Investigative Interviews (JUST303) and a Criminal Investigation major or permission of instructor.

J. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Objective</th>
<th>Institutional SLO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Discriminate between premeditated murder, voluntary manslaughter and involuntary manslaughter, negligent homicide, felony murder, capital murder and justifiable homicide.</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Summarize data sources used in the US to measure homicide trends</td>
<td>1. Communication</td>
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<td>c. Discuss commonly accepted psychological, biological, social and cultural theories related to the commission of homicides.</td>
<td>1. Communication</td>
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<td>d. Explain the stages of a confrontational homicide</td>
<td>1. Communication</td>
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<td>e. Differentiate between instrumental homicide and expressive homicide</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Discuss murder as a hate crime</td>
<td>1. Communication</td>
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                                                             |                                        | 4. Inter-Intrapersonal
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<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discriminate between filicide, parricide</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess a multiple murder scenario and classify perpetrator as a mass murderer, spree murderer, or serial murderer</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>Prioritize duties of a first responder to a crime scene</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking 3. Professional Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summarize duties of a detective re: the investigation and case management of a death case</td>
<td>1. Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appraise a death scene and identify mode and manner of death</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking 3. Professional Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with other members of a “detective unit” in the investigation of a death case study</td>
<td>1. Communication 2. Critical Thinking 3. Professional Competence 4. Inter-Intrapersonal Skills</td>
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L. **REFERENCES:** Various internet sources

M. **EQUIPMENT:** Access to Payson interview suite; televisions with access to Genetech video system

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A-F

O. **MEASUREMENT CRITERIA:**
   - Quizzes
   - Exams
   - Laboratory exercises
   - Class participation
   - Homework

P. **DETAILED OUTLINE**

I. **Definitions**
   a. Criminal homicide
   b. Premeditated murder
c. Manslaughter
   i. Involuntary
   ii. Voluntary
   iii. Vehicular manslaughter
d. Capital murder
e. Justifiable homicide

II. Measuring homicide and data exchange
   a. Uniform Crime Report
   b. National Incident Based Reporting System
   c. VICAP
   d. Homicide Investigation Tracking System
   e. NDEX

III. Explanations for homicide
   a. Biological
   b. Psychological
   c. Social and cultural
      i. Rational choice theory
      ii. Deterrence theory
      iii. Social disorganization theory
      iv. Neutralization theory

IV. Circumstances of homicides
   a. Confrontational
   b. Intimate partner
      i. Expressive
      ii. Instrumental
   c. Juvenile perpetrators
      i. Gender
      ii. Race
      iii. Parricide
      iv. Gangs
d. Child murder
      i. Neonaticide
      ii. Infanticide
      iii. Filicide
      iv. Filicide-suicide
e. Murder as a hate crime
      i. Definition of hate crime
      ii. Genocide
      iii. Gendercide
      iv. Hate Crime Statistics Act

V. Multiple Murders
   a. Mass murders
i. Family annihilators
ii. Pseudo-commandos
iii. Set and run killers
iv. Disciples
v. Disgruntled employees
vi. Disgruntled citizens
vii. Psychotics
b. Spree murders
c. Serial murders
   i. Serial murder symposium – 2005
   ii. MacDonald Triad

VI. The crime scene
   a. Starting the investigation
   b. Protecting the scene
   c. The staged crime scene
   d. Equivocal death investigations
   e. Investigative strategies

VII. First responder’s duties
   a. General duties
   b. Specific duties

VIII. Preliminary investigation
   a. Arrival at the scene
   b. Describing the scene
   c. Crime scene procedures
   d. Teamwork approach

IX. Identifying the deceased
   a. Estimating time of death
   b. Personal identification
   c. Identification by photographs
   d. Fingerprints
   e. Dentition
   f. Anthropology
   g. Facial reconstruction
   h. Death notifications

X. Modes of death
   a. Manner of death
   b. Cause of death
   c. Mechanism of death
   d. Gunshot wounds
   e. Sharp force wounds
   f. Blunt force wounds
g. Asphyxia
h. Sexual asphyxia
g. Suicide investigation
h. Sex related homicides
i. Homosexual homicides
j. Drug related homicides

XI. Identification of suspects
   a. Bite mark identification
   b. Hypnosis
   c. Fingerprints
   d. The investigative response

XII. Case management
   a. Homicide check list
   b. Lead organization