

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**COURSE OUTLINE  
JUST 408 – INVESTIGATION OF DEATH**

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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, HEALTH AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
SEPTEMBER 2017**

## JUST 408 – INVESTIGATION OF DEATH

- A. **TITLE:** Investigation of Death
- B. **COURSE NUMBER:** JUST 408
- C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 4 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, 4 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. NOTE: As this course includes a death investigation that typically extends over a four/five day period, students must have the ability to attend extended hours during the life of the investigation. This will include late evening hours on each day of the investigation.
- 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.  
 Co-requisite: JUST 406, Crime Scene Investigation
- J. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**  
 Upon completion of this course the students will be able to:

<i>Course Objective</i>	<i>Institutional SLO</i>
a. Summarize data sources and trends related to the study of homicides.	2. Critical Thinking
b. Discuss commonly accepted psychological, biological, social and cultural theories related to the commission of homicides.	2. Critical Thinking
c. Identify common homicide circumstances through the use of case studies.	2. Critical Thinking
d. Assess a multiple murder case studies and classify perpetrator as a mass murderer, spree murderer, or serial murderer	2. Critical Thinking

e. Summarize duties of a first responder and a detective to a potential homicide scene.	2. Critical Thinking
f. Collaborate with other students/members of a “detective unit” to bring a death investigation to a successful conclusion.	4. Social Responsibility 5. Industry, Professional, Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Skills

K. **TEXTS:** Davies, K (2008). *The murder book: Examining homicide*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.  
 Geberth, V.J. (2015). *Practical homicide investigation*, (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

L. **REFERENCES:** Various internet sources

M. **EQUIPMENT:** Access to Payson interview suite; monitors 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. Homicide Investigation Tracking System
- d. 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