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

COURSE OUTLINE
JUST 408 – INVESTIGATION OF DEATH

Prepared by: Susan E. Buckley

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:

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<tr>
<th>Course Objective</th>
<th>Institutional SLO</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Summarize data sources and trends related to the study of homicides.</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>b. Discuss commonly accepted psychological, biological, social and cultural theories related to the commission of homicides.</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>c. Identify common homicide circumstances through the use of case studies.</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>d. Assess a multiple murder case studies and classify perpetrator as a mass murderer, spree murderer, or serial murderer</td>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>e.</td>
<td>Summarize duties of a first responder and a detective to a potential homicide scene.</td>
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<td>f.</td>
<td>Collaborate with other students/members of a “detective unit” to bring a death investigation to a successful conclusion.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Industry, Professional, Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Skills</td>
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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