

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



**COURSE OUTLINE**

**JUST 320 – MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATION OF DEATH**

**Prepared By: Liz Erickson**

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH, SCIENCE, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT**

January 2016

**JUST 320 – Medico-legal Investigation of Death**

- A. **TITLE:** Medico-legal Investigation of Death
- B. **COURSE NUMBER:** JUST 320
- C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3
- D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** No
- E. **COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks
- F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall or Spring
- G. **HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:**  
3 hours lecture per week
- H. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**  
This course provides an in-depth look into the medico-legal aspects of death investigation, including the manners, mechanisms, and causes of death, as well as the post mortem changes. The course also instructs the student on wound interpretation and the method to apply post mortem conditions to criminal investigations to confirm or refute evidence of wrongful deaths.
- I. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-COURSES:** Pre-requisite: 45 credit hours or permission of the instructor.
- J. **GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):**  
By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

<b><u>Course Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Institutional SLO</u></b>
a. Explain manner, mechanism, and cause of death	2. Crit. Thinking
b. Employ forensic methods to determine the time of death	2. Crit. Thinking
c. Illustrate the importance of personal identification in death investigations	2. Crit. Thinking
d. Classify the various types of injuries	2. Crit. Thinking

- K. **TEXTS:**  
*Spitz, W. U. (2006). Medicolegal investigation of death: Guidelines for the application of pathology to crime investigation. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.*
- L. **REFERENCES:** None
- M. **EQUIPMENT:** Technology Enhanced Classroom

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

**N. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

- Exams
- Quizzes
- Paper
- Participation / discussion boards

**O. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

- I. The History of Forensic Pathology
  - A. The coroner system in England
  - B. The pathology system in the United States
- II. Crime Scene
  - A. Blood Stain Pattern Interpretation
  - B. Biological evidence
  - C. Trace evidence
- III. Time of death and changes after death
  - A. Anatomical considerations
  - B. Chemical considerations
  - C. Forensic entomology
  - D. Exhumation
- IV. Identification of Human Remains
  - A. Diverse techniques
  - B. DNA
- V. Anthropology
- VI. Forensic Odontology
  - A. Bite mark identification
  - B. Advanced techniques
  - C. Photographic techniques
  - D. Digital analysis
- VII. Sudden and Unexpected Death from Natural Causes in Adults
- VIII. Investigation of Deaths in Childhood
  - A. Feticide and Neonaticide
  - B. The abused child and adolescent
  - C. Differential diagnosis of child abuse
- IX. Trauma and Disease
- X. Blunt Force Injury
- XI. Sharp Force Injury
- XII. Injury by Gunfire
  - A. Gunshot Wounds
  - B. Shotgun Wounds
- XIV. Asphyxia
- XV. Investigation of Bodies in Water
- XVI. Electrical and Lightning Injuries
- XVII. Road Traffic Victim
- XVIII. Medicolegal Investigation of Mass Disasters
- XIX. Investigation of Deaths from Drug Abuse
- XX. The Medicolegal Autopsy Report