 COURSE DETAILS:
Meeting dates: TBC
Meeting venue: TBC
Instructor: Kelley Moult
Email: kelley.moult@american.edu
Phone: 202 6670679

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will give you an overview of the crime scene investigation process, and the issues involved in presenting forensic evidence in court. We will learn about the identification, documentation and collection of physical evidence, including fingerprints, shoe impressions, hair and fibers, firearms evidence and questioned documents. We will also discuss the impact of television and other media on the field of Forensic Science. This course is designed to provide a basic foundation in the field of criminalistics to students who are interested in the use of science to solve crime.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
This course will provide students with knowledge of:
- General principles of forensic science.
- Definitions of key terms used in the field of forensic science.
- Crime scene protocol & processing.
- Recognizing evidence and its value.
- How forensic evidence is utilized by police and the courts.
- The principles of scientific testimony

COURSE DESIGN:
The class will follow a lecture format, interspersed with discussion and interactive exercises. You will complete homework and writing assignments after you leave AU, and deliver these to me through the Blackboard web portal. Students are not expected to complete their assignments while on campus at AU. The projects and homework assignments are described in detail below.

REQUIRED TEXT:
The following text is required reading for the class:

This text is readily available through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-million, and Borders, and costs around $15. You should bring the text with you to classes. The lectures will cover the material contained in the assigned reading (detailed below). Journal articles and other handouts may be used to supplement the text and lecture material, and will be posted on Blackboard. A list of additional resources for use in the assignments will also be posted on Blackboard.
**GRADING:**

I am well aware of your anxiety concerning grades. Grades in my class are **earned** and not **given** – the ability for you to earn a good grade in this class is therefore in your hands and not mine. I am interested in how you apply critical thinking to the issues presented, and how you apply that knowledge and skill to the assignments I have set. Only excellent work will earn an A. If work is good it will earn a B, and satisfactory work will earn a C. You will earn Ds and Fs if your work is less than satisfactory or extremely poor quality. If you fail to turn in an assignment, you will receive a grade of 0.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

The assignments for this class will be as follows:

1. Homework assignments 30%
2. Case Study 50%
3. Participation 20%

These assignments are due in the 30 days after the completion of your AU NSLC program (see detailed deadlines below). The university has a strict policy regarding incomplete coursework, and you will consequently receive a failing grade if you do not hand in your assignments. **You will have to arrange your schedule so that you can meet this deadline.**

Students taking the two-credit option will have to do two case-studies as outlined below.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

All assignments are considered due at the beginning of each session, even if I don’t formally accept them until later in the class. Assignments submitted after the time that they are due and that are not accompanied by an acceptable excuse (as outlined below) will be addressed as follows: for every 24 hour period that the assignment is late, the grade will be decreased by one letter grade. For example, if you turn an A quality assignment in at 8.30am on Wednesday, when it was due at 8.30am on Tuesday, you will earn a B on that assignment. If you turn the same assignment in on Thursday at 8.30am, you will earn a C on that assignment.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance is required, except in case of illness or injury. Should the latter occur, I require some form of documentation informing me of said illness. A note from your program director or physician will suffice. 20% of your course grade is based upon class participation, and if you miss class this grade will suffer. Inattentive students (sleeping, playing computer/cellphone games, reading, doing other homework) or students who do not stay for the whole class period may have their names removed from the attendance sheet.

**CLASS ETIQUETTE:**

I expect students to arrive for class on time. Arriving late is disruptive to me and other students. If you are late I will lower your class participation grade. We have a limited time to cover a great deal of material. To maximize the effectiveness of our time together you should arrive prepared for class, and turn your cell phone off before entering the classroom. I expect you to confine your class activities to class-related work (in other words no websurfing, texting, IM-ing), and I expect you to refrain from any behavior that is disruptive or disrespectful.
CONTACT AND ASSISTANCE:

I will generally respond to email promptly, but there are times when I am traveling or engaged with other matters. In these cases, I will be in email contact to the extent possible. Please do not email me multiple times about the same issue – trust that I will respond when I am able to do so.

One other note about email – although email is a quick and easy way to get hold of me, this doesn’t mean that your communication should be sloppy or ill considered. Please address me appropriately (as I do you).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE:

Standards of academic integrity as set forth by the University are strictly observed and rigorously enforced in this class. Course writing assignments are designed to teach you to write and research responsibly and ethically. To learn strategies for researching, compiling, and presenting your writing, you must complete all stages of the work yourself. Taking the words of others, or presenting the ideas of others, as your own not only prohibits you from learning the skills of academic research, it also violates the University's Code of Academic Integrity. The

It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Code. Copies are available from the University Registrar’s office, or can be accessed at: www.american.edu/america/registrar/AcademicReg/New/reg09.html.

DISABILITY STATEMENT:

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me both verbally and in writing, within the first two weeks of classes, to discuss his or her specific needs. Accommodations will be made in accordance with recommendations by the University’s Disability Support Services office.

BY TAKING THIS CLASS, YOU AGREE TO ADHERE TO THE RULES AND SCHEDULE PRESENTED ON THIS SYLLABUS, BUT ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE INSTRUCTOR’S RIGHT TO ALTER THEM, AS NECESSARY.
**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

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<th>DATE</th>
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| **Class 1** | **Introduction**  
- Review of the Syllabus  
- Introduction to Blackboard – assigned readings & assignments  
- Introduction to Forensic Science & Crime Scenes  
- What is evidence, and how do we collect it?  
- Rules of evidence & the courts. | Chapters 1-3 |
| **Class 2** | **Pattern evidence**  
- Fingerprints & shoeprints  
- Firearms  
- Questioned documents | Chapter 5 & 9 |
| **Trace evidence Part I:** |  
- Hairs & fibers | |
| **Class 3** | **Trace evidence Part II:**  
- Paint, glass & soil  
**Biological evidence:**  
- Blood & fluids  
- Forensic anthropology, odontology & entomology | Chapters 6,7 & 10 |

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

a) **Final Papers**

For your final project, one-credit students write one case study. Two-credit students must write two different case studies (preferably from different sources – for example, one CSI episode, and one newspaper case).

Each case study consists of an analysis of a case, and should present the **science** behind criminalistics. A well-written case study presents a “real” forensic case you have found. This may be from newspaper reports, in books describing a crime, or in popular programs such as CSI. You should focus on the **physical and/or biological evidence that was gathered, and the tests used to analyze it**. You should think critically about the techniques and methods presented in the case. Some guiding questions are:

- Were the techniques appropriate to the evidence collected?
- Did the crime scene technicians follow set procedures and protocols?
- What were the results of the tests? Were they credible?

Your paper should follow the following format: Title, Description of the Crime Scene, Evidence, Description of Analytical Tests, Results of Analysis, Conclusion, Analysis and Bibliography. Your paper should cite the sources of information you have used, and contain a bibliography with both print and online sources.

b) **Homework assignments**

Homework assignments will be handed out in class. These assignments are designed to familiarize students with the techniques discussed in each lecture.