

**CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE  
SYLLABUS FOR CJSA 1342  
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION**

Semester Hours Credit: 3

INSTRUCTOR: \_\_\_\_\_  
OFFICE HOURS: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Introduction**

- A. This course covers the fundamentals of criminal investigations including the gathering of investigative information from victims and witnesses, the search and recording of crime scenes, and the principals involved in collecting and preserving physical evidence. There is a strong emphasis on investigative policies, procedures, and practices that are necessary and essential to secure the truth within today's legal climate.
- B. Criminal Investigations is a required course for an Associate of Applied Science degree with a major in Criminal Justice or Law Enforcement. The course is also part of the Transfer Curriculum established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).
- C. This course is occupationally related and serves as preparation for careers in Criminal Justice, or Law Enforcement.
- D. Alphanumeric coding used throughout the syllabus denotes the integration of SCANS occupational competencies © and Foundation skills (F).

**II. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, Criminal Investigations, the student will:

- A. Define the goals and objectives of criminal investigation. (C5-C8, F1, F2, F6)
- B. Demonstrate ability to conduct proper crime scene investigations. (C1, C5-C14, C18-C20, F2, F9, F10)
- C. Illustrate the use of forensic science for various statutory offenses. (C10, C18-C20, F9-F17)
- D. Organize the criminal case including field notes, reports, crime scene activities, and mandatory documentation of statutory warning. (C5-C14, F1-F17)

**III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

- A. The instructional materials identified for this course are viewable through [www.ctcd.edu/books](http://www.ctcd.edu/books)
- B. References: *Texas Criminal and Traffic Law Manual*, 2013-2014 Edition, LexisNexis

**IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Your first responsibility is scholarship. The grade you receive for this course will not be the grade of the instructor, but rather the grade you and you alone make.
- B. You should attend class regularly and be prepared to participate in classroom discussions and to take unannounced quizzes relating to text assignments and lecture material presented from the beginning of the course.

- C. You are encouraged to give your best effort throughout the semester. From the beginning, you should plan for a steady, organized, and continuous effort, which in the long run will prove more effective for your final grade than a last minute crash cram policy. Your course grade is not determined solely by exam grade. Such factors as class participation, initiative, attendance, and individual research papers will be considered in grade computation.
- D. From time to time, special library and/or outside assignments will be made to members of the class individually and/or in groups. You are expected to read all assignments and fulfill your responsibilities to any group assignment.
- E. You are expected to read all assigned material and bring your textbook to class. Keep informed on all assignments, especially after an absence.
- F. Good class notes are indispensable for earning a good grad, since both the material assigned and that discussed in class will be the basis for examination material.
- G. Special Work: A term paper or other research project, per requirements of the instructor, will be required. The subject must be appropriate for the course material.

Check with the instructor when you have made a selection. The value is indicated in the Semester Grade Computation and has considerable weight on your final average.

## **V. EXAMINATIONS**

- A. There will be four major examinations, as follows:
  - 1. Three-week exam
  - 2. Mid-term exam
  - 3. Twelve-week exam
  - 4. Final exam.
- B. A student must be present for all examinations. No make-up examinations will be given. Students who know in advance that they will be absent from an examination due to a valid reasons must arrange to take an early examination. Unexpected absences due to illness or extenuating circumstances will require the student to see the instructor about individual make-up work.
- C. Students without excused absences will be given a zero for the missed examination.
- D. Examinations may consist of objective (true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and matching) or subjective (short answer and essay) questions, or a combination of both types. Students majoring in Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement must be able to communicate both orally and in written form, thus some questions requiring the composition and writing of an essay answer will be required.

## **VI. SEMESTER GRADE COMPUTATIONS**

- A. Grades are based on a 1000 point system. The total points for each exam, writing assignment, discussion board responses, and homework lesson assignments are determined by the individual instructor.

<b>Points</b>	<b>Grade</b>
900-1000	= A
800-899	= B
700-799	= C
600-699	= D
0-599	= F

- B. Three points are deducted for each unexcused absence. Military assignments or unavoidable circumstances will be evaluated upon notification of the instructor.

## **VII. NOTES AND ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM COURSE INSTRUCTOR**

- A. **Withdrawal:** It is the student's responsibility to officially drop a class if circumstances prevent attendance. Any student who desires to, or must, "Officially Withdraw" from a course after the first scheduled class meeting must file a Central Texas College Application for Withdrawal (CTC Form 59). The withdrawal form must be signed by the student. CTC Form 59 will be accepted at any time prior to Friday of the 12<sup>th</sup> week of classes during the 16 week, Fall and Spring semesters. The deadline for sessions of other lengths is as follows:

10 Week Session	Friday of the 8 <sup>th</sup> Week
8 Week Session	Friday of the 6 <sup>th</sup> Week
5 Week Session	Friday of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Week

The equivalent date (75% of the semester) will be used for sessions of other lengths.) The specific last day to withdraw is published each semester in the Schedule Bulletin.

A student who "Officially Withdraws" will be awarded the grade of "W," provided the student's attendance and academic performance are satisfactory at the time of official withdrawal. Students must file a withdrawal application with the college before they may be considered for withdrawal.

A student may not withdraw from a class for which the instructor has previously issued the student a grade of "F" or "FN" for nonattendance.

- B. **Administrative Withdrawal:** An Administrative Withdrawal may be initiated when the student fails to meet Central Texas College attendance requirements. The instructor will assign the appropriate grade on CTC Form 59 for submission to the registrar.
- C. **Incomplete Grade:** Central Texas College catalog states < "An Incomplete Grade may be given in those cases where the student has completed the majority of the course work, but because of personal illness, death in the immediate family, or military orders, is unable to complete all the requirements for a course..." Prior Approval" from the instructor is required before the grade of "IP" is recorded. A student who merely fails to show for the final examination will receive a zero for the final and "F" for the course.
- D. **Cellular Phones and Beepers:** Cellular phones and beepers will be turned off while the student is in the classroom or laboratory.
- E. **American's With Disabilities Act (ADA):** Disability Support Services provides services to student who have appropriate documentation of a disability. Students requiring accommodations for class are responsible for contacting the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) located on the Central Campus of Central

Texas College. This service is available to all students, regardless of location. Explore the website at [www.ctcd.edu/disability-support](http://www.ctcd.edu/disability-support) for further information. Reasonable accommodations will be given in accordance with the federal and state laws through the DSS office.

- F. **Instructor Discretion:** The instructor reserves the right of final decision in course requirements.
- G. **Civility:** Individuals are expected to be cognizant of what a constructive educational experience is and respectful of those participating in a learning environment. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

**VIII. COURSE OUTLINE: Note – material in Chapters 11 and 20 of the text are not included in this course. You may review them for your own interest.**

A. **Lesson One:** Course Introduction, Chapter 1: Criminal Investigation: An Overview.

- 1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:
  - a. Describe what criminal investigation is
  - b. Define major goals of the criminal investigation
  - c. Explain the basic functions investigations perform
  - d. Discuss what should be done initially at the crime scene
  - e. Describe what to do if a suspect is still at a crime scene or has recently fled the scene.
  - f. Discuss who is responsible for solving crimes
  - g. Explain with whom investigators must relate
- 2. Learning Activities:
  - a. Discuss course requirements and activities as contained in the syllabus
  - b. Classroom lecture/discussion
  - c. Reading Assignment: Chapter 1
  - d. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned
- 3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook

B. **Lesson two:** Chapter 2: Documenting the Crime Scene: Note Taking, Photographing and Sketching and Chapter 3: Writing Effective Reports

- 1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:
  - a. Explain the ways that field notes can be used to assist the investigator in the preparation of his or her report.
  - b. Learn the proper structure of the report.
  - c. Explain the proper methods o crime scene photography and preservation of photographic evidence.
  - d. Understand how to properly capture the crime scene on digital video.

- e. Understand the usefulness of the rough and final crime scene sketch.
- f. Explain why reports are important to an investigation.
- g. Describe how reports are used.
- h. Summarize the common problems which occur in many police reports.
- i. Explain why reports should be well written

2. Learning Activities:

- a. Classroom lecture/discussion
- b. Reading assignment: Chapter's 2 and 3
- c. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned

3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook

4. Exam 1

C. **Lesson Three:** Chapter 4: Searches and Chapter 5: Forensics/Physical Evidence

1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:

- a. Identify which constitutional amendments restrict investigative searches.
- b. Describe what is required for an effective search.
- c. Outline what is included in organizing a crime scene search.
- d. Define and compare interior and exterior search patterns.
- e. Describe various methods of processing physical evidence.
- f. Determine what qualifies as evidence.
- g. Discuss common errors in collecting evidence.
- h. Explain what should be recorded in crime scene notes.

2. Learning Activities:

- a. Classroom lecture/discussion
- b. Reading assignment: Chapters 4 & 5
- c. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned

3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook

D. **Lesson Four:** Chapter 6: Obtaining Information and Intelligence and Chapter 7: Identifying and Arresting Suspects

1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:

- a. Discuss what a source of information file is and what it contains.
- b. Explain the goal of interviewing and interrogation.
- c. Outline what two requirements are needed to obtain information.
- d. Clarify the difference between direct and indirect questions, and when to use each.
- e. Define and compare the differences between field identifications and show-up identifications.

- f. Describe the four basic means of identifying a suspect.
  - g. Describe when surveillance is used and what the objectives are.
2. Learning Activities:
    - a. Classroom lecture/discussion
    - b. Reading assignment: Chapter 6
    - c. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned
  3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook
  4. Exam 2
- E. **Lesson Five:** Chapter 8: Death Investigations: Chapter 9: Assault, Domestic Violence, Stalking and Elder Abuse: Chapter 10: Sex Offenses: and Chapter 12: Robbery
1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:
    - a. Identify a basic requirement in a homicide investigation.
    - b. Define and classify homicide, murder and manslaughter.
    - c. Define what constitutes assault.
    - d. Compare how simple assault differs from aggravated assault.
    - e. Describe how sex offenses are classified.
    - f. Identify the elements of sexual assault.
    - g. Define robbery.
    - h. Classify robberies.
  2. Unit Activities:
    - a. Classroom lecture/discussion
    - b. Reading assignment: Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 12
    - c. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned
  3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook
- F. **Lesson Six:** Chapter 13: Burglary: Chapter 14: Larceny/Theft, Fraud and White-collar Crime: Chapter 15: Motor Vehicle Theft: and Chapter 16: Arson, Bombs and Explosives
1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:
    - a. Define burglary.
    - b. Identify the basic difference between burglary and robbery.

- c. Describe the elements of larceny/theft.
- d. Define the common types of larceny.
- e. Explain what a 'VIN' is and why it is important.
- f. Identify the five major categories of motor vehicle theft.
- g. Define aggravated and simple arson.
- h. Describe what factors indicate the likelihood of arson.

2. Learning Activities:

- a. Classroom lecture/discussion
- b. Reading assignment: Chapter 13, 14, 15 and 16
- c. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned

3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook

4. Exam 3

G. **Lesson Seven:** Chapter 17: Computer Crime: and Chapter 18: A Dual Threat: Drug-related Crime and Organized Crime

1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:

- a. Identify the two key characteristics of computer crime.
- b. Explain how computer crime can be categorized.
- c. Explain how drugs are commonly classified.
- d. Discuss what precautions to take in undercover drug buys and how to avoid a charge of entrapment.
- e. Explain what hazards exist in raiding a clandestine drug laboratory.

2. Learning Activities:

- a. Classroom lecture/discussion
- b. Reading assignment: Chapters 17 and 18
- c. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned

3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook

H. **Lesson Eight:** Chapter 19: Criminal Activities of Gangs and Other Dangerous Groups: and Chapter 21: Preparing for and Presenting Cases in Court

1. Unit Objectives: Upon successful completion of this unit, the student should be able to:

- a. Outline how to classify gangs.
- b. Describe the types of crimes gangs typically engage in.

- c. Discuss what special challenges are involved in investigating illegal activities of gangs.
  - d. Explain why some cases are not prosecuted.
  - e. Discuss how to prepare a case for court.
  - f. Explain what occurs during a pretrial conference.
2. Learning Activities:
    - a. Classroom lecture/discussion
    - b. Reading assignment: Chapters 19 and 21
    - c. Homework Lesson assignment as assigned
  3. Unit Outline: Refer to Contents, textbook
  4. Exam 4 (Final Exam)