

**SYLLABUS**  
**CrJ 4, General Investigative Techniques**  
**Spring 2009**

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Office hours: I am in the office every day, call or stop at CJ Office for appointment

Lecture notes at: [www.hhs.csus.edu/HomePages/CJ/Vizzardw/](http://www.hhs.csus.edu/HomePages/CJ/Vizzardw/) (under courses)

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Charles Swanson, Neil Chamelin, Leonard Territo and Robert Taylor, *Criminal Investigation*, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed, McGraw-Hill. (note: this text is also used in most CrJ 140 classes) as an alternative you may buy the online version of the chapters we use in this class at: [www.ebooks.primisonline.com](http://www.ebooks.primisonline.com) and they click on [Locate the custom eBook created by your professor.](#) This will save you initial expense, but cannot be sold back as text can.

Wambaugh, Joseph, *Fire Lover*, any edition.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is an introductory course in criminal investigation which covers the techniques involved in the investigation of crime, including: interview of victims and witnesses; questioning of suspects; organization and procedure for the investigation of crimes; crime scene searches; surveillance; use of scientific aids and sources of information.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES: at completion of course students will be able to**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of critical ethical issues relating to criminal investigation.
2. Identify the 3 conceptual stages in a criminal investigation and identify associated activities for each stage.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate actions for first responders at crime scenes.
4. Identify the 3 functions in crime scene management and duties related to each.
5. Describe the three functional roles of evidence and categorize evidence by primary function given appropriate background information.
6. Identify relevant tests and examinations for linking and associating physical evidence.
7. Identify criteria for prioritizing investigations and alternative strategies to full follow-up investigation.
8. Identify the problems associated with witness memory and to select interviewing techniques and strategies for minimizing these problems.
9. Recognize the fundamental problems and techniques associated with interrogation of criminal suspects and to select appropriate strategies for minimizing these problems.
10. Differentiate between crime analysis and behavioral analysis and the appropriate uses for each.
11. Identify key information sources and data systems available to investigators, strategies for their use and the legal or administrative privacy restrictions imposed upon their use.

12. Classify informant typologies by primary motivation and identify associated advantages, difficulties and strategies associated with each typology.
13. Explain fundamental techniques of surveillance and primary costs and benefits of these techniques.
14. Demonstrate recognition of distinctions between types of undercover operations and explain the associated benefits, costs and risks of each.
15. Describe the processes for obtaining and serving search warrants.
16. Define the investigator's role during the trial process and explain relationship between investigative process and knowledge of law relating to both corpus delicti and rules of criminal procedure.

### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:**

The course will be presented in a combination of lecture and discussion format, supplemented by audio-visual materials and reading assignments.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance is required. I understand that circumstances occasionally cause students to miss class, and I do not distinguish between reasons for absences. In cases of unavoidable and extended absences due to situations such as subpoenas, hospitalization, jury duty, military call up or incarceration, it would be appropriate to advise me and attempt to make arrangements for remaining in the class. If, on the other hand, you have a cold, your car will not start, you overslept, or you went to a funeral, do not feel compelled to inform me. I have no means of verifying your excuse, and I thus do not attempt to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable absences. I will not count the first two absences against you. I advise you to reserve these for occasions when you seriously need to be gone. **If you must leave class early for some reason, please advise me in advance.**

Participation is expected. I will evaluate students on both the quantity and quality of their participation. Both comments and questions are encouraged. I encourage you to think independently about issues and raise questions. If you believe I am wrong, say so but be prepared to support your position with logic or sources. If you do not understand either my lecture or the text, ask for clarification. If your questions are not answered in class, come to my office. Professors are paid to teach, not just lecture.

Turn off cell phones! You may use laptops for note taking. I expect you to be attentive in class. **That means no sleeping, text messaging, surfing or reading. Failure to comply will result in a request that you leave class and an absence counted against you.**

### **DISABILITIES**

Students with special needs or disabilities should advise me at first opportunity. Disabilities should be documented with SSWD, 1008 Lassen Hall to assure accommodation.

### **GRADING**

Two midterm examinations will each account for 20% of the grade.

The cumulative final will account for 30% of the grade.

Class attendance and participation will account for 10% grade.

A required paper will account for 20% of the grade, this paper will be graded for content and writing quality.

Examinations will be objective, but do not assume this means easy. I write questions that seek to determine if you understand the material. Mere familiarity will not suffice. **Do not miss examinations.** Unexcused absence from an examination will result in a reduction in your grade.

## ESSAY

An essay of 8 to 10 double spaced, typed pages is required. Read *Firelover* thoroughly and evaluate the overall conduct of the investigation. Although this will require you to give an overview of events with enough detail to allow the reader to understand them, do not try and retell the entire book. **Focus on the investigation.** What were the key events that changed the course of the investigation? How well did the book conform to procedures as covered in class? What other issues, besides investigative techniques, influences the outcome of a criminal investigation? What insights does the book give you that a text does not? Cite specific examples from the book or class to support your position. You will probably find it helpful to construct a time line of key events. It can also prove useful to develop an overriding theme that allows you to talk about the process of investigation using the book as a tool. Examples of themes might be the influence of fragmented jurisdiction on the case, why the nature of the crimes delayed solution or how subsequent developments in forensic science might have altered the events.

I will be looking for insight and understanding of the investigative process as it occurs in the real world as demonstrated by this case. Use the book as a source and write your own essay. Extensive quotes are seldom useful; a simple reference to the event will suffice. **Focus on what affected the investigation and how.** If the suspect's actions changed the course of the investigation, cover it; but do not dwell on suspect. Although I have read the book, write the essay as though I have not. **You are explaining the investigation to a person who understands investigation but does not know this investigation.** As you write keep in mind: who, what, why, where, when and how.

I recommend that you read *Firelover* as early in the semester as possible. It is an enjoyable read and will raise questions that you can address in class. This will also allow you to get started on your paper earlier. The essay should begin with an introductory paragraph which allows the reader to understand the focus of the essay, then lays out the key points to follow. This can be done by implication and without using the first person. Later paragraphs should expand on this theme and these key points with support in logic or citations to the book or class. You do not have to conduct independent research. If you finish your paper early, I will critique it and return it. This usually results in an improvement in the grade. Please review what you have read before you submit it. If possible, get someone else to read it also. First drafts are never your best effort. Your grade will depend on both the quality of your writing, the organization of the paper and your insight and analysis.

## Support with Writing Assignments

The College of Health and Human Services Writing Center, located in Solano Hall 5000, is a program designed to assist students with all stages of writing from pre-writing through editing a text utilizing a peer-tutoring environment. The Center is staffed by graduate students from the English Department. Hours will be posted at the beginning of the semester. If you have questions about the Center, call (916) 278-7255. You can also obtain assistance at the Writing Center, <http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>

## Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarized work will result in failure in the class and a referral to the university authorities for disciplinary action. I expect you to be able to defend and explain your work. If I encounter a suspect essay, I will give you the opportunity to explain and defend it. If you cannot, the presumption will be that the work is not original. **Retain a copy of your essay for your own records and verification in case the essay you submit is misplaced.** The university website at (<http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMP14150.htm>) contains the university policy on plagiarism and definitions of plagiarism. Also consult the university library website (<http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=175>) for further information concerning plagiarism and strategies to avoid plagiarism. The library website also has a link to a plagiarism "test" to assist students in determining how well they understand what plagiarism is.

## GRADING SCALE

	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69
A 93-100	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66
A- 90- 92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62



**SCHEDULE** (This schedule is subject to minor adjustment as the class progresses)

1/26-29	The history and role of invest. in CJ	Chap 1 & 2
2/2-4	Initial response to crime scene	
2/9	Crime scene roles & mgt	3
2/11-18	Physical evidence & labs	4 & 8
2/23	Review for examination	
2/25	<b>Examination.</b>	
3/2	Discuss essay, begin follow-up investigation.	7
3/4-9	Interviewing, interrogation and field notes	5 & 6
3/9-18	Automated data systems, sources of info, behavioral analysis	
3/23-25	Search warrants	Reread 2
4/6	Review for exam	
4/8	<b>Examination</b>	
4/13-20	Discuss essay, proactive techniques, intelligence	
4/22-27	Surveillance	19
4/29	Informant management	
5/4	Undercover, <b>Paper due</b>	
5/6-11	Court preparation & presentation	21
5/13	Review for final	
	<b>Final examination,</b>	

## Essay Grading Rubric

### 1) Structure (25%)

- a) Excellent: (24-25 points)
  - i) Opening paragraph defines purpose of essay clearly and succinctly, allows the reader to predict what follows and establishes a clear theme for essay.
  - ii) Paragraphs begin and end with transitions and focus on single concept or idea.
  - iii) Body of essay develops on the opening theme in a coherent and logical progression of ideas that facilitates the reader's understanding and maintains the reader's interest.
  - iv) Arguments and conclusions are internally consistent and always supported with evidence or logic.
  - v) Writer makes frequent and effective use of examples to support his/her underlying argument.
  - vi) Closing paragraph sums up writer's points and links back to opening.
  - vii) Overall the essay reflects conscious use of structure and organization which facilitates the reader's understanding.
  
- b) Acceptable: (18-19 points)
  - i) Opening paragraph addresses a purpose.
  - ii) Writer makes paragraph breaks in appropriate places.
  - iii) Body of essay stays on general topic introduced in essay.
  - iv) Writer makes some use of logic and evidence.
  - v) Writer makes some use of examples to support his/her argument.
  - vi) The essay reflects some overall structure and organization.
  
- c) Unacceptable: (15 points or less)
  - i) Opening paragraph does not relate to any clear theme, nor does it relate to the remainder of essay.
  - ii) Writer fails to break writing into paragraphs at appropriate places
  - iii) Body of essay wanders among topics without apparent purpose.
  - iv) Writer makes assertions without evidence, logic or examples or uses evidence, logic or examples that clearly fail to support assertions.
  - v) The essay lacks structure and reflects no planning or organization. It shifts from one topic to another at random

## 2) Language Usage (25%)

- a) Excellent: (24-25 points)
  - i) Writing contains no grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors.
  - ii) Writer makes extensive use of active voice.
  - iii) Writer consistently uses appropriate tense.
  - iv) Writer uses varied sentence structures.
  - v) Writer appropriately uses a rich vocabulary and varied vocabulary.
- b) Acceptable (18-19 points)
  - i) Writing contains some minor grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors.
  - ii) Writer primarily uses active voice, but occasionally lapses into passive voice where active voice would better serve his/her objectives.
  - iii) Writer sometimes uses present tense to describe past events or other errors in tense.
  - iv) Writer repeatedly uses simple sentence structure.
  - v) Writer repeatedly uses the same words or phrases; vocabulary shows no richness or variety.
- c) Unacceptable (15 or less points)
  - i) Writing contains numerous grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors.
  - ii) Writer never uses active voice.
  - iii) Writer demonstrates no awareness of tense, mixes tense in sentences.
  - iv) Writing contains sentence fragments.
  - v) Writing contains slang or obscene terms without quotation marks or other significant misuse of words.

## 3) Content and analysis (50%)

- a) Excellent (48-50 points)
  - i) The essay directly addresses the question or assignment.
  - ii) Writer demonstrates extensive and sophisticated understanding of the material covered in the essay.
  - iii) The writer demonstrates innovative and original analysis of the issue.
- b) Acceptable (37-39 points)
  - i) The essay primarily addresses the question or assignment, but misses some aspects of the question.
  - ii) Writer demonstrates moderate knowledge of facts but only limited insight into causes, relationships or other complex analysis.
  - iii) The essay describes more than it analyzes.
- c) Unacceptable (30 points or less)
  - i) The essay is not responsive to the question or assignment.
  - ii) The facts or conclusions are erroneous.