

FRNSC 475 (001, 002) FA19 Forensic Science Seminar
Meeting Date/Time: 165 Willard Bldg on Tuesdays from 12:20 pm – 1:10 pm

Course Description

Presentation and discussion of special issues in forensic science; extension and application of background knowledge to unusual topics and cases. [Penn State Bulletin FRNSC 475](#) (1 credit)

Enforced pre-requisite or concurrent: FRNSC 485

Other pre-requisites: Successful completion of FRNSC 210

Co-requisites: FRNSC 410, 411, 413

Textbook: None required

Additional Course Information:

In this course, students will be selecting relevant journal articles in forensic scientific areas, read and critique the articles, and present the articles or topics to the class. Students will select articles that pique their interest and will be allowed to use them upon approval by the Instructor. Students who have not selected articles/topics by the deadline will be assigned articles and topics by the Instructor. A short, written summary and a critique of the article will be submitted along with the PowerPoint presentation (or equivalent) by the due dates. Students are encouraged to present on a topic of interest that is based on more than one article.

Note: Syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified in class or in Canvas.

Course Instructor and Contact Information

Faculty: Mr. Stewart Hung
Office: 329B Whitmore Laboratory
Tel: 814-863-3387
Email: sxh611@psu.edu

Office Hours:
by appointment

Course Objectives

- To learn how to objectively assess the merit of forensically relevant scientific and technical papers
- To understand the scientific and technical content of published research articles
- To independently develop a scientific opinion on a scientific topic
- To learn about advances in forensic science/ criminalistics through presentation and discussion of scientific, peer-reviewed research
- To understand importance of peer review in science
- To develop and/or refine ability to read and evaluate scientific literature
- To develop and/or refine public speaking and presentation skills

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Strategies and Assessment

- Two articles discussing the importance and methodology of peer review will be discussed
- Students will locate one recent scientific research study published in a peer-reviewed journal for instructor approval
- Once approved, students will present their selected article to the class and provide an in-depth and critical review of the study
- Each student is expected to participate in the discussions following each presentation

Presentation Guidelines

- Be provided using PowerPoint or Google Slides. Please consult with the Instructor for other formats
- Include a brief background and supporting information from article citations or other references
- Discuss quality of research to include relevance, literature review, research design and execution, results, and conclusions (overall analysis of research)
- Presentation length between 13 – 17 minutes in duration
- Provide between 3 – 5 questions for class discussion that follows the presentation

Class Participation

This class relies upon the students to participate in a discussion after each presentation. All students will be required to prepare a critique for each speaker (templates will be provided).

- Critiques must be uploaded to Canvas NO LATER than 48 hours after each presentation
- Critiques must be thoughtful, objective, and address the speaker's knowledge of the research and their presentation quality
- Critiques must contain no identifiable data as comments may be forwarded to the speakers
- Critiques must include a letter grade OR numerical score for each presenter

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Article Guidelines	
<p>Articles must be original research published in a peer-reviewed, scientific journal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles must have relevance to criminalistics/forensic science (validation studies, case studies, etc. are NOT considered original research and are not acceptable) • Articles must have been published within the last 12 months; articles published since December 2017 are acceptable (research published before December 2017 cannot be used) • All research articles must be approved by the Instructor. NO EXCEPTIONS (Research articles must be submitted for approval NO LATER than Friday, January 24th, 2019 at 3:00 pm) • Acceptable journals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Journal of Forensic Sciences, Forensic Science International, Science & Justice, Canadian Society of Forensic Science Journal, Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences, etc. ○ Other peer-reviewed scientific journals including Nature, Science, Talanta, etc. 	
Point and Grading Structure	
<p>Presentation: 200 points (50.0 %) Attendance & Participation: 100 points (25.0 %) Quizzes and Assignments: 100 points (25.0 %)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Letter grades:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">93 % to 100 % = A 90 % to < 93 % = A- 87 % to < 90 % = B+ 84 % to < 87 % = B 80 % to < 84 % = B- 77 % to < 80 % = C+ 70 % to < 77 % = C 60 % to < 70 % = D 0 % to < 60 % = F</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No scaling or grade curving will be performed on any of the earned points/grades for all of the graded material in this course. • Any discrepancies or ambiguity in any of the graded material should be brought to the Instructor’s attention in writing (e.g., email) as soon as possible. • At the beginning of the semester, the Attendance & Participation grade for all students is 70.0% of the max score (70 / 100 points). Students will earn the additional points through attendance and participation in discussion during classes as well as well as timely responses to requests (e.g. online polls, Canvas questionnaires). Students can have points reduced through lack of attendance and participation in the aforementioned activities. <p>Late Assignment and Quiz/Exam Make-up Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only documented cases of hardship, emergency, illnesses, etc. will be considered for late assignment submissions or quiz/exam make-up. • Late assignments after the due date/time will receive an immediate 50% deduction from the maximum point score before assignment grading. Assignments received over 24 hours after the due date/time will not receive any credit. 	

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Additional comments on Attendance: More than two (2) unexcused absences will result in a deduction of (10% per absence) of the final course grade.

Personal hardship. Life events happen. The instructor can discuss options to assist the student in completing the course, or if need be, to drop the course.

Make-up Quizzes. If a student has a scheduling conflict with the date and time of the quiz, the student is responsible for letting the Instructor know that she/he cannot be there for the quiz with as much notice as possible (at least a week, preferably). If the student does not inform the Instructor, no make-up quiz will be offered. NOTE: Please see Exceptions and Unforeseen Circumstances.

Policy on Late Assignments. An assignment that is handed in after the due date/time posted on Canvas or announced in class, whichever one is the more recent, there will be a 50% deduction from the max points for the first 24 hours in which the assignment is late. Assignments submitted more than 24 hours after the due date/time will not receive any credit. NOTE: Please see Exceptions and Unforeseen Circumstances. NOTE: Please be aware that some specific assignments will be clearly identified as NO LATE assignments will be accepted and they must be submitted before or on the due date/time.

Rubrics. Each of the assignments, laboratories, papers, etc. will have their own set of rubrics. Please check the SOPs for the details on each of them.

Independent Effort. ALL of the homework assignments, papers, laboratory assignments, quizzes are to be completed by the student independent of their current classmates and colleagues. Students are encouraged to seek out all types of resources available to them (including electronic ones) with the exception of their current classmates and any student who has taken FRNSC 475 in previous course offerings.

Exceptions and Unforeseen Circumstances. If a student has a medical or personal emergency, the appropriate documentation required by Penn State Policy (See Course Policies – Attendance below) must be provided and alternate arrangements could be made to help the student complete the assignments, quizzes, laboratories, etc. If there is a weather event or other campus emergency that prevents the scheduled events from being completed on time, then the Instructor will announce the new dates/times when it is feasible to determine a new date/time.

Attendance and Participation

If you need to request an exception due to a personal or medical emergency, contact the instructor directly as soon as you are able. Such requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

This course abides by the Penn State Class Attendance Policy 42-27: <http://senate.psu.edu/policies/42-00.html#42-27>, Attendance Policy E-11: <http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/E-11.html>, and Conflict Exam Policy 44-35: <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/44-00.html#44-35>. Please also see Illness Verification Policy: <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health/welcome/illnessVerification/>, and Religious Observance Policy: <http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/R-4.html>. Students who miss class for legitimate reasons will be given a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work, including exams and quizzes. Students are not required to secure the signature of medical personnel in the case of illness or injury and should use their best judgment on whether they are well enough to attend class or not; the University Health Center will not provide medical verification for minor illnesses or injuries. Other legitimate reasons for missing class include religious observance, family emergencies, and regularly scheduled university-approved curricular or extracurricular activities. Students who encounter serious family, health, or personal situations that result in extended absences should contact the Office of Student and Family Services for help: <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/familyservices>. Whenever possible, students participating in University-approved

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activities should submit to the instructor a Class Absence Form available from the Registrar's Office: http://www.registrar.psu.edu/student_forms, at least one week prior to the activity. (Note: This form is currently only available online as a PDF).

Campus emergencies, including weather delays, are announced on Penn State Live (<http://news.psu.edu>) and communicated to cellphones, email, the Penn State Facebook page, and Twitter via PSUAlert (to sign up, please see <https://psualert.psu.edu/psualert/>).

Academic Integrity Policy

All Penn State policies regarding ethics and honorable behavior apply to this course. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. All University policies regarding academic integrity apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

For any material or ideas obtained from other sources, such as the text or things you see on the web, in the library, etc., a source reference must be given. Direct quotes from any source must be identified as such.

Students in this class are expected to write up their assignment or reports individually, to work the exams on their own, and to write their papers in their own words using proper citations. Class members may work on the assignments in groups, but then each student must write up the answers separately. Students are not to copy problem or exam answers from another person's paper and present them as their own; students may not plagiarize text from papers or websites written by others. Students who present other people's work as their own will receive at least a 0 on the assignment and may well receive an F or XF in the course.

All exam answers must be your own, and you must not provide any assistance to other students during exams. Any instances of academic dishonesty WILL be pursued under the University and [Eberly College of Science regulations](#) concerning academic integrity. For more information on academic integrity, see [Penn State's statement on plagiarism and academic dishonesty](#).

[The Eberly College of Science Code of Mutual Respect and Cooperation](#) embodies the values that we hope our faculty, staff, and students possess and will endorse to make The Eberly College of Science a place where every individual feels respected and valued, as well as challenged and rewarded.

Plagiarism is the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as your own. You are advised to look up the definition of and descriptions of different forms of plagiarism. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated!** The **first offense** will result, at a minimum, in a **grade of zero** on the assignment **and filing of an Academic Integrity Form which will be forwarded to the Associate Dean's Office**. If a policy of dropping the lowest grade is implemented during the semester, you will not receive the benefit of this policy and you will have all grades count toward your final grade, including the zero on the plagiarized material. The **second offense** of plagiarism will result in a **grade of "F" in the course and referral to the Committee on Academic Integrity where further action may be taken**. If you need help determining the correct way to paraphrase another work without committing plagiarism, ask myself or another knowledgeable mentor.

(text courtesy of Dr. Greg Broussard)

In this course, the Penn State edition of TurnItIn Feedback Studio (integrated with Canvas) will be used by the instructor, TAs, and students as a method of checking for plagiarism and to monitor the instances of both unintentional and intentional instances of plagiarism.

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What is TurnItIn?

Turnitin is a web-based writing assessment toolkit which allows instructors to provide feedback to students through markup tools, rubrics, proofing tools and originality reports to detect plagiarism. Turnitin also provides peer review options. (from: <http://turnitin.psu.edu/>)

Links:

What is plagiarism? [Theodore W. Frick, Professor Emeritus](#)
Penn State Student Affairs [Office of Student Conduct](#)

PSU Code of Conduct, ECoS Code of Mutual Respect

Excerpt from the [PSU Code of Conduct](#):

The Office of Student Conduct strives to deliver a student discipline process that is equitable, just, educational, effective and expeditious; and to provide a system that promotes student growth through individual responsibility and in which the success of its educational endeavors is characterized by increased civility.

The Office of Student Conduct supports the University's educational mission by promoting a safe, orderly and positive University climate through enforcing behavioral standards, enacting and facilitating intervention efforts, managing disciplinary proceedings, mentoring students, developing leadership, delivering informational programming and fostering peer education. We hope to create a University culture that is self-disciplined, where civility is embraced, and the norms and foundational beliefs validate the essential values of Penn State University, namely

- personal and academic integrity;
- respect for the dignity of all persons and a willingness to learn from the differences in people, ideas, and opinions;
- respect for the rights, property and safety of others; and
- concern for others and their feelings and their need for conditions that support an environment where they can work, grow and succeed at Penn State.

[ECOS Code of Mutual Respect and Cooperation](#):

The [Code of Mutual Respect and Cooperation](#) was developed to embody the values that we hope our faculty, staff, and students possess, consistent with the aspirational goals expressed in the Penn State Principles. The University is strongly committed to freedom of expression, and consequently, the Code does not constitute University or College policy, and is not intended to interfere in any way with an individual's academic or personal freedoms. We hope, however, that individuals will voluntarily endorse the 12 principles set forth in the Code, thereby helping us make the Eberly College of Science a place where every individual feels respected and valued, as well as challenged and rewarded.

Student Disability Resources (SDR)

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site provides contact information for every Penn State campus: <http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources>. For further information, please visit the Office for Disability Services Web site.

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation <http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services>. If the documentation

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supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)
(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395

Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses
(<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses>)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400
Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Nondiscrimination Statement

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University's educational mission, and will not be tolerated.

Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to:

Affirmative Action Office
The Pennsylvania State University
328 Boucke Building
University Park, PA 16802-5901
Email: kfl2@psu.edu
Tel (814) 863-0471

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Diversity Statement

The instructor considers this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. Penn State is “committed to creating an educational environment which is free from intolerance directed toward individuals or groups and strives to create and maintain an environment that fosters respect for others” as stated in [Policy AD29 Statement on Intolerance](#).

Mandated Reporting Statement

Penn State’s policies require me, as a faculty member, to share information about incidents of sex-based discrimination and harassment (discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation) with Penn State’s Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinators, regardless of whether the incidents are stated to me in person or shared by students as part of their coursework. For more information regarding the University's policies and procedures for responding to reports of sexual or gender-based harassment or misconduct, please visit <http://titleix.psu.edu>. Additionally, I am required to make a report on any reasonable suspicion of child abuse in accordance with the [Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law](#).

Safer People Safer Places Member Statement

I am a member of the Penn State Safer People Safer Places Network, and am available to listen and support you in a safe and private manner. As a network member, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual and gender diversity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

For more information visit the Penn State LGBTQA Student Resource Center in 101 Boucke Building or at: studentaffairs.psu.edu/lgbtqa
For more information visit the Penn State LGBTQA Student Resource Center in 101 Boucke Building or at: <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/lgbtqa>.



Penn State Learning

Penn State Learning is a multi-disciplinary academic assistance program that is staffed by peer tutors who are themselves undergraduates, by scholars in residence who are content experts in their respective fields, and by professional and administrative staff members.

Penn State Learning supports individual and group tutoring, learning community development, and collaborative projects with academic departments to assess learning and improve academic assistance resources for undergraduates. See links below for more details.

<http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/>

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Course Calendar, Meeting Times, and Communication

This class will use the Course Calendar file in Box to keep track of calendar meeting times and places and the topics for each class. Please note that the meetings can change due to unforeseen circumstances. Communication of these changes will take place using your Penn State email address through Canvas.

NOTE: The topics may change slightly in order to meet the Learning Outcomes.

Assignments and Due Dates

The assignments and due dates can be found on the Assignments and Due Dates sheet.

Course Expectations and Grading

The rubrics for the assignments can be found in the relevant Box folders.

Links to Resources and Penn State Programs

Academic Calendar

http://www.registrar.psu.edu/academic_calendar/calendar_index.cfm

Penn State Forensic Science Program

<http://forensics.psu.edu/>

Penn State Academic Advising Portal

<http://advising.psu.edu/>

Eberly College of Science Advising and Academic Assistance

<https://science.psu.edu/current-students/support-network>

The Center for Excellence in Science Education

<http://cese.science.psu.edu/>

LionPath

<https://www.lionpath.psu.edu>

University Bulletin

<http://bulletins.psu.edu/bulletins/bluebook/>

Office of Science Engagement

<https://scienceengagement.psu.edu/>

Academic Integrity

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<https://science.psu.edu/current-students/integrity/policies>

ECoS Code of Mutual Respect and Cooperation

<https://science.psu.edu/chem/diversity/code-of-mutual-respect>