



2025-2026

Criminal Investigation

COURSE OUTLINE - UC

DESCRIPTION:

Criminal Investigation is the capstone course in the public safety pathway. It is designed to give students both theory and hands-on experience in the skills and knowledge required of a Criminal Investigator. Students will be introduced to a series of topics including response to crime scenes, analytical evaluation of evidence, and appropriate protocols for each phase of an investigation. Students will determine the seriousness of a crime, coupled with appropriate skill in determining a possible outcome of a criminal case. Students will demonstrate knowledge of learned concepts in reference to the foundations of Forensic Science, effective investigative skill, laws related to evidence, proper procedures when responding to crime scenes, use of crime scene photography/sketching, and the importance of detailed report writing. Activities in this course include work-based learning that connects students to industry and the local community.

INFORMATION:

PRE-REQUISITE: Intro to Criminal Justice (Recommended)

LENGTH / GRADE: One Year – 10, 11, 12

SECTOR: Public Service

PATHWAY: Public Safety

ARTICULATED: Yes

UC A-G APPROVAL: Yes: College-Preparatory Elective (G) – Interdisciplinary Requirement

O*NET SOC CODES:

33-3021.00 Detectives and Criminal Investigators

33-9032.00 Security Guards

33-3051.03 Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers

<p>Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Introduce the course and facilities. B. Discuss the syllabus and major objectives. C. Explain applicable classroom management procedures, and any operational guidelines. D. Review instructor/student expectations. E. Explain attendance requirements and procedures. F. Review grading and student evaluation procedures. G. Discuss the work-based learning aspect of the program, if applicable. H. Discuss the “next steps” related to additional education, training, and employment. I. Review classroom safety, emergency and disaster procedures.
<p>1. Communication Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Demonstrate positive verbal communication skills using appropriate vocabulary, demeanor, and vocal tone in the classroom and/or worksite. B. Read and interpret written information and directions. C. Practice various forms of written communication appropriate to the occupation. D. Practice positive body language skills. E. Practice professional verbal skills for resolving a conflict. F. Demonstrate active listening skills including techniques for checking for understanding, and for obtaining clarification of directions.
<p>2. Interpersonal Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Demonstrate positive teamwork skills by contributing to a group effort. B. Practice the importance of diversity awareness and sensitivity in the workplace. C. Define sexual harassment in the workplace and identify the employee’s role and responsibility. D. Practice participation skills. E. Identify different personality types and demonstrate flexibility and adaptability working with diverse individuals. F. Practice business and social etiquette skills appropriate to the occupation. G. Evaluate and discuss the role of business and personal ethics in decision making based on various job-related scenarios. H. Demonstrate the use of time management skills.
<p>3. Employability Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Demonstrate appropriate attendance and punctuality practices for the classroom (and worksite, if applicable). B. Prepare a resume, cover letter, and job application. C. Demonstrate interviewing techniques in seeking employment, using appropriate tone, body language and professional dress and

grooming standards.

- D. Identify strategies for employment retention.
- E. Identify and analyze sources of job information, including electronic sources and the impact of social networking on employability.
- F. Identify the need for continuing education, professional development, and professional growth in chosen field.
- G. Identify appropriate procedures for leaving a job.
- H. Review company policies and current trends in employee compatibility screening, drug screening, and background checks.

4. Leadership

- A. Define leadership and identify the responsibilities, competencies, and behaviors of successful leaders.
- B. Work with peers to promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- C. Demonstrate how to organize and structure work, individually and in teams, for effective performance and the attainment of goals.
- D. Explain multiple approaches to conflict resolution and their appropriateness for a variety of situations in the workplace.
- E. Employ ethical behaviors and actions that positively influence others.
- F. Analyze the short-term and long-term effects a leader's actions and attitudes can have on productivity, morale, and organizational culture.

5. Personal and Occupational Safety

- A. Demonstrate procedures to be followed in case of emergencies.
- B. Describe and discuss the procedure for reporting a work-related hazard or injury (worker's comp), including ways to report a potential safety hazard to a supervisor.
- C. Identify and discuss cyber ethics, cyber safety, and cyber security.
- D. Apply personal safety practices to and from the job.
- E. Recognize the effects of substance abuse in the workplace.
- F. Explain the importance of CAL-OSHA in the industry.

6. Overview of Forensic Science

- A. Describe the significance of the key contributors to the field of forensics.
- B. Define Locard's exchange principle.
- C. Define the Frye standard of admissibility of evidence.
- D. Discuss the importance of significant cases that have impacted forensic science.
- E. Explain how forensic science relies on multiple disciplines to solve crimes.

7. Crime Scene Processing

- A. Identify first response procedures.

- B. Explain how to approach and evaluate a scene.
- C. Describe proper methods for securing and processing a scene.

8. Physical Evidence

- A. Demonstrate procedures for identifying and securing physical evidence.
- B. Demonstrate proper procedures regarding the chain of custody of physical evidence.
- C. Explain the importance of making all evidence available to both sides (discovery) as it relates to a court trial.
- D. Describe the process of psychological profiling as it relates to suspect identification.

9. Finger Printing

- A. Identify the three types of fingerprints left at the scene - visible, plastic, and latent.
- B. Demonstrate proper procedures to collect fingerprints – dusting, lifting, and chemical processing.
- C. Identify the three primary classifications of fingerprints – whorls, loops and arches.

10. Field Notes and Report Writing

- A. Demonstrate the ability to take comprehensive field notes that can be utilized to effectively recreate the scene or complete an accurate written report.
- B. Describe procedures for proper notetaking.
- C. Evaluate the elements of a well-composed crime scene report.
- D. Identify the importance of supplemental reports and the part they play in investigations.

11. Interviews and Interrogations

- A. Differentiate between an interview and an interrogation.
- B. Identify factors that can impact the interview process.
- C. Identify factors that impact a witness' perception.
- D. Demonstrate the ability to effectively and professionally interview a witness.
- E. Demonstrate the ability to interrogate a suspect.
- F. Explain the legal procedures that are required when an interview becomes an interrogation.

12. Death Investigations

- A. Explain the responsibilities of the Office of the Coroner.
- B. Identify the manner, mode, and cause of death.

- C. Describe the two methods for determining time of death (rate and concurrence).
- D. Describe the steps involved in an autopsy.

13. Crime Scene Sketching and Diagrams

- A. Identify elements to be included in a crime scene sketch and/or diagram.
- B. Draw accurate sketches/diagrams that document the exact location of physical evidence for purposes of recreating the scene.
- C. Describe the differences between a preliminary and final crime scene sketch.

14. Crime Scene Photography

- A. Describe the use of photography and video as it relates to investigations, both criminal and non-criminal.
- B. Identify the equipment required in forensic photography.
- C. Describe the three-step process used in investigative photography.
- D. Explain the use of photographs as demonstrative evidence in court proceedings.

15. Preparing for Court

- A. Identify responsibilities of peace officers regarding trial preparation.
- B. Identify aspects of a case that officers should review prior to giving their individual testimony.
- C. Recognize factors related to an officer's appearance that can influence how an officer's testimony is received by the court.

16. Trial Proceedings

- A. Identify the various roles of professionals and civilians in trial proceedings.
- B. Demonstrate how to testify effectively.
- C. Identify outside factors that influence trial proceedings.
- D. Analyze how outside factors have influenced a high-profile trial proceeding.

17. Industrial Technology

- A. Identify the positive and negative impact current technological improvements have had on investigations.
- B. Identify the current advances in technology within the law enforcement industry.
- C. Debate how technology encroaches on civil liberties.
- D. Identify how technology has changed court proceedings.
- E. Discuss the security issues that arise with the use of major databases designed to quickly identify fingerprints, DNA, etc.

18. Portfolio Design

- A. Develop personal marketing and computer skills by refining your digital portfolio for post-secondary and employment acceptance.
- B. Compile best samples of original works (in photographs and video) and documents for a variety of purposes, which shows a progression in the acquisition of knowledge and/or skills.
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of competencies through journaling or summary of selected works or documents.
- D. Revise professional resume and cover letter to align with skills and objective statements of the relevant industry.
- E. Dress professionally and practice interviewing techniques using portfolio materials.
- F. Assemble industry and employability documents (resume, cover letter, certifications, recommendation letters, etc.).
- G. Create a “leave behind” book or folder.
- H. Display portfolio materials during a fair, community event, competition, or professional panel review.
- I. Evaluate and utilize feedback to improve portfolio.

Key Assignments

Assignment	Competencies	Career Ready Practices	Anchor Standards	Pathway Standards	CCSS
1. Students will participate in mock interviews that represent current industry practices (e.g., skills demonstrations, resumes, applications, portfolios, personal websites, etc.).	1A-D, F 2A, D, F 3A-E, H 18A-I	1 2 3 4 10 11	2 3 4 10		LS 11-12.6 SLS 11-12.2
2. In teams, students research the impact of technology on criminal investigations. Students electronically present the ethical dilemmas that the use of technology presents.	1A-D, F 2A, D, F 4B-F 5C 17A-E	1 2 4 5 9 11	2 4 5 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	LS 11-12.6 RSIT 11-12.7 WHSST 11-12.7
3. Students will determine the classifications of death, analyzing evidence that connects to specific types of death.	1A-C 2A, D, F 10A 12A-D 14A, B	1 2 5 11	2 5 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	LS 11-12.6
4. In teams, students will complete a search warrant affidavit, stating probable cause of a pre-planned scenario. Students will then execute the warrant, gathering the physical evidence, and complete a court return of service. Students will then follow the chain of custody procedures to log the evidence.	1A, C, E, F 2A, D, F 4B-F 6A-E 8A-D 9A-C	1 2 5 8 9 11	2 5 8 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	LS 11-12.6 SLS 11-12.1b SLS 11-12.1d WS 11-12.7
5. Students will demonstrate the proper procedures as a first responder in securing a crime scene.	1A, D, E, F 2A, D, F	1 2	2	A4.0 A5.0	LS 11-12.6

Assignment	Competencies	Career Ready Practices	Anchor Standards	Pathway Standards	CCSS
	5A, D 7A-C 8A, B 10A-D 11A-F	5 8 11	5 8 9 10	A6.0	SLS 11-12.1b SLS 11-12.1d WS 11-12.7
6. In teams, students will complete the three-step process and four-angle approach to taking pictures of various crime scenes. Students will complete a photo log, documenting the necessary details of each photo.	1C 2A, D, F 4B-F 7B 8A-D 10A, B 14A-D	1 2 4 5 9 11 12	2 4 5 7 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	WS 11-12.3
7. Students will locate and recover a latent print, utilizing the appropriate procedure. Students will label prints, documenting the necessary details of the print. In teams, students will identify and match fingerprints to confirm the identity of a suspect.	1A, C 2A, D, F 4B-F 8A 9A-C 10A	1 2 4 5 9	2 4 6 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	LS 11-12.6 SLS 11-12.1b WS 11-12.3
8. In teams, students will conduct a search pattern to locate, mark, photograph, and collect evidence.	1A, C 2A, D, F 4B-F 7C 8A, B 10A 14A-D	1 2 5 8 9 11	2 5 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	LS 11-12.6 SLS 11-12.1b WS 11-12.3
9. Students will produce a rough sketch and final draft of a crime	1C 2A, D, F	1 2	2	A4.0 A5.0	LS 11-12.6 SLS 11-12.1b

Assignment	Competencies	Career Ready Practices	Anchor Standards	Pathway Standards	CCSS
scene sketch, which will include evidence, measurements, legends, and proper labeling.	6E 7B, C 10A, B 13A-C	4 10 11	5 10	A6.0	WS 11-12.3 G-GMD 5
10. Students will complete a mock crime scene investigation from beginning to end without the assistance of the instructor. Students will prepare a CI notebook that would be appropriate to support testimony.	1A-C, E, F 2A, D, F 4B-F 5A 6E 7A-C 8A-C 9A, B 10A, C, D 11B, D 12B 13A, B 14A, C, D 15A-C 16A-D	1 2 4 5 9 10 11	2 5 8 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	LS 11-12.6 SLS 11-12.1b SLS 11-12.1d WS 11-12.3 G-GMD 5
11. Students will testify to their findings of their investigation and support their own testimony utilizing their CI notebook. As a class, students will determine the innocence or guilt of a suspect.	1A-D, F 2A, D, F 4B-F 8C 10A-D 15A-C 16A-D	1 2 5 7 8 9 11	2 5 8 9 10	A4.0 A5.0 A6.0	LS 11-12.6 SLS 11-12.1b SLS 11-12.1d WS 11-12.3

Standards Assessed in this Program

Career Ready Practices

1. Apply appropriate technical skills and academic knowledge.
2. Communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason.
3. Develop an education and career plan aligned to personal goals.
4. Apply technology to enhance productivity.
5. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
6. Practice personal health and understand financial well-being.
7. Act as a responsible citizen in the workplace and the community.
8. Model integrity, ethical leadership, and effective management.
9. Work productively in teams while integrating cultural/global competence.
10. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
11. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
12. Understand the environmental, social, and economic impacts of decisions.

Anchor Standards

2.0 Communications

- Acquire and use accurately sector terminology and protocols at the career and college readiness level for communicating effectively in oral, written, and multimedia formats.

3.0 Career Planning and Management

- Integrate multiple sources of career information from diverse formats to make informed career decisions, solve problems, and manage personal career plans.

4.0 Technology

- Use existing and emerging technology, to investigate, research, and produce products and services, including new information, as required in the sector workplace environment.

5.0 Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

- Conduct short, as well as more sustained, research to create alternative solutions to answer a question or solve a problem unique to the sector using critical and creative thinking, logical reasoning, analysis, inquiry, and problem-solving techniques.

6.0 Health and Safety

- Demonstrate health and safety procedures, regulations, and personal health practices and determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and domain-specific words and phrases as related to the sector workplace environment.

7.0 Responsibility and Flexibility

- Initiate, and participate in, a range of collaborations demonstrating behaviors that reflect personal and professional responsibility, flexibility, and respect in the sector workplace environment and community settings.

8.0 Ethics and Legal Responsibilities

- Practice professional, ethical, and legal behavior, responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives and resolving contradictions when possible, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and organizational norms.

9.0 Leadership and Teamwork

- Work with peers to promote divergent and creative perspectives, effective leadership, group dynamics, team and individual decision making, benefits of workforce diversity, and conflict resolution.

10.0 Technical Knowledge and Skills

- Apply essential technical knowledge and skills common to all pathways in the sector following procedures when carrying out experiments or performing technical tasks.

Pathway Standards

Public Services - Public Safety Pathway

A4.0 Employ active listening, concise reporting, and familiarity with professional equipment to communicate effectively.

A5.0 Understand the laws, ordinances, regulations, and organizational policies that guide public safety career fields.

A6.0 Know the skills and equipment needed to deal with various types of situations found in public safety occupations (e.g., working with special populations, responding to emergencies, and assisting with incidents).

Common Core State Standards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Language Standards

LS 11-12.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the (career and college) readiness level, demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Reading Standards for Information Text

RSIT 11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Speaking and Listening Standards

SLS 11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SLS 11-12.1d: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, synthesize comments, claims and evidence made on all sides of an issue, resolve contradictions when possible, and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the work.

Writing Standards

WHSST 11-12.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

WS 11-12.3: Write narratives to develop real or imaged experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

WS 11-12.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback including new arguments and information.

WS 11-12.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem, narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate, synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Geometric Measurement and Dimension Standards

G-GMD5: Determine how changes in dimensions affect the perimeter, area, and volume of common geometric figures and solids.