

Syllabus
FIVS 435 Case Studies in Problem Solving
Spring Semester 2014
Three Credit Hours
Tuesday, Thursday 9:35-10:50
Room 123 Heep Center-West Campus

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Tarone, Assistant Professor

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Office Hours: Tuesday 8:30AM-9:30AM, 11-12 AM, or by appointment

Description/Expectations: This course is designed to help students develop problem-solving skills for real world situations. The forensic sciences provide excellent material for gaining experience due to the diversity range of sciences that are of importance to legal issues. Students are expected to identify and provide order to the components of problem solving, develop logical arguments from different perspectives, and communicate decision-making processes as a member of a problem solving team. The scale of problem solving will extend from laboratory and field to community, state, and national levels.

Students are expected to build upon their knowledge of, and experience in forensic science by learning about problems and problem solving approaches. Students will participate by developing and evaluating different problem solving strategies, by investigating a series of cases that vary in scale and complexity, and by being challenged to solve real-world problems as part of a team of scientific investigators.

This course will emphasize both lateral and vertical integration of instructional experiences. The lateral dimension will be achieved within the course by using a team approach to focus on case studies and problem solving. The vertical integration (i.e., integration over time) will encourage continual building of new concepts predicated on principles previously learned in other courses. Students will be required to utilize concepts, skills, and knowledge from previously completed course work and experience as they formulate solutions to problems presented in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Assess, define and communicate problems from simple to complex levels.
- Define and debate problems and solutions from different points of view.
- Participate in the development and assessment of logical arguments, appropriate uses of evidence, and integration of varied types of information (quantitative, qualitative, text, image, etc.) in problem solving.
- Recognize the responsibilities and opportunities associated with citizenship in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

Prerequisites: Junior or Senior classification, or approval of instructor. This is a capstone course in the curriculum for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Forensic and Investigative Sciences and as such my expectations are for you to draw upon your background, current knowledge, and experience in this course.

Text: Forensic Science and the Criminal Law (2nd Ed.) Terrence F. Kiely. 2006. Second Edition.

Required Reading: Selected materials including web-based, scientific and public domain articles, and materials appropriate to case studies. Due dates listed below are the dates that you should be prepared to discuss the readings listed on that date at the beginning of class.

Class Guide to Library Resources Website: Class and activity 21 January to be held in the Medical Sciences Library, West Campus.

Grading: Approximate percent values, actual point values.

- Paper and presentation on a single scientific article.....6% (100 pts)
- Comparison paper and presentation*.....6% (100 pts)
- Written mid-term exam.....6% (100 pts)
- Forensic science discipline evaluation paper and presentation*....18% (300 pts)
- Current Issues Debates*.....24% (400 pts)
- AAFS/articles paper.....12% (200 pts)
- Attendance and Participation.....6% (100 pts)
- Final (Compare and contrast 3 forensic science disciplines); presentation and paper*.....24% (400pts)

A=90-100% of cumulative points; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=<60.

Course activities designated by * include formal presentations with a requirement for business professional dress. Students are guided to “Dress for Success”. Visit the Career Center website for information and guidelines on professional dress.

Each course activity will include assessment of written documents and oral presentations. Activities indicated by * may be assigned to teams and teams will be evaluated by collective and individual assessments (pending class size).

Estimated Schedule of Classroom Activities (Schedule and Assignments are Subject to Change):

Week	Joint Assignment	FIVS 415	Date	FIVS 435
1 (joint classes)		Welcome & Rubric	14 January	Welcome & Rubric
1		Paper 1	16 January	Scientific Method, Lakatos, Platt, Kuhn
2		Library	21 January	Library
2 (joint classes)		Daubert and Science	23 January	Scientific Method, Chapter 1
3	Assign one article and discuss rubric for presentations	Paper 2	28 January	Reading scientific papers.
3 (joint classes)		PRESENTATION	30 January	PRESENTATION One page article review due.
4		Paper 3	4 February	Review presentations, assign Forensic Science vs Non-forensic science
4		Exam #1	6 February	Mid Term Exam
5		Paper 4	11 February	In class work, compare For Sci vs. Non-For Sci
5		Paper 5	13 February	PRESENTATION, 2 page comparison paper due
6 (joint classes)	Assign AAFS/articles (5) (5 page maximum summary paper)	Out of class assignment	18 February	Out of class assignment
6 (joint classes)		Out of class assignment	20 February	Out of class assignment

7	Papers due	Paper 5	25 February	Discuss papers and AAFS conference. Assign 5 paper field evaluation.
7	Assign Debate #1	Paper 6	27 February	Work on 5 paper field evaluation
8		Exam #2	4 March	PRESENT 5 paper field evaluation
8		Paper 7	6 March	4 page paper comparing scientific rigor of 1 field due. Assign Three fields.
9		Spring Break	11 March	Spring Break
9		Spring Break	13 March	Spring Break
10	Assign Debate #2	Debate #1	18 March	Debate #1
10		Paper 8	20 March	Discussion on research from Chapters 3/4
11 (joint classes)		Debate #2	25 March	Debate #2
11	Assign Debate #3	Paper 9	27 March	Discussion on Chapter 5
12		Exam #3	1 April	Discussion on research from Chapter 5
12		Paper 10	3 April	Discussion on Chapter 10
13			8 April	Work on Debate #3
13	Assign Debate #4	Paper 11	10 April	Discussion on research from Chapter 10
14		Debate #3	15 April	Debate #3
14		Paper 12	17 April	Discussion on research from Chapter 11

15		Present Multi-discipline Comparison. 10 page compare and contrast paper due.	22 April	Present Multi-discipline Comparison. 10 page compare and contrast paper due.
15	Debate #4	Debate #4	24 April	Debate #4

Classroom Expectations: Be in class on time and be prepared for classroom discussion/participation. Turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other communication devices that would cause interruptions. Please remove caps. Be aware of and observe all classroom safety rules and regulations. Assist and respect others.

Make ups: No make ups are given without a University Approved Excuse. University policy also requires that students contact the instructor within two business days of the absence to inform the instructor of their intention to make up the activity, assignment, or exam. Make up exams must be taken within 2 weeks of missed date or a "0" will be given. Make up assignments must be turned in within 1 week of missed date or a "0" will be given. Late assignments will lose one full grade (A downgraded to a B, etc.) per day, starting at the beginning of the course on the due date of an assignment. Yes, that means that, if you are late to class, your grade will drop one full grade. If you don't get the assignment to me within 24 hours of the beginning of the course on the due date, your grade will drop two full levels.

Joint Assignments with FIVS 415

You will have several assignments, such as the debates, where you will be evaluated for both FIVS 415 and FIVS 435. This does not mean that you should expect the same grade for such an assignment in each class. It is entirely possible to have a detailed knowledge of how a forensic science fits into the legal arena and have no understanding of the science itself (and vice versa). Accordingly, make sure that you have met the requirements of both courses on these assignments and do not hesitate to contact the instructors of either or both courses if you are unclear as to how you can do so.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 845-1637.

Academic Integrity Statement

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the Texas A&M University community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information please visit:

www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor.