

**Sul Ross State University
Seminar in Forensic Sciences
Semester: Spring 2026
CJ 5368 Syllabus**

Instructor: Corey Rice
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Class hours: Online
Classroom: Remote
Office hours: Virtual (Schedule for times)

REQUIRED TEXT(S)

None

Additional readings (e.g., articles, reports) will be posted on Blackboard.

SRSU LIBRARY SERVICES

The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, www.library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Once you logged in to your Sul Ross Account on Blackboard you should be automatically connected to the library webpage as well. Thus, you can browse the online databases of the University and reach the articles on the reading list.

Syllabus is subject to updates and changes always look to the course announcements and reminders for updates. The faculty member reserves the right to amend this syllabus as needed.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a writing-intensive graduate seminar. Students are expected to write regularly, and their grades in this seminar are linked to the quality and content of their written work. The students will focus on various forensic science disciplines and related fields, including discussions of research and developments, and current topics in those areas.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide knowledge about various topics related to Forensic Science. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

LO1- Understand the fundamentals of forensic investigations through police, investigators, courts, and corrections.

LO2- Examine and discuss the processes and underlying philosophies of the criminal law and crime scene processing.

LO3- Describe the general categories of physical evidence, what a crime laboratory can do with this evidence, and accepted methods of recovery.

LO4- Discuss pros and cons of Forensic Science.

LO5- Able to think critically on different disciplines of forensic science in regards to evidence and crime scene processing, their current functions, and their interrelationships with each other.

LO6- Develop competencies in analyzing criminal issues and promoting possible solutions for forensic related problems.

LO7- Describe the main goals of a crime scene and forensic investigation. Understand standard processing techniques and alternative techniques.

LO8- Compare the advantages and disadvantages of specific forensic disciplines. Compare and contrast processing methods and forensic analyses.

LO9- Discuss the history of forensic disciplines and their admissibility in court.

LO10- Understand and able to think critically on different forensic investigations nationally. Understand the effects of forensic on criminal activities.

MARKETABLE SKILLS:

This course is designed also to help the students for building various marketable skills to use in their in careers Criminal Justice related professions. Specifically, in this course, the following marketable skills, which are some of the most important skills for such careers, will be emphasized during this course:

MS 1- Verbal and Written Communication Skills. Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

MS 2- Critical Thinking and Observation. Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

MS 3- Multicultural Understanding.

MS 4- Accessing Resources with Crime Data and the most current updates of legal codes and procedures.

MS 5- Teamwork and Working Collaboratively

MS 6- Analyzing the Factors Contributing Forensic Investigations

GENERAL CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Students are encouraged to attend the class, ask questions and express opinions, however, talking among students and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. You may bring beverages to class with you, but not food. Reading outside materials such as newspapers or other course work is not permitted during class time. Students should be prepared to engage in discussion over the assigned readings, and for possible pop quizzes. Electronic devices are never allowed to use in class in a way to distract the instructor and other students. Keep your mobile phone in silent mode, otherwise switch it off. Violation of this crucial principal will be penalized. There will be one general rule in class which applies to all situations. This is also called “golden rule”. **TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.**

GRADING:

There will be 2 major exams throughout the semester, with questions drawn from the presentations and the supplemental materials posted on the blackboard. These 2 exams will be worth 20% each. There will be no makeup exams. There will be weekly assignments that contribute to 60% of the total grade.

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Assignments	60%
Total	100%

100-90% equates to an A

89-80% equate to a B

79-70% equate to a C

69-60% equate to a D

59-50% or less receive an F

DISCUSSION RUBRIC:

The student will need to make initial post by the third day of the week the discussion is posted. The initial response should be a minimum of **500 words**. Students will need to reply to at least three other students. All references should be cited in APA format. Discussions will be graded based on the rubric below.

Criteria	Excellent (100%)	Satisfactory (75%)	Unsatisfactory (50%)	Poor (25%)
Content 25%	Demonstrated a clear understanding of the weekly material/subject and articulated command of content/subject into well stated post responses.	Displayed an understanding of weekly material/subject but did not fully articulate their understanding.	Displayed very little understanding of the weekly material /subject and did not articulate an understanding.	Failed to display any understanding of the week's materials; and/or incorrectly addressed the weekly material/subject.
Timely Posting 25%	Posts original discussions by day three (3) of the academic week.	Posts original discussions by day four (4) of the academic week.	Posts original discussion by day six (5) of the academic week.	Posts original discussion by day seven (6) of the academic week or after.
Peer Interaction 25%	Engaged in discussion with at least three (3) peers whereby an idea was built upon or refuted and displayed exemplary critical thinking.	Engaged in discussion with at least two (2) peers whereby an idea was built upon or refuted and displayed good critical thinking.	Engaged in discussion with at least one (1) peer whereby an idea was built upon or refuted.	Did not engage in discussion with peers.

Criteria	Excellent (100%)	Satisfactory (75%)	Unsatisfactory (50%)	Poor (25%)
Grammar 25%	All standards followed as required (i.e. APA format; grammar; citations; references, other standards as required).	1 discussion standard not followed (i.e. APA format; grammar; citations; references, other standards as required).	2-3 discussion standards not followed (i.e. APA format; grammar; citations; references, other standards as required).	4 or more discussion standards not followed (i.e. APA format; grammar; citations; references, other standards as required).

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:

Students are expected to do their own work on all tests and papers. Cheating on tests and plagiarism on assignments will result in a grade of “F” on that part of the course, a possible grade of “F” for the entire course, and possible recommendation for suspension from the university.

Plagiarism consists of presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting examinations or other work in whole or in part as one’s own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person (see the Student Handbook).

IN-CLASS and ON-LINE ATTENDANCE:

The Department of Criminal Justice feels very strongly that class attendance is a direct predictor of student classroom success. Therefore, the faculty of the CJ department as a group will enforce the following student attendance policy. This policy does not supersede the SRSU policy on student attendance; it simply reinforces those stated goals. Criminal justice faculty will take class attendance. In accordance with current SRSU policy, when a student misses a total of 9 hours of class, the presumption is that the student will be dropped from that class with an “F”.

Students who violate the SRSU attendance policy may also find that they are ineligible for any extra credit or any discretionary grading curve applied to any or all exams for that course/semester. It should also be noted that it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor prior to any University event that would cause an absence. Failure of the student to inform the instructor will result in that absence being recorded as unexcused. Attendance is important! Attendance demonstrates maturity, responsibility and a serious attitude toward education. Additionally, instructors seldom teach only from the book. Missing a class (even an excused absence) will put you at a disadvantage for all of the materials covered when you were absent such as films, presentations, and guest lectures which cannot be made up. Attendance will be taken daily and

absences cannot be made up. Students should be in class on time and should be prepared to stay for the entire class period. Students who are late will not be counted as attending if attendance has already been taken.

SERVICE STATEMENT:

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND BLACKBOARD HELP DESK

Sul Ross State University has established a variety of programs to help students meet the challenges of college life. Support to students includes advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and writing assistance. For a complete list of academic support services, visit the Student Support Services <https://www.sulross.edu/section/311/student-support-services>. For more information, students are encouraged to contact SSS at (432) 837-9118 or visit Ferguson Hall Room 105. For Blackboard help visit <https://www.sulross.edu/bb> or call 432-837-8523 (M-F 09:00 am-06:00 pm). You can get The Distance Education Handbook at <https://tvpb.sulross.edu/start/index.html>

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

W	DATES	TOPICS	
1	Week 1 01/14 to 01/18	Introduction	
2	Week 2 01/19 to 01/25	Crime Scene Processing	
3	Week 3 01/26 to 02/01	Forensic Photography	
4	Week 4 02/02 to 02/08	Firearm Examination	
5	Week 5 02/09 to 02/15	Post Blast Investigation	
6	Week 6 02/16 to 02/22	Latent Print Examination	
7	Week 7 02/23 to 3/01	Digital Forensics	
8	Week 8 03/02 to 03/08	MIDTERM	
9	03/09 to 03/15 (Spring Break)	<u>Spring Break</u>	
10	Week 9 03/16 to 03/22	DNA and Trace	
11	Week 10 03/23 to 03/29	Bloodstain Pattern Analysis	
12	Week 11 03/30 to 04/05	Death Investigation	
13	Week 12 04/06 to 04/12	Collision Reconstruction	
14	Week 13 04/13 to 04/19	Shooting Incident Reconstruction	
15	Week 14 04/20 to 04/26	Crime Scene Reconstruction	
16	Week 15 04/27 to 05/03	FINAL EXAM	
	Week 16 05/04-05/07	(Make-up Exam)	

END OF COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for all courses with five or more students. Students will receive an email containing a link to a survey for each course in which they are enrolled. All responses are anonymous.