**Syllabus: Spring 2016**

Northern Virginia Community College

Course Name: Principles of Criminal Investigations

Course Number: ADJ 236

Section Number: 001A-#13029

Meeting Times: Thursday 9:30 am – 12:10 pm

Meeting Location: Bisdorf/AA-442

Instructor Name: **Tim Dickinson**

Telephone Number: **703-933-8083**

E-mail Address: tdickinson@nvcc.edu

[http://blogs.nvcc.edu/tdickinson/](https://mail.nvcc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=e4af37c7e13742b589970494af58d20f&URL=http%3a%2f%2fblogs.nvcc.edu%2ftdickinson%2f)

**This syllabus is a guide. The instructor reserves the right to make changes as needed.**

**Course Materials:**

**Lyman, Michael D. 2014. Criminal Investigation - the art and the science. Seventh Edition.** Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Surveys the fundamentals of criminal investigation procedures and techniques. Examines crime scene, search, collecting, handling and preserving of evidence. Lecture 3 hours per week.

**GENERAL COURSE PURPOSE**

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with an introduction to the investigation steps that should be followed during the investigation of crimes. Also, the methods of properly obtaining the gathering evidence so that it can be used in the solution of crimes and be admissible at the time of trial.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

A. understand the duties, responsibilities, and methods of the first officer to arrive at the scene of a crime

B. obtain insights as to the investigative responsibility and techniques in obtaining evidence during the follow-up investigation

C. be an effective witness in court

**MAJOR TOPICS TO BE INCLUDED**

A. History of criminal investigation

B. Investigative techniques

1. Surveillance
2. Informants
3. Crime scene recording
4. Interviews and interrogations

C. Specific investigations

1. Death
2 .Sex offenses
3. Robbery

**Course Requirements and Grading**

* Four Examinations (300 points total – lowest exam grade dropped)
* Assignment (50 points)
* Attendance and Participation (50 points)
* Extra Credit – Complete Course Evaluation (10 points)

**Grading Scale**

100%-90% - A 69%-60% - D

89%-80 – B Below 60 - F

79%-70% - C

**Description of Course Requirements**

**Examinations**

There will be four examinations. **I will drop the lowest test grade.** Examinations may consist of true/false, multiple choice, fill-in the blank and essay questions. There will be a maximum of 50 questions per examination and the examination will cover materials presented during lectures and from the textbook. **Study guides will be provided.**

There will be absolutely no make–up or early exams. Failure to take the exam when scheduled will result in the grade of “0” for the missed exam. That missed exam will constitute the “dropped” exam.

***There will be no opportunity for extra credit assignments so it is important that you satisfy the stated requirements.***

**Attendance and Participation**

Attendance for each class is required. However, I will “give” each student one absence without penalty. Fifty points ofyour final grade is based on your attendance and participation in the class. Each missed class will result in a four (4) point deduction from the attendance grade (50 points).

Attendance for each class is required. I usually take attendance at the beginning and end of each class. Each half of class is worth 2 points. If you are late, or leave early you will lose 2 points. I will make a determination for any attendance/participation points earned each class.

Read the textbook before class, and be prepared to ask and answer questions. If you attended class and participate, there is good chance the 89 (B) will become a 90 (A).

**Policies and Procedures**

Classroom civility – students are expected to respect each other and the instructor. Students should not disrupt class by arriving late, leaving early and/or by unnecessary talking or use of electronic devices. Students may be asked to leave class for any disruptions.

**Should you choose to bring a laptop/tablet/smart phone to class it must only be used for course activities.**

When in class **please do not sleep**, write notes to each other, read newspapers, do homework for any class, listen to music, or engage in activity that may disturb others.

*Please turn your phone on vibrate!!*

**Academic Dishonesty:** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Cheating includes dishonesty of any kind on tests or assignments. Plagiarism includes the failure to give credit to another’s work. Giving and taking unauthorized help on tests or assignments are both considered cheating. NOVA and I regard these as serious offenses. The minimum sanction for such behavior is an F on the assignment; the maximum sanction is dismissal from college. You may read the full policy on academic dishonesty in the Student Handbook.

**Fire/Emergency Evacuation Procedures**: The evacuation route is located on the wall next to the classroom door. Please familiarize yourself with this route. In case of an emergency, take all of your belongings with you when/if possible.

**Inclement Weather and Other Closing Information**: Please check NOVA’s website (www.nvcc.edu) for information about weather closings and if class is cancelled, check Blackboard for assignment information. Students are strongly encouraged to sign up for NOVA Alert: <https://alert.nvcc.edu/index.php?CCheck=1>.

In the event of a canceled class, each student must complete - in writing - the Discussion Questions located at the end of the chapter. The assignment must be turned in to me at the next class. Students not completing the assignment will not receive attendance/participation credit for that class.

Please check Blackboard for course continuation instructions for longer term class cancellations (multiple classes). For example, a flood might close the building for the remainder of the semester and force us to move to a new location.

**Special Accommodations**: Any student who thinks that he or she might need an accommodation based on a disability should make an appointment to see a Counselor for Disability Services (Bisdorf Room 193). Additional information can be found here: <http://www.nvcc.edu/current-students/disability-services/index.html>.

**\* Students are urged to contact the instructor with any special circumstances.**

**Office Hours:**

Room - Bisdorf #427

Monday 11:00 am – 12:30 pm and 3:30 pm – 7:00 pm

By Appointment only:

Tuesday 12:30 – 2:30 pm

Thursday 3:30 pm – 7:30 pm

or see me before or after class.

**Class Schedule:**

**Course of Study**  TOPIC /READINGS

January 14 Course Orientation Chapter 1

January 21 Crime Scene and Reporting Chapter 2

 Processing the Crime Scene Chapter 3

January 28 Identifying Suspects Chapter 4

February 4 Exam 1 Chapters 1-4

 Legal Issues Chapter 5

February 11 Interviewing and Interrogation Chapter 6

February 18 Criminal Intelligence and Surveillance Ops Chapter 7

Management of Informants Chapter 8

February 25 Exam 2 Chapter 5-8

 Robbery Chapter 10

March 3 Death Investigations Chapter 9

March 10 Spring Break (No class)

March 17 Assault and Related Offenses Chapter 11

March 24 Missing and Abducted Persons Chapter 12

March 31 Exam 3 Chapters 9-12

 Guest Speaker

April 7 Crimes Against Children Chapter 13

April 14 Theft offenses Chapter 14

April 21 Arson and Terrorism Chapter 15

April 28 Drugs and Gangs Chapter 16 Prep for Court Chapter 18

May 5 Exam 4 Chapters 13-16,18

**Key Dates**

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| **Classes begin** | January 11 |
| MLK Day (No Class) | January 18 |
| Last day to drop a class with a tuition refund or change to audit (census date)\*\* | January 28 |
| Last day to apply for Spring Graduation | March 1 |
| Spring Break | March 7-13 |
| Last day to withdraw without grade penalty | March 22 |
| Classes and examinations end | May 8 |
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