Department:

Criminal Justice

Course Description:

This course covers the fundamentals of criminal investigative techniques and examines how some techniques remain relatively static while many others are evolving due to technology, national databases, and applicability of basic medical practices. The course focuses specifically on major felony investigations with an emphasis on adherence to rigid crime scene protocols.

Course Competencies:

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

1. Adhere to basic crime scene protocols, including arriving at the crime scene, identifying, collecting, and preserving evidence.
2. Convert observation into written reports that can withstand cross examination.
3. Analyze and apply basic forensic science principles, including entomology, odontology, DNA testing, profiling, fingerprint collection, identification, and classification.
4. Identify crime scene typologies in terms of victims, suspects, and eyewitnesses.
5. Deduce and reconstruct crime scenes with staging indicators, modus operandi patterns, and comparative analysis of evidence.
6. Perform basic interviewing techniques and interrogation methods
7. Explain the differences between general inquiry and questions designed to elicit incriminating statements.
8. Describe what types of careers are available for investigators and list the different fields of study open to people with these interests and skills.

Course Content:

A. Overview of crime scene investigation
   1. Crime, crime trends and specific crime scene indicators
   2. Levels of proof, understanding probable cause, affidavits, search warrants, warrant-less searches and associated issues
   3. Modern day applicability in terms of appellate review issues and precedents
B. Legal issues with investigative response
   1. Concepts of informed consent, implied consent, and when law enforcement are within their powers and duties to investigate
   2. Index of offenses, definitions of crimes, violent and nonviolent crimes
C. Crime scene investigative techniques
   1. Ways to enter a crime scene, secure the perimeter, perform a search, sketch and photograph a crime scene
   2. Identifying, collecting, and preserving crime scene evidence

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D. Basic interviewing and interrogation techniques
   1. Fundamental differences between legal rights of the defendant and the admittance into court of any confessions, admissions, denials, etc.
   2. The importance of interviewing witnesses, bystanders, and victims
E. Documentation of investigations
   1. Writing standard offense report narratives in a clear, concise, and chronological manner
   2. Duties, roles, and responsibilities of the defense attorney, prosecutor, and judge

Learning Assessments:

Course competencies will be assessed by regular critical thinking exercises, research exercises, skills tests, participation in simulated investigations, a midterm exam, and a comprehensive final exam.

Instructional Materials:


Guidelines for Requesting Accommodations Based on Documented Disability or Medical Condition

It is the intention of Highland Community College to work toward full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to make instructional programs accessible to all people, and to provide reasonable accommodations according to the law.

Students should understand that it is their responsibility to self-identify their need(s) for accommodation and that they must provide current, comprehensive diagnosis of a specific disability or medical condition from a qualified professional in order to receive services. Documentation must include specific recommendations for accommodation(s). Documentation should be provided in a timely manner prior to or early in the semester so that the requested accommodation can be considered and, if warranted, arranged.

In order to begin the process all students must complete the “Disabilities Self-Identification Form” at this link: https://highlandcc.edu/pages/disability-services.

This form can also be accessed at the Highland Community College homepage under Students Services/Student Resources/Disability Service or by contacting the Disabilities Coordinator.