University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

CRJU 32173 Criminal Investigations

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite: ENGL 10203 Composition II or ENGL 24103 Advanced Composition
Effective Catalog; 2025-2026

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Overview of scientific crime detection and detailed discussion of techniques for case management and documentation, the concept of proof, the impact of emergent technology on the investigative process, interacting with victims and witnesses, and interviewing suspects. Emphasis on the investigation of particular types of crimes; including homicides, sex offenses, child abuse, and hate crimes.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

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

1. Appraise the fundamentals of criminal investigation, including crime scene analysis, documentation and compiling reports.
2. Discuss suspect identification processes.
3. Explain differences between interrogation and interview of suspects and witnesses.
4. Assess what laboratory services are available and distinguish how to submit evidence for analysis.
5. Determine legal issues that impact criminal investigations, including court rulings.
6. Describe intelligence, surveillance, and undercover operations.
7. Compare and contrast the investigative methods for specific types of crimes against persons, property crimes, drug and gang related crimes.
8. Describe the prosecutorial and court process.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills
Critical Thinking Skills: Students will identify criminal investigation problems/issues and develop solutions/ analysis.

Communication Skills (written and oral)
Students will communicate proficiently. Students will use essay format for written presentation of research projects and discuss particular aspects of various topics.

Ethical Decision Making
Students will model ethical decision-making processes. Students will examine ethical dilemmas within criminal investigations and develop ethical frameworks to resolve specific ethical issues.

Global and Cultural Perspectives
Students will reflect upon cultural differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own.

III. Major Course Topics

A. Foundation of criminal investigation
B. Crime scene documentation and processing
C. Legal issues in criminal investigation
D. Interview and interrogation
E. Criminal intelligence and surveillance operations
F. Investigation of specific crimes
G. Preparation for court