

**Department of Justice Studies**

**FS 169 Senior Seminar**

**CRN 29303, Spring 2019**

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| **Instructor** | Dr. Shawna Bolton |
| **Contact Information** | Email: [shawna.bolton@sjsu.edu](mailto:shawna.bolton@sjsu.edu)  Phone: 408-924-**8974** |
| **Office Location** **and Hours** | Health Building rm 210A  Drop in: ***M*** 11:30a-12:30p ***W*** 11:30a-12:30p, 4:15p-5:15p ***OR*** by appointment |
| **Canvas Course Website** | https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1314980  Login using your Tower ID Card and Password → Courses → FS 169 |
| **Lecture Days/Time** | Mondays/Wednesdays 3:00p-4:15p, Rm HB 207 |
| **Prerequisites** | FS or JS Major, Graduating Senior |
| **FS Library Liaison** | Silke Higgins [silke.higgins@sjsu.edu](mailto:silke.higgins@sjsu.edu) |
| **FS Lib Guide** | http://libguides.sjsu.edu/content.php?pid=57768&sid=2450175 |
| **FS Program Website** | <http://www.sjsu.edu/justicestudies/degrees/fs-program/> |

**Course Description**

This capstone course provides an in-depth study of a number of key issues facing the forensic science (FS) discipline. In particular, students will focus on identifying issues presented in various journal publications, formulate sound arguments using their critical thinking skills, and articulate their conceptualizations of subject matters in group-lead discussions and a major research paper on a topic of their choosing. Topics to be explored include understanding error and its meaning in forensic contexts, principles and concepts relating to quality in FS, quality assurance, accreditation and certification, expert witness testimony, ethical and professional issues encountered, and professional development skills.

Outlines will be provided or made accessible via Canvas for each lecture pertaining to the topic that will be discussed.

**Note** the following, detailed **prerequisites** for:

* **Justice Studies Majors**: JS 100W and JS 114 or instructor consent,
* **Forensic Science Majors**: JS 100W, FS 161, FS, 162, Biology 30, CHEM 1A and CHEM 1B
  + **Note**- ***JS 114*** is ***waived*** as a prerequisite for ***forensic science majors***.
* **Both majors**: senior standing or by instructor consent, graduation application submitted and major form filled out and signed.

**Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives** **(LO)**

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

* **LO1** Identify and analyze sources of error in crime scene investigation and forensic science.
* **LO2** Identify and analyze professional resources for forensic scientists.
* **LO3** Evaluate quality assurance mechanisms in crime scene investigation and forensic science, and identify areas that require improvement.
* **LO4** Critique progress of NIJ and PCAST recommendations for improving forensic science; devise strategies for combatting error.
* **LO5** Prepare for a career in forensic science by creating a clear and mechanically correct resume and cover letter, and identifying jobsites and resources for networking.

**Required Texts/Readings**

* Koen, W. C. & Bowers, M. (2017). Forensic Science Reform. Elsevier ISBN-13: 978-0128027196
* Gilpin, A. & Patchet-Golubev, P. (2000). A guide to writing in the sciences. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. ISBN 9780802083661
* DOJ, National Academy of Sciences. (2009). Strengthening Forensic Science: A Path Forward. (pdf provided by instructor)
* President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. (2016). Forensic Science in Criminal Courts: Ensuring Scientific Validity of Feature Comparison Methods. (pdf provided by instructor)
* LaPorte, G. (2018). NIJ Report: Wrongful Convictions and DNA Exonerations: Understanding the Role of Forensic Science. (pdf provided by instructor)
* Schweitzer, N. J. (2016). NIJ Report: Communicating Forensic Science. (pdf provided by instructor)
* Dror, I. E., Kassin, S. M., & Kuckucka, J. (2013). New application of psychology to law: Improving forensic evidence and expert witness contributions. Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition 2, 78-81. (pdf provided by instructor)
* Turvey, B. http://www.corpus-delicti.com/forensic\_fraud.html, http://www.corpus-delicti.com/forensic\_mis.html
* Weiss, D. & LaPorte, G. (2018). NIJ Report: Uncertainty Ahead: A Shift in How Federal Scientific Experts Can Testify. (pdf provided by instructor)
* Links to additional articles will be posted on Canvas. Check the site frequently!

**Assignments**

1. ***Reading notes and quizzes*** (25%): Reading notes and reading quizzes, including vocabulary quizzes. (LO1-4)
2. ***Group Presentation*** (25%): Group presentations on topics such as NIJ NAS Report recommendations, criminal case examples of type I and type II errors, forensic science professional organizations, graduate programs in FS, FSAT, bias, ethics codes, etc. LO2
3. ***Research Project Study*** (40%): Propose and present a detailed research project/study that addresses one serious problem or source of error discussed in class and in the readings. Include the research question, hypothesis, and research methodology you would use to investigate this problem. Details and guidelines will be provided. (40%) LO1, LO3
4. ***Resume Building and Interviews*** (10%): Create a clear and mechanically correct resume and cover letter. Identify jobsites and resources for networking. (LO1-5)

**Grading Scale for All Assignments**

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| ***Letter Grade Percent***  A plus (+) 97-100  A 94-96.9  A minus (-) 90-93.9  B plus (+) 87-89.9  B 84-86.9  B minus (-) 80-83.9 | ***Letter Grade Percent***  C plus (+) 77-79.9  C 74-76.9  C minus (-) 70-73.9  D plus (+) 67-69.9  D 64-66.9  D minus (-) 60-63.9 | ***Letter Grade Percent***  F <60 |

All assignments are graded based on adherence to directions, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, clarity, and logic.

Note: **A grade of C or better is required for all Justice Studies major and minor coursework, and desirable for students enrolled in the Forensic Science majors and/or minor.**

**Extra Credit**

Extra credit opportunities may be available throughout the semester and will be used to augment your final grade up to **3%**. You may submit up to three extra credit assignments of your choosing. Each extra credit opportunity is given a weighted value of **10 marks**.

1. Join a professional organization (CAC, AAFS, IAI, *etc*.) that is of specific interest to *you* and supply proof of membership before the end of the semester. A professional organization is one that holds conferences and/or produces a periodic journal. This is not the same thing as an internship, job, or student organization; it is a professional *membership*.
2. Portfolio: Students may turn in a neat and organized 3-ring binder (portfolio) at the end of the semester containing all work completed in the class. Copies of group assignments are acceptable. This should be professional quality (for example, you would bring it to an interview to display your work).
3. Tour a crime lab and write a 2-page, typed, double-spaced synopsis of the experience. Santa Clara has monthly tours, and San Mateo has an annual tour in October.
4. Read and critique a current journal article from the forensic science discipline. Discuss its relevance to forensic science and how it contributes to the advancement the field.

**Class Protocol and Policies**

* All assignments are to be completed a week after their assignment or completion of a la practical. Late work may be submitted ***up to 3 days*** **without penalty**. Subsequently, a ***late penalty of 5% per day*** for **a maximum of 5 days**, weekends included will apply. Assignments submitted thereafter will NOT be accepted and results in an automatic fail unless extraordinary, documented circumstances exist or a doctor’s note is presented. Avoid missing lab practicals. Make-up sessions may not be available. Should you know in advance of any extenuating circumstances that conflict with such sessions, it is your responsibility to inform your lecturer. The possibility for submitting an alternative assignment may be granted at discretion, but be advised that such undertaking will be quite demanding. If there is any doubt about the requirements for an assignment, or due dates/times, re-read the directions of the assignment and/or schedule. If your question(s) remains unanswered, contact your lecturer for clarification.
* Attendance and class participation is expected. It is essential that you come to class prepared. Therefore, it is your responsibility to stay on top of your readings, complete assignments on time, and participate in class discussions. Lack of adequate participation *will* result in pop quizzes, which *will* count toward your final grade.
* The use of cell phones is NOT PERMITTED during class. Students caught using their phone will be asked to surrender it for the remainder of the lecture or excused from the class. Laptops are permitted for note-taking only.

**Student Resources**

**Forensic Science Student Group (FSS)**

Forensic Science Students is a campus group open to all students interested in forensic science. The group meets biweekly during the semester and offers friendship, forensic science-related activities, networking opportunities, and mentorship. Members of the FSS participate and assist at conferences, CSI camps, guest speaking events, and other extra-curricular activities. FSS Peer Mentors assist forensic science students in navigating the major, understanding requirements and prerequisites, and making wise choices in their college careers. Mentors may also offer limited tutoring, and facilitate educational and professional opportunities. Contact [sjsu.fss@gmail.com](mailto:sjsu.fss@gmail.com) for more information, or to get an application for membership.

**Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center assists students in the development of their full academic potential and motivates them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skill assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [http:/www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/)

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center located in Room 126 in Clark Hall offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, including one-on-one tutoring sessions and numerous writing workshops. All services are free for SJSU students. <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

**CASA Student Success Center**

The Student Success Center in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts (CASA) provides advising for undergraduate students majoring or wanting to major in programs offered in CASA Departments and Schools. All CASA students and students who would like to be in CASA are invited to stop by the Center for general education advising, help with changing majors, academic policy related questions, meeting with peer advisors, and/or attending various regularly scheduled presentations and workshops. If you are looking for academic advice or even tips about how to navigate your way around SJSU, check out the CASA Student Success Center. Location: MacQuarrie Hall (MQH) 533. Contact information: [408.924.2910](tel:408.924.2910) Website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/casa/ssc/>. The CASA Student Success Center also provides study space and laptops for checkout.

**University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

**Important Dates This Semester**

***University Calendar***: \* http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/2192/index.html

**Jan 24-Feb 12**: Late Registration for Spring 2019. Registration via MySJSU starting after 7am

**Feb 5**: Last Day to Drop Without a “W” grade

**Feb 12**: Last Day to Add a Course, Last Day to Request CR/NC

**Apr 25**: Last Day to Submit Late Drop/Withdrawal Request <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/forms/>

**May 13**: Last day of Instruction

**May 15-17, 20-21**:Final Exams (see [Exam Schedule](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/splash/schedules.html))

\*Late add fees apply. See above website.

**Justice Studies Reading and Writing Philosophy**

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives–personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

**Instructor**

Dr. Shawna Bolton first attended the University of Toronto where she obtained her BA in Anthropology (major) and double minored in French and English. She then went on to complete an MSc in Criminal Justice with an advanced forensic anthropology interdiscipline at Radford University before earning her PhD in Forensic Sciences at the University of Wolverhampton in the UK. There, Dr. Bolton conducted preliminary research investigating the post mortem molecular properties of cartilage and its potential use as a forensic tool. Upon the completion of her doctorate, she has worked in partnership with Global Forensics and the University of Wolverhampton to prepare and provide academic and laboratory training to Rwandan National Police officers enrolled in an intensive forensic DNA and toxicology module. To date, she is teaching FS and JS courses while continuing her research into cartilage degradation.

| Tentative Course Schedule | | | |
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| Week | Date | In-Class Topics | Assignments & Readings |
| 1 | 01/28  &  01/30 | Introductions, course overview, form groups, brainstorm types & sources of error in CSI & FS | Read “Forensic Science and Wrongful Convictions,” and “A Time of Transformation” **Take notes as you read** |
| 2 | 02/04  &  02/06 | Primary research, variables, testing hypotheses, conceptualizing terms,  research project format  APA format  *Discussion of readings* | Read NAS Report, Preface and Ch 1 Introduction (skip “Summary”), read to p. 53, **Take notes as you read**  *Develop research topics and questions* |
| 3 | 02/11  &  02/13 | Grammar, academic and scientific writing  *Discussion of readings*  Preliminary research topic and questions due, workshop  *Discussion of readings* | Read NAS Report Ch 2, 3, & 4 (p. 55-125)  **Take notes as you read**  Read NAS Report Ch 5 (p. 126-182)  Read “Confirmation Bias”  Read “New Application of Psychology to Forensic Science”  **Take notes as you read** |
| 4 | 02/18  &  02/20 | Group presentations  Group presentations | Read NAS Report Ch 6 & 7 (p. 183-215), Read “Adopting a Research Culture”  **Take notes as you read** |
| 5 | 02/25  &  **02/27** | Research workshop: Intro, lit review, and annotated bibliography  No Class Meeting: John Oliver video CANVAS assignment | Read NAS Report Ch 8, 9, 10 & 11 (p. 216-286)  **Take notes as you read** |
| 6 | 03/01  &  03/03 | Research Methodology  NAS Report & APA Quiz | Read “Uncertainty Ahead: A Shift in How Federal Experts Testify” & “Communicating Forensic Science”  **Take notes as you read** |
| 7 | 03/11  &  **03/13** | Group presentations  Canvas APA Quiz | Read FSR Preface, Forward, Ch 1&2  Read “Not Guilty, Probably”  **Take notes as you read** |
| 8 | 03/18  &  **03/20** | Annotated bib due, Lit Review  Methodology due, workshop | Read FSR Ch 3,4,5  **Take notes as you read** |
| 9 | **03/25**  &  **03/27** | Individual meetings | Read FSR Ch 6,7,8  **Take notes as you read** |
| 10 | **04/01& 04/03** | ***Spring Recess***  *(April 1-5)*  ***April 1 – Cesar Chavez Day (Campus Closed)*** | |

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| 11 | 04/08  &  **04/10** | Lit review due | Read FSR Ch 9,10,11  **Take notes as you read** |
| 12 | 04/15  &  04/17 | Research presentations  Research presentations  Discussion of readings | Read “Wrongful Convictions and DNA Exonerations: Understanding the Role of Forensic Science”  **Take notes as you read** |
| 13 | 04/22  &  04/24 | Research Presentations | Read 2014 Progress Report |
| 14 | 04/29  &  05/01 | What’s Next? Internships, Jobs, Grad School: Writing cover letters, personal statements, and resumes  Workshops continued | Read PCAST report to p. 122  **Take notes as you read**  Internship/job lab, continued  Read PCAST report p. 123-end  **Take notes as you read** |
| 15 | 05/06  &  05/08 | Interviews  Final Paper Due |  |
| 16 | 05/13 | Last day of Instruction  Final exam review and questions session | Study for final |
| 17 | 05/21 | **Final Exam**  2:45p-5:00p  <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/final-exam-schedule-spring.html> | |