

San José State University
CASA/Department of Justice Studies
FS 169 Forensic Science Senior Seminar, CRN 49307
Fall 2018

Instructor	Mary Juno
Instructor Email	mary.juno@sjsu.edu
Canvas Website	https://sjsu.instructure.com/
Office Location	127 Health Building
Office Hours	1330-1500 Mondays, or by appointment
Class Days, Times, & Location	1200-1315, Mon/Wed, Health Building 207
Prerequisites	FS or JS MAJOR, GRADUATING SENIOR
JS & FS Library Liaison	Silke Higgins silke.higgins@sjsu.edu
FS LibGuide	http://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=230074&p=1526987

Course Catalogue Description

Capstone course in forensic science. Primary focus will be on identification, discussion, and analysis of selected problems in forensic science, specifically: types and causes of error in forensic science. Related topics will include ethics, expert testimony, quality assurance, accreditation and certification. Key skills for obtaining an internship or job, such as writing cover letters and resumes, interviewing, networking, and passing the FSAT, will also be covered.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

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.

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.

Assignments

1. Reading notes and reading quizzes, including vocabulary quizzes. (25%) LO1-4
2. Several small 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. (25%) LO2
3. 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. Create a clear and mechanically correct resume and cover letter. Identify jobsites and resources for networking. (10%) (LO5)

Grading Scale for All Assignments

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
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
F	<60

All assignments are graded based on adherence to directions, thoroughness, accuracy, thoughtfulness, clarity (including writing mechanics), and logic.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities may be available throughout the semester and will be used to augment the final grade up to 3%.

1. Attend an appointment or workshop at The Writing Center (126 Clark) by Nov 21 and supply proof of attendance.

2. Attend a Forensic Science Seminar during the semester and write a 2-page, double-spaced synopsis/reaction paper, due the following class meeting.
3. Join a professional organization that is of interest to you (IAI, AAFS, ABC, CAC, etc. – there are *thousands*) 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*.

Class Policies

- No cell phones in class: Turn them off and put them away.
- Laptop use is not permitted in class; exceptions are possible but users must sit in the front row.
- Plagiarized work and/or cheating on assessments will result in a 0 grade on the assignment, and the incident will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct](#).
- Late work may be submitted for half credit within one week of due date.
- Make-ups for exams will generally not be possible unless extraordinary, documented circumstances exist.
- Handle personal business before you begin an exam. A student who leaves the classroom *for any reason* during an exam will be presumed finished with the exam.

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 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/>

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 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Important Dates This Semester

Aug 31: Last Day to Drop Without a W

Sept 10: Last Day to Add a Course, Last Day to Submit C/NC Request

Nov 16: Last Day to Submit Late Drop/Withdrawal Request

Dec 10: Last day of Instruction

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

Mary Juno earned her MSc in Forensic Science from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, and her BA in Biological Anthropology from San Francisco State University. Juno worked for many years as a CSI at the Oakland Police Department where she processed hundreds of major crime scenes. She has conducted research at the NYPD Latent Fingerprint Lab, and is currently the co-coordinator of the FS program at SJSU. Her office is 127 HB.

Week	Date	In-Class Topics	Assignments & Readings
1	8/22	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	8/27 8/29	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	9/3 9/5	No Class Meeting: Labor Day Grammar, academic and scientific writing, Discussion of readings	Read NAS Report Ch 2, 3, & 4 (p. 55-125), take notes as you read
4	9/10 9/12	Preliminary research topic and questions due, workshop Discussion of readings	Read NAS Report Ch 5 (p. 126-182) Read “Confirmation Bias” Read “New Application of Psychology to Forensic Science,” take notes as you read
5	9/17 9/19	Group presentations Group presentations	Read NAS Report Ch 6 & 7 (p. 183-215), Read “Adopting a Research Culture” Take notes as you read
6	9/24 9/26	Research workshop: Intro, lit review, and annotated bibliography Discussion of readings	Read NAS Report Ch 8, 9, 10 & 11 (p. 216-286), take notes as you read
7	10/1 10/3	NAS Report Discussion & Exam John Oliver video Research workshop: Methodology	Read “Uncertainty Ahead: A Shift in How Federal Experts Testify” & “Communicating Forensic Science” Take notes as you read
8	10/8 10/10	Annotated bib due, peer review Group presentations	Read FSR Preface, Forward, Ch 1&2 Read “Not Guilty, Probably” Take notes as you read
9	10/15 10/17	Group presentations Lit review & intro due	Read FSR Ch 3,4,5 Take notes as you read
10	10/22 10/24	Methodology due, peer view Research conclusions	Read FSR Ch 6,7,8 Take notes as you read
11	10/29 10/31	Individual meetings	Read FSR Ch 9,10,11 Take notes as you read
12	11/5 11/7	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	11/12 11/14	No Class Meeting: Veteran’s Day Research Presentations	Read 2014 Progress Report

14	11/19 11/21	What's Next? Internships, Jobs, Grad School: Writing cover letters, personal statements, and resumes No Class Meeting: Happy Thanksgiving!	Read PCAST report to p. 122 Take notes as you read Internship/job lab, continued
15	11/26 11/28	Workshops continued	Read PCAST report p. 123-end Take notes as you read
16	12/3 12/5	Interviews Final Paper Due	
17	12/10	Last day of class	Study for final
	TBD	Final Exam	