

# McLennan C O M M U N I T Y C O L L E G E

WACO, TEXAS

---

## **COURSE SYLLABUS AND INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

### **CRIMINALISTICS I CJSA 1308 H1**

**DR. SUZANNE BALDON**

**NOTE: This is a 16 Week Blended/Hybrid course.**

#### **COVID 19 Notice:**

McLennan Community College is committed to providing you with every resource you need to reach your academic goals including your safety. We will continue to monitor the evolving situation with COVID 19 and adjust our safety guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. Please make sure to consult your faculty and the MCC website at <https://www.mclennan.edu/crisis-management/coronavirus-updates/index.html> on any changes to these guidelines.

# CRIMINALISTICS I

## CJSA 1308 H1

---

### **Course Description:**

Studies the use of scientific methods in the investigation of crime, including locating, identifying, and handling of evidence for scientific analysis. Semester Hours 3 (3 lec.)

### **Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:**

CRIJ 1301 with a grade of C or better or approval of the program director.

### **Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:**

This course is designed to include an introductory hybrid lecture course to the topics noted in the course description, hands-on labs during the semester, and an outside project for observing, documenting, and reporting on the decomposition process of an animal(s). If any students are hunters or herders, the donation of a feral hog, deer, or goat, etc. would be appreciated. Please check first with your instructor about delivery of any animals. During labs, you must document activities by making lab notes with photographs/sketches/activity sheets and compile them into a folder due at the end of semester on December 2

### **Instructor Information:**

Instructor Name: Suzanne Baldon  
MCC E-mail: [sbaldon@mclennan.edu](mailto:sbaldon@mclennan.edu)  
Office Phone Number: 254.299.6505  
Office Location: ESEC 216

Office/Teacher Conf. Hours: Instructor available through Brightspace, telephone and email.

Other Instruction Information: Please contact instructor to schedule additional conference time. Advising by appointment; call Glenda at 254.299.6502 to make an appointment for advising.

You may use Messages for non-emergency communications. If you need to reach me quickly, please email me at [sbaldon@mclennan.edu](mailto:sbaldon@mclennan.edu), or call or text my cell phone at 254-230-3595.

### **Required Text & Materials:**

SkyePack Custom Digital Access for course: <https://www.skyepack.com/launch>

You will get an email from the SkyePack publisher with further instructions.

**MCC Bookstore Website:** <http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/>

# CRIMINALISTICS I

## CJSA 1308 H1

---

### **Methods of Teaching and Learning:**

The course will be composed primarily of lecture materials online, online discussion boards and weekly quizzes, and participation in face to face labs, articles, news items from the media and professional publications, films, videos, and slides relating to the field of criminal justice, guest speakers when qualified and available, and an out of class project.

### **Course Objectives and/or Competencies:**

The student will develop competency in conducting criminal investigations by learning the meaning of a complete investigation, the proof required of various crimes, and the employment of technical methods and services available.

### **Course Outline or Schedule:**

Welcome to our class! We will use an online format for lecture information, discussion boards, quizzes, announcements, messages, and items of interest. Please check that venue regularly and after absences from our classroom.

The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes to this document and schedule with appropriate notice given to students, for example, depending on events and guest speakers available. Please get to know study buddies in the class whom you can contact in order to find out what you may need to know in case you are absent for any reason and to form study groups for assignments. It is the student's responsibility to stay aware of class activities.

**Weekly Schedule:** Class meetings every Friday 10:30-12:00 in ESEC 219 with online readings, discussion boards, and quizzes during each week **before** meetings. **Read the chapters, participate in the discussion boards, and take the quizzes before coming to class!**

### **Weeks Beginning:**

### **Chapters and Labs:**

Jan 9, Meet Jan 13	Module 1	Introductions in Class for Students, Syllabus, and Beginning the Class
Jan 16, Meet Jan 20	Module 2	Securing and Searching the Crime Scene and Recording the Crime Scene
<b>Jan 16</b>	<b>MLK Day Holiday</b>	
Jan 23, Meet Jan 27	Module 3	Crime Scene Sketches & Start Decomp Projects
Jan 30, Meet Feb 3	Module 4	Collection of Crime-Scene Evidence and Physical Evidence
Feb 6, Meet Feb 10	Module 5	Death Investigation and Crime-Scene Reconstruction

# CRIMINALISTICS I

## CJSA 1308 H1

---

Feb 13, Meet Feb 17	Module 6	Forensic Biometrics: Fingerprints and Facial Recognition
Feb 20, Meet Feb 24	Module 7	Firearms, Tool Marks, and Other Impressions
Feb 27, Meet Mar 3	Module 8	Bloodstain Pattern Analysis and Biological Stain Analysis: DNA
<b>Mar 6—Mar 10</b>	<b>Spring Break! Enjoy!!</b>	
Mar 13, Meet Mar 17	Module 9	Drugs and Toxicology
Mar 20, Meet Mar 24	Module 10	Trace Evidence I: Hairs and Fibers
Mar 27, Meet Mar 31	Module 11	Trace Evidence II: Paint, Glass, and Soil
Apr 3, Meet Apr 14	Module 12	Forensic Aspects of Fire and Explosion Investigation
<b>Apr 7</b>	<b>Spring Holiday!</b>	
Apr 17, Meet Apr 21	Module 13	Document Examination, Computer Forensics, and Digital and Multimedia Forensics: Cell phones, Video, and Audio. <b>You may make your Presentation today, earlier than due, if you like.</b>
Apr 24, Meet Apr 28	<b>Last Day of Classes! Projects, Presentations, and Lab Notes are due in class this week on Apr 28! There is no final exam because you took a Quiz every week.</b>	

### **Course Grading Information:**

There will be a quiz given online prior to our meeting for every unit that will assess what you have learned during the previous week. In order to benefit from the face to face lab in the classroom, you must complete the quiz and discussion board by the Thursday/early Friday morning due date. Please complete the quiz and discussion board before coming to class! The average of these assessments will count for 25% of the final grade.

All students will be required to complete an out-of-class project for this class. The out-of-class project and class presentation will count 25% toward the student's final grade. The assignment start date and completion date will be given to students during the first few weeks of class. The possible projects to be assigned will be over decomposition and entomology and will include

# CRIMINALISTICS I

## CJSA 1308 H1

---

decomposition process, plants, weather, and environmental location. Each student will be required to furnish all supplies related to the project, which can be completed in an electronic or poster format. Each student will present her/his project to the class, including questions/answers from the class, on the due date.

Your final grade will be comprised of 1) completion of online quizzes (25%), 2) discussion boards (25%), 3) weekly lab notes (25%), and 4) the project/presentation (25%).

If I decide it is necessary to curve the grade distribution, this will be done at the end of the course, after all the assessments have been taken. Your grade will never be lowered by curving; you will always receive your "straight-scale" grade or better.

### Course Grading:

100 - 90 = A

89 - 80 = B

79 - 70 = C

69 - 60 = D

59 - 0 = F

### **Discussion Boards**

After reviewing each week's material, you will be asked to respond to a prompt that the instructor will provide in the weekly discussion board. The initial response should be well thought out and substantial enough to indicate that you have a firm grasp on the week's materials. You must then respond to at least two (2) classmates with substantial posts. Simple responses like "I agree" or "good point" will not be counted. **Tell us why and give examples.**

### Discussion Board Grading

The following rubric illustrates how each discussion session will be graded. The number of posts represented in your posting history will be calculated. The quality of your posts is a subjective assessment by me of how much your posts add to the discussion.

Metrics	Original Post 1 Entered	Responses 1 & 2 Entered	Quality of the Original Post	Quality of Your Responses 1 & 2
Points earned	1/4 credit	1/4 credit	1/4 credit	1/4 credit

# CRIMINALISTICS I

## CJSA 1308 H1

---

**Quizzes:** Questions will be graded by your instructor or auto-graded by Brightspace.

**Lab Notes:** Portfolios will be graded by your instructor.

**Projects and Presentations:** Will be graded by your instructor. Part of your grade is presenting your report to the class.

**Plagiarism** the unacknowledged borrowing of information, wording, organization, or ideas. Whether the original source is public (e.g., a newspaper, book, journal article, the Web) or private (e.g., a classmate's paper), you need to indicate your indebtedness to it. Where you repeat the exact language of your source, you must treat the borrowed material as a quotation and place it within quotation marks. However, by *merely changing a few words or the word order or by paraphrasing, you do not avoid plagiarism*. In the case of plagiarism, the instructor has the right to give the student a "zero" for the assignment. In the case of cheating during the course of a test or unauthorized collaboration on a writing project, the instructor reserves the right to give the student a "zero" for the test or assignment. Citation style guides are available at the Purdue Online Writing Lab: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html).

**Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:**

A student who is unable to do the scheduled work on the scheduled date must contact the instructor as soon as possible. The type, format, and schedule of any make-up assessment will be at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to take the make-up assessment or complete assignment criteria will result in an automatic "F" for that particular assessment. If you wish to drop the course, please contact your instructor and do not assume that you have been dropped as a result of absences.

**Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:**

Behavior guidelines are outlined in the "Conduct Policy" portion of the Highlander Student Guide. Any behavior which disrupts the learning process will be grounds for dismissal from the class. Cell phones and laptops are permitted if the student is using those resources for the purposes of our class. If child care is a problem, please confer with Student Services for alternatives to avoid bringing children to class. Students are expected to follow the General Conduct Policy in the Highlander Student Guide.

**[Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)**

(<https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html>)

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have additional guidelines specific to this course.