

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

- A. Department Information:  
Division: Criminal Justice  
Department: Criminal Justice  
Course ID: POLICE 103  
Course Title: Introduction to Criminal Investigation  
Units: 3  
Lecture: 48 hours  
Laboratory: None  
Prerequisite: None  
Corequisite: Must also enroll in POLICE 002, 100, 101 and 102.
- B. Catalog and Schedule Description:  
This course will address the examination of crime, evidence and police procedures in investigating crime. This includes organized crime, street crime and white-collar crime.  
**ENROLLMENT IS LIMITED TO THOSE STUDENTS WHO MEET SCREENING REQUIREMENTS AS OUTLINED IN THE GOVERNMENT CODE, CALIFORNIA PENAL CODE AND THE COMMISSION ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL.**  
*Associate Degree Applicable*  
*Course transfers to CSU*

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One**

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**

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

- A. Describe the goals of a criminal investigation.
- B. Identify and describe the basic components of a preliminary criminal investigation.
- C. Categorize, define and discuss the terms associated with criminal investigation.
- D. Analyze the criteria used to determine whether evidence is admissible in the court of law.
- E. Identify the primary purpose of conducting an initial survey of a crime scene and crime scene search.
- F. Compare and contrast the criteria for allowing crime scene photographs to be admitted as evidence by the court.
- G. Describe and identify elements to be included on a crime scene diagram.
- H. Differentiate between different styles of crime scene sketches/diagrams.
- I. Recognize basic survey methods that may be used for identifying the location of evidence at a crime scene.

**IV. CONTENT:**

- A. Overview
  - An introduction of a preliminary crime scene investigation as it relates to law enforcement.
- B. Preliminary Criminal Investigation
  - 1. An investigation is the systematic gathering of information from a variety of sources and the documentation of evidence, observation, and findings
  - 2. Law Enforcement agencies conduct a variety of different types of investigations
    - a. Background investigations (e.g., screening job applicants)
    - b. Internal investigations (e.g., regarding conduct of officers)
    - c. Permit investigations (e.g., prior to issuing business license)

- d. Criminal investigations
3. Criminal Investigations
    - a. Establishment of a criminal violation
    - b. Identification and arrest of a suspect
    - c. Gathering of evidence for presentation in a court of law
  4. Preliminary Investigation
    - a. Investigation of a crime scene ultimately leading to the arrest or indictment of a suspect.
    - b. Investigation continues through writing and filing of the officers investigative report
  5. Involved Parties
    - a. Reporting parties
    - b. Responding officers
    - c. Investigating officers
    - d. Victims
    - e. Witnesses
    - f. Evidence technicians
    - g. Medical examiners
    - h. Forensic scientist
    - i. Attorneys
- C. Components of a Preliminary Investigation
1. Arrival
    - a. The first priority when responding to a call is officer safety and the safety of others
    - b. Officers should be aware of road and weather conditions
    - c. Other vehicles
    - d. Bystanders who are in the area
  2. Assessment
    - a. Officers have a primary responsibility for the preservation of life and must supercede the apprehension of a suspect
    - b. Officers should render first aid and request additional emergency medical services when needed
    - c. While rendering aid, officers must also remain alert to officer safety issues
    - d. Do not assume that the information that was dispatched will be a valid reflection of the actual event
    - e. Upon arrival, officers should inspect the scene
    - f. Gather information from involved parties
    - g. Establish the body of elements of the crime (Corpus Delecti)
  3. Preliminary Investigation
    - a. Officers should obtain and document information needed to determine the crime
    - b. Identify and locate the victims or suspects
    - c. As quickly as possible, collect as much information as is available
  4. Report
    - a. Officers should begin taking field notes as soon as possible after arriving at the crime scene
    - b. Notes should reflect information needed to report on who, what, where, when, how, and why of the crime
  5. Follow-Up Investigation
    - a. Reviewing the original report to develop additional leads
    - b. Reviewing all evidence seized and assuring submission to a crime laboratory

- c. Conducting follow-up interviews with the reporting officer, victims, witnesses, and suspects
- d. Evaluating statements, evidence, and laboratory results
- e. Gathering additional evidence through surveillance
- f. Identifying, locating, arresting or seeking warrants for the arrests of suspects
- g. Conducting custodial interviews
- h. Compiling and conducting field show ups and line ups

D. Categories of Evidence

- 1. Testimonial
  - a. Most common form of evidence offered in court
  - b. Offered by individuals who have been sworn to testify truthfully
  - c. Concern facts that have been personally observed or experienced by the individual
- 2. Physical
  - a. Tangible objects that are relevant to the issue being presented
  - b. Often includes items collected at a crime scene (e.g., clothing, fibers, fingerprints, etc.)
- 3. Demonstrative
  - a. Representations that show or illustrate a fact
  - b. Photographs, rough sketches, and diagrams
- 4. Documentary
  - a. Documents or other forms of written information that are relevant to the issue being presented
  - b. May include public or private documents (diaries, letters)
  - c. Proof of authenticity may be required
- 5. Mathematical or Statistical
  - a. Information that shows frequency or probability of an event
  - b. Often obtained through expert witnesses

E. Admissibility of Evidence

- 1. Relevancy
  - a. Have a tendency to prove or disprove a fact which is at issue in the case
  - b. Having a bearing on any issue which is relevant to the defendant's guilt or innocence
- 2. Materiality
  - a. Be related to the facts of the particular case
  - b. Not merely be in regard to secondary issues (e.g., evidence of other crimes committed by the defendant)
  - c. Not biased the injury into judging the character of the person rather than the criminal act
- 3. Competency/Reliability
  - a. Come from reliable source (e.g., witness, expert witness, voluntary confession, etc.)
  - b. Not have been tainted by faulty collections, handling, or analysts methods

F. Crime Scene Surveys and Searches

- 1. Crime Scene Search is a systematical, coordinated effort conducted in order to:
  - a. Locate physical evidence that a crime has taken place
  - b. Identify individuals who may have committed the crime
- 2. Search Plans
  - a. Type of crime that has taken place

- b. Type of items that may be associated with the crime
- c. Perimeters of the area to be searched
- d. Searching patten that will be used
- 3. Selecting a search pattern
  - a. Location and configuration of the crime scene
  - b. Number of personnel available for the search
  - c. Personal preference
- 4. Documentation
  - a. The investigating officers field notes
  - b. Photographs
  - c. Crime scene diagrams
- 5. Search Patterns
  - a. Line
  - b. Quadrant
  - c. Grid
  - d. Spiral
  - e. Wheel

G. Field Notes

- 1. Field notes are abbreviated notation written by an officer while investigating a specific incident or crime
- 2. When to take notes
  - a. At the scene of an event or incident
  - b. When interviewing persons (e.g., victims, witness, suspects, etc.)
  - c. Whenever an officer wishes to record specific facts for inclusion in the report
  - d. Any time the officer wishes to remember specific details at a later time
- 3. Considerations
  - a. Field notes are more reliable than an officers memory
  - b. Detailed field notes reduce the need to re-contact the involved parties at a later time.
  - c. Field notes can be used to defend the credibility of an investigative report

H. Photographs of a Crime Scene

- 1. Benefits of photographs at a crime scene
  - a. Provide investigators with a visual record of the crime scene
  - b. Allow the court to visually see the crime scene and the position and the state of each item of evidence at the scene
  - c. Serve as a means of preserving perishable evidence
  - d. Be stored as evidence indefinitely and be readily available if needed at a later time
- 2. Photographs as evidence
  - a. Show an object or person relevant to a crime
  - b. Accurately represent, without distortion, the object, or scene photographed
  - c. Are marked properly to identify contents and location
  - d. Are not used solely to appeal to the emotions or prejudice the court or jury
- 3. Types of Photographs
  - a. Location
  - b. Witnesses
  - c. Evidence
  - d. Close-ups

I. Crime Scene Sketches and Diagrams

1. Crime scene sketches and diagrams can be used to supplement photographs and provide this additional information regarding the crime scene
  - a. Display a crime scene as a whole or in part
  - b. Provide clear and concise descriptions of all pieces of evidence
  - c. Show the relationship of items to each other
  - d. Show measured distances between items
  - e. Illustrate positions and movements of involved parties (e.g., victims, suspects, and witnesses)
  - f. Provide a permanent record of the condition not easily recorded in words
  - g. Aid in reconstructing the crime scene
  - h. Supplement written field notes
  - i. Assist the reporting officer in writing comprehensive investigative reports

J. Styles of Sketches/Diagrams

1. Exploded/Cross Projection
  - a. Walls of a room are folded outward and appear to be on the same plane as the floor
  - b. Illustrates the location of objects relative to each other
  - c. Useful when evidence is located on the walls or ceiling
  - d. Showing the front of objects along a wall and the top objects elsewhere in the room
2. Elevation
  - a. Used when a crime scene covers uneven terrain
  - b. Shows measurements of objects relative to a selected reference base such as a bottom of an incline or the side of a structure
3. Sectional
  - a. Illustrates details and vertical spatial relationships of items interior to a crime scene.
  - b. Used in conjunction with overhead diagrams
  - c. Provides a comprehensive view of walls and items along walls

K. Handling Evidence

1. At Risk Evidence
  - a. Fingerprints
  - b. Biological fluids and stains
  - c. Gunshot residue
  - d. Paint chips
  - e. Hairs and fibers
  - f. Flammable liquids and accelerants
  - g. Shoe, foot, or tire impressions
2. Trace and Transfer Evidence
  - a. Hair
  - b. Fibers
  - c. Soil
  - d. Paint chips
  - e. Glass fragments
  - f. Biological fluids
3. Areas to Examine
  - a. Suspected points of entry or direct contact (windowsills, broken glass, door or window frames, or metal associated with hit and run cases.
  - b. Points of direct contact (e.g., furniture and carpeting, bedding, or clothing)

4. Locating trace and transfer evidence
  - a. Examining the area carefully using the naked eye, magnifying lens
  - b. Using an evidence vacuum
5. Collection of equipment
  - a. Latex gloves
  - b. Shoe covers
  - c. Smooth tip metal tweezers or forceps
  - d. Rubber tipped tongs
  - e. Sterile swabs or swatch material (for collecting liquids)
  - f. Scraper/Scalpel
  - g. Magnifying device
  - h. Casting materials and rubber containers
  - i. Brushes and other tools (e.g., pliers, screwdrivers, putty knife, etc.)
6. Packaging Equipment
  - a. Various sizes of manila envelopes
  - b. Various bags including paper, polyethylene, and plastic
  - c. Clear airtight containers
  - d. File/Test tubes with lids
  - e. Cardboard boxes and pieces of cardboard
  - f. Other clean evidence containers of various types and sizes
  - g. Puncture proof containers (for sharp objects)
  - h. Glycine Paper
  - i. Permanent marking instruments
  - j. Masking and cellulose tape
  - k. Evidence tape
7. Specialty kits or equipment
  - a. Fingerprint Kit
  - b. Drug Testing Kit
  - c. Blood Field Kit
  - d. Paraffin Test Kit (to test for gunshot residue)
8. Containers
  - a. Paper
  - b. Cardboard
  - c. Metal
  - d. Glass
  - e. Plastic

L. Chain of Custody

1. Chain of Custody begins when the item is first collected and tagged as evidence. The officer using the appropriate documentation techniques will aid in keeping the chain of custody intact.
  - a. The report number
  - b. Who initially found the item
  - c. Where and when the item was found
  - d. Description of the item
  - e. Who recovered, packaged and labeled the item
  - f. Who transported the item
  - g. Where it was submitted
  - h. Where, how, and when the item was secured
2. Handling Evidence
  - a. Responding officers
  - b. Investigating officers
  - c. Evidence technicians
  - d. Property personnel
  - e. Laboratory personnel

- f. Individuals from the district attorney's office

M. Fingerprints

1. Fingerprints are a form of an at risk evidence that can be easily smeared or destroyed. Because of this, officers at the crime scene should always
  - a. Handle items as little as possible
  - b. Pick items by holding onto areas that are least likely to hold a print (i.e., on rough surfaces)
  - c. Keep in mind that wearing gloves or using handkerchiefs, while keeping their own prints off an item, may also wipe away any prints already on the item
  - d. Bring any portable object with fingerprints on it to the lab whenever possible rather than attempting to process the fingerprints at the crime scene
2. Forms of Fingerprints
  - a. Visible
  - b. Plastic
  - c. Latent
3. Basic steps for latent fingerprints on nonporous surfaces
  - a. Identify a possible location where prints may have been left
  - b. Prepare equipment (brush, powder, etc.)
  - c. Lightly dust surface
  - d. Photograph revealed fingerprints in place
4. Other powder application techniques
  - a. Spraying
  - b. Magna-brush
  - c. Sifting/rolling
5. Developing latent fingerprints on porous materials
  - a. Fuming
  - b. Immersion
6. Lifting latent fingerprints
  - a. Cellulose Tape
  - b. Pre-assembled lifter

N. Crime Scene Interviews

1. An interview is the purpose of gathering information from a person who has knowledge of the facts that an officer will need to conduct an investigation
2. The purpose of an interview is to be conducted at the crime scene of a crime in order to obtain and document information needed
  - a. Determine if a crime has taken place
  - b. Identify and locate victims and witnesses
  - c. Identify possible suspects
  - d. Generate a crime broadcast to dispatch
  - e. Influencing factors
    - a. Isolation
    - b. Convenience to witness
    - c. Interviewer and action skills
3. Overcoming reluctance
  - a. Distrustful or suspicious of the legal system
  - b. Intimidation
  - c. Deceit
4. Factors influencing perceptions

- a. External conditions
- b. Physical abilities/impairments
- c. Emotional condition
- d. Bias and/or prejudice
- e. Culture differences

O. Investigative Interrogations

1. An interrogation means any questioning or conduct that is reasonably likely to elicit (produce) an incriminating response from a suspect
2. Miranda Law
3. Purposes of an interrogation
  - a. Obtaining an admission or confession
  - b. Identifying individuals involved in a crime
  - c. Establishing a persons guilt
  - d. Corroborating the facts of a crime
  - e. Obtaining information that could lead to the recovery of evidence or property
4. Confession Vs. Admission
  - a. Confession – The commission of all of the elements of a crime
  - b. Admission – Certain facts that tend to incriminate the individual, but fall short of a confession

P. United States Constitutional Amendments

1. 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment – Freedom from Unreasonable Searches or Seizures
2. 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment – Freedom from Self Incrimination
3. 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment – Right to Counsel
4. 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment – Right to Due Process and Equal Protection of the Law
  1. Use of diversionary reality questions
  2. Pose simple choices to help victim regain some sense of control
  3. Provide options and explain procedures that will follow

**V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

- A. Lecture
- B. Discussion
- C. Practical Exercises/Demonstration
- D. Audio-Visual
- E. Participation/Role Play

**VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. Reading: Read current Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) approved handouts and workbooks related to the Public Safety field.
  1. After reading selected chapters on criminal investigation, students will discuss the basic elements of crime scene investigations including fingerprinting.



- B. Writing: Typical writing assignments include memorandums familiarizing the student with criminal investigation.
1. Students will also prepare reports of law enforcement situations including chain of custody and crime scene diagrams.

C. Critical Evaluation of Videotapes:

View current POST approved videos related to sexual harassment and community policing.

1. Students will interpret and discuss the material presented in the videos

**VII. EVALUATION:**

A. Methods of Evaluation

1. Examinations

a. Typical examination questions:

Evidence can be in the form of:

- a) Tangible items collected at the scene of a crime
- b) Verbal testimony given by a peace officer at a trial
- c) Rough sketches and diagrams drawn by officers at a crime scene
- d) All of the above

b. Which of the following containers would be most appropriate for packaging an individual hair found loosely attached to a chair cushion at a crime scene?

- a) Paper bag
- b) Small plastic bag
- c) Folded paper bundle
- d) Small cardboard box
- e) The entire cushion should be collected as evidence

B. Frequency of evaluation

1. Minimum of two (2) examinations per class, or as deemed appropriate throughout the course of the connection with the instruction.

**VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):**

Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), Performance Objectives for the Regular Basic Course, Sacramento, CA., 2002

Gould's, Penal Code Handbook of California, Longwood, FL., most recent edition  
Handouts provided by the instructor

**IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF THE STUDENTS:**

Three ring binder  
Book carry case