

CJ-2812: SPECIAL TOPICS: INTRODUCTION TO MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATION

Cuyahoga Community College

Viewing: CJ-2812 : Special Topics: Introduction to Medicolegal Death Investigation

Academic Term:

Fall 2026

Subject Code

CJ - Criminal Justice

Course Number:

2812

Title:

Special Topics: Introduction to Medicolegal Death Investigation

Catalog Description:

This course will serve as an introduction to the Medicolegal Death Investigation process. The course will cover history, procedures, report writing, and medical terminology commonly found in the medicolegal field. Students will enhance their knowledge by conducting investigations of dynamic mock scenes and witnessing an autopsy.

Credit Hour(s):

3

Lecture Hour(s):

3

Lab Hour(s):

0

Requisites

Prerequisite and Corequisite

None.

Outcomes

Course Outcome(s):

Define types of death that must be reported to the Coroner or Medical Examiner in Ohio.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Cultural Sensitivity: Demonstrate sensitivity to the beliefs, views, values, and practices of cultures within and beyond the United States.

Objective(s):

1. Distinguish types of trauma and explain the mechanisms of injury.
2. Describe investigative information that is important to the determination of cause and manner of death on specific cases.
3. Recognize natural disease processes/ medical terminology.
4. Distinguish early and late phase postmortem changes and identify variables used in the assessment of postmortem interval including limitations.
5. Investigate a simulated death scene in accordance with national guidelines.

Methods of Evaluation:

Attendance/participation

20%

Quizzes	20%
Assignments	30%
Final Examination	30%

Course Content Outline:

This course is comprised of weekly lectures covering topics in Medicolegal Death Investigation. Guest lecturers on selected topics are TBA. There will be two projects assigned. The first assignment is a two-page report on a medical examiner's office/ coroner's office of the student's choice. Additional information including content of paper will be distributed to the student prior to the assignment.

The second assignment involves the student formulating a one-page medicolegal report on death after performing a mock scene (site TBD).

Case studies: Each class will finish with a case study previously investigated by the instructor. Students will have the opportunity to write notes on the photographs displayed. Each class will start with a class discussion on the case.

Religious Accommodation

Before reviewing the course schedule, students should carefully review the following religious accommodation policy and other required instructional policies:

Religious Accommodation:

Students seeking an accommodation for absences permitted under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act must provide the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requires an accommodation and must do so not later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction. Please submit requests for accommodations at this link: <https://portal2.tri-c.edu/ReligiousAccommodation/> Religious Accommodation Form. Students with questions about their religious accommodations under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act may contact the College's Office of General Counsel and Legal Services by phone at 216.987.4856 or via email at legal@tri-c.edu.

Other Required Instructional Policies:

<https://www.tri-c.edu/student-resources/curriculum/documents/syllabus-part-b.pdf>

Weekly Schedule

	Topics
Week 1	Course Introduction
Week 2	History- Medical Examiner vs. Coroner
Week 3	Reportable Deaths in Ohio
Week 4	Sudden Death in Adults
Week 5	Time of Death
Week 6	Death Scene/Identification/Fingerprints
Week 7	Blunt/Sharp Force Trauma
Week 8	Blunt/Sharp/Force Trauma cont.
Week 9	Gunshot Wounds
Week 10	Gunshot Wounds cont.
Week 11	Asphyxia
Week 12	Mock Scene
Week 13	The Autopsy
Week 14	Medical Examiners Office Visit (Optional)
Week 15	Review
Week 16	Final Examination

The Course Schedule is subject to change due to pedagogical needs, instructor discretion, parts of term, and unexpected events.

Required/Recommended Readings

Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office. "Medicolegal Death Investigation (A Step-By-Step Field Guide)".

Resources for the Instructor

Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office. (2017) *Medicolegal Death Investigation (A Step-by-Step Field Guide)*, Bookbaby.

Additional Resources for the Instructor

National Institute of Justice. Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/167568.pdf>. Updated 2011.

1. Ann Bucholt, Death Investigation. Anderson Publishing. 2015
2. Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office Investigation Unit. Medicolegal Death Investigation: A Step-By-Step Field Guide. Book Baby. April 2018.
3. National Institute of Justice. Death Investigation: A Guide for the Scene Investigator. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. 2011.

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