

The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities
Forensic Science SCI 04250
Fall Semester 2026

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Office Hours: MW 9:30 – 10:30 and 1:30 - 2:30, Tuesday 10:00 – 1:00,
Friday 1:30 – 2:30, or by appointment

Class Schedule: Lecture: MWF 3:00 – 3:50 in B-211

Lab: Thursday 10:00 – 11:50 in B-211

Course description:

“Forensic Science is a first course in the forensic application of both science and technology. Topics will be taught on a case history approach to expose students to “front-page” cases of past and present. This course will place major emphasis on exposing students to biological, chemical, and physical methods of analyzing crime scene evidence. Students will use information and evidence data from case histories and case readings, as well as the compilation of information from the internet, to explore and learn about the forensic applications of science and technology. Topics in this course will include: the history and development of forensic science, security of a crime scene and collection of physical evidence, trace evidence, fire investigations and explosives, fingerprints, firearms and tool marks, document examination, and computer forensics. This course will place a major emphasis on the newest and best methods to gather, analyze, and interpret data needed to solve all types of crimes. In addition, students will explore the disciplines of forensic science and college courses and majors necessary to obtain a career in the forensic sciences.”

(<http://www.bsu.edu/academy/catalog/>)

Texts:

Forensic Science, Fundamentals and Investigations, Second Edition by Bertino and Bertino
The Forensic Casebook by N.E. Genge

All students will need a personal computer to complete assignments. Students may access helpful software applications (Microsoft Office, Adobe, etc.) at the following link:

[BSU Digital Tools](#)

Please note that some aspects of this course may need to be changed during the semester, so this syllabus is subject to revision. If the syllabus is revised during the semester, the updated syllabus will be posted on Canvas. Please refer to Canvas for updated information.

Assignments:

The assignments for the course are shown in the table below.

Category	Percentage
Exams and Quizzes	50%
Assignments (Classwork, homework, etc.)	25%
Laboratory Exercises and Projects	25%
Total	100%

Grading scale:

Your course grade and Dual Credit Grade will be determined as a percentage of earned points with weighted categories on the following scale:

A = 94 – 100%	B = 83 – 86%	C = 74 – 76%
A- = 90 – 93%	B- = 80 – 82%	C- = 70 – 73%
B+ = 87 – 89%	C+ = 79 – 77%	D* < 69.9%

Grades will be posted on Powerschool. If I am late posting grades, you can estimate your current grade in the course by adding all the points you have earned or anticipate earning from all assignments. Please check Powerschool regularly and notify me of any potential errors within 10 school days. **Please make an appointment to talk with me if you are concerned about your grade or uncertain about your standing in the course.**

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Students may receive excused absences at the professional discretion of the school nurse, the associate director of mental health services, the associate director of college counseling and student engagement, the director of academic affairs, and the executive director of the Indiana Academy. Unexcused absences occur when students miss class without prior approval from the aforementioned designated school officials. Continued absences (both excused and unexcused) from Academy classes increase the likelihood of unsuccessful completion.

Alongside steady attendance, students are expected to maintain consistent healthy habits of decorum, respect, and kindness towards their classmates, instructors, and teaching assistants. When students fail to meet these classroom behavioral standards and academic habits, it is the expectation faculty engage appropriately to bring quick and immediate resolution. When students consistently fail to meet these behavioral standards and academic habits in the classroom, administrative action will be taken involving, but not limited to, parent/guardian communication, removal of privileges, administrative withdrawal from the classroom, suspension, and expulsion.

The Academy and not the instructor determines whether an absence is excused or unexcused. You are expected to attend every class, but you are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. For additional information on absences and late work, please see the sections below.

Absence Policy

It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor. Four or more unexcused absences in any particular class a student takes will lead to academic and residential consequences to be determined by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Residential Life that may include detention, residential groundings, parent/principal conference, among others.

Late work

If an absence is excused, the instructor will make every reasonable effort to ensure the student has the opportunity to make up any assignments associated with the absence. A student who has an excused absence on the day an assignment is due must communicate with the instructor regarding an appropriate due date for missed work. Each student may submit 1 homework assignment late (beyond a 24-h grace period) for an unexcused reason without penalty if the student tells the instructor on or before the due date that it will be late. Any other unexcused late work may be graded, but a penalty of 10% per day late may be deducted from the score at the instructor's discretion. Unexcused late work for a given unit cannot be submitted after the unit exam is completed.

Laboratory assignments must be submitted by the due date, or 10% per day late may be deducted at the instructor's discretion. If a student misses a lab session because of an excused absence, additional time may be granted to allow the student to make up the lab activity or a substitute activity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the

instructor as soon as possible to set up a time to make up the missed lab.

If an exam is missed, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible to set up a time to make it up. If the exam is missed due to an unexcused absence, the student will be permitted to make up the exam, but a penalty of 10% may be deducted from the exam score at the instructor's discretion. All makeup exams must be completed within one week of the student returning to class.

Safety

Please familiarize yourself with lab safety protocols and perform procedures with care. Because we hold class in a science lab, no food, gum, or drinks can be brought into the classroom. Your work area should always be free of clutter and only have the necessary materials (pens/pencils, notebook, etc.). If there are glassware breakages or equipment problems, please notify the instructor immediately to ensure proper safety and equipment protocols are followed.

Academic conduct

You will prepare for each class meeting by completing the reading and any assignments that are due. Most assignments will be submitted on Canvas, though some assignments may be submitted in class.

Although some activities such as labs may be completed in pairs or groups of students, each student is individually responsible for submitting assignments with original writing (not copied from your lab mate or any other source). You are encouraged to discuss answers to lab activities with other class members, but the wording should not be the same. Do not share word processing files with each other, but make sure each student has access to the raw data for analysis.

You are expected to conduct yourself according to the Indiana Academy Student Handbook (<https://academy.bsu.edu/handbook/>), especially the Code of Conduct and the section on Academic Integrity. On writing assignments, please be sure to use your own wording and cite all sources of information, whether from the Internet or otherwise. If you are not sure how to cite something, ask the instructor. Note that language copied verbatim from a book, website, another student's paper, or any other source is considered plagiarism unless it is in quotation marks and cited. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. Please do not plagiarize or cheat in any other way. An infraction may result in a 0 for the assignment. For violations of academic honesty, please refer to the "Academic Dishonesty" portion of your student handbook. In particular, please read the "Academic Integrity Board". Remember that you always have the right to refute any accusation (or ramification dictated by your instructor) of academic dishonesty by having your case brought before the AIB. Note that if the AIB is used, its decisions are final.

Classroom conduct

Please do not engage in conversations that are not relevant to the class. Please be respectful of other classmates. Keep any devices not used for classroom activities silenced or off. Your phone should be put away if it's not being used for class. Phones, tablets, and laptops can be used in class for class activities, but repeated use for non-class activities may result in a loss of that privilege. Please treat each other with respect and refrain from disruptive behavior. Do not interrupt another student or the instructor. If you are having difficulty asking questions or contributing to discussions, you can raise your hand. Examples of improper conduct include having extended conversations, working on assignments for other courses, sleeping, etc. Serious and/or chronic problems may be cause for dismissal from the course. A calculator (but not a phone) may be used for exams.

Indiana Academy Wireless Device Policy

Per Indiana Code 20-26-5-40.7, each school corporation must adopt and implement a wireless communication device policy that:

- Prohibits a student from using a wireless communication device unless directed by the classroom teacher for educational purposes only.

If required for participation in classroom instruction, a teacher may direct students to use only laptops or tablets. Cellphones, gaming devices, and smartwatches may not be used and must always be stored in a residential room, locker, backpack, or cellphone holders in the classroom. Students are prohibited from using any wireless communication device in the hallways, bathrooms, and all other locations inside the instructional building unless directly instructed to by a teacher. Students violating this policy may have their phone taken by a Burris or Indiana Academy school official for the remainder of the day. Phones can be picked up from the school office at the end of the instructional day. Repeated violations of this policy will result in further consequences as outlined in the Student Handbook. This policy does not apply to the residential hall (Wagoner/Elliott) except when a teacher temporarily holds a class session in a location other than the Burris Laboratory building. This policy does not apply to Ball State University courses or other Ball State University buildings.

Library research

Through your association with Ball State University, you have access to an academic research library with many useful materials. This includes online access to many peer-reviewed biological journals through bibliographic databases to which Ball State subscribes. To access these databases, go to <https://www.bsu.edu/academics/libraries>, and scroll down to "Databases". The databases are listed in alphabetical order by the first letter. Two good ones to try are JSTOR under "J" and NCBI under "N". When you click on one of these databases, you will be prompted to log into your Ball State account. You can search for articles on topics of interest and access the full text of

many articles from the journal publishers' websites.

Special circumstances

If you need accommodations because of a disability, have emergency medical information to share, or need special arrangements in case of a building evacuation, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

If you are struggling with study habits, stress, and/or personal issues, I encourage you to discuss the situation with your SLC and/or contact the Guidance Office for help in dealing with these issues so that you can thrive at the Academy. Many resources are available for students, and important contact information is listed below:

For tutoring: To find a tutor through Ball State: iaguidance@bsu.edu
phone: 765-285-2889; office: WA 160-D

Mental health: Dr. Mindy Wallpe (mcwallpe@bsu.edu)
phone: 765-285-5483; office: WA 160-C

Student Accommodation Policy

Students possessing an educational 504 or IEP should contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for any accommodations that may be needed. Likewise, if you feel that you could benefit from an educational 504 or IEP, feel free to contact the instructor to this regard.

Ball State University Beneficence Pledge

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains outstanding faculty, staff, and students. Ball State is committed to ensuring that all members of the campus community are welcome through our practice of valuing the varied experiences and worldviews of the people whom we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as evident in our Beneficence Pledge. As a reflection of Ball State's commitment to respect, civil discourse, and the Beneficence Pledge, inclusiveness at the Indiana Academy emerges as one of the priorities of our living and learning community. We strive to exist together respectfully and compassionately, creating an environment where every member can thrive.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

For information regarding use of artificial intelligence (AI) for this course, please consult the AI Policy document available on the AP Biology Canvas page.

Tentative Forensic Science Schedule:

Listed below is a tentative schedule of course content and may be subject to change.

***Note: Chronic Safety violations and/or disruptions may result in grade deductions and/or dismissal from course**

Fall Semester 2026		
Week	Topic	Chapters
1 (8/10)	Introduction to Forensics, Observation, and Applications	1
2 (8/17)	Securing and Searching a Crime Scene and Evidence Collection (Locard's Exchange Principle)	2
3 (8/24)	Case Study: A Beauty Queen's Death, Trace Evidence Pt. I (Hair and Fibers)	3-4
4 (8/31)	Trace Evidence Pt. II (Hair and Fibers), Forensic Botany, Unit 1 Exam: Crime Scene Analysis, Evidence Collection, and Trace Evidence	5, 13, 15
5 (9/7)	Death Investigation, Pathology and Anthropology	12, 14
6 (9/14)	Case Study: John Wayne Gacy, Forensic Entomology and Intro to DNA and Biotechnology	7, 11
7 (9/21)	Biological Samples, PCR, and Gel Electrophoresis	7
8 (9/28)	DNA Profiling and CODIS, Case Study: The Grim Sleeper (10/4: parent-teacher conferences in afternoon)	7
9 (10/5)	Unit 2 Exam: Death Investigation and DNA Profiling, Drug Classifications and Laws	9
10 (10/19)	Forensic Toxicology, Case Study: The Tylenol Murders	9
11 (10/26)	Fire, Explosion, and Arson Investigation	supp.
12 (11/2)	Blood Spatter Analysis, Introduction to Fingerprints	6, 8
13 (11/9)	Case Study: Francisca Rojas, Fingerprint Analysis	8
14 (11/16)	Impressions, Tool Marks, and Ballistics	16-18
15 (11/23)	Document Analysis, Computer Forensics,	10, supp.
16 (11/30)	Unit 3 Exam: Toxicology, Fingerprints, and Impressions, work on projects	
17 (12/7)	Project Presentations	
18 (12/14)	Final Exam	

Mr. Crowder reserves the right to change the schedule on an "as needed" basis. Students will be notified of these changes through e-mail and/or Canvas announcements.