

**Wildlife Crime Scene Processing**  
**WIS-6561**  
**Spring 2016**

**Instructor: Susan Underkoffler, MFS**

**Available online (online chat): Mondays 10:00AM-12:00PM EST; Thursdays 8:00PM-10:00PM EST**

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**Office: Remote**

**Text (Recommended):**

This course will utilize readings from Practical Crime Scene Processing and Investigation; Ross M. Gardner, 2nd Edition, Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-1439853023 ISBN-10: 1439853029 and Wildlife Forensic Investigation: Principles & Practice; John E. Cooper, Margaret E. Cooper. CRC Press, 2013. ISBN 1439813744

*\*Note: these are RECOMMENDED texts – they are not required for this course. Readings from relevant literature will be provided on the course website.*

**Required Equipment:** Computer with reliable, high speed internet access; your preferred web browser; video player with ability to play MP4 videos; speakers and/or headphones and working sound; PDF reader. For more information on hardware and software necessary to run Canvas, visit <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2059> (Links to an external site.). Canvas offers mobile applications for both [Apple](#) (Links to an external site.) and [Android](#) (Links to an external site.) products. These apps may be downloaded in the respective app stores. Depending on the device and your equipment, not all Canvas features may be available on the app at this time. For more information on Canvas apps, visit <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-1542> (Links to an external site.).

**Course Overview**

This course will serve as an introduction to wildlife crime scene investigations. The purpose of the course is to give the student an overview of procedures and protocols that can be used when processing a wildlife crime scene and will discuss in detail various types of evidence.

## Course Objectives

At the successful completion of this course, students will have an understanding of forensic science and its disciplines and will know how to properly document and process a crime scene where wildlife may be the victim or possibly the perpetrator. Students will gain an understanding of evidence recognition and handling as well as record keeping in order to prevent undocumented scene details or lost or damaged evidence. The student will have learned the various methods to properly conduct a search of the scene and record information, as well as tricks and techniques for equipment improvisation when in the field. The student will also be familiar with the various presumptive test methods that can be utilized at the scene to identify items of evidence, and will have gained a background in basic species morphology.

## Topics:

<b>Module</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>1 – <u>Introduction</u></b> <b>Week of Jan. 5, 2016</b>	Course Introduction/Expectations The Scientific Method – How to Apply the Scientific Method to Wildlife Crime Scene Investigation Taxonomic Identification Introduction to Types of Wildlife Crimes Discussion Questions/Project
<b>2 –<u>Forensic Science</u></b> <b>Week of Jan. 10, 2016</b>	History of Forensic Science Forensic Science and Medicine and its Application to Wildlife Crime Discussion Questions/Project
<b>3 – <u>Conservation Biology &amp; Wildlife Management</u></b> <b>Week of Jan. 17, 2016</b>	Wildlife Management Overview Conservation Biology and Ecology Basics Biodiversity, Its Importance and Its Threats Endangered Species/Extinction Risks CITES Discussion Questions/Project Quiz 1
<b>4 – <u>Identifying the Crime Scene/Scene Processing</u></b> <b>Week of Jan. 24, 2016</b>	Approaching, Defining, and Securing a Wildlife Crime Scene Questions That Must be Answered When Processing a Wildlife Crime Scene Scene Processing Steps Mapping and Sketching the Scene Discussion Questions/Project
<b>5 –<u>Evidence</u></b> <b>Week of Jan. 31, 2016</b>	What is Evidence? Identification of Physical Evidence of Wildlife Crime Evidence Collection, Preservation, and Processing of a Wildlife Crime Scene Discussion Questions/Project
<b>6 – <u>Forensic Photography/Impression</u></b>	The How-tos of Wildlife Crime Scene Photographic Documentation Impression Evidence

<b><u>Evidence Week of Feb. 7, 2016</u></b>	Tracking/Sign Discussion Questions/Project Quiz 2
<b><u>7 – Morphology: Fish &amp; Reptile Identification Week of Feb. 14, 2016</u></b>	Trace Evidence Associated with Fish and Reptiles – Scales, Skin, Fish Fillet Identification Discussion Questions/Project
<b><u>8 – Morphology: Avian &amp; Mammal Identification Week of Feb. 21, 2016</u></b>	Trace Evidence Associated with Avian/Mammal Species– Feathers, Hair, Etc. Discussion Questions/Project
<b><u>(Spring Break) Week of Feb. 28, 2016</u></b>	Midterm Exam
<b><u>9 – Forensic Entomology &amp; Botany Week of March 6, 2016</u></b>	Forensic Entomology and Botany and Their Uses in Wildlife Forensic Investigations Decomposition Analysis Discussion Questions/Project Quiz 3
<b><u>10 – DNA Analysis/Toxicology Week of March 13, 2016</u></b>	Introduction to DNA and its Practical Applications in Wildlife Crime Scene Processing Forensic Toxicology: Poisoning Discussion Questions/Project
<b><u>11 – Blood/Serology/ Ballistics Week of March 20, 2016</u></b>	Presumptive Testing and Differentiation of Human and Animal Blood Under Field Conditions Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Basics Ballistic Evidence Discussion Questions/Project
<b><u>12 – Forensic Animal Anthropology and Osteology Week of March 27, 2016</u></b>	Aspects of Wildlife Osteology Species Identification Carcass Identification Claw ID Discussion Questions/Project Quiz 4
<b><u>13 – Animal Examinations/Field Forensics Week of April 3, 2016</u></b>	Live Animal Examinations Necropsy Samples from Live and Dead Animals Forensic Science in the Field Equipment Improvisation and Substitution
<b><u>14 – Criminal Law Week of April 10, 2016</u></b>	Relevant Criminal Law Crash Course Looking to the Future Discussion Questions
<b><u>15 – Week of April 17, 2016</u></b>	Final Exam/Research Project Due

**Grading:**

Exams: There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The exams will each consist of 20 multiple choice questions worth 1 point each and two short essay questions worth 10 points each for a total of 40 points per exam. The exams will open on a Monday morning (EST) and be due by 11:59 PM EST the following Sunday. The exams will be open book and the students may use the readings and their notes from the lectures.

Weekly Discussion Questions/Projects: There will either be two discussion questions or a short project assigned for each Module; each discussion question is worth 2 points and each short project will be worth 5 points. Discussion questions/short projects will open on a Monday morning (EST) and be due by 11:59 PM EST the following Sunday. The discussions will remain open for the duration of the semester, but you must post at least one response by the following Sunday to receive credit. Extra credit may be given for thought-provoking, on-going discussions.

Quizzes: There will be four quizzes throughout the semester. These are open-note/book, consisting of 10 multiple choice questions worth 1 point each for a total of 10 points per quiz. The quizzes will open on a Monday morning (EST) and be due by 11:59 PM EST the following Sunday.

Final Project: There will also be a research project to consist of 8-10 typewritten pages (not including extraneous material) that will be due the last week of class, worth 100 points. It will require students to do research outside the provided materials for class and will incorporate most of the lessons of the course. Inclusion of supplemental material for the research project, such as reference pages, logs, photographs, maps, etc., (not included as part of the 8-10 pages) is encouraged.

Each assignment will have an accompanying rubric explaining the breakdown of how points are to be distributed.

**MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS WILL NOT BE GIVEN UNLESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE *PRIOR* TO THE EXAM DATE. IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND YOU ARE UNABLE TO TAKE THE EXAM ON THE DATE IT IS ADMINISTERED TO THE CLASS, A DOCTOR'S NOTE MUST BE PROVIDED IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO RETAKE THE EXAM.**

**I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S NOTE (OR SIMILAR EXCUSE).**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A 90% or Above

A- 88 - 89%

B+ 85 - 87%

B 80 - 84%

B- 78 - 79%

C+ 75 - 77%

C 70 - 74%

C- 68 - 69 %

D+ 65 - 67%  
D 60 - 64%  
D- 58 - 59%  
E < 58

There will be no curve.

**Additional information on the University of Florida Grades and Grading Policies may be found at: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>**

**Grade Changes:**

Grades will be changed only when a grading error has been made. If you think an error has been made, you should email the instructor as soon as possible. Your entire assignment will then be re-graded.

**About online participation:** This course is offered online, using the learning management system Canvas provided by the University of Florida. Online participation is expected throughout the course. If the course requires scheduled online activities, absences must be documented. If not documented, such behavior may result in a course withdrawal issued for the students. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and to login to the course discussion boards and post messages to each of the threads provided in the discussion forums. Active participation in the course will count towards the final grade, and assist students with the exams and written assignments.

Lectures for the week will be posted by the Sunday prior to the class week. Lectures may be viewed in any order, but are organized to build on one another. Students may view lectures as often as desired. Lectures from previous weeks will remain on the course page for the duration of the semester.

**Getting Started:**

To get started, briefly introduce yourself via the discussion board located in the left-hand menu on the homepage of the course. Once you have responded to the Introduction you will then go to the first module. Read through the course content and any required reading listed in the module introduction. Do not hesitate to contact your instructor at any time if you need guidance; if you are unsure about the focus of the assignment; if you have assignment questions or questions relating to the course content. If you don't tell us you need help, we can't help you!

**Revision and Notes:**

We will not be able to provide you with copies of course content once the course is removed from your account.

**Communication:**

Course Email, not the discussion board, should always be used to contact the faculty or staff if you have a problem of a personal nature. If you are having technical problems with the course content (downloads, etc) or you are unable to access your course interface, please contact us directly, and please don't spend hours trying to get something to work as this will only lead to frustration. We don't want any of you to be offline for any length of time. Contact us as soon as

you can so we can check it out and help you. If you are experiencing difficulty with your access to course email then please email your course instructor directly via regular email. In that email, make sure you give your name and the name of your course. Please respond to all emails from your instructor or TA. When we email you we are usually contacting you because we want to help you. If you have a question about your grade, an exam, or assignment question, please email us and we'll be happy to help you.

**Announcements:**

It's VERY important that you check the site daily and read all the posted announcements. I will use this area to post important information relating to content or exam changes, deadlines etc.

**Attendance:** Students must participate in the bulletin board discussions, and are required to visit the course website daily for important updates and bulletins.

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to constructively join in bulletin board discussions with appropriate preparation, to post interesting and relevant information on the class bulletin board, and to interact professionally with their classmates.

**Performance Expectations:** Students are expected to produce quality work of a standard comparable to any graduate level didactic course. Bulletin postings and discussions must be legible, constructive and appropriate. Students are required to think for themselves and will be expected to complete assignments that require the application of logic and reasoning skills when the answer may not be found in a book or the course notes.

**Academic Honesty:** All students are expected to abide by the student honor code. To review the student honor code read the information on standards of ethical Conduct at:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism includes any attempt to take credit for another person's work. This includes quoting directly from a book or web site, without crediting the source. Sources should always be referenced, a link to the website added, or quotation marks placed around the material. However, we expect more than simply cutting and pasting in this graduate level course. Students are expected to review, evaluate and comment on material they research, rather than simply copying relevant material. Your work will be graded accordingly.

**Assignments:** While we understand that our students have other work and personal commitments, we expect every effort to be made to meet these deadlines. If for some reason, because of circumstances beyond your control, you are unable to meet an assignment deadline, students should e-mail the professor and explain the situation in advance. Being consistently late in submitting assignments disrupts the discussion of topics on the bulletin board and will therefore result in loss of marks for that assignment up to a full letter grade. If you email us we will work with you around the deadline. If you have outstanding assignments at the end of the semester we will send you a follow up email as a reminder and as a means to determine your plans for completion. If you do not respond to us before the final day of classes you will be assigned a grade based on the completed assignments.

**Incomplete grades:** Under special circumstances, if a student is unable to finish a course before the end of the semester we may be able to assign an incomplete grade. An incomplete grade is a non punitive grade assigned at the discretion of the course instructor. In this course an incomplete grade may be assigned if 1/3rd or more of the course assignments have been completed and if the student has remained in communication with TA's and instructors throughout the course, or has made an effort to request an incomplete grade. If an incomplete grade is assigned, outstanding assignments must be completed by the end of the next semester. If the assignments are not completed in this time you will be assigned a grade based on the completed assignments.

**Drop Dates:** consult the UF Calendar of Critical Dates at

<http://www.forensicscience.ufl.edu/Students/Dates.asp>

Students must inform us that they are withdrawing from a course to ensure appropriate tuition reimbursement. Deleting yourself from the course roster does not officially withdraw you from a course.

**Important Dates:**

For Assignment deadlines - see the course Calendar in WebCT.

For other important dates, consult the UF Calendar of Critical Dates and

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/>

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting the accommodation.