

Forensic Specialist Certificate Program
I. Crime Scene Investigation Track

All courses include a lecture and practical component. All materials are provided for laboratory and practicum exercises

Program Outline:

1. Basic Photography (40 hours)

Course Description:

This is an introductory course that addresses photographic theory, technical issues, and composition in the context of forensic applications and practice. This will provide the basis for the General Crime Scene Photography and Procedure course.

2. General Crime Scene Photography and Procedure (40 hours)

Course Description:

This course introduces students to photographic concepts and lighting techniques for documenting crime scenes as well as the procedures when arriving at a crime scene.

3. Fingerprint Processing and Development (20 hours)

Course Description:

This course provides both lecture and hands-on techniques for processing and developing latent prints from physical evidence, using both mechanical and chemical techniques. It will also focus on examining fingerprint evidence collected and analyzing it's suitability for submission.

4. Specialized Impression Photography and Recovery (20 hours)

Course Description:

This course will provide both lecture and hands-on techniques for processing, photographing, lifting, casting, and preserving footwear and tire impression evidence.

5. Sketching, Measuring, and Collecting Crime Scene Evidence (20 hours)

Course Description:

This course will provide both lecture and hands-on techniques for searching, sketching, measuring, packaging, and collecting evidence. Students will apply the skills learned by processing a mock crime scene.

6. Mock Crime Scene Practicums and Courtroom Testimony (40 hours)

Course Description:

This course builds on the concepts learned in courses 1 through 5 and provides the opportunity to apply the skills in processing mock crime scenes. Students will process two crime scenes independently, from start to finish. The course will culminate in a moot court exercise.

II. Friction Ridge Examination Track

7. Introduction to Friction Ridge Analysis (40 hours)

Course Description:

This course provides a foundation in friction ridge skin as it relates to latent print examination. The content includes an historical perspective of friction ridge examinations and primary theories underlying the use of friction ridge impressions as a means of identification. Students are also introduced to levels of detail associated with friction ridge impressions as they relate to fingerprint examinations. These include creases, pattern types, deltas, ridge counts, ridge flows (macro-detail) and ridge paths, minutiae, ridge morphology, damage, aging, and other occasional features (micro-detail). Practical exercises are incorporated to reinforce the lecture topics.

8. Friction Ridge Examination Process (40 hours)

Course Description:

This course focuses on the practical applications of friction ridge examination using ACE-V methodology. Students will be introduced to factors that affect the quantity, quality, and rarity of comparison features and the standards for reporting conclusions. The role of human factors in affecting the decision-making process is also discussed.

9. Courtroom Testimony & Report Writing for Friction Ridge Examination (40 hours)

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the formalized processes that relate to the expert witness, courtroom etiquette, qualification and admissibility, and other areas of knowledge that may be referenced during expert testimony. This course will employ both lecture and hands-on training, culminating in a moot court experience and report writing exercises.