

**Modern Death Investigation  
and  
Pennsylvania Coroner's Basic Education Course**

**Hershey, PA, November 28 – December 3, 2011**

**Sponsored by**

**Applied Forensic Sciences Department  
Mercyhurst College, Erie, PA**

**Course Syllabus**

**Monday: The Office of the Pennsylvania Coroner: Roles, Duties, Nuts, and Bolts**

- 7:30-8:00 Registration
- 8:00-8:30 Introduction, Course Content (Dirkmaat)
- 8:30-9:30 **1** History of the Office of the Coroner (Ross)
- 9:30-9:45 Break
- 9:45-11:30 **2** Roles and Duties of the Coroner (Kwiatkowski)
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch
- 12:30-2:00 **3** Types of Deaths Investigated by Coroner's Office (Kwiatkowski)
- 2:00-2:15 Break
- 2:15-4:00 **4** Nuts and Bolts of the Coroner's Office (Kwiatkowski, Ross)
- 4:00-4:15 Break
- 4:15-5:45 **5** Filling out the death certificate (Mattiko)

**Tuesday: Recovery of Physical Evidence and Context at the Indoor Crime Scene**

- 8:00-9:30 **6** Evidence Recovery at the Indoor Crime Scene: Lecture (Donovan, Grim)
- 9:30-9:45 Break
- 9:45-11:30 **7** Investigating the Indoor Crime Scene I: Mock Scene (Donovan, Grim)
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch
- 12:30-2:00 **8** Investigating the Indoor Crime Scene II: Mock Scene (Donovan, Grim)
- 2:00-2:15 Break
- 2:15-3:30 **9** Fatal Automobile Crash Scenes (Grim)
- 3:30-3:45 Break
- 3:45-5:45 **10** Investigating the Indoor Crime Scene II: Case Studies (Grim)

**Wednesday: Recovery of Physical Evidence and Context at the Outdoor Crime Scene**

- 8:00-9:30 **11** Evidence Recovery at the Outdoor Crime Scene: Lecture (Dirkmaat)
- 9:30-9:45 Break
- 9:45-11:30 **12** Investigating the Outdoor Crime Scene I: Surface-scatter, Buried Body Mock Scenes, (Dirkmaat)
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch
- 12:30-1:00 **13** Use of the Cadaver Dog (Ackerman)
- 1:00-3:00 **14** Investigating the Outdoor Crime Scene II: Fatal Fire and Mass Disaster Lecture (Dirkmaat)
- 3:00-3:15 Break
- 3:15-5:30 **15** Response to the Mass Fatality Incident (Kontanis, Miller)

### Thursday: Recovery of Evidence at the Medicolegal Autopsy

- 8:00-10:00 **16** Introduction to the Medico-Legal Autopsy (deJong)  
10:00-10:15 Break  
10:15-11:30 **17** Forensic Pathology: Determining Cause of Death (deJong)  
11:30-12:30 Lunch  
12:30-2:00 **18** Trauma and Postmortem Interval (deJong)  
2:00-2:15 Break  
2:15-4:15 **19** Case Studies in Forensic Pathology II (deJong)  
4:15-4:30 Break  
4:30-5:45 **20** Child Abuse Studies (Ross)

### Friday: Establishing Identification and Circumstances of Death: Forensic Specialists

- 8:00-9:45 **21** Preparing for court (Grim)  
9:45-10:00 Break  
10:00-11:30 **22** Forensic DNA analysis (TBD)  
11:30-12:30 Lunch  
12:30-2:00 **23** Forensic Odontology: Lecture and Hands-on Demonstration (Scanlon)  
2:00-2:15 Break  
2:15-3:30 **25** Forensic Osteology Hands-on Demonstration (Symes)  
3:30-3:45 Break  
3:45-5:45 **26** Forensic Taphonomy and Bone Trauma Analysis Hands on (Symes)  
5:45-6:45 Dinner  
6:45-8:00 Course Review and Preparation for Examination (not mandatory)

### Saturday: Special Considerations and Overview of the Coroner's Office

- 8:00-9:30 **27** Ruling on Cause and Manner of Death: Case Studies (Kwiatkowski)  
9:30-9:45 Break  
9:30-10:45 **28** Mental Health in the Coroner's Office (Kwiatkowski)  
10:45-11:00 Break  
11:00-2:00 **Examination**

### Instructors

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Dennis J. Kwiatkowski, Cambria County Coroner, Johnstown, PA  
Scott Grim, D-ABMDI, Lehigh County Coroner, Reading, PA  
Elias Kontanis, Ph.D., Investigator, National Transportation Safety Board, Washington, DC  
David Mattiko, Chief, Vital Events Registry, Harrisburg, PA  
Wallace E. Miller, Somerset County Coroner, Somerset, PA  
Patty Ross, Blair County Coroner, President Pennsylvania Coroner's Association  
Richard M. Scanlon, DMD, Forensic Odontologist, Lewistown, PA  
Joyce L. deJong, DO, Forensic Pathologist, Lansing, MI  
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