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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