

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Course website: <http://spots.augusta.edu/smyers1/Chemistry4100/ForensicWelcome1.htm>

COURSE OVERVIEW

Objective. To learn skills relevant to Forensic Chemistry including interpretation and validation of data, basic toxicology (drugs and poisons), arson analysis and communication of results to nonscientists. If time permits, trace analysis will also be covered.

Materials. Required: Lab notebook with duplicate pages (yes, you can use one with leftover pages from previous class), lab coat and safety glasses. Highly recommended: *Forensic Chemistry* by Suzanne Bell. Optional: *The Dose makes the Poison* by Patricia Frank and M. Alice Ottoboni.

GRADING

Tests. There will two tests worth about 100 points each and a semi-comprehensive final exam worth 150 points (100 points of new material and 50 points of review from previous tests). The final exam is scheduled for Friday May 1 at 11 am.

Ethics Response Papers. Periodically there will be class discussions on ethics topics. There will be a required pre-class reading (posted on website), discussion in class and a short, informal (1/2 – 1 page, double spaced) response paper addressing a question relevant to the discussion. Each ethics response (all three parts) will be worth 10 points total. Students must participate in the class discussion to earn all 10 points and turn in a paper to earn ANY of the 10 points. Readings will be posted at least 24 hours before the class discussion. Check the website regularly.

Book Report. You must read some book with a significant forensic science component. (List of suggestions is posted on the website. You may use something not on the list, with permission.) You should then turn in an informal, but well-written report with a synopsis of the book, a comment on the type and quality and quantity of the forensic science included and something that you learned from it. The report should be 2-3 pages. This is worth 30 points. You may earn another 15 points for a second book report provided you switch from fiction to nonfiction (or nonfiction to fiction).

Pick your own poison. Each student will be assigned (preferences will be honored, if possible) a different poison or class of poisons. They must do a 10 -15 minute presentation to the class about their poison using a minimum of 3 references. Details of the assignment will be given in class and posted on the website. This assignment is worth 50 points.

Other assignments. There will be other assignments. This will include one major homework assignment before each test. These will be given a point value at the time of the assignment.

Labs. Labs will be worth 20 – 50 points depending on difficulty. Instructions for conducting the lab and writing the reports will be distributed by email and/or posted in the website. Students are responsible for following given instructions. Formal reports should the style should following the *ACS Style Guide* (edited by J. Dodd) but a slightly more accessible version of a style guide can be found on the course website. Points for lab will be averaged separately from the rest of the course points and average. This average will be 25% of your course grade.

Overall Grade. Students grade will be based on the percentage of points earned out of those available in two categories. The class category is worth 75% of your total grade; the lab category is worth 25% of your total grade. Together an average of 90% or greater earns an "A"; 89 – 80% earns a "B"; 79 – 70% earns a "C"; 69 – 60% earns a "D" and less than 60% earns a "F."

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all classes and all lab sessions. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what material was covered and what announcements were made.

You are expected to attend lab regularly and at the assigned time. You may lose points from your lab if you are late. Any student more than 15 minutes late will be considered absent. With an acceptable excuse, you *might* be allowed to make up a lab, depending on the nature of the experiment conducted. You might instead be given an alternate assignment. You will not be allowed to make-up more than one lab. You will receive a zero for any lab you do not attend.

Absence from 4 lectures and/or lab is considered cause to drop a student from the course. Absence from two labs is cause to drop a student from the course. The instructor will only withdraw students after midterm (2/27) with the corresponding grade of WF.

GENERAL

Lab Notebooks. You are expected to keep a lab notebook that contains all information and data relevant to your lab. Sometimes you will work with a partner or in a group. In that case, even if you did not collect all the data yourself, you are still expected to have all data pertaining to the lab in your notebook, giving credit to the person (your partner!) who did collect the data. **You will not be permitted in lab without your notebook!** Duplicate pages of your lab notebook, including copies of any instrumental data, must be turned in *BEFORE LEAVING LAB!* Any information that cannot be validated by your lab notebook is not an acceptable part of your report.

Website. You are expected to check the course website within 24 hours before each class. You are responsible for all announcements and any assignments made on the website more than 24 before class or lab. Assignments appear in various sections, so be sure to look at announcement, homework, lab and ethics sections!

Makeups. If you are aware of an exam absence in advance, you must schedule a time to take the exam early. If unforeseen circumstances cause you to miss an exam, you must notify the instructor as soon as possible (with 24 hours!) and schedule a make-up as soon as possible. (Normally before the next class meeting.) If you are not taking the exam at the same time as the rest of the class it may be different and probably harder. Documentation of your excuse may be required and must be from an authority recognized by the instructor.

If you miss a lab, you must inform the instructor as soon as possible. If you have an acceptable, the lab may be rescheduled. If not, you will be counted as absent and receive a zero for that lab.

Late penalties. There will be a 5 point per day late penalty. If an assignment does not meet prescribed standards, it may be returned to the student and the late penalty will be 5 points for every day after it was returned.

Academic Honesty. While it is appropriate to discuss assignments with other students, students are expected to fully participate in all classes and labs and submit only their own work for grading. Student should not have at their desk or on their person anything other than the materials allowed for tests. Possession of cell phones or smart (or even moderately intelligent) watches during a test is considered cheating. Failure to comply with these guidelines or any other detailed in the AU academic honesty policy will result in a zero on the assignment and possibly a WF for the course.

Safety. You are expected to abide by all department safety rules. Failure to do so will result in a zero for that experiment.

Note: The course instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course syllabus and schedule with reasonable notice to the students. The most up-to-date syllabus will be posted on the course website.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will be able to evaluate and discuss validity of data and types and sources of data error.
2. Students will be able to evaluate toxicity data.
3. Students will be able discuss the absorption, distribution, metabolism and elimination of drugs/poisons
4. Students will be able to determine conditions that lead to fire and explosions.
5. Students will be able to appropriately and scientifically discuss controversial topics related to forensic science.