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# Forensic Science

## Course Syllabus 2021-2022

Ms. Vega ♦ [jorvega@hcps.org](mailto:jorvega@hcps.org)

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### **Course Description**

This elective course is intended for any high school students who have an interest in and desire to learn more about the investigative techniques in the collection and analysis of criminal evidence. Successful completion of this course will give students a good base to continue the study of other analytical science.

### **Goals for Student Learning**

The aim of this course is to provide students an opportunity to practice and apply the skills and processes of science through the study of content in the forensic sciences. Students will be engaged in a variety of activities involving investigations of crime scene processing, past and present techniques used in the discipline, and the collection and analysis of biological and non-biological evidence.

### **Textbook and Materials**

Textbook: "Forensic Science: An Introduction" by Richard Saferstein (*provided*).

The students should bring to class:

- 1" binder with 2 tabs: warmups & classwork
- Lined notebook paper
- Pencils and pens (any ink color, as long as it is legible)
- Device chargers and headphones

### **Course Outline**

Due to the nature of this course this outline is subject to change based on student interest. Forensics involves a collaboration between biologists, physicists, and chemists and covers areas of each field in depth. As this course progresses more time may be spent on units that appeal to class. As such, this outline is considered tentative.

Unit 1. Introduction to Forensic Science

Unit 2. Death Investigations

Unit 3: Trace Evidence: Hair and Fibers

Unit 4: Blood Basics / Spatter

Unit 5: Forensic Psychology

Unit 6: The Innocence Project

Unit 7: Fingerprinting

Unit 8: Ballistics

Unit 9: Impression Evidence: Tire, Foot, and Tool

Unit 10: Document Analysis

Unit 11: Drugs and Toxicology

**HCPS Grading Policy**

<b>PRODUCT (50%)</b> <i>Culminating Demonstration of Knowledge</i>	<b>PROCESS (30%)</b> <i>Addressing Specific Short-Term Learning Outcomes</i>	<b>PRACTICE (20%)</b> <i>Building Attitudes, Habits, and Skills</i>
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- Extra credit will not be given for non-academic purposes.

**Absent Work Policy**

All assignments should be submitted on time. Students will be given the number of class periods equal to the number of lawful class periods absent to turn in completed make up assignments without penalty.

**Late Work Policy**

All assignments should be submitted on time in order to earn full credit. Any assignment, (product, process, or practice) will be allowed to be turned in late for one letter grade deduction from the grade a student earns on the assignment. In order to earn credit for late assignments, students must submit assignments by the end of the day on Wednesday (except for the last week of the quarter) following the designated HAC update. Students are only able to submit assignments that have an established due date within the grading window before the designated HAC update. Assignment that are turned in for late credit will be identified by a footnote in HAC to include a statement about the deduction of a letter grade due to the lateness of the assignment.

Grading Window	Designated HAC Update	Late Work Due Date
September 8- September 24	September 24	September 29
September 27- October 13	October 13	October 20
October 14- October 29	October 29	November 5 (Friday)
November 8- November 19	November 19	November 24
November 22- December 10	December 10	December 15
December 13- January 13	January 13	January 21 (Friday)
January 24- February 11	February 11	February 16
February 14- February 25	February 25	March 2
February 28- March 11	March 11	March 16
March 14- March 25	March 25	March 31 (Thursday)
April 1- April 22	April 22	April 27
April 25- May 6	May 6	May 11
May 11- May 20	May 20	May 25

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for the quality and completion of one's own work. Academic dishonesty is taking someone else's work and claiming it as one's own. Students at Bel Air High School are responsible for knowing what is considered to be Academic Dishonesty and the subsequent consequences. More information can be found in the BAHS Student Planner.

## **Classroom Rules and Procedures**

**Be Respectful:** listen quietly when I am speaking and respect one others space, materials and feelings. Raise your hand when you want to contribute to class.

**Be Responsible.** You will need to be responsible for yourself and your materials. This includes text book, class notebook, case book, home work, blank paper to write on, and writing utensils.

**Be Ready:** arrive to class on time, be seated in assigned space when the bell rings and come to class with an open and mind ready to learn. Check ItsLearning weekly for announcements, new assignments and other important information.

**Be Responsive:** actively participate in classroom discussions in a positive manner with comments relative to the subject at hand.

## **Cell Phone Policy**

Students will place their electronic devices (including, but not limited to, cell phones, listening devices, smart watches, laptops, and iPads), either on silent or off, in a teacher designated area as they enter each classroom. Teachers will review with students the specific location for each room. The devices will remain in the teacher designated areas unless teachers explicitly tell students to use them as a part of classroom instruction.

- Devices will remain in the teacher designated area during bathroom visits.
- Devices will be retrieved from the teacher designated area at the end of the class at the direction of the teacher.
- School-appropriate cellphone use is permitted during class changes and lunch. Students are not permitted to make phone calls during school hours.
- Students will NOT be permitted to carry their electronic devices in a book bag throughout the school day.

*If the electronic device policy is violated, the student shall then be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, confiscation of the device as well as an office referral.*



**September 2021**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am excited to work with your student this year in Forensics! This course is designed to engage your student in applying science and scientific processes towards the study of crime scenes. I ask that you take a minute to read the Course Syllabus and review it with your child, particularly the topics we will be covering this year. Please encourage your student to review their forensics materials and ask any questions they may have. A course outline has been provided in the syllabus.

As your teen's teacher, I want to make certain that you are informed about the topics he or she will be learning. Your teen's Forensic Science class will be exposing him or her to several controversial subjects. These include the following:

- crime scene situations and evidence
- perpetration of violence (including potentially sensitive crimes)
- serial killer videos, facts, methods, and psychology
- analysis of skeletal remains and insects
- the effects of a fired bullet
- drug use, addiction and analysis (legal and illegal)
- use and detection of blood, other body fluids and poisons
- autopsy procedures, photos, and videos

Not only will the student learn about these topics, he or she will participate in labs to gain hands-on experience. Illegal substances and objects **will not** be available to the students. However, several graphic pictures, videos, and illustrations are included in the class to further the understanding of certain topics. It is important to note that to convict criminals, one must first understand the circumstances of criminals, the crimes they commit, and the tools that are used to commit them. This must be done at the crime scenes, in laboratories, and courts.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 410-638-4600 or by email at [jorvega@hcps.org](mailto:jorvega@hcps.org).

Forensics is a very exciting elective course! If you or your student ever feel uncomfortable with class content, please reach out immediately so we can arrange an alternative.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jordan Vega

# Syllabus Acknowledgment Form

This form is due on Friday, September 17, 2021.

**SCHOOL:** Bel Air HS  
**CLASS:** Forensic Science  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Ms. Vega  
**YEAR:** 2021-2022

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*parent/guardian*), concur that I have read the letter and understand that my teen, \_\_\_\_\_, will be exposed to the aforementioned material. I have no objections to my teen attending and participating in Forensic Science class.

**PARENT / GUARDIAN NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT / GUARDIAN SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer to communicate through telephone or email?

- telephone \_\_\_\_\_
- email \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything special I can do to ensure the success of your student?

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