

**CRIM 410 - 002 Criminal Investigations
(3 credits)**

*George Mason University
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Criminology, Law, and Society*

Spring 2024

Instructor: Shahram Fard, CPM, MS
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Phone: 703-993-8315 (office)
Office Hours: By Appointment
Class Time: Mondays 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m.
Location: Planetary Hall – 212
Prerequisite: D or higher in CRIM 100

Course Description (GMU Course Catalog):
https://cls.gmu.edu/courses/crim410/course_sections/99042

I. Learning Goal

This course fulfills an elective requirement for Criminology, Law, and Society majors/minors. It covers criminal investigations and the investigator's role in the justice system. The course is arranged based on the textbook's chapters.

II. Attendance Policy and Required Course Materials

Attendance Policy:

Students should attend all classes on time and complete in-class assignments. Since this is an in-person course, attendance and participation are crucial for a positive learning outcome. The Qwickly app will be used to take electronic attendance at the end of each class session. Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive and will negatively affect final grades.

Excused Absences - Excused absences include illness (with doctor's note), family death, and academic/athletic mandates (with prior approval). For expected absences, contact the instructor one week in advance. For unforeseen absences, email or call the instructor. Students have one week to complete missed assignments due to excused absences.

Unexcused Absences - Absent a verifiable emergency or excused absence, there will be no make-up assignments, quizzes, or exams. Unexcused late assignments and missed quizzes/exams are not accepted and will automatically be assigned a zero.

Required Course Textbook and Digital Learning Platform:

Criminal Investigations Today: The Essentials

Richard M. Hough / ISBN-10: 1544308000 / ISBN-13: 978-1544308005

Digital Learning Platform:

We will use Sage Vantage Digital Learning Platform for the above textbook, chapter assignments, and quizzes. The mid-term and final exam questions will be from the assigned textbook above. Use the listed link to access the purchase and registration page for it.

Course ID is **FARDIH-4116** <https://vantage.sagepub.com/FARDIH-4116/JoinCourse>

Please note that other readings may be assigned and placed in the Content area of Blackboard to support the textbook readings and lectures.

III. Assignments, Exams, and Grading*

Assignments and Exams

- 20% - In-class discussions, engagement, and participation
- 40% - Weekly Chapter Assignments & Quizzes (Sage Vantage) – ***Each week's assignments and quizzes are due before the start of the following week's class.***
 - Videos Activities – Short, formative assessments that test students on the content of a video. Unlimited attempts. The best grade of all attempts.
 - Knowledge Checks – Short, formative assessments designed to improve reading retention that appears at the end of each reading section within a chapter. Unlimited attempts. The best grade of all attempts.
 - Quizzes – The end-of-chapter summative assessment. 15 questions pulled randomly from a pool of shuffled questions.
- 20% - Mid-Term Exam (Chapters 1 through 6)
- 20% - Final Exam (Chapters 7 through 12)

Grading Scale

A+	100 – 96%	C+	79 – 77%
A	95 – 93%	C	76 – 73%
A-	92 – 90%	C-	72 – 70%
B+	89 – 87%	D	69 – 60%
B	86 – 83%	F	59 – 0%
B-	82 – 80%		

*Unexcused late assignments and exams are not accepted and will automatically be assigned a zero.

IV. Course Schedule and Topics

Week	Class Session Date	Topic	Chapter	Assignment/ Quiz Due Date
1	01/22	Course overview, History of Criminal Investigation	1	01/29
2	01/29	Forensic Evidence	2	02/05
3	02/05	Victims, Suspects, Witnesses, and Detectives <i>Guest Speaker – Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Program Division Chief</i>	3	02/12
4	02/12	Managing the Criminal Investigation	4	2/19
5	02/19	Searches, Seizures, and Statements	5	2/26
6	02/26	Homicide, Death, and Cold Case Investigations <i>Guest Speaker – Homicide, Cold Case, Narcotics Detective & Supervisor</i>	6	03/11
03/04		<i>SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS</i>		
7	03/11	<i>Mid-Term Exam (Chapters 1 – 6)</i>		
8	03/18	Assault, Battery, Robbery, and Sex Crimes	7	03/25
9	03/25	Familial Crimes	8	04/01
10	04/01	Burglary, Theft, White-Collar, and Cybercrime	9	04/08
11	04/08	Drug Crimes, Organized Crimes, and Gangs <i>Guest Speaker – Gang Expert/Polygraph Examiner</i>	10	04/15
12	04/15	Terrorism and Homeland Security	11	04/22
13	04/22	Criminal Investigation in Court <i>Guest Speaker – Commonwealth's Attorney</i>	12	04/29
14	04/29	Final assignments & quiz due		
15	05/08	<i>Final Exam (Chapters 7 – 12)</i>		

V. Honor Code – Academic Integrity

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity.

Three fundamental and relatively simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citations, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited using APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

See <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/> for more detailed information.

VI. Important Dates and University Policies

Important Dates:

First day of class (CRIM-410)	January 22
Last day to add classes	January 23
Last Day to Drop: With 100% Tuition Refund	January 30
Drop period begins: 50% Tuition Refund Period Begins	February 6
Unrestricted Withdrawal Period: (100% Tuition Liability)	Feb. 7 – Feb. 20
Spring Recess (NO CLASS)	March 4
Selective Withdrawal Period: (100% Tuition Liability)	Feb. 21 – Mar. 25
Last Day of Class (CRIM-410)	April 29
Final Exam (CRIM-410)	May 6

Visit https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring_2024/ for additional important dates.

In-Class Electronic Use Policy:

Using laptops, cell phones, and portable or wearable electronic devices during class is disruptive. All electronic devices must be turned off and not on your desk at the start of class. Please see me if you feel you must use your computer in class to take notes. Otherwise, mobile phones, tablets, smartwatches, and computers must be turned off, not on your desk. The only exceptions for use will be those approved by the Office of Disability Services and communicated to me via an official accommodation letter. Students utilizing various technology devices during class will be deemed to have disregarded these rules, resulting in a loss of participation grade.

Campus Resources:

The Writing Center, University Libraries, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and the Office of Disability Services are available to assist students. Links to the University Catalog and the University Policies website for all other university academic and non-academic policies can be found in the links below:

- Mason Alert: <https://ready.gmu.edu/category/recent-alerts/>
- Office of Disability Services: <https://ds.gmu.edu/>
- Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>
- Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://caps.gmu.edu/>
- Catalog: <https://catalog.gmu.edu>
- University Policies: <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/all-policies/>
- University Library: <http://library.gmu.edu/>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you seek accommodations for this class, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Title IX notice:

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please get in touch with one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Class Cancellations:

Check Mason’s homepage (www.gmu.edu) to see if classes are canceled for adverse weather or other emergencies. You can also register for Mason’s emergency alert system at <https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/>.

If I need to cancel a class session due to an emergency, I will try to email you ASAP at your Mason email address. Be sure to check your email regularly to receive important information promptly.

Note: The syllabus is a guide. The instructor reserves the right to make changes as needed.