

Forensics 9
Ms. Donahue
Course Description

Overview

Welcome to forensics, your first science course at SLJ. The goal of this course is to strengthen and build upon your scientific skills and knowledge by studying the application of science in the law. By learning about crime scenes and using forensic techniques, you will develop skills and knowledge of biological and physical science that will become the foundation of your SLJ science experience. You will also come to understand that science is not an isolated subject; it plays a major role in all parts of life, crime scenes being only one area. I hope that this course will increase your awareness of your environment and how things work.

I will devote my time this year to ensuring that you have a well-organized, positive, and productive learning experience. I ask that in return you challenge yourself and put forth as much effort as you can give. Science is based on inquiry; do not be afraid to ask questions and challenge ideas, but remember, scientists always use facts to back up their opinions. Questioning and validating facts are two areas that we will be focusing on throughout this course.

Please review the following objectives and syllabus so that you are clear on what you need to do to be successful in this course. If you or your parent/guardian has any questions, please speak with me. You may contact me by e-mail at ldonahue@sljhs.org.

I look forward to our year together!

Sincerely,

Ms. Donahue

Course Objectives

The major objectives of this course are:

1. To introduce you to the field of forensics, its history, and how it shapes society today.
2. To enable you to apply classification and identification systems used in forensics.
3. To build your skills in using scientific instruments.
4. To give you an understanding of the human body on different levels.
5. To give you an understanding of the relationship between humans and our environment.
6. To strengthen your scientific skills of inquiry, observation, and analysis.

Syllabus

This course consists of six major units aimed to give you an understanding of science through the eyes of a forensics expert. Each unit consists of lessons and assignments that will lead up to a final assessment that will require you to apply your understanding of the unit.

Unit	Overview	Major Assessments
Fingerprints	This unit will introduce you to the history of forensics and basic crime scene terminology. You will acquire forensic science skills in the area of fingerprint identification. By the end of this unit, you should be accustomed to our class routines and procedures.	Fingerprint Guide
Trace Evidence	This unit will focus on the collection and analysis of smaller forms of evidence such as hair and fibers. By the end of this unit, you should be comfortable with microscopic techniques.	Expert Testimony Letter
Blood and DNA	In this unit you will study the biological evidence of blood and DNA in the context of a widely publicized trial. You will learn about the composition of blood, blood typing, blood spatter, and DNA identification, and employ laboratory techniques for processing these forms of evidence.	OJ Simpson Juror Packet and Verdict
Time of Death	This unit will introduce you to the role of a medical examiner. You will learn various methods for determining the time of death of a victim and will perform a forensic autopsy on an animal specimen.	Medical Examiner's Handbook
Toxicology	In this unit you will learn about drugs and environmental poisons. You will learn the effects of these toxins on the body and methods of detecting their presence. We will learn about environmental justice by studying a criminal case in which a community suffered because of the improper use of toxic chemicals.	Woburn Town Hall Meeting
Forensic Anthropology	This unit will introduce you to the role of a forensic anthropologist. You will learn how bones are used to tell the story of a crime. The unit will end in a final crime scene that will require you to use the knowledge and skills you acquire throughout the year.	Final Crime Scene

Grading

You will receive a rubric for each assignment that will tell you how the assignment will be scored. Please use these rubrics as your guide/checklist when completing assignments.

Assignments will contribute to your grade according to the following percentages:

10%	20%	20%	25%	25%
Professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance and punctuality• Behavior• Attitude• Dress code• Presentation of self	Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home reading and writing assignments• Outlines and Rough Drafts	Minor Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quizzes• Labs	Classwork <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cornell notes• Group work• Portfolio reflections• In class assignments	Major Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projects (final draft)• Unit Exams

Forensics Portfolio

Over the year you will be required to keep your graded work in a portfolio in class. At the end of each unit, you will select three pieces of work that best reflect your progress in the unit, one of which should be a major assessment. In class, you will use these pieces of work to reflect on your academic journey. This portfolio will serve as a resource for both of us to identify your strengths in this class and areas in which you would like to improve.

Late Work

Late work is not accepted for full credit. You may submit work one day late for half credit. After one day, work submitted will be marked but will not receive credit.

If you are absent, you must be accountable for finding out what you missed on the day you return and submitting the assignment by the next class. A record of each day's activities and an assignment log will be kept in the classroom for reference; it is your responsibility to obtain this information.

Supplies

The following materials are required for this course:

- One spiral bound notebook (single subject) to be kept in the forensics section of your binder
- One pocket folder to be kept in class
- Blue or black pens
- Highlighter
- One pack of colored pencils
- Looseleaf paper

Daily Routines

Each class will begin with a short writing activity (Do Now) to prepare you for the day's lesson. Please wait to be invited in and enter the classroom quietly. Immediately take out your forensics notebook, the previous night's homework, and a pen and get started on the do now. Make sure to label your page with the unit and lesson number as this will help with notebook checks and keeping track of work that needs to be made up. You will have a limited amount of time to do this and incomplete work will cost you points.

After we review the do now, we will proceed to the daily lesson. This will usually require you to take notes, which must always be done in Cornell style. This format of note-taking encourages you to ask questions about the information you are being given in order to foster critical thinking skills. The notes section will be completed in class, all other sections (questions, main idea, key words, summary) must be completed by the following class. Reviewing these notes and completing these other sections each day will help to reinforce what you learned in class, and will allow you to clear up any questions you may have as soon as possible.

In our daily activity you will have to apply the information covered in the lesson. This is your chance to test your understanding of the lesson and ask any questions for clarification. Activities will frequently require you to work with others; you will receive a group work rubric and are expected to challenge each other while adhering to our code of conduct. When we have finished the activity we will review what we have learned. At the end of class you will be given instructions for returning materials and for the night's assignment. Please wait respectfully to be dismissed.

Attendance and Lateness

Regular attendance and punctuality is essential to your success in this course. Lateness and unexcused absences will result in points being deducted from your professionalism grade. In the case of an excused absence, please refer to the daily assignment log and speak with me after to class to clarify what you missed.

Restroom Use

Please refer to the SLJ restroom policy and keep in mind that we have a limited amount of class time and a lot to accomplish.

Code of Conduct

In order to provide a positive learning atmosphere where all students can grow and excel, we must have a classroom free from disruption. As in all other classes, you are expected to follow the SLJ code of conduct:

1. Respect for self:
 - Come to class on time and prepared every day.
 - Adhere to all school and class rules and procedures.
 - Take responsibility for our own learning and challenge yourself.

2. Respect for others:

- Listen to each other carefully, one voice at a time.
- Use positive language, support, and challenge each other to excel.
- Recognize my role as a teacher is to guide you through this course. In order to do this, I need you to listen carefully when I am speaking and to treat me with respect.

3. Respect for property:

- Keep our room clean and in order. Use the trash can for any materials that need to be discarded.
- Do not abuse classroom materials.
- Do not eat, drink, or chew gum in the classroom.
- Respect the personal belongings of everyone in the room.

If you choose to break the code of conduct:

1. First Offense: Reminder
2. Second Offense: Intervention (change of seat, removal from activity, possible phone call or detention)
3. Third Offense: Consequences (detention, phone call home)
4. Major disruptions will be referred to the dean's office.

I look forward to having an exciting and productive year with all of you. Adhering to the routines and procedures outlined in this syllabus will guarantee that we are on our way to success.

Please sign and return the bottom of this page by **Monday, September 10th**. This will be counted as a homework grade. Please keep the syllabus in your binder so it can be referred to over the course of the year.

I have read the Forensics 9 course description and syllabus. I will follow the policies and procedures outlined for this course.

Student Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Home Number _____