Course Syllabus FSCN 322

Course Information

Course Prefix and Title: FSCN 322 Fire Investigation  
Credit Hours: 3  
Semester/Year: Fall I, 2014  
Class Day/Time: Online  
First Day of Class: August 19, 2014  
Last Day of Class: October 13, 2014  
Blackboard LMS: https://blackboard.uncfsu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Barbara R. Russo  
Phone: 910-672-2652 Office  
E-mail: brusso@uncfsu.edu  
Office: LS 322  
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 0800-Noon or By Appointment via phone or Skype barbrusso

Academic Information

Course Description

A course intended to provide the student with advanced technical knowledge on rules of law, fire scene analysis, fire behavior, evidence collection and preservation, scene documentation, case preparation and testifying.

Prerequisites

None

Required Text

Supplemental readings will be made available in Blackboard in the Course Content section.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE MATERIAL

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this course the student will

1. Document a fire scene keeping with best practices and legal requirements.
2. Design and implement various arson related intervention and mitigation strategies.
3. Analyze a fire scene using technology and scientific methods and demonstrate use of applicable technology.
4. Describe the systematic approach to conducting incendiary fire investigations adhering to legal considerations.
5. Describe the differences in investigation for structural, wildland, and vehicular fires.
6. Identify considerations that must be made for high risk occupancies such as industrial plants.
7. Retrieve data from various data bases as related to extent and cost of arson to society.
8. Explain sociological and psychological factors that may be related to arsonists.

Grading

a. Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>920-1000</td>
<td>92-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830-919</td>
<td>83 - 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>730-829</td>
<td>73 - 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>640-729</td>
<td>64 - 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>639 or less</td>
<td>63 or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Value of Each Assignment/Assessment - Point Breakdown

Unit 1
- Discussion Board: 30 points
- Quiz: 20 points
- Written Assignment: 50 points

Unit 2
- Discussion Board: 30 points
- Quiz: 20 points
- Written Assignment: 50 points

Unit 3
- Discussion Board: 30 points
- Quiz: 20 points
- Written Assignment: 50 points

Unit 4
- Discussion Board: 30 points
- Quiz: 20 points
- Written Assignment: 50 points

Unit 5
- Discussion Board: 30 points
- Quiz: 20 points
- Written Assignment: 50 points
c. Graded Assignments/Assessments

Case Studies/Written Assignments: You will have 8 case studies/written assignments worth 50 points each which will be submitted through the Assignment Links in Blackboard. All instructions and the grading rubric can be found in the Course Information area in Blackboard. Please cite your sources properly using APA Style and be familiar with the University’s Plagiarism Policy. **Late work will not be accepted as per the Policy on Missed and Late Assignments.**

Quizzes: You will have 8 Unit quizzes worth 20 points each. They will be comprised of true-false/multiple choice questions. Instructions are provided at the start of each quiz.

Final Exam/Project: You will have one final exam/project worth 200 points and it will be comprehensive in nature. It will be made available in advance so that you will be able to meet the assigned deadline during exam week. It will be submitted through the Assignment Link in Blackboard which is the same for all written assignments.

Discussion Boards: You will have 8 discussion boards worth 30 points each throughout the semester. It is important for the student to frequently log in and participate. As these discussions are designed to create a classroom type of forum and replaces traditional classroom participation, student participation is vital and required. Your participation in the discussion boards will be evaluated and points awarded based on the rubric provided in Course Information area in Blackboard.

Complete requirements for Discussion Boards are found below in the Participation Policy section of the syllabus.

**Instructional Approaches**

Students will draw upon experiential components and analyze theoretical concepts that together will lead to an integrated and applied project. A variety of instructional strategies may be utilized as they apply to the context of each session including: class discussions, written assignments, experiential exercises, PowerPoint audio-visual presentations, out of class readings, project development and applications, guest speakers (when available), case studies, etc.
General Information

Learning Environment Policy
All students are expected to support the university’s commitment to provide an effective learning environment. Any behaviors and/or events determined to the detrimental to success in any Fayetteville State University related academic pursuit are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, language used in online forums, timely postings to forums, and responding to forum postings as outlined on the course web site.

Attendance Policy
Students are expected to attend classes, synchronous or otherwise. Although attendance does directly, to a small degree, affect your grades, research suggests that attendance is strongly correlated with course grades. Therefore, attendance and active participation can only aid your learning and your grade. Thus the requirements set forth for your discussion board posting.

Withdrawals
To withdraw from a course, students must follow University policy for withdrawing from online courses. Information and the form can be found on the registrar’s website at http://www.uncfsu.edu/registrar/forms under Course Withdrawal Online Courses. Not doing so by the date listed in the University Academic Calendar and on your syllabus will result in a final grade of "F". If the course(s) you are withdrawing from is/are the only ones you are currently enrolled in, then you must complete a withdrawal from the University by calling the Center for personal Development at 910-672-1222/1203. Please remember that withdrawing from courses may affect your financial aid and meeting satisfactory academic progress. You should consult with your Instructor and Advisor before beginning the process.

Incompletes
There will be no Incompletes awarded in this course. Students are expected to successfully complete the course in the 8-weeks that it is delivered. If you feel that you cannot complete the course you must withdraw by the date required by the University to avoid a grade penalty. Incompletes will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor and only for causes such as extended illness or loss of an immediate family member. Documentation will be required.

Class Cancellation Policy
Because of the online nature of the program and its courses, there should be no cancellation of classes even if the University itself is closed due to holidays or other emergencies related to weather. All technological issues shall be factored in when determining if a change in scheduling is necessary.

Make-ups and Late Work
It is expected that all assignments will be completed on time. As a general practice, I do not accept late assignments at all. If for some reason beyond your control an assignment must be turned in late please document this. I will determine if an exception to this policy should be made based on each
individual situation. Late assignments, if accepted at all, may be penalized. Any conflict of schedule should be brought to the attention of the instructor during the first week of classes.

**Communication Policy**

**FSU Policy on Electronic Mail:** Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account (Bronco Mail) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail. Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at [http://www.uncfsu.edu/current-students](http://www.uncfsu.edu/current-students) under the Information Technology Resources section as a downloadable PDF.

As a best practice, you should plan on logging into your course at least once a day to check for announcements, read and post discussion forums, and to contribute to any assignments that may need your attention.

**Participation Policy**

**Discussion Forum Participation**

Online discussions pose an opportunity for rich and meaningful student learning and interaction. Online discussions extend classroom learning by providing an asynchronous method of communication for the exchange of meaningful ideas that promote critical thinking and develop thoughtful reflective learning. All students are expected to participate in each weekly discussion. These forums will be grounded in durable or critical thinking utilizing case studies, problem/solution scenarios or other appropriate assignments.

Discussion board questions will be assigned each week. Students who use external sources for supporting their position should use APA style when citing references from the book and other sources. All answers must be at least two paragraphs. Students must also reply to at least two other students’ posting.

**Consider the following when you post:**

**Frequency** is the number of posts and the number of days you post in keeping with the requirements. Students are expected to log into the course and post (respond) in each graded threaded discussion on a minimum of three separate days per unit. **Quality** is the content of the student’s contributions.

**Frequency/12 points (maximum 4 points per post):** Frequency is calculated on a “points per day” basis, with up to 4 points per day for each post. Students cannot earn full points for frequency without meeting the frequency requirements.

**Quality/18 points (maximum 6 points per post):** Quality points up to the maximum are earned by a combination of the following values- 6 points per high quality post, 4 points per medium quality post and 2 point for each low quality post).
Post quality is evaluated using the quality measurement criteria below. For example, a student may post multiple medium quality posts in one graded thread and earn full points for quality. To earn full quality points with the fewest number of posts, a minimum of three high quality posts is required in each graded topic. Therefore, it is in your best interest to always post more than the bare minimum required so that you have an opportunity to make quality posts.

Examples of quality posts include:

- providing additional information to the discussion;
- elaborating on previous comments from others;
- presenting explanations of concepts or methods to help fellow students;
- presenting reasons for or against a topic in a persuasive fashion,
- sharing your own personal experiences that relate to the topic, and
- providing a URL and explanation for an area you researched on the Internet.

**Full credit is awarded when both required frequency is met and the maximum quality points are earned. See the provided rubric in the Course Information section of your course for complete details.**

**Other things to consider:**

- Please be professional and courteous.
- Online communication lacks the non-verbal cues that provide much of the meaning in face-to-face conversations. Choose your words carefully, phrase your sentences clearly, and keep your sentences and paragraphs brief.
- State the main topic of your posting in the Subject line.
- State your purpose for writing at or near the beginning of your message whenever possible.
- Proofread what you post. You may want to use a word processor to draft what you intend to say, check your spelling and grammar, and then paste your text into the Message section of your posting.
- Please do not use all capital letters. It makes it hard to read, and it comes across as though you were shouting.

**Technical Assistance**

**Blackboard Help Desk: 910-672-HELP**

This is your first stop when experiencing technical challenges with your Blackboard course site(s). Your professor will direct you to this site so please start there as you attempt to solve your technology challenges.

Fayetteville State has also established a Self-Service Password Management site at [https://selfserve.uncfsu.edu:8443/showLogin.cc](https://selfserve.uncfsu.edu:8443/showLogin.cc). If it is a password problem, this should take care of it. Please be advised that you are not prompted to change your passwords, you will just automatically be locked out every 90 days. So it is recommended that you change your passwords before this occurs. Being “locked out” of your account is not an acceptable excuse for failing to submit your work on time. The Help Desk is available 24-7-365 so make the call if necessary. You will be provided a ticket number should the situation not be remedied immediately.
Library Information
The successful student will utilize a variety of library sources and Internet resources. Fire & Emergency Services Administration students are encouraged to utilize the FSU library, as it is an interlibrary loan facility. Additionally, students are encouraged to utilize their local public, college and university libraries. Finally, the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the National Fire Academy (NFA) is an excellent resource, participating in the interlibrary loan process and providing search assistance to fire service personnel (www.fema.gov).

Academic Dishonesty Policy
Cheating is defined as the attempt, successful or not, to give or obtain aid or information by illicit means in meeting any academic requirements, including examinations. Plagiarism is defined as the use, without proper acknowledgement, of the ideas, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse from another writer or speaker, including information found through the Internet. Typical penalties can include: a warning for a first offense; a failing grade on the assignment or examination; or a failing grade for the course. The most serious instances of plagiarism can result in a direct referral to the Academic Integrity Board. Please review this policy in the Fayetteville State University Code of Conduct www.uncfsu.edu/documents/handbook/Codeofconduct.pdf.

It is the instructor’s right to pursue ANY of these penalties and a warning is a courtesy, not required so please keep this in mind. There is a zero tolerance of academic dishonesty within the University, especially for those in the FESA program who are held to higher ethical standards and integrity as public servants.

An Incident of Cheating or Plagiarism
Faculty members have a variety of resources which may be used to detect or to confirm suspected incidents of cheating or plagiarism (e.g., computer software which is provided by the University and which can scan student papers for plagiarized components). The University has a license agreement with Turnitin.com, a service that helps prevent plagiarism in student assignments. Instructors may use Turnitin to help review some or all assignments in this course. By taking this course you are agreeing that your assignment submissions can be submitted to and screened by Turnitin for originality rating and notation of possible text or contextual matches with other source documents. Turnitin does not make any determination of plagiarism. Rather, it identifies parts of an assignment that may have significant matches with other source documents found on the Internet, in the Turnitin database, or from other sources. If matches are identified and indicate the possibility of inclusion of material that is not properly cited, I will discuss this information with you before reaching any judgment or decision.

Responsibilities of Students
Students are responsible for knowing the policies regarding cheating and plagiarism and the penalties for such behavior. For a complete, detailed statement of policies and procedures, see the Fayetteville State University Student Code of Conduct. Failure of an individual faculty member to remind the student as to what constitutes cheating and plagiarism does not relieve the student of this responsibility.
Disability Statement

In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203.
## Class Schedule

The schedule is subject to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignments and Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates/Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 8/19-8/25</td>
<td>Unit 1 – Introduction to Fire Investigations Unit 1 Reading, Quiz, DB, Paper</td>
<td>Midnight 8/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 8/26-9/1</td>
<td>Unit 2 – Structural and Wildland Investigations Unit 2 Reading, Quiz, DB, Paper</td>
<td>Midnight 9/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 9/2-9/8</td>
<td>Unit 3 – Combustion and Fire Behavior Principles Unit 3 Reading, Quiz, DB, Paper</td>
<td>Midnight 9/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 9/9-9/15</td>
<td>Unit 4 – Investigative Topics Unit 4 Reading, Quiz, DB, Paper</td>
<td>Midnight 9/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 9/16-9/22</td>
<td>Unit 5 – Lab Services &amp; Arson Investigation Unit 5 Reading, Quiz, DB, Paper</td>
<td>Midnight 9/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 9/23-9/29</td>
<td>Unit 6 – Arson Investigation Continued Unit 6 Reading, Quiz, DB, Paper</td>
<td>Midnight 9/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 9/30-10/6</td>
<td>Unit 7 – Fire-related Deaths and Injuries</td>
<td>Midnight 10/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 10/7-10/13</td>
<td>Unit 8 – Explosions and Explosive Combustion Unit 8 Reading, Quiz, DB, Paper <strong>AND FINAL EXAM/PROJECT</strong></td>
<td>Midnight 10/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** This syllabus is a guide to students. The professor reserves the right to change, alter, or amend items in this syllabus if circumstances indicate a change is warranted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>August 19th</strong></td>
<td>First Day of Classes 1st 8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>August 25th</strong></td>
<td>Last Day to Drop with Partial Refund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 1st</strong></td>
<td>Labor Day University Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 1st</strong></td>
<td>Last Day to Withdraw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 13th</strong></td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 15th</strong></td>
<td>Final Grades Due By Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 18th</strong></td>
<td>First Day of Classes 2nd 8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 22nd</strong></td>
<td>Last Day to Drop with Partial Refund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 11th</strong></td>
<td>Veteran’s Day University Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 26th</strong></td>
<td>Last Day to Withdraw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 27th-28th</strong></td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday University Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 6th</strong></td>
<td>Final Grades for Graduating Seniors Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 12th</strong></td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 13th</strong></td>
<td>Commencement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 15th</strong></td>
<td>Final Grades Due By Faculty for All Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 19th</strong></td>
<td>Textbook Rental Returns Due</td>
</tr>
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