Administrative Unit: Criminal Justice Administration & Human Services Department

Course Prefix and Number: CJAD 406

Course Title: Expert and Scientific Evidence

Number of Credit Hours: 3  Lecture Hours: 3  Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Examination of the role and function of expert and scientific evidence in the legal system, and critical evaluation of the standards governing the integration of law and science. Topics include the Frye, Daubert and other standards governing scientific evidence; ethical issues concerning expert testimony; the interface between the scientific, legal and law enforcement communities; and particularized consideration of evidentiary issues connected with specific scientific techniques. Prerequisites: CJAD 101 and junior standing. Offered odd Fall.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): CJAD 101 and junior standing.

Text(s): Many suitable textbooks are available from various publishers and the following list is not comprehensive. Other textbooks may be judged by individual instructors to be more suitable in meeting Course Objectives. Many current textbooks have companion websites, and the instructor is encouraged to enhance the course experience for the student by utilizing available technology.

Moenssens; Starrs; Henderson and Inbau; Scientific Evidence in Civil and Criminal Cases, 4th Edition; Foundation Press, 1999.


The instructor may also want to consider directing the student to websites containing Criminal Codes and Criminal Cases, such as http://www.findlaw.com or other legal sites maintained by governmental or not for profit entities.

Course Objectives: To understand and appreciate the history and evolution of scientific and expert evidence in the justice system.
To understand the distinctions between the scientific and expert evidence and other forms of evidence in court proceedings.

To gain experience with the common legal terminology, methods and procedures connected with scientific and expert testimony.

To focus on legal issues and techniques connected with scientific and expert evidence in the criminal justice system which are not extensively considered or analyzed in other courses.

To examine the practical and theoretical difficulties in merging scientific and legal principles.

To demonstrate critical thinking, research and writing skills on issues relevant to scientific and expert evidence.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the history of the use of scientific evidence in court proceedings.
- Define and differentiate between the Frye and Daubert standards for admission of scientific and expert evidence.
- Explain the role of expert testimony in modern trials.
- Identify and evaluate the ethical issues surrounding the use of expert testimony.
- Describe the common methods and procedures utilized in contacts and dealings between the scientific community and the legal community.
- Identify and analyze the current evidentiary issues with specific scientific procedures and techniques and apply the Frye and Daubert standards to current and emerging procedures and techniques.
- Interpret court decisions concerning scientific evidence.
- Interpret and apply the meaning of specific statutory provisions concerning scientific evidence.
- Explain how scientific evidence has improved the criminal justice system and identify areas for reform.
- Appraise current literature, materials and developments regarding scientific evidence.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

- History of Expert and Scientific Evidence in American trials.
- The Frye “general acceptance” standard.
- Daubert v. Merrill Dow Pharmaceuticals
- Ethical issues with expert testimony
- Experts and Law Enforcement
- Experts and the Legal Community
- Specific techniques and procedures under Frye and Daubert
Recommended maximum class size for this course: 35

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

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Name ___________________________ Signature ___________________________
Date: September 12, 2005

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

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