***Westford Academy Mission Statement:*** *Westford Academy, in collaboration with home and community, provides a safe environment where high expectations advance academic excellence. We are committed to promoting integrity and critical thinking, while fostering tolerance and life-long learning in an ever-changing global society.*

**Forensics - Fall Semester 2015**

*Mrs. Kravitz*

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http://westfordforensics.weebly.com

Class Procedures:

* Students are expected to come prepared for class every day
* Important information and resources are posted on the course website
* Assignments and quiz dates are posted in the classroom
* Mrs. Kravitz is available before & after school for extra help, by appointment

Required Materials:

* Textbook (Forensic Science, class set) **Must stay in the classroom!**
* 3-ring Notebook/binder (1” minimum width, must include dividers and lined paper)
* Writing utensil (pen or pencil)

Grading: *These percentages are approximate and are subject to change.*

* Notebook = 40% of class grade
* Quizzes = 30% of class grade
* Papers = 20% of class grade
* Case studies and question sets = 10% of class grade

Notebook:

Scientists must keep a detailed notebook in the lab at all times. A notebook is where a scientist describes procedures, makes observations, analyzes data, and writes conclusions. It is a point of reference. **Without an organized notebook, a scientist would not be able to analyze data or testify in court.** Since this aspect is so important to all research scientists, your grade is going to be based heavily on your notebook.

**You are REQUIRED to have a 3-ring binder in class EVERYDAY.** This 3-ring binder should be specifically devoted to Forensics class ONLY. You will have several notebook checks, so your notebooks should always be neat and organized.

You will be given handouts and materials during class that must go into your notebook. **Make sure that you date each page that you receive.** When conducting an experiment, make sure the notebook page is titled with the name of the experiment and each section is appropriately titled and labeled (procedures, observations, data, conclusions, questions).

**Your notebook should be divided (using tabbed dividers) into the following sections:**

**Handouts, Notes, Case Studies, Vocabulary, Question Sets, Lab Activities, Quizzes, Papers**

The goal of compiling your Forensic notebook is to create a manual of skills and information that will be VITAL for your final project, in which you will analyze a simulated crime scene and present the prosecution’s case in court.

Quizzes:

You will be given a quiz at the completion of each unit, to formally assess both your understanding of the material and your mastery of important analytical skills. You will usually be allowed to use your notebook to complete quizzes and will be notified in advance if this is not the case.

Papers:

You will have three brief papers to write throughout the semester. Each will be accompanied with a set format and rubric at the time the paper is assigned. All will involve some type of research. **All papers must be typed and submitted digitally.** You will be given a sufficient amount of time to complete these assignments, so that you can take advantage of the WA library if you do not have access to a computer outside of school.

Case Studies and Question Sets:

You will be given case studies and question sets in which you will need to analyze evidence and make conclusions based on the knowledge you gained in class. **Good time management is essential, since textbooks must stay in the classroom.**

Laboratory:

It is expected that everyone participate cooperatively in lab. This means everyone doing their share in the set-up, running of the experiment, and the clean-up of all materials when done. No lab activity is allowed without proper supervision. All students are expected to learn the location and proper use of all safety equipment in the lab. All students are the follow the safety rules outlined in the lab safety contract. **No food or drink is allowed on tables in the classroom, due to lab safety protocol. Food/beverages can be safely stored during class in the marked area next to the classroom door.**

Due Dates:

Some work may be accepted late, with a penalty of -10% per day. In extenuating circumstances, extensions or other arrangements can be made, particularly if discussed ahead of time. Make sure to keep Mrs. Kravitz informed if an event inhibits your performance.

Behavior & Discipline:

**Safety and respect are of the utmost importance.** Violations of either ideal will introduce students to disciplinary action, which may include teacher detention, parental contact, and/or referral to the office. **Cell phones may not be used in the classroom without teacher authorization.** During guided inquiry work, the usefulness of cellular telephones and other devices may be used only as a means of supplementing educational instruction under teacher supervision and with teacher permission. **Without exceptions, cell phones must be put away and cannot be visible during formal assessments such as tests and quizzes.**

Tardy to Class:

Students are expected to report to class on time. Upon the fourth tardy the student will receive a teacher detention. If the detention is not served, the student will be referred to the office.

Absence:

Attendance will be taken daily. Prolonged absences or vacations are discouraged. Since this is a lab-based program, missing several days means the loss of valuable lab time. The school make-up policy will be followed. Please read your student handbook as a reminder that if you are absent, you are expected to take exams or make up labs the day you return. Failure to meet school attendance policies due to excessive absences or class tardiness can result in loss of credit.

Extra Credit:

While not required, extra credit assignments are provided in order to give students the opportunity for more in-depth analysis of concepts covered and reinforcement of particularly challenging material. Extra credit assignments may include research papers, current event reflections, and bonus problems.

Units of Study:

**Course Material Approximate Syllabus**

*Use this as a general guide, as specific dates, sequences, and materials are subject to change.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week #** | **Dates** | **Topic** | **Textbook Chapters** |
| 1-2 | 9/2 to 9/11 | Forensic Science and the Law; Evidence | 1-2 |
| 3-4 | 9/14 to 9/25 | Fingerprint Analysis (*Paper #1: Biometrics Technology*) | 4 |
| 5-6 | 9/28 to 10/9 | Blood Spatter | 10 |
| 7-8 | 10/14 to 10/23 | DNA Analysis (*Paper #2: DNA Database Controversy*) | 11 |
| 9 | 10/26 to 10/30 | Handwriting Analysis | 15 |
| 10 | 11/1 to 11/6 | Human Remains (*Paper #3: Human Remains Case Study*) | 12 |
| 11 | 11/9 to 11/13 | Evaluating and Processing a Crime Scene | 3 |
| 12-14 | 11/16 to 12/4 | **Simulated Crime Scene** | 1-5, 7, 10-11, 15 |
| 15-17 | 12/7 to 12/22 | Crime Scene Extension: WeVideo Forensic Files | 1-5, 7, 10-11, 15 |
| 18-20 | 1/4 to 1/27 | Independent Criminalistics Projects | 1-5, 7, 10-11, 15 |

Simulated Crime Scene:

Students will work in investigative teams, in which individuals will focus on particular specialty roles. Teams will be given evidence from a simulated murder scene. Using all the techniques learned in class, the teams have to design and conduct experiments, collect data, analyze findings, and present the case to the rest of the class (who will act as the jury). Each student must be able to defend his/her findings with scientific evidence.

Independent Criminalistics Projects:

Students will independently research a current technique in Criminalistics that was not covered in the course material. Students will prepare presentations, including case studies and information from forensic and law enforcement experts, which detail the uses and advantages of the technique.