



Curriculum Outline

Course Title: *Homicide Investigation Course*

Course Description:

The study of responding to a homicide scene, documenting the investigation, applying investigative techniques and processing and developing investigative information is the emphasis of this course. Classroom instruction will be lecture style using PowerPoint presentations. Hands-on training will be conducted in an indoor or outdoor field environment. Students will be provided a Homicide Investigation Course DVD. Dress for inclement weather is required.

Number of instructional hours: 40

Number of lecture hours: 16

Number of hands-on training hours: 24

Submitted by: *Sgt. Miguel Santiago and Det. Terry Brandon*

Course Objectives Classroom Training:

- **Duties of Responding Officers:** *Learn procedures for requesting additional information, duties upon arriving at the scene, securing the crime scene, making appropriate notifications, conducting a preliminary investigation, dealing with suspects at the scene, and responding to hospitals.*
- **Responsibilities of a Homicide Detective:** *Learn how to respond to the initial notification, arrival at the scene, document the scene, taking charge of the scene, work as a team, initiate a canvass, working with the Medical Examiner, suspect in custody, crime scene sketch, search the crime scene, and releasing the crime scene.*
- **Documentation and Report Writing:** *Learn the basics of documenting, taking notes, the use of detective's field notes, documenting the scene, documenting the victim, witnesses, suspects, documenting and interview/interrogation, documenting weapons, analyzing and organizing notes, debriefing, writing the report, resources for the report, and report review.*
- **Crime Scene Sketch and Diagrams:** *Learn about and complete sketches, the use of sketches, legal aspects, preparing the sketch, required information, types of drawing, and measurement techniques.*
- **Identifying the Victim:** *Learn about information about the victim, scene identification, body description, positive identification, tentative identification,*

human remains, records to identify victims, postmortem procedures, and methods of identification.

- **Investigative Tactics:** *Learn and apply investigative techniques, about the investigative triangle, team concept, call for service, 911 recordings, crime scene sketch, tasks at the scene, canvass, crime stoppers, tip line, distributing flyers, hospitals, area celebrations or events, witness interviews, process evidence, evidence log, medical examiner/autopsy, phone records, squad briefing, local officers, gang unit, public transportation, juvenile unit, media, social media, Twitter search, and community.*
- **The Area Canvass:** *Learn about and prepare to conduct a canvass, canvass report, the proper way to canvass, Officer's duties, initial canvass, main canvass, follow-up canvass, size of area to be canvassed, area maps/overlays, do's and don'ts, and looking for the forgetables.*
- **Developing Suspects:** *Learn how to develop suspects, the victim, witnesses, fingerprints, DNA, bite mark identification, polygraphs, video surveillance, memory recall, pattern injuries, cell phone records, jail informants, jail calls/letters, and forensic art.*
- **911 Call Analysis:** *Learn about the 911 Homicide Call Study, what was the call about? relevance of information, attitude towards the victim, accuracy of facts, who was the call about?, topic of the call, focus of the help, attitude towards the death, how was the call made?, urgency of the call, level of cooperation, resist through repetition, and self-interruption.*
- **Victimology:** *Learn the definition of victimology, what can victimology do for the detective, method of approach, method of attack, risk assessment, and victimology report.*
- **Death by Asphyxiation:** *Learn the definition of asphyxia, general points of asphyxia, types of asphyxia, hanging, strangulation, suffocation, choking, traumatic crush, positional asphyxia, drowning, poison gas, autoerotic death, and the investigation.*
- **Fire Death Investigation:** *Learn of the focus of the investigation, crime scene photographs, crime scene investigation, follow-up investigation, color of smoke, color of flames, identification, burns, cause of death in fires, artifacts, general information, information for Medical Examiner, and fatal fire checklist.*
- **Search Warrants:** *Learn of the 4th Amendment of the US Constitution, who issues search warrants, application description, description of crime, description of place, probable cause statement, four corners rule, scope of the search, search warrant checklist, consent searches, consent forms, non-testimonial identification, suspect in custody, and suspect out of custody.*
- **Suicide Investigations:** *Learn to investigate suicides, problems determining manner of death, national statistics, reasons for criticism, focus of the investigation, common motives, methods of suicides, crime scene photos, crime scene investigation, body transport from the scene, follow-up investigation, and victim's background.*
- **Evidence on the Body:** *Learn of the principle of exchange, types of evidence, clothing, wounds and injuries, firearms evidence, biological evidence, reference*

samples, victim identification, photography, and packaging and handling evidence.

- **Crime Scene Reconstruction:** Learn of the foundation of a reconstruction, the importance of a walkthrough, understand the basics of CSR, learn the exchange principle, correctly processing the scene, gunshot evidence, learn of trajectory and the tools, learn of bloodstain analysis, learn about angle of impact, chemical enhancement of bloodstains, and the importance of bloodstain evidence.

Course Objectives Hands-On Training:

- **Homicide Scenario 1:** The students will be divided in two groups. Group 1 will be the investigators and group 2 will be role players. Group 1 will receive a call for service to respond to a possible homicide. Group 1 will be expected to manage the personnel and resources to investigate, process the crime scene, identify a possible suspect and obtain an arrest warrant based on probable cause.
- **Homicide Scenario 2:** The students will be divided in two groups. Group 2 will be the investigators and group 1 will be role players. Group 2 will receive a call for service to respond to a possible homicide. Group 2 will be expected to manage the personnel and resources to investigate, process the crime scene, identify a possible suspect and obtain an arrest warrant based on probable cause.
- Homicide scenarios will be different for each group.
- **Case Study:** *Review a real life homicide case to identify the investigative techniques learned during these courses that were utilized during the investigation.*