

CHEM 4900/4912, BIOL 4900: FORENSIC INTERNSHIP (Spring 2026)

Instructor Contact

Name: Dr. Charlie Williams

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Office Location: Chem 263

Office Hours: TR 10:00 – 11:00, WF 9:30 – 10:30 or by appointment

Email: Charlie.williams@unt.edu

Communication Expectations:

I can be reached most easily via email. If you are attaching pictures to a Canvas message, however, please clearly indicate you are doing so in your message. I will typically respond within 24 hours unless you email me between 5 pm Friday and 5 pm Sunday. MWF office hours will usually be in person in my office, but we can also set up Zoom appointments if necessary. If you need or want individualized help with any of your assignments outside of office hours, it is your responsibility to email me and set up a meeting – provide a few available time slots up front for efficiency (this is best practice in general).

Course Description

Students in the UNT Forensic Science Program are required to complete a capstone experience for their degree. This includes a research project (hands-on or literature review) or an internship in an offsite laboratory. This course will also review topics necessary for future success in the forensic field such as professional development, legal aspects related to your internship/research field, and ethics.

Course Structure

This course will meet the following Mondays. Please put them in your calendars at the start of term. Changes to dates, times, or locations will be announced ASAP on Canvas.

Time: 5:00 – 5:50 pm

Location: LANG 209 (see email and Canvas for updates)

- 1/12 – syllabus and intro
- 1/26 – paper topic discussions; Q&A on formatting, research, etc.
- 2/24 – professional development activities
- 3/16 – QA/QC discussion
- 3/30 or 4/7 - optional writing/presentation work session (we will discuss preferences)
- 4/28 – presentations

I am happy to meet with one or all of you on other Mondays from 5:00-6:00 if you email me no later than the preceding Friday to give me a heads up. We can either meet in my office or the classroom, depending on demand.

Additionally, the classroom is reserved for our use every week whether we're in it or not. If you need a quiet place to make yourself write, want to meet with a classmate for accountability, or would like to practice your presentation, you're welcome to do so on days we're not scheduled to meet. However, be respectful of classes scheduled before and after us or I will revoke this.

Course Prerequisites or Other Restrictions

Confirmation from internship mentor of acceptance into an internship or permission of the Forensic Office. Some internship assignments require additional prerequisites (see application for details).

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss key court cases that relate to legal standards of forensic science.
2. Research criminal cases and their results as they relate to forensic science.
3. Find job postings and prepare a resume and cover letter for those postings.
4. Prepare and deliver an elevator speech.
5. Perform a literature search and review on a given topic using literature databases.

Materials

The following books are available in the library and are useful resources for forensic scientists.

- Ethics and the Practice of Forensic Science, by R.T. Bowen
- Quality Assurance in Analytical Chemistry by Prichard & Barwick
- Forensic Applications of HPLC, Bayne & Carlin
- Forensic Science Handbook Volumes I (2nd ed.), II (2nd ed.), and III, Richard Saferstein, editor.

Teaching Philosophy

I am a facilitator of learning, but I cannot learn for you. I place great value on students seeking out their own answers. I encourage students to look up information when they have a question (if possible) and seek me out for clarification or reinforcement. I believe learning is much more effective and long-term when it takes place in this manner.

Most of the meaningful learning associated with your capstone hours should take place at your internship and/or during your independent research. Outside of that, I do not believe in busy work or assigning homework simply to have something to grade. If I ask you to complete a task, it is because I think it will help you progress on your journey to becoming a professional in the forensic field.

Course Technology & Skills

Minimum Technology Requirements – In Person

- Access to computer with the following:
 - Microsoft Office Suite
 - [Canvas Technical Requirements](https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements) (<https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>)
 - Reliable internet access
 - Speakers

Minimum Technology Requirements – Remote

If class switches to remote format, you'll also need the following in addition to the in person materials:

- Microphone
- Zoom
- Webcam

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

Provide a list of course-specific technical skills learners must have to succeed in the course, such as:

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Using Microsoft Office (Word, Powerpoint, Excel)

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328) (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”

- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using “text-talk” unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these [Engagement Guidelines](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) for more information.

Course Requirements

Tasks your mentor will need to complete. Some of these will affect your grade.

- Confirm your internship experience when sent the Handshake link (they can email me for help if the link expires)
- Complete a midterm survey and discuss it with you
- Complete a final survey

There will also be a required report/research paper and presentation. The format of this paper may vary from student to student as your internships are all different. Regardless of your internship type, expect to spend **at least** an additional **focused** 1-3 hours per week on research, writing, etc.

Specific requirements for papers and presentations will be discussed in our first meeting, provided on Canvas, and can be discussed one-on-one in office hours.

There is assistance with literature search and review available on Canvas, and it will be discussed in class.

Grading

Professional Development – 100 pts

- Resume, cover letter
- Job search
- Networking & elevator speech
- Provide details on a professional organization your mentor or someone else at your internship belongs to or a licensure they maintain. What are the requirements, benefits, etc.

Legal Standards and Ethics – 100 pts

- Codes of ethics
- Summary of a court decision that affects some aspect of your internship field
- Ethical misconduct case related to your internship field

QA/QC – 50 pts

- Write an SOP for any task you conduct as an intern.
- Choose a task conducted by your mentor or someone else at your internship and explain a related QA or QC measure in place for that task.

Final Presentation – 50 points

Final Paper – 100 points

Mentor/Supervisor Surveys – 200 pts

- Your mentor will be asked to assign you a midterm and a final letter grade to reflect their opinion of your performance as an intern. They should ideally meet with you after the midterm survey to go over their selections. I will post the questions they'll be sent to Canvas so you know what you'll be assessed on.
- Generally, I will just go off of the letter grade they choose unless their answers to the other questions are grossly out of line with their letter grade decision (i.e., they mark you as excellent in every category but then give you a C or vice versa). If that happens, you and I can meet to discuss and I may raise or lower the grade accordingly.
- These letter grades will reflect a slightly different, more drastic scale than you're accustomed to when contributing to overall course grade calculations since they reflect the most important aspect of your internship.
 - o A = 100/100
 - o B = 85/100
 - o C = 70/100
 - o D = 50/100
 - o F = 0/100
- **NOTE: This grade category is subject to change if we experience issues getting Handshake notices sent/received. We may change the survey mechanism and/or grade impact as needed, and I will update you as soon as changes are made.**

*If you are writing a capstone thesis in lieu of an internship, your points for your paper and mentor surveys will be flipped (100 for surveys, 200 for your paper). You will still need to meet with the instructor supervising your thesis paper regularly and discuss your topic, progress, etc. and may have deliverables due throughout the semester.

Your grade for the course can be determined by the formula **(total points earned)/(total points possible)*100**. For example, if all assignment grades add up to 600 possible points, 540 points and above would earn you an A for the semester.

A = 90.0% and above

B = 80.0% - 89.9%

C = 70.0% - 79.9%

D = 60.0% - 69.9%

F = 59.9% and below

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve

the quality of student experiences in the course. **These evaluations will be announced in class and 5 bonus points will be given if we receive a response rate of 80% or higher.**

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and is an integral part of success in this course and the forensic science program in general.

Class Participation

Class participation will improve your experience in this class. It will not be graded, but it is a good low-stakes way to start engaging in new environments like you will in a new job. This is also a small, judgement-free environment which I suggest taking advantage of to get answers to questions about post-graduation success and practicing things like interview questions and such with your peers.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted with an increasing point penalty (10% the first day, 20% the second day, etc.). The instructor will announce any final deadlines with at least 1 week's advance notice.

Examination Policy

There will be no exams in this course. The paper/presentation take the place of the final exam.

Assignment Policy

Assignment instructions and due dates will be included in the assignment on Canvas.

All assignments should be submitted in Canvas as .DOC, .DOCX, or .PDF (preferred).

I'm happy to try to look over written assignments, pieces of your paper, etc. if provided at least one week before it is due. I'll do my best to get you some feedback within a day or two.

CITING YOUR WORK

All borrowed ideas, data, figures, etc. must be appropriately cited.

Turnitin will be used for short essay submission. If your similarity score is above 50%, you may receive a zero for that assignment so be sure to write everything in your own words.

Failure to cite your sources WILL result in a 0 for the assignment and MAY result in a report of academic dishonesty, depending on circumstances, severity, and number of occurrences.

Failure to include in-text citations as explained in class and on Canvas will result in a loss of 50% of points.

Instructor Responsibilities and Feedback

- It is my responsibility to help students grow and learn, provide clear instructions for projects and assessments, answer questions about assignments, identify additional resources as necessary, review and update course content, etc.
- I will typically reply to emails within 24 hours except on weekends as discussed in the Contact section
- Grades will typically be posted within 1 week unless an announcement is made otherwise

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus may be changed at any time. Changes will be announced via Canvas in as timely a fashion as possible.

Due date changes will be announced on Canvas and will be visible on the assignments themselves.

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

As students in the forensic science program, ethical behavior is paramount. Therefore, I adopt a zero - tolerance policy with respect to any violations of academic integrity. Any students found to be cheating may immediately receive a failing grade.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website \(https://disability.unt.edu/\)](https://disability.unt.edu/).

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

**UNT euIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (https://library.unt.edu/)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)