



Marshall University
Forensic Science Graduate Program
FSC 618: Comparative Sciences Syllabus

Course Title/Number	FSC 618 Comparative Sciences
Semester/Year	Spring 2025
Days/Time	Thursday 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Location	West Wing Classroom
Instructor	Stephen C. King
Office	Off Campus
Phone	304-543-5054 cell
E-Mail	scking359 @gmail.com / stephen.c.king@wvsp.gov
Office Hours	None; Prior to or after class
University Policies	By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on "Marshall University Policies." Or, you can access the policies directly by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/policies/ . Academic Dishonesty/Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/Computing Services Acceptable Use/Inclement Weather/Dead Week/Students with Disabilities/Academic Forgiveness/Academic Probation and Suspension/Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/Affirmative Action/Sexual Harassment

Course Description: From Catalog

An introduction to friction ridge skin (fingerprints and palm prints) and its use in human identification and forensics (latent prints).

The table below shows the following relationships: How each student learning outcome will be practiced and assessed in the course.

Course student learning outcomes	How students will practice each outcome in this course	How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will discuss the history of fingerprints in human identification • Students will discuss the formation of friction ridge skin on humans • Students will learn the proper method of taking fingerprints and palm prints • Students will learn the basics of fingerprint pattern recognition, the basic structure of palm prints, how to compare two fingerprint/palm print 	Discussion, in-class exercises	Exam questions

<p>samples, and how to arrive at a conclusion of identification, exclusion, or inconclusive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will learn how to develop latent prints using a variety of physical, chemical, and electronic means • Students will learn how to properly preserve developed latent prints • Students will learn how to properly analyze, compare, and evaluate developed latent prints • Students will learn about the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) • Students will learn the fundamentals of expert testimony, especially as it pertains to the latent print discipline • Students will learn the connection between forensic science and ethics 		
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Required Texts, Additional Reading, and Other Materials

There is no single required text. Several texts and publications will be consulted. Any additional readings will be provided by the instructor.

Course Requirements/Due Dates

There will be assignments made that will require the student to acquire objects and data and perform tasks relevant to the topic being discussed. The instructor will explain the requirements prior to the assignment.

Grading Policy

Evaluation Methods: Written examinations and class assignments

Midterm Exam: 40%
 Final Exam: 40%
 Class Assignments: 20%

Grading Scale: A = 90-100%
 B = 80-89%
 C = 70-79%
 D = 60-69%

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all lectures and laboratory sessions. Unexcused absences may result in decrease of overall course grade. Only university approved absences will be accepted.

Students will be allowed to make-up a lab only for university approved absences. Make-up time will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time.

Course Schedule**FSC 618 Course Schedule (Subject to Change)**

Week 1: (Jan. 16)	Introduction
Week 2: (Jan. 23)	A Brief History / Friction Ridge Skin Morphology (Lecture)
Week 3: (Jan. 30)	Fingerprint Pattern Recognition (Lecture & Exercises)
Week 4: (Feb. 06)	Taking Finger and Palm Prints (Practical)
Week 5: (Feb. 13)	February Break (no class)
Week 6: (Feb. 20)	MID-TERM EXAM
Week 7: (Feb. 27)	Latent Prints / ACE-V (Lecture)
Week 8: (Mar. 06)	Palm Prints Analysis (Lecture & Exercises)
Week 9: (Mar. 13)	Friction Ridge Skin on the Soles of the Feet (Lecture)
Week 10: (Mar. 20)	Spring Break (no class)
Week 11: (Mar. 27)	Latent Print Processing (Lecture/Laboratory)
Week 12: (Apr. 03)	Latent Print Processing (Laboratory)
Week 13: (Apr. 10)	AFIS / ACE-V (Exercises)
Week 14: (Apr. 17)	Latent Print Comparison (Exercises)
Week 15: (Apr. 24)	Latent Print Comparison (Exercises)
Week 16: (May 01)	Latent Prints and the Law / Testimony (Lecture)
Week 17: (May 08)	FINAL EXAM

Miscellaneous:

- Since powder processing and other latent print development methods can be messy, you may wish to wear old clothes during those sessions. Also, prior to the scheduled processing classes, students should begin collecting “evidence” to process. Items should be a mixture of smooth or semi-smooth nonporous surfaces (cans, bottles, plastics, glass etc.) and paper items. Reminders will be given prior to those sessions.
- A 3x or 4x magnifying glass will be needed to perform latent print comparisons.
- Due to the nature of my work, I am subject to court and could be either delayed or absent for any session. A suitable substitute will be found if possible.
- If you need to contact me during the day or evening, feel free to do so by calling, sending a text, or an email. I will make every effort to be in the classroom 30 minutes prior to our sessions for consultation. I can also stay after class, if needed.