Clues—the stuff of criminal evidence—are contingent traces pointing to a deeper reality. Containing an element of uncertainty, their meaning must be divined. This course will explore the spiritual, scientific, and popular beliefs that have informed criminal evidentiary practices, beginning in medieval Europe and ending in the 21st-century United States. Following an introduction to evidential paradigms, we will consider the collection, reading, and reconstruction of clues to establish belief and a legal decision. Case studies include the theological roots of the criminal trial; miraculous evidence in early modern Europe; the invention of the scientist; Sherlock Holmes and his spiritualist creator Arthur Conan Doyle; the Bertillon system of criminal identification; fingerprint and DNA analysis; images and objectivity; crime laboratories; truth serum; the Wisconsin Innocence Project; and the CSI television series. Students will collaboratively develop an Internet site documenting past and present evidentiary practices. Fusing old and new media, we will explore ways of knowing and seeing that expand beyond traditional text-based scholarship.
Course Requirements

Classes will combine lecture, discussion, and other activities. All readings are available electronically at Learn@UW. You will be graded on the following:

- Participation and attendance  20%
- Response papers  20%
- Blog Project  20%
- Midterm exam  20%
- Final exam  20%

**Participation and attendance:** Learning is a collaborative process. You will learn more, feel more engaged, and have more fun by participating regularly in discussion. If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, come meet with me during office hours and I will help you to connect.

Participation means that you have carefully read all assigned materials and that you contribute your voice and “reading” of these materials to our discussion. It means raising questions about readings, responding to questions I raise, and to other students’ comments. It means respectfully listening to what a classmate has to say even when you strongly disagree with her or his point of view. It means offering your thoughts even when you think that many, some, all of your classmates will disagree with you.

In-class use of electronic devices is limited to laptop note taking. Accessing other devices or materials is disruptive to the class, unless specifically requested in conjunction with our group blog project. If you abuse this privilege once, you will lose it for the remainder of the semester.

If you must be absent, email or call me in advance, as I will be taking attendance. Keep me apprised of anything that could significantly impair your studies. Because everyone has other things to do, gets sick, has an out-of-town sporting event, or just needs a day off, you may miss three regular classes without penalty. After that, it affects your grade. If you miss six or more classes, you will fail the course. You may not miss on an exam day, or on a day when you are scheduled to present your group blog, unless you have my prior approval. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting any handouts or assignments made—ask me or check with someone from class.

A late assignment will affect your grade.

**Response papers:** You will complete ten one-page responses to questions posted on Learn@UW. The responses should substantively engage the week’s reading, but the format is your choice. Personality and creativity are encouraged! Responses should be submitted via the Learn@UW drop box by 2:30 on Mondays. NO RESPONSES ARE DUE: Week 1, Week 2 (individual blog due), Week 7 (midterm), Week 11 (spring break), your Group Blog Week, and one Opt Out Week of your choice. Response papers are graded √-, √, or √+ (and sometimes, √++).
Blog Project: You will post one individual blog and one group blog on assigned topics to our collaborative website AND present your group blog entry in class, answering questions and facilitating a site discussion. The project is intended to promote digital literacy, spark creativity, and enhance our learning partnership. We will discuss logistics, format, and content in class, and resources will be posted at Learn@UW. Access to the site will be limited to enrolled students and UW support staff. Selected entries may be subsequently posted to a public gallery, with student permission. You can access the site via the Blog Project tab in Learn@UW.

IMPORTANT NOTE: POST BLOG ASSIGNMENTS BY MIDNIGHT ON WEDNESDAYS

Individual Blogs are due Wednesday, February 3. Instructions will be provided in class and on Learn@UW. Individual blogs will be graded √-, √, or √+.

Sign up for your Group Blog by Monday, January 30, either in-class or by emailing me your choice (first come, first served). The group blog should:

- substantively engage the assigned topic
- relate to and help the class understand the week’s readings
- integrate individual student contributions
- include a variety of source materials: visual, material, performative, aural, textual
- demonstrate independent thought and creativity

The group project requires both individual and collaborative contributions. I will evaluate your work on both an individual and collaborative basis, making use of on-site tracking options and peer/self evaluation forms that you will complete following your presentation. A bonus will be awarded to students who thoughtfully incorporate presentation feedback in their entry.

Each student will prepare and post/present their own research, integrating their work as a cohesive response to the topic, and posting their name at the end of their entry. Individual entries should include formal citations (footnotes), at least three images, and three additional source links. Source links are to be embedded within the body of your text, not listed at the end of your entry.

Groups should plan to meet at least twice prior to the blog posting. At the first meeting, you should discuss content, delegate group responsibilities, and plan a schedule for completion. At the second meeting, you should share your initial research, revise plans as necessary, and discuss how you will integrate your contributions online and in class. Delegate the following group responsibilities at your initial meeting:

- Project coordinator to schedule meetings, facilitate communications, send reminders
- Designer to select iconic image for home page, review site for visual continuity/flow
- Technical advisor to suggest resources for technical/equipment issues
- Editor(s) to write introduction and conclusion, review site for content continuity/flow

Midterm and final exams: The midterm exam will be on Friday, March 9; the final exam on Monday, May 14. The format for both exams will be an essay question. I will circulate two possible questions in advance from which I will select one exam question. You may bring to the
exam ONE 3 x 5 notecard, which will be stapled to your bluebook(s). You may include whatever you like on both sides of the notecard: thesis, outline, key quotes, dates, key evidence, etc.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Evidential Paradigms

Week 1: Introduction

Monday, January 23

- Course Overview

Friday, January 27


Week 2: Clues

Monday, January 30

- Arthur Conan Doyle, The Sign of the Four, chapters 8-12.

POST INDIVIDUAL BLOG BY WEDNESDAY 2/3

Friday, February 3

- Individual Blog: Clues

Collecting Evidence

Week 3: Proof and the Theological Roots of the Criminal Trial

Monday, February 6


Friday, February 10

- Group Blog: Inquisition (post by Wednesday 2/8)
Week 4: Matters of Fact and the Invention of the Scientist

Monday, February 13


Friday, February 17

- *Group Blog*: Science and Spectacle (post by Wednesday 2/15)

Week 5: Towards a Theory of Evidence

Monday, February 20


Friday, February 24


Week 6: Repositories

Monday, February 27


Friday, March 2

- *Group Blog*: Wisconsin State Legal Archives (post by Wednesday 2/29)

Reading Evidence

Week 7: Bodies

Monday, March 5
• Alphonse Bertillon, Alphonse Bertillon’s Instructions for Taking Descriptions for the Identification of Criminals, tr. Gallus Muller (1889).

Friday, March 9

**MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8: Images

Monday, March 12

• Tal Golan, “The Emergence of the Silent Witness: The Legal and Medical Reception of X-rays in the USA,” 34 Social Studies of Science 469 (2004).

Friday, March 16

• Group Blog: Images and Objectivity (post by Wednesday 2/14)

Week 9: Minds

Monday, March 19


Friday, March 23

• Group Blog: Detecting Truth (post by Wednesday 2/21)

Week 10: Identity

Monday, March 26

Friday, March 30

- Group Blog: Biometrics (post by Wednesday, March 28)

Week 11: SPRING BREAK APRIL 2-6

Reconstructing Crime

Week 12: Crime Laboratories

Monday, April 9


Friday, April 13

- Group Blog: Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory (post by Wednesday 4/11)

Week 13: Narratives

Monday, April 16


Friday, April 20


Week 14: Re-reconstructing the Evidence

Monday, April 23

Guest Lecturer: Keith Findley, “The Wisconsin Innocence Project”
   Co-Director, Wisconsin Innocence Project and UW Clinical Professor of Law


Friday, April 27

Week 15: Popular Reconstructions

Monday, April 30


Friday, May 4

Group Blog: Courting Television/Television Courts (post by Wednesday 5/2)

Conclusions

Week 16: Past and Present

Monday, May 7

Clues in Current Events, readings TBC
Course Review

Friday, May 11

Group Blog: Evidencing New Media (post by Wednesday 5/9)

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, MAY 14, 10:05-12:05

University and Class Policies

Creating an environment that fosters learning for every student is essential to the mission of the University and our class. Below I have outlined the policies and services that are most important for building and sustaining such a learning community.

Accommodations

Students with needs that might affect participation, exams, or coursework should speak with me no later than the third week of the course in order to arrange for accommodations. The McBurney Center assists in determining reasonable academic accommodations. For additional information, please contact me or the McBurney Center at http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu (608-263-2741).
**Religious Observation**

Mandatory academic requirements will not be scheduled when a religious observance may cause significant numbers of students to be absent from the class. Student religious observation that might affect participation, exams, or coursework should be discussed with me no later than the third week of the course. Make up of work due to religious observation may be before or after the regularly scheduled requirements, at my discretion.

**Learning Environment**

Equal opportunity includes every student’s right to a dignified and respectful learning environment. Sexual harassment is one form of disrespect that undermines our community and violates the law. If you have questions, or are having any problems, contact me or the Office for Equity and Diversity at [http://www.oed.wisc.edu/](http://www.oed.wisc.edu/) (608-263-2378).

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity—honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility—is a key element of a positive learning environment. The overwhelming majority of students are hard working and honest about their schoolwork. If you have any questions about how to cite or present your material, ask me. If you have any concerns about academic integrity in our classroom, feel free to discuss them with me.

It is important to understand how academic misconduct is defined in order to avoid it. According to University of Wisconsin-Madison policies, academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others
- Engages in conduct aimed at falsely representing a student’s academic performance
- Assists other students in any of these acts

How to avoid plagiarism: [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html)