

Recovery of Outdoor Forensic Scenes: Basics of Forensic Archaeology and Taphonomy

Date: Oct 18, 2019

Co-sponsors: HD Forensics, LLC, Mercyhurst University, and Tripwire Operations Group, LLC

Location: Mercyhurst University, Erie, PA

Course Tuition: \$225 (10% discount for 2 or more courses)

Principle Instructors: Dennis C. Dirkmaat, Ph.D., D-ABFA; Michael J. Hochrein, Special Agent FBI, Ret.

Participants: Coroners, Law Enforcement and Fire personnel, University students (*limited to 20 individuals*)

Course Overview

The goal of the course is to explain what can be gained by proper outdoor scene recoveries employing forensic archaeology and employing a forensic taphonomic approach to the reconstruction of past events at the crime scene. Topics to be discussed include how to conduct efficient and effective forensic archaeological searches; how to create hand-drawn and sophisticated maps of the scenes and evidence with electronic total stations, survey-grade GPS, and high-end drones; and how to document, recover, and interpret surface-scattered human remains, buried body features, fatal fires, and mass disaster scenes. Numerous actual forensic cases will be discussed.

Saturday, Oct 18, 2019

7:30 – 8:00	Registration
8:00 – 10:00	Introduction to Forensic Anthropology (Dirkmaat) Basics of forensic archaeology, and forensic taphonomy and how to reconstruct past events. Actual cases presented
10:00 – 10:15	Break
9:45 – 12:30	Crime Scene Mapping (Hochrein) Basics of mapping outdoor crime scenes from hand-drawn maps, electronic total stations, GPS units, and drones
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 3:00	Surface Scatter Recovery (Dirkmaat) How to identify human vs animal bones (forensic significance), and how to process an outdoor scene involving remains scattered by a variety of natural forces.
3:00 – 3:15	Break
3:15 – 4:30	Buried Body Feature Recovery (Hochrein) Discussion of hand excavation of buried bodies, goals, and interpretations
4:30 – 5:45	Fatal Fire and Mass Disaster Scene Recovery (Dirkmaat) Basics of how to document, recover and interpret fatal fire scenes (structure and car fires), and mass disaster scenes (plane crashes and explosions)
5:45 – 6:00	Review and Certificates Awarded