

# Modern Death Investigation and the Pennsylvania Coroner's Basic Education Course

PCCD Building, Harrisburg  
December 9 – December 14, 2019  
Sponsored by  
Applied Forensic Sciences Department  
Mercyhurst University, Erie, PA

## Course Syllabus

### Monday, Dec 9. The Office of the Pennsylvania Coroner: Roles, Duties, Nuts and Bolts

7:30-8:00		Registration
8:00-8:30		Introduction, Course Content (Dirkmaat)
8:30-9:30	1	History of the Office of the Coroner (Kiessling)
9:30-9:45		Break
9:45-11:30	2	Roles and Duties of the Coroner (Kiessling)
11:30-12:30		Lunch
12:30-2:30	3	Pennsylvania State Statutes and Laws for the Coroner's Office (Grim)
2:30-2:45		Break
2:45-4:15	4	Types of Deaths Investigated by Coroner's Office (Grim)
4:15-4:30		Break
4:30-5:45	5	Right to Know/Filling out the death certificate (Grim)

### Tuesday, Dec 10. Recovery of Physical Evidence and Context at the Outdoor Crime Scene

8:00-9:30	13	Outdoor Crime Scene Reconstruction (Dirkmaat)
9:30-10:15	14	Recovery of surface-scattered cases (Dirkmaat)
		Break
10:15-11:30	15	Recovery of buried body cases (Dirkmaat)
11:30-12:30		Lunch
12:30-2:00	15	Fatal Fire Recovery (Dirkmaat)
2:00-2:15		Break
2:15-4:00	16	Mass Disaster Scene Recovery and Victim ID Considerations (Dirkmaat)
4:00-5:45	17	Role of NTSB (Kontanis)

### Wednesday, Dec 11. Recovery of Physical Evidence and Context at the Indoor Crime Scene

8:00-9:30	6	Role of Law Enforcement in Death Investigations: Lecture (Hochrein)
9:30-9:45		Break
9:45-11:30	7	Processing Indoor Crime/Death Scenes (Hochrein)
11:30-12:30		Lunch
12:30-2:00	8	Investigating the Indoor Crime Scene: Mock Scene (Hochrein)
2:00-2:15		Break
2:15-3:30	9	Fatal Motor Vehicle Accidents (Grim)
3:30-3:45		Break
3:45-5:45	10	Fatal Motor Vehicle Accidents – Part 2 (Grim)
	11	Blood Sample Collection (Grim)
	12	Drugs: The New Epidemic (Grim)

### Thursday, Dec. 12. Recovery of Evidence at the Medicolegal Autopsy

8:00-10:00	17	Introduction to the Medicolegal Autopsy (Johnson)
10:00-10:15		Break
10:15-11:30	18	Forensic Pathology: Determining Cause of Death (Johnson)
11:30-12:30		Lunch
12:30-2:00	19	Trauma and Postmortem Interval (Vey)
2:00-2:15		Break
2:15-4:15	20	Case Studies in Forensic Pathology I (Vey)
4:15-4:30		Break
4:30-5:45	21	Child and Elderly Abuse Investigation (Vey)

### Friday, Dec. 13. Establishing Identification, Special Forensic Cases and Court

8:00-9:45	22	Forensic DNA analysis (Young)
9:45-10:00		Break
10:00-11:30	23	Forensic Odontology (Scanlon)
11:30-12:30		Lunch
12:30-2:00	24	Relevant Anatomy for the Coroner (Messer)
2:00-2:15		Break
2:15-3:30	25	Forensic Anthropology (Messer)
3:30-3:45		Break
3:45-5:45	26	Preparing for court (Grim)

### Saturday, Dec. 14. Special Considerations and Overview of the Coroner's Office

8:00-10:00	27	Ruling on Cause and Manner of Death: Case Studies (Grim)
10:00-10:15		Break
10:15-10:45	28	Mental Health in the Coroner's Office (Grim)
10:45-11:00		Break
11:00-2:00		<b>Examination</b>

### Instructors

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Michael W. Johnson, MD, PhD, Forensic Pathologist, Allentown, PA  
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