

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS

Professor: Charlotte Braziel

Welcome to the homicide investigating class. I am Charlotte Braziel, retired Special Agent of the FBI. I've a variety of background, including crime scene investigations, organized crime, and I've worked for a lot of local departments on some homicide investigations. My educational background is an MBA from Sacred Heart University in Connecticut, and a criminal justice Master's from St. Leo's.

I'm very happy to have this opportunity to work with you in the homicide class. I know everyone in this class is going to bring a wealth of information and experience, and I encourage and want everyone to share that experience. What I want the students in the class to take away the most from this class is the principle that works in law enforcement-- multiple players, multiple decision-makers. We work together as a team, and we have success.

So we're going to be working with stakeholders, forensic anthropologists, botanists, the experts on the scene that we're going to need, learning what they contribute to the scene. Also, the community. How do we measure success? Is it just a conviction? Or is it the fact that we followed the laws and prosecuted? Because we all know from experience, we may do a great job, present the [? class, ?] but lose in the courtroom. We don't want that to happen, however, it's possible.

One point I want to emphasize is I'm going to require that everyone attend an autopsy and complete a summary of that experience. Because you have to schedule that ahead of time, I'm bringing that forward to your attention now. The class we're having is going to be exciting. It's going to be a little different than your traditional homicide investigation, as the emphasis is going to be on investigation and applying forensic science and applied sciences.

We'll also learn of other homicide nontraditional-- no bodies. Well how do you prosecute a case when you know the person is likely murdered and missing? What evidence, what circumstantial things do we bring to the courtroom? Long-term missing cases. Cold cases. A cold case is going to be classified after a year. The evidence is no longer hot. It poses different challenges. And I'm sure the homicide investigators in our class will be able to help us with that.

The most successful thing in this is teamwork. We work together, you take that away, you apply that in your everyday job, and we will be successful not only in homicides, but any investigation we encounter.