CMJ101: VEHICLE LAW AND ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION  
SPRING 2013

1. Instructor Information:

Assistant Professor Edmond J. O’Brien

Office Location: Guerrieri Hall, Room 202C

Office Phone Number: 410-572-8757

Office Hours: Monday: 9:45 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.  
5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

Tuesday: 2:15 P.M. – 3:15 P.M.

Wednesday: 9:45 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.  
5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

Thursday: 2:15 P.M. - 3:15 P.M.

Friday: By Appointment

College E-mail Address: eobrien@worwic.edu

2. Course Level: 100 – First Year

3. Course Title: CMJ101: Vehicle Law and Accident Investigation  
Section 1, Guerrieri Hall, Room 203  
Monday: 6:30 P.M. – 9:45 P.M.

4. Textbooks: Maryland Criminal Laws and Motor Vehicle  
Nexis publications, Matthew Bender and Company,  
Inc., Charlottesville, Virginia
5. **Course Description:**

This course introduces the student to the motor vehicle law of Maryland and basic accident investigation. Emphasis is placed on those sections of the vehicle code which police officers use in their daily enforcement activities. A study of accident investigation acquaints students with the methods and techniques of this type of police investigation.

“Ever since human beings have stood erect, they have been trying to go faster than each other whether it is for escape, work, or sport.” – Warren E. Clark

6. **Course Objectives, Assessment Goals, and Assessment Strategies**

Upon the successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the Maryland Vehicle Code.  (**GEO #3**)  
   A. Identify the respective titles and appropriate topics of the Maryland Vehicle Code.  
   B. Identify categories of traffic violations by their common name, classification and section number in the Maryland Annotated Code  
   C. Given word pictures or an audio-visual presentation depicting situations involving a vehicle, identify those situations that fit the definition of a traffic accident.

2. Identify traffic accident investigation functions.  (**GEO #5**)  
   A. The student will be able to identify and explain the functions of traffic accident investigation.  
   B. The student will be able to identify uses of traffic accident information.  
   C. The student will be able to explain the types of data used in traffic accident investigation.  
   D. The student will be able to describe the levels of accident investigation.  
   E. The student will be able to identify and define the categories of accidents.  
   F. The student will be able to describe the data and procedures of each category of accident.

3. Describe the preparation necessary for traffic accident investigation.  (**GEO #1,2**)  
   A. The student will be able to describe how police departments should
prepare organizationally for traffic accident investigation.

B. The student will be able to identify the categories of programs for special data collection.

C. The student will be able to describe the forms and files that are used in standard traffic accident investigation.

D. The student will be able to identify the equipment used in traffic accident investigation.

E. The student will be able to describe the training needed to be a competent traffic accident investigator.

F. The student will be able to describe and list the stages of planning at accident scene investigations.

4. Describe the procedures and techniques for collecting, preserving, and presentation of information in traffic accident investigation. (GEO #1, 2)

A. The student will be able to describe the methods of obtaining information from drivers.

B. The student will be able to describe the methods of obtaining information from witnesses.

C. The student will be able to identify techniques for describing injuries.

D. The student will be able to identify and explain the types of information that can be collected from roadways.

E. The student will be able to estimate vehicle stopping distances.

F. The student will be able to estimate vehicle speed from skid marks.

G. The student will be able to identify and explain the types of evidence that can be collected from vehicles.

H. The student will be able to prepare a drawing of an after accident situation map for a sample scene.

I. The student will be able to describe the techniques for evidence preservation for accident investigation.

All assessment strategies will be through the use of test questions and traffic accident scenarios.

Maryland Correctional Training Commission Entry Level Objectives covered in this course:

220 Identify the legal authority for those instances where an officer may store or impound a vehicle from public property.

221 Demonstrate the procedure necessary to store or impound a vehicle, inventory of property in vehicle, required reports, notification of tow truck.

222 Explain the state law related to impounding property.

235 Identify the following types of physical evidence an officer should look for at
the scene of a traffic accident: final position of vehicles, tire marks, metal scars, debris, fixed objects (poles, street signs, etc.)

236 Identify the reasons for gathering evidence at an accident scene as soon as possible, e.g.: witnesses may leave the scene, impending tire marks do not last long, and weather may destroy the evidence.

237 Identify the following as purposes of traffic accident investigation: protect the civil rights of those involved, determine appropriate enforcement action, determine the need for engineering changes, determine need for accident prevention programs.

238 Identify factors when a police officer must investigate a traffic accident.

239 Identify factors and circumstances when an officer may investigate a traffic accident.

240 Given word, picture, or audio-visual presentation depicting situations involving a vehicle accident, identify those situations that fit the definition of a traffic accident.

241 Identify the advantages of immediately removing vehicles from the street which have been involved in a traffic accident.

242 Identify circumstances that dictate the need for photographs and technical expertise at the scene of an accident.

243 Identify uses of tire marks evidence, including determination of: speed, position of vehicle on roadway, vehicle’s direction of travel.

244 Given photographs depicting the following types of tire marks found at accident scenes, properly match the photos with the appropriate term: skid, impending skid or shadow, critical speed scuff or yaw, acceleration marks, print.

245 Given a practical exercise depicting an accident scene, prepare an acceptable proportional sketch that reflects the following: probable point of impact, final positions of vehicles, traffic control devices, street names, visual obstruction, direction of north.

246 Given a practical situation, such as the two previous exercises, evaluate available evidence and identify proper enforcement action.

247 Identify elements required to prosecute successfully a hit and run driver, including: a particular vehicle was the one involved in the accident, person charged was driving the vehicle involved, person avoided his/her legal
responsibility, prudent driver would have known he/she was in an accident.

248 Demonstrate procedure for gathering complete and appropriate information from witness at a traffic accident scene.

249 Demonstrate or identify technique of vehicle inspection to determine if damage to a vehicle is fresh.

250 Identify circumstances when it is appropriate to impound a vehicle and/or obtain a search warrant before inspecting a vehicle involved in a traffic accident.

251 Identify procedure to check accident vehicle’s equipment for suspected failure, such as, brakes, tires, lights.

252 Identify circumstances in which a follow up on a traffic accident is required.

260 Identify the role of a law enforcement officer in traffic regulations.

262 Given various situations, determine that there is a violation and identify it by common name, crime classification, and section number, for example:
   (1) Possible unsafe vehicle or a vehicle not safely loaded
   (2) Hit and run accident
   (3) Vehicle failing to stop for a red or flashing signal
   (4) Failure to yield right of way at an uncontrolled intersection
   (5) Failing to yield to an emergency vehicle
   (6) Illegal u-turn
   (7) Vehicle traveling at an unsafe speed.
   (8) Reckless driving
   (9) Passes a stopped school bus which has its red lights flashing
   (10) Licensing and registration violations

265 Identify an officer’s options if a violator refuses to sign a citation issued by an officer.

266 Identify the options a violator may exercise in response to a traffic citation, to include court procedures or; pay monetary penalty.

267 Identify circumstances or situations when an arrest is the appropriate response during a traffic stop.

268 Identify the arrested person’s obligations regarding the “implied consent” law, and the process involved.

269 Given a vehicle code and words, pictures, or audio-visual presentation depicting a driver under the influence, identify it by common name, crime
Given a vehicle code and words, pictures, or audio-visual presentations depicting the consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages in a motor vehicle, determine if there is a violation and identify it by common name, crime classifications, and section number.

Identify two reasons why it is important that an officer check both the validity and authenticity of a motorist's operator's license.

Identify the legal authority for those instances where an officer may store or impound a vehicle from private property.

Define the responsibilities of a driver involved in an accident, to include duties under transportation code and insurance reporting requirements.

Identify the resources available to an officer who is first to arrive at the scene of a traffic accident.

**General Education Objectives addressed by this course:**

**GEO 1:** Express ideas objectively through oral and written communication.

**GEO 2:** Think critically and reason logically.

**GEO 3:** Read and analyze a written text.

**GEO 5:** Evaluate individual, societal, and cultural relationship.

**Course Content:**

I. Orientation
   
   A. Explanation of course goals, class requirements, grading system and instructor expectation.
   
   B. Origin, purpose and development of traffic laws.

II. Motor Vehicle Laws
   
   A. Definition and General Provisions (Title 11)
   
   B. Motor Vehicle Administration (Title 12)
   
   C. Certificate of Title and Registration of Vehicle (Title 13)
   
   D. Antitheft Laws (Title 14)
   
   E. Driver's License (Title 16)
1. Issuance
2. Expiration
3. Renewal
4. Violation of provisions
5. Refusal, revocation, suspension, and points

F. Accidents and Accident Reports (Title 20)

G. Rules of the Road (Title 21)
1. Definitions
2. Traffic Signs, signals, and markers
3. Use of roadway
4. Right-of-way
5. Pedestrians
6. Turning and starting
7. Special stops
8. Speed
9. Reckless, negligent and impaired driving
10. Stopping, standing and parking
11. Miscellaneous rules
12. Bicycles and play vehicles
13. Motorcycles
14. Special roadways

H. Equipment of Vehicles (Title 22)
1. Scope
2. Lamps and lights
3. Brakes
4. Other equipment
5. Vehicle safety equipment
6. Noise abatement

I. Vehicle Inspections (Title 23)

J. Size, Weight and Loads (Title 24)
1. Projecting loads
2. Securing loads

K. Powers of State and Local Authorities of Reference to Abandonment Vehicles (Title 25)

L. Parties and Procedures on Citations, Arrest, Trial and Appeal (Title 26)

M. Penalties; Dispositions of Fines and Forfeitures (Title 27)

III. Accident Investigation

A. The Investigation Process
1. Collecting information
2. Levels of accident investigation
3. Quality

B. Basis for Traffic-Accident Investigation (Police Policy)

C. Preparation for Traffic-Accident Investigation
1. Investigation preparation
2. Planning at scene
D. Information From and About People
   1. Finding people
   2. Identification
   3. Descriptions
   4. What people have to say
   5. Injuries
   6. Condition before the accident
   7. The driving process

E. Information Concerning the Roads
   1. Identifying the location
   2. Description of road
   3. Existing conditions
   4. Results of accident on road

F. Information Concerning the Vehicle
   1. Identification
   2. Description for classification purposes
   3. Damage classification
   4. Vehicle data at the scene

G. Measurements and Maps
   1. Measurements to locate results
   2. Measuring methods
   3. Measurements for maps
   4. Drawing the map
   5. Accuracy of measurements and maps

H. Reconstruction
   1. Objectives
   2. General procedures
   3. Fundamentals
   4. Speed and time to slide to stop
   5. Speed to side stop
   6. Flips and vaults
   7. Collision placement
   8. Collision speed
   9. Time and position

I. Causes and Factors
   1. Nature of cause
   2. Operational factors
   3. Conditional factors
   4. Conventional concepts
   5. Cause analysis

J. The MAARS Report
8. Evaluation and Grading:

Two examinations (mid-term and final) and four quizzes will be given at appropriate intervals. Test questions will be based on the texts, Power Point presentations, and lecture material. The final examination is comprehensive and includes information covered throughout the semester. Exams are expected to be taken during their scheduled times.

Make-up Exams – Make-up exams will only be permitted for legitimate reasons and must be taken within one week of the originally scheduled date. Students must contact the instructor in advance if unable to take a quiz or an exam. If not, the student will receive a zero for the exam. Final exams must be taken when scheduled because final grades must be submitted to the registrar within 24 hours.

Grading will be as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
A & = 90\% - 100\% \\
B & = 80\% – 89\% \\
C & = 70\% – 79\% \\
D & = 60\% – 69\% \\
F & = 0\% - 59\%
\end{align*}
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Weighting will be as follows:

- Quizzes: 20%
- Mid Term Exam: 35%
- Writing Assignment: 5%
- Electronic Assignment: 5%
- Final Exam: 35%

9. Writing assignments:

Each student will be required to complete a State of Maryland Motor Vehicle Accident Report (MSP Form #1) in accordance with the Maryland Automated Accident Reporting System (MAARS). This reporting form meets the known and projected needs of Maryland State, local, and federal government users. It provides a multi-level reporting capability designed to facilitate the work of law enforcement officers while guiding the reporting process to generate complete and accurate data.

Each student will be provided copies of the State of Maryland Motor Vehicle Accident Report (MSP Form #1) and the Maryland Automated Accident Reporting System Instruction and Reference Manual. The report must be completed in accordance with procedures established in the manual, and will be
weighted as 5% of the student’s course grade. The accident report is due no later than the last day of class on Monday, April 22, 2013.

Scoring Rubric: MAARS Report Assignment

All appropriate sections completed: 60%
All appropriate coding utilized: 20%
Organization: 10%
All special conditions are in accordance with MAARS: 10%

10. Electronic Assignment:

Students are required to complete a three page research paper on a specific aspect of traffic safety; i.e., traffic engineering, automotive safety features, etc. This assignment is worth 5% of the total course grade and will be graded on content, organization, and grammar.

Text should be double spaced with one-inch margins using a 12 point font. The paper should include a title page with the student’s name, date, title, instructor’s name and course title. Do not use Wikipedia or the textbooks as resources. At least one resource should be from the Wor-Wic Community College research database. A.P.A. guidelines should be followed.

Assignments are due on the last day of class, Thursday, April 19, 2012.

Scoring Rubric: Electronic Assignment

Content: 60%
Grammar, punctuation, and style: 20%
Organization: 10%
Research (APA) 10%

Writing Center

If you wish to have additional help on a electronic assignment, you may schedule an appointment with a writing conference instructor by going to www.worwic.edu and clicking on “Current Students” and then “Learning Resources” and “Writing Conferences.” Limited time slots are available, so an appointment is required. If you cannot keep your appointment, it is your responsibility to cancel any writing conferences by using this link.

11. Laboratory/Internship/Practical/Field Experience/Clinical Experience, Etc.:

Not Applicable.
12. **Academic Honesty Policy:**

Students must comply with the standards of conduct mandated by college policy as outlined in the Appendix of the college catalogue (pgs. 198 – 201). Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment in violation of that policy will not receive credit for that assignment. Discussions will occur before penalties are given. At the discretion of the instructor, the student may also be referred to the Student-Faculty Disciplinary Committee.

**Classroom Etiquette**

Please place all cell phones and other electronic devices on “silent” or “vibrate” mode before class. Text messaging in the classroom is not permitted. If it is necessary to immediately respond to an electronic message, please leave the classroom, make your response, and return to class. No side conversations or other distracting behaviors will be tolerated during class. Please respect others by being polite and considerate.

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend class and be on time. If the student is absent, excused or unexcused, more than 5 times for a day class, or 3 times for a night class, the Dean of Students will be advised. If arriving late, please minimize disruption to the class.

13. **Emergency Information Statement:**

In the event of a flu epidemic or other emergency that results in the suspension of classes, faculty will be communicating with students about their courses and course requirements, such as assignments, quiz and exam dates, and class and grading policies, via Blackboard. Students will be responsible for completing all these assignments in accordance with class policies. Information about the resumption of classes will be communicated via the College’s website and email system.

14. **Blackboard Statement:**

Blackboard is being used as a supplementary site in this course. To access course content in Blackboard you need to have access to a computer with an internet connection (other requirements may apply). Computers that meet these requirements are available on campus in the Maynard Technology Center (MTC 200), the Academic and Administration Building (AAB 217), Henson Hall (HH 100), Guerreiri Hall (GH 201), the Workforce Development Center (WDC 305), and the Allied Health Building (AHB 108).
Please follow these directions to gain access to the course syllabus, Power Point presentations, and study guides:

**Login Information**

1. From the Wor-Wic home page, point to “Quick Links” (top-right) and click the “Blackboard Login” link.

2. Enter your Wor-Wic user ID and password (same as your Wor-Wic e-mail user ID and password). **If you do not know your Wor-Wic user ID and password, contact Student Services.**

3. You should then see a list of courses in which you are currently enrolled. Click on the course link for CMJ 101.

4. Find and click on the folder for the course resource you are looking for; i.e. course syllabus, Power Point presentations, study guides, etc.

**15. Miscellaneous:**

Class time will involve both lecture and class discussions covering subjects in the text and outside materials. Students are expected to complete all assigned reading prior to class and be prepared to ask or answer questions regarding the material covered. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, attend all classes, and be on time. Regular attendance and participation are the best ways to ensure your success in this course.

If a student experiences any course-related problems throughout the semester, he/she should feel free to contact the instructor at any time. The student may call, send an e-mail, stop by the office, or meet with the instructor before or after class. I look forward to working with you this semester.

**16. Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #1</th>
<th>Course Orientation</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Title 11: Definitions</td>
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| Week #2     | Title 11: Definitions |

| Week #3     | Title 12: Motor Vehicle Administration; Title 13: Titles & Registrations |
Week #4
Title 13: Titles & Registrations
Title 14: Anti-Theft Laws

Week #5
Title 16: Drivers’ Licenses
Quiz #1 (Titles 11 – 13)

Week #6
Quiz #1 Critique
Title 16: Drivers’ Licenses;
Title 20: Accidents and
Accident Reports
Title 21: Rules of the Road

Week #7
Title 21: Rules of the Road
Quiz #2 (Titles 14, 16, 20)

Week #8
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
(March 4 – March 9, 2013)

Week #9
Quiz #2 Critique
Title 21: Rules of the Road
Title 22: Equipment of Vehicles

Week #10
Title 26: Parties and Procedures on Citations, Arrest, Trials, and Appeals Review
MID-TERM EXAM (Titles 11-14, 16, 20)

Week #11
Mid Term Critique
Title 26: Parties & Procedures on Citations, Arrest, Trials, and Appeals, Review
Title 27: Penalties; Dispositions of Fines and Forfeiture

Week #12
Accident Investigation Process
MAARS Form
Basis & Preparation for Traffic Accident Investigation
Quiz #3 (Titles 21, 22, 26)

Week #13
Quiz #3 Critique
Information From and About People
Information Concerning Roads
Week #14

Information concerning Vehicles
Projects Due
Quiz #4 (MAARS Form)

Week #15

Quiz #4 Critique
Final Exam, Monday, April 29, 2013, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM