

**UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING**  
**PHCY 5240**  
**PHARMACEUTICAL HOMICIDE PREVENTION, 2 Credit Hours**  
**Fall, 2025**

**Asynchronous (Online) Delivery Through WyoCourses**

**This Course Meets Daily on the Discussion Board**

**Instructor contact information:** Professor David Brushwood, RPh, JD, FAPhA. Phone: 307 766-6120 E-mail: [dbrushwo@uwyo.edu](mailto:dbrushwo@uwyo.edu), Office(s): HS 292, although your professor does not maintain an office in Laramie and electronic contact through some alternate means is required.

**Office Hours:** Sunday afternoons online, or at other times by appointment either through telephone or online (Zoom meeting). Please post general questions about course materials to the course discussion board. Personal matters should be addressed directly to the instructor through email or by telephone.

**Course prerequisites, co-requisites, enrollment restrictions:** Professional or graduate standing, or by permission of the School of Pharmacy.

**Course Description:**

Legal pharmaceutical products are sometimes used criminally by healthcare professionals and others as murder weapons to kill people. This course focuses on identifying the zone of risk for people who could be harmed by deadly pharmaceuticals used in the commission of a homicide, and the development of best practices to protect patients and others from harm that may occur to them from the homicidal use of medications sourced from a licensed pharmacist.

**General Course Information:**

This course is delivered in an asynchronous fashion. Pre-recorded lectures are posted to WyoCourses, along with reading assignments. Student-student and student-faculty interaction occurs on the course discussion board around the clock, 24/7. Students are expected to actively participate in online discussions, starting two original threads during each unit and posting three responses within other students' original threads during each unit. There is a multiple-choice online exam during each unit. There is a short answer/essay comprehensive exam at the end of the course.

**Objectives/Outcomes/Standards:**

1. Describe the background of the United States criminal justice system.
2. List the sources of law in the US system.
3. Discuss the seven basic legal principles that underlie the commission of a crime.
4. Describe the process for location of criminal laws in federal and state statutes.
5. Distinguish between criminal, administrative, and civil legal proceedings.
7. List the most common and powerful defense arguments in a criminal proceeding.
8. Describe the role of the local police department, and the relationship of the local police department with federal law enforcement agencies.
9. List the steps undertaken in the prosecution and defense of a criminal case.
10. List and discuss different types of evidence that are used in a criminal case.

11. Describe the types of crimes that have been committed by health professionals within a health care setting.
12. Describe the crimes that have been committed by those who prepare and distribute unapproved new drugs.
13. Discuss the avenues through which drugs can be diverted from a health care setting and then used as weapons to commit crimes outside a health care setting.
14. List the drugs that can be used as poisons in commission of the crime of murder.
15. Describe the balance that must be reached in the provision of necessary opioids for the treatment of chronic pain and the prevention of unintended deaths due to prescription drug abuse.
16. Discuss the circumstances under which the commission of an error in health care can be viewed as a criminal act.
17. Explain burden of proof in a criminal case.
18. Design a risk reduction system that will detect criminal activity of healthcare personnel who intentionally use pharmaceutical products to harm patients.
19. Describe a program that will reduce the zone of risk so that pharmaceutical products under the control of the pharmacy department are not removed from the healthcare setting and used to harm persons known to healthcare personnel.
20. Present a seminar to health care providers on reducing the risk that pharmaceutical products will be used to intentionally harm a person as the instrumentality of a criminal act.
21. Develop a system for detecting deadly drugs within the drug distribution system and the use of strategies that will reduce the risk of harm from these deadly drugs.
22. Describe the emerging field of forensic pharmacy.
23. Supervise a crime scene in which pharmaceutical homicide is suspected.

**Required Text: Brushwood, David B. Pharmaceutical Homicide: A Forensic Approach to Patient Safety. Innovative Ink Publishing (2024). Print ISBN: 979-8-7657-9696-2. eBook ISBN: 979-8-7657-9697-9**

**Recorded Online Lectures:**

- Homicide: The Patient Safety Orphan
- Classifying the Degrees of Homicide
- Criminal Actions by Healthcare Professionals
- Murder By Medication
- Homicidal Poisoning
- Unlawful Use of Lawful Medications
- The Inherent Dangers of Pharmaceutical Products
- Criminality and Medication Errors

**Online Videos:**

- Harold Shipman (Doctor Death) Documentary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1f01Y0yzn4>
- Drug Induced Homicide Part 1 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK\\_i8TBxv4w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK_i8TBxv4w)
- Drug Induced Homicide Part 2 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_0UmY6pptY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_0UmY6pptY)
- Drug Induced Homicide Part 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAKDFP5tZ0k>
- Serial Killer Charles Cullen Interview <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2xMTTmZpSM>
- Von Bulow: A Wealth of Evidence <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3flb8h>
- Pharmacist Natalie Cochran Stunned by Fast Murder Verdict <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKayGEOw3tc>

- Opioids III: The Sacklers: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaCalhfETsM>
- Frontline: The Suicide Plan <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/suicide-plan/>
- RaDonda Vaught Trial: State's Closing Arguments  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqBbyVjUFGw>

**Legal Case Studies:**

- Saenz v. State
- People v. Kim
- Jones v. State
- Krapf v. St. Luke’s Hospital
- Commonwealth v. Walker
- People v. Li
- TL v. Cook Children’s Medical Center
- Vaught v. Tennessee Board of Nursing

**Course Requirements/Assignments:**

Each unit in this course requires that students complete the following activities:

- Carefully review the Unit Guide for familiarity with unit learning objectives and responsibilities.
- Read the assigned chapter(s) in the textbook
- Download and print the recorded lecture handouts and view the pre-recorded online lecture.
- View the assigned online video.
- Read the assigned case study.
- Participate actively in discussion board (Start 2 original threads and provide 3 responsive posts minimum per week/unit—See grading rubric at the end of the syllabus).
- Take the unit exam online.

There is a comprehensive exam at the end of the course.

**Grading Standards:**

The final grade in this course will be comprised of:

Unit Exams	50%
Comprehensive Exam	25%
Class Discussion Board	25%

Grading:

A:	90-100
B:	80-89
C:	70-79
D:	60-69
F:	<60

Students who miss exams or class participation may request an excused absence, which will be granted by the course instructor if warranted. Students who develop conflicts that prohibit their completion of 25% or more of course material should withdraw from the course. Students who satisfactorily complete 75% or more of the course material, and who cannot complete the balance within the confines of the course schedule, may be granted an incomplete (I) course grade, and missing coursework must be completed by the end of the following term.

**Course Outline:**

**Unit 1: The Mandate for Patient Safety—September 13 to 21**

Assigned Text Reading	Foreword and Chapter 1
Recorded Online Lecture	Homicide: The Patient Safety Orphan
Online Video	Harold Shipman (Doctor Death) Documentary
Case Study	Saenz v. State

**Unit 2: The Crime of Homicide—September 20 to 28**

Assigned Text Reading	Chapters 2 and 3
Recorded Online Lecture	Classifying the Degrees of Homicide
Online Video	Drug Induced Homicide Parts 1, 2, 3
Case Study	People v. Kim

**Unit 3: Forensics and Pharmacy—September 27 to October 5**

Assigned Text Reading	Chapters 4 and 5
Recorded Online Lecture	Criminal Actions by Healthcare Professionals
Online Video	Serial Killer Charles Cullen Interview
Case Study	Krapf v. St. Luke’s Hospital

**Unit 4: The Perfect Crime Setting—October 4 to 12**

Assigned Text Reading	Chapters 6 and 7
Recorded Online Lecture	Murder By Medication
Assigned Video	Von Bulow: A Wealth of Evidence
Case Study	Jones v. State

**Unit 5: Poisons in the Community—October 11 to 19**

Assigned Text Reading	Chapters 8 and 9
Recorded Online Lecture	Homicidal Poisoning
Assigned Video	Pharmacist Natalie Cochran Stunned by Fast Murder Verdict
Case Study	Commonwealth v. Walker

**Unit 6: Drugs that Can Kill—October 18 to 26**

Assigned Text Reading	Chapters 10 and 11
Recorded Online Lecture	Unlawful Use of Lawful Medications
Assigned Video	Opioids III: The Sacklers: Last Week Tonight
Case Study	People v. Li

**Unit 7: Foreseeable Death—October 25 to November 2**

Assigned Text Reading	Chapter 12 and 13
Recorded Online Lecture	The Inherent Dangers of Pharmaceutical Products
Assigned Video	The Suicide Plan
Case Study	TL v. Cook Children’s Medical Center

**Unit 8: The Crime of Imperfection—November 1 to 9**

Assigned Text Reading	Chapters 14 and 15
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Recorded Online Lecture	Criminality and Medication Errors
Assigned Video	RaDonda Vaught Trial: State's Closing Arguments
Case Study	Vaught v. Tennessee Board of Nursing

**Comprehensive Exam (Essay, Short Answer) Posted November 10; Due November 17**

**Attendance/Participation Policy:**

University sponsored absences are cleared through the Office of Student Life. Class attendance in this course is mandatory and is fulfilled through active participation on the course discussion board, as well as completion of assigned examinations. Graduate and professional students are subject to an elevated expectation for participation in class discussion board. Graduate and professional students should post original threads early during each unit, respond with encouraging and helpful remarks to posts of other students, and provide explanations of healthcare matters or research issues that may not yet be fully appreciated by undergraduate students enrolled in the cross-listed version of this course.

**Classroom Behavior Policy:**

At all times, I expect you to treat your presence in the classroom and your enrollment in this course as you would a job. You will be respectful towards you classmates and instructor. Spirited debate and disagreement are to be expected in any classroom and all views will be heard fully, but at all times we will behave civilly and with respect towards one another. Personal attacks, offensive language, name-calling, and dismissive gestures are not warranted in a learning atmosphere. As the instructor, I have the right to dismiss you from the electronic forums and other areas where disruptive behavior occurs.

**Classroom Statement on Diversity:**

The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that supports students of all backgrounds and viewpoints. Diversity of viewpoints is considered a resource for learning. Topics may be difficult, not only intellectually but emotionally; however, discussions are essential to meeting the course's student learning outcomes and assisting students in developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. During all conversations, respect and civility are of utmost importance.

**Disability Support:**

The University of Wyoming is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you have a disability, including but not limited to physical, learning, sensory or psychological disabilities, and would like to request accommodation for this course due to your disability, please register with and provide documentation of your disability as soon as possible to Disability Support Services (DSS), Room 128 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu). It is in the student's best interest to request accommodations within the first week of classes, understanding that accommodations are not retroactive. Visit the DSS website for more information at: [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss)

**Academic Dishonesty Policies:**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Cases of academic dishonesty will be treated in accordance with UW Regulation 2-114. The penalties for academic dishonesty can include, at my discretion, an "F" on an exam, an "F" on the class component exercise, and/or an "F" in the entire course. Academic dishonesty means anything that represents someone else's ideas as your own without attribution. It is intellectual theft – stealing - and includes (but is not limited to) unapproved assistance on examinations, plagiarism (use of any amount of another person's writings, blog posts, publications, and other materials without attributing that material to that person with citations), or

fabrication of referenced information. Facilitation of another person's academic dishonesty is also considered academic dishonesty and will be treated identically.

**Duty to Report:**

UW faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX, discrimination based upon sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, the faculty member MUST report information you share about the incident to the university's Title IX Coordinator (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. Faculty can help direct you or you may find info about UW policy and resources at

<http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit>

You do not have to go through the experience alone. Assistance and resources are available, and you are not required to make a formal complaint or participate in an investigation to access them.

**Substantive changes to syllabus:**

All deadlines, requirements, and course structure is subject to change if deemed necessary by the instructor. Students will be notified verbally in class, on our WyoCourses page announcement, and via email of these changes.

**Student Resources:**

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES: [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu), 766-3073, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss)

COUNSELING CENTER: [uccstaff@uwyo.edu](mailto:uccstaff@uwyo.edu), 766-2187, 766-8989 (After hours), 341 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/ucc](http://www.uwyo.edu/ucc)

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS: 766-4286, 312 Old Main, [www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs](http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs)

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE: [dos@uwyo.edu](mailto:dos@uwyo.edu), 766-3296, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/dos](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos)

UW POLICE DEPARTMENT: [uwpd@uwyo.edu](mailto:uwpd@uwyo.edu), 766-5179, 1426 E Flint St, [www.uwyo.edu/uwpd](http://www.uwyo.edu/uwpd)

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT WEBSITE: [www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct)

**Syllabus Changes:** The material in this course is constantly changing. As new challenges for the prevention of pharmaceutical homicide emerge, they will be incorporated into the class as soon as possible. Omissions and deletions of course material may occur during the term of a course, and they will be highlighted for student awareness.

**HyFlex, Zoom, and WyoCourses expectations:**

As with all UW coursework, this course will be educational and useful to you. I will respond to questions, concerns, and feedback in a timely manner.

Your responsibilities:

- Give and receive feedback from me and your classmates respectfully and constructively in all interactions. This includes in Zoom chats, on WyoCourses boards, and within physical classroom spaces.
- Actively engage in civil discourse in a respectful manner. Use professional language in all course related forums.

- Communicate professionally. Whenever you send class-related email or messages, please include a clear, specific subject line and use the body of the email or message to explain the purpose for the email and any attached materials. Conduct yourself professionally.
- Meet assignment deadlines. We expect that you're interacting with course material multiple times during the week.
- Ask for help when you need it. For academic assistance for this course please contact me for available resources. For Dean of Students assistance please see: <https://www.uwyo.edu/dos/student-resources/covid-19-student-resources.html>
- Please let us know if you notice another student who needs help in our (anonymous) WyoCares referral option (<https://www.uwyo.edu/dos/students-concern/index.html>).

**Information Technology (IT):** If you have any IT related challenges, please contact the UWIT Service Center: <https://uwyo.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1940/Portal/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=8890>

# Discussion Board (Class) Preparation/Participation

## Grading Rubric

### (25% of Grade)

	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Inadequate (C)
<b>Contributions</b>	Consistently initiates useful and relevant ideas when participating in the discussion board. A definite leader who contributes major effort and who makes class discussions better.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in classroom discussion board. A strong student who tries hard but is more of a follower than a leader in discussions.	Inconsistent in providing relevant comments on discussion board. Fails to initiate new threads that stimulate participation by other students.
<b>Attitude</b>	Always respectful of others; has a positive attitude, and does not rudely criticize anyone else's ideas or work. Other students feel safe responding to this student's posts.	Occasionally becomes impatient with ideas or work of others. Usually has a positive attitude toward discussions. Usually treats others and self with respect.	On more than one occasion becomes disrespectful of ideas expressed by others, using insults rather than evidence to express contrary views.
<b>Preparedness &amp; Focus</b>	Consistently stays focused on subject matter assigned for discussion board and achieves identified outcomes. Self-directed and highly motivated. Postings help with understanding of assigned materials.	Usually posts comments that are related to course materials, but occasionally rambles about subjects that are not relevant to the course.	Postings to discussion board are based on general knowledge and common sense, rather than on materials assigned for course.
<b>Quality of Work</b>	Provides work of the highest insight that motivates other students to achieve at a high level.	Provides quality work that is interesting but not consistently insightful.	Does work that reflects little understanding of the course material.