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Ferris lectures address topics central to 'CSI' shows

BIG RAPIDS – The topics of forensic anthropology, pathology and toxicology, made popular by television's "CSI" shows, will be addressed by a trio of interesting speakers in upcoming lectures at Ferris State University.

Stephen Cohle, chief medical examiner for Kent County, will talk on "Forensic Pathology" on Tuesday, March 22, at 6 p.m. in Room 2 of the Instructional Resource Center. Cohle, whose job is to determine how people died, is collaborating on a book about some of his more interesting cases. He estimates he has performed more than 6,000 autopsies over his career throughout West Michigan and other parts of the state.

Alumnus John Trestrail, managing director of the DeVos Children's Hospital Regional Poison Center in Grand Rapids, will discuss "Forensic Toxicology" on Thursday, April 7, at 6 p.m. in IRC-2. He received his baccalaureate degree in Pharmacy from Ferris in 1967.

Trestrail's book, "Criminal Poisoning: Investigational Guide for Law Enforcement, Toxicologists, Forensic Scientists, and Attorneys," is a pioneering survey of the use of poison as a murder weapon. For years, he served as a visiting faculty member at the FBI National Academy in Virginia, and routinely takes calls for advice from "CSI" shows script writers.

The lecture series concludes with two presentations by Heather Gill-Robinson, an instructor and doctoral candidate at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. A graduate of Trent University in the United Kingdom, she is an authority on bog bodies (mummies) in Northern Europe.

Gill-Robinson will speak on "Forensic Anthropology/Archaeology" on Tuesday, April 12, at 6 p.m. in IRC-2 and will explain "My life as a CSI" on Thursday, April 14, at 11 a.m. in Room 120 of the Science Building.

The lectures, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences' biology department, are free and open to the public.

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