During the course of the module we have briefly considered the nature of science and looked at forensic evidence that is generally accepted to be scientific.

For this assignment our goal is to look at a category of potential evidence that may be touted as useful but may not generally be considered reliable or scientific. The purpose is to see why such evidence may not trusted, so that we can avoid similar reliability issues regarding digital evidence.

You are expected to discuss one example to be selected from the list at the end of this assignment.

When discussing your selected category of evidence attempt to indicate whether the category of evidence is

- Inherently unreliable (which may be the case if its foundation is not scientific), or
- Is not yet ready to be used, but there are many indications that the underlying science just needs to mature), or
- Is solid, but its poor reputation is based on an unjustifiable bias in the community — in other words, it should be accepted as reliable evidence.

Justify your discussion and opinion by citing reliable scientific sources. Also look for (and report on) evidence of the following:

1. Does it seem as if scholarly activity occurs/occurred in the field? For example, are there any academic journals or conferences where papers in this field are solicited and, perhaps more importantly, is there a history of publication in this field aimed at improving (or justifying) the achievements of the field?
2. If you are able to find judgements (in any court in any jurisdiction) that express an opinion on the reliability of the method, briefly discuss the grounds for such a decision. (Here we do not care whether a particular decision was later overturned, although where this happened and the reasons for overturning the decision are known, they may be an interesting issues to discuss.)

3. If you find that the field is recognised by a professional science or forensic body, discussion of this fact may be interesting.

Write your opinion in the style of an academic paper (but without an abstract). Amongst others this means you should include an introduction, primary argument, conclusion and references in your submission. It is evident that some references will have to be to resources on the Web.

You are allowed to submit up to four A4 pages written in 12pt font. (As usual, a larger font may be used for headings.)

Select one of the following categories of ‘evidence’ for your discussion.

1. Channeling
2. Graphology
3. Hypnosis
4. Iridology
5. Polygraphy