**Serial Murder Investigations**  
*Syllabus*  
CRIJ 4380-001, Fall 2012

**Instructor:** Kristen Welch  
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**Class Hours:** W 4:20-6:50  
**Classroom:** BH 205  
**Office Hours:** TR 12:30-1:30, W 12:30-3:30 p.m., or by appointment

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS


### RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS


### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Serial Murder course introduces the student to the phenomenon of serial murder and its various definitions. The course emphasizes the difficult investigations serial murders present, victim selection by serial killers, and the psychology of serial killers and serial killer investigations. Course topics include murder investigation techniques, the utility of homicide tracking systems, the *Modus Operandi* and signature aspects of serial killers, crime scene analysis, the effect of the news media on serial murder investigations, and assessing the quality of serial murder investigations.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course the student should be able to:

1. summarize the role of serial killer investigations and offender profiling in the criminal justice process;
2. discuss the methods and techniques used by investigators in serial murder cases;
3. identify and explain the legal problems that serial killer investigations present,
4. describe the psychology of serial killer investigations, including the roles of denial, defeat, recognition, acknowledgement, control, modus operandi, and signature characteristics in investigations;
5. evaluate the shortcomings of key, high profile, serial investigations and identify the best practices and techniques in successful investigations.
6. describe what crime scene characteristics and evidence are most important in providing linkages of cases attributed to a same serial killer; and
7. assess news media, current events, and scientific discourse as they relate to serial murder.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance is highly important because discussion groups, and in class assignments will be assessed throughout the session. The student is expected to attend all classes and actively participate in class discussions. Because of this, students must complete the assigned readings and homework assignments prior to the scheduled class meeting to contribute to meaningful class discussions.

Class attendance is mandatory and attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with University Policy. Attendance will be recorded pursuant to University policy. Penalties for absences will be governed by rules promulgated by the University. A student may be penalized for more than three hours of absence at the discretion of the instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor number of absences. Accordingly, the instructor will deduct points from the FINAL COURSE GRADE based on the following scale:

- 2 unexcused absences = 10 point reduction in final grade
- 3 + unexcused absences = 30 point reduction final grade

**Student Absences on Religious Holy Day Policy**

Section 51.91 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observation of a religious holy day, including travel for the purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made within the first fifteen days of the semester or the first seven days of a summer session in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable time frame in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.
**Grading Policy:**

- **A** = 90-100%
- **B** = 80-89%
- **C** = 70-79%
- **D** = 60-69%
- **F** = Below 60%

**Exams: (60%)**

Students will be required to take 2 exams during the semester (a midterm and a final exam) on the days listed on the course schedule. Exams will be comprised of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Each exam is worth 30% for a total of 60 points.

**Texas Serial Killers Project: (20%)**

Students will be required to complete a Texas serial killer project in which students research various serial killers who operated in Texas. This project is worth 20% of the student’s grade and will require students to identify and describe serial killers who killed at least one of their victims in Texas.

**Class Participation: (10%)**

Students will receive grade based upon attendance, participation in class discussions, participation in small group discussions, and completion of in class assignments. Students are expected to have read the chapters and any additional readings assigned prior to class lecture/discussion so that any questions may be clarified and meaningful class discussion may be conducted.

**Homework Assignments: (10%)**

In addition to class participation, students are required to complete any homework assignments which may be assigned. Homework assignments may include completion of short answer or essay questions, research of assigned topics, chapter outlines, or written article summaries (primary article abstracts).

**Late Work: Late work will NOT be accepted without appropriate documentation of an excused absence, such as a physicians note.**

**Make up Exam Policy**

Students are required to take the examinations on the dates indicated in the course schedule. Any scheduling difficulties should be addressed the first week of class. If an emergency arises, students should notify the instructor as soon as possible before the absence. Notifications after the absence are not acceptable, barring extreme circumstances. If you miss an examination without prior approval from the instructor, the grade recorded will be a zero. If it is not possible to discuss the absence prior to the exam date due to an emergency, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible after the emergency. Appropriate documentation of the nature of the absence must be provided to the instructor.
ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts expects students to conduct their academic work with integrity and honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can result in the failure of a course and dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion – the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit, the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments as a member of the college.

DISABLED STUDENT POLICY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101. Students with a disability which affects their academic performance are expected to arrange for a conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal.

A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)
2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.
3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.
5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.
7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)
8. Decision by Provost.
9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule.
Confidentiality: If you would like to discuss your course performance, an appointment with the instructor may be made at a mutually agreeable time. In order to protect student confidentiality, it is against TAMU-CC policy for an instructor to discuss grades by telephone or through email. Any discussions on student’s course performance must be conducted with the instructor in person.

Academic Advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up the degree plan which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. If you are majoring, or planning to major in a field taught in the College of Liberal Arts, and if you have not yet obtained a signed degree plan, you should see you Academic Advisor immediately. Degree plans are important and useful to successful progress toward graduation. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Extra Credit: In general, extra credit opportunities will not be given, but may be offered at the instructor’s discretion. However, if an extra credit opportunity is extended to one student, then all students will be given the opportunity to complete the same assignment for extra credit.

CLASS CONDUCT

General Conduct
All students are expected to be respectful to others and the instructor at all times. Class discussions may include controversial topics. Students should be respectful of others’ viewpoints and opinions, even those that they may not agree with. Any conduct deemed by the instructor to be disruptive to the class may result in the student’s removal from the class. The removal will count as an unexcused absence. Excessive tardiness (2+) without a legitimate excuse may be counted as an absence at the discretion of the instructor.

Tobacco Products
No tobacco products allowed in the classroom at any time. Violations will result in the student’s removal from the class and the removal will count as an unexcused absence.

Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom
- Turn off all cell phones, pagers, iPods, and any other distracting devices prior to class. This means no text messaging during class!
- Laptops may be used in class with prior approval from the instructor for class purposes only (no surfing, email, or IM services may be accessed).
- Students are encouraged to use electronic resources outside of class for discussion forums and to access reading materials on class topics.
The anticipated schedule of lectures, readings, assignments, and examinations is as follows:

**August 26:** COURSE INTRODUCTION  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations (Keppel): Introduction & Chapter 1

**Sept. 2:** Defining Serial Murder and Serial murder Investigations  
 Assigned Readings: The Riverman: Chapter 1  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations (Keppel): Chapter 2 & 3

**Sept. 9:** Serial Killer Investigations: The Yorkshire Ripper  
The Riverman: Chapter 2 & 3

**Sept. 16:** Ted Bundy the Angel of Decay  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations: Chapter 4  
The Riverman: Chapter 4

**Sept. 23:** The Atlanta Child Murders & Consulting Detectives  
The Riverman: Chapters 5 & 6  
Handouts

**Sept. 30:** VICAP & Michigan Child Murders  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations: Chapter 5  
The Riverman: Chapter 7

**Oct. 7:** Innocent Victims: The Ken and Barbie Murders  
The Riverman: Chapters 8-9  
Handouts

**Oct. 14:** Discussion/Exam Review

**Oct. 21:** MIDTERM  
The Riverman: Chapters 10-11

**Oct. 28:** Some Murders are OKAY: The Mind of A Killer  
The Riverman: Chapter 12-13  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations: Chapter 6

**Nov. 4:** Profiling Serial Killers: George Russell Murders  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations: Chapter 7  
The Riverman: 14-16

**Nov. 11:** Profiling Case Examples: Cranbrook Murders  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations: Chapter 8  
The Riverman 17-18 & Handouts
Nov. 18:  **Morris Frampton: More on Signature**  
The Riverman: Chapter 19-21  
The Psychology of Serial Killer Investigations: Chapter 9

Nov. 25:  HOLIDAY

Dec 2:  **Was Bundy Right? Best Practices**  
The Riverman: Chapter 19-20

Dec. 9:  **Final Exam 4:30 – 7:00 pm**