

Serial Killers  
CRMJ 4890-40, Fall 2018

Instructor: Meagen Hildebrand Cutler, M.A., Assistant Professional Lecturer, Department of Criminal Justice  
Phone: 307-689-4181  
Fax: 307-766-3913  
E-mail: mhildeb4@uwyo.edu (Works best for communication. Do NOT send emails through WyoCourses.  
Send emails directly and only send emails from your uwyo.edu account.)  
Office hours: Optional Online “Conference” Mondays from 6:00 – 7:00pm MST or by appointment

Readings: Holmes, R. M., & Holmes, S. T. (2010). *Serial murder* (3rd Ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.  
Other readings in Files section of WyoCourses & Emailed links

Prerequisites: Junior or Senior Standing & Completion of 3 Criminal Justice Foundation Courses, Completion of two upper division CJ courses, or Consent of Instructor

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide students with an in-depth examination of the serial killers among us. It introduces students to particular case studies of notorious serial killers and explores current methods of tracking and apprehending such individuals. The course focuses on the myths and stereotypes that have evolved from mass media and public efforts to find satisfactory explanations for the relatively rare phenomenon of serial murder. Case studies are used to introduce several serial killers in the US and abroad. Also draws on outside readings, films, and lectures.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Understand the history and social construction of serial killers.
2. Identify the various types of serial killers.
3. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of specific cases of serial murderers.
4. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the techniques used to investigate serial murder cases.

**Course Materials:**

**PowerPoint Presentations.** I’ve prepared lecture-style PowerPoint presentations for each topic area, which includes content in the “Notes” section of the PowerPoint screen. Please use these presentations to help guide you through the course topics each week. These presentations are available in the Files section on WyoCourses.

**Readings.** All readings should be completed during the week indicated on the syllabus. Readings will either be chapters from the Holmes and Holmes Serial Murder book or .pdf files located under the “Files” section of your WyoCourses for this class.


**Videos.** Several videos are located in the WyoCourses Modules section of the course website and supplement the written materials provided. Please view these videos during the week indicated on the syllabus.

To make course materials as easy to find as possible, I’ve created Modules for each week on WyoCourse. Each week’s Module will contain links to the associated PowerPoint presentations, additional readings, and videos as applicable. The Modules will not contain the chapters assigned from the Holmes and Holmes textbook.

## Course Grades:

**Discussion Board Participation (20% of Grade).** You are required to post *one (1) substantive response* to each of the three (3) Discussion Board prompts on WyoCourses. Each discussion board prompt will contain instructions for the response, as well as any additional requirements, such as outside research (i.e., materials not provided in this course) or word minimums, as applicable. Please read **all** of the instructions provided. When outside research is required, you **must** cite your sources, both in-text and provide a full citation at the bottom of your post, using 6<sup>th</sup> Edition APA Format. These discussion boards will be civil; no disrespectful commentary will be tolerated. Disagreement is perfectly fine as we all have our own points of view; however, it will be done with logic and reason, not personal attacks. Please post your discussion prompt response by 12:00pm (**noon**) on the Tuesday indicated on the syllabus. Failure to post your discussion response on time will result in a 10% reduction in the grade of the post for each day it is late. Each discussion post is worth 20 points. Your participation on the Discussion Board accounts for 20% of your overall grade for the course.

**Quizzes (15% of Grade).** There will be three (3) quizzes during the course. The quizzes consist of multiple choice and true/false questions and will test material covered in the weeks prior only (i.e., no comprehensive quizzes). The material from the quizzes may come from the PowerPoints, videos, or readings. There are no make-ups without an excuse from the University. Quizzes will be available beginning at 8:00am and will close at 11:00pm Mountain Standard Time on the Tuesday indicated on the syllabus. You will have 30 minutes to take the quiz. Once you begin, you cannot stop and restart. The dates for the quizzes can be found on the timeline at the end of the syllabus. Each quiz is worth 15 points. The quizzes account for 15% of your overall grade for the course.

**Journal Article Critique (25% of Grade).** You are required to choose one (1) of the three (3) journal articles assigned during Week 10 (Female Killers) posted on WyoCourses that is of interest to you and provide a three (3) page review of the article. Papers must be in Times New Roman, size 12-point font, and double-spaced with 1" margins (default on most word processor programs is 1.25"). The possible journal articles are marked on the syllabus with the following symbol: . Your article review must be turned in via the Assignment section of WyoCourses by Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (**noon**) Mountain Standard Time. Failure to turn in your paper on time will result in a 10% reduction in the grade of the article critique for each day it is late. You will upload your work in .docx format (.doc, .rtf, .wps, .pdf, etc. are not acceptable and will be penalized). In this article critique, you need to summarize the article and its main findings, discuss five (5) strengths and five (5) weaknesses of the article (and **why** each is a strength or weakness), and conclude with recommendations on how future research in this area could be improved. This critique accounts for 25% of your overall grade.

**“The Perfect Serial Killer” Paper (40% of Grade).** Your task is to invent the perfect serial killer, meaning one who does not get caught. The killer can be anything you want him/her to be. Papers must be in Times New Roman, size 12-point font, and double-spaced with 1" margins (default on most word processor programs is 1.25"). You need to divide the work into six sections with individual headings:

- a) Personal factors of the killer’s background;
- b) Current aspects of the killer’s life;
- c) Holmes & Holmes Classification and, if appropriate, FBI classification of the killer;
- d) Targets;
- e) Method of killing; and
- f) Post-mortem behaviors.

All sections are equally important. Every detail you provide needs to be justified with an explanation. **More importantly, you need to cite any supporting research you identify.** You can use any of the materials I have provided, as well as any journal articles you find. You need to find academic research to support your

work; Wikipedia or similar websites are not appropriate sources. This will require you to go through the library databases of articles. You can also sometimes find academic journal articles available through Google Scholar.

Your job is to identify features that would make someone a successful, or “perfect”, serial killer and avoid detection. This paper is not for a class on literature or fiction. As such, the purpose is not to create a fantastical character that could not exist in reality. I recommend approaching this paper as a case study – several case studies are presented throughout the semester and can serve as a rough guide. Likewise, this paper is not about what other killers have done. Do not write about other killers and their behaviors (e.g., do not say the BTK killer did X so my hypothetical serial killer would do X). Those killers were not perfect, hence their infamy. When presenting facts about your hypothetical killer, note the research corresponding to your work.

The paper requires a minimum of seven (7) peer-reviewed, independently located journal articles (i.e., articles not provided in this course). There is a 10% deduction for each missing source. There is an 8-page minimum and no maximum number of pages. There is a 10% deduction for each page short of the minimum. Proper 6<sup>th</sup> edition APA formatting is required and will be a 25% component of the final grade. This means you will need a title page and reference page properly formatted (these do not count toward the total pages). An abstract is not necessary, nor are author notes on the title page. The more information you present, the more complete view of your killer and likely the better paper. If you have questions, please feel free to email me.

The paper is due by 5:00pm Mountain Standard Time on Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. Failure to turn in your paper on time will result in a 10% reduction in the grade of the paper for each day it is late. This penalty includes any time after 5:00pm on Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup>.

An assignment has been created in WyoCourses for your work. You will upload your work in .docx format (.doc, .rtf, .wps, .pdf, etc. are not acceptable and will be penalized). The paper constitutes 40% of your overall grade.

**Extra Credit:** No extra credit is scheduled at this time.

### **Final Grade Distribution:**

Discussion Board Participation	60 points	20%	A	89.50 – 100.0%
Quizzes	45 points	15%	B	79.50 – 89.49%
Journal Article Critique	75 points	25%	C	69.50 – 79.49%
Paper	120 points	40%	D	59.50 – 69.49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300 points</b>	<b>100%</b>	F	0.00 – 59.49%

### **University Policies:**

**Cheating & Plagiarism.** Do not do it! If caught, you will be reported to University Administration. Plagiarism is defined as taking or using the thoughts, writings, or inventions of another as one's own. It also means using direct quotations without credit and quotation marks, as well as using the ideas of another without proper credit. Some ideas in criminal justice, however, are so general that credit need not be given. Ask your instructor when in doubt. Cheating is defined as any intent to deceive the instructor in his or her effort to grade fairly. Anything that can possibly affect the fairness of grading is cheating, which I interpret to include any collaborative, mischievous, or disruptive behavior. In this course, pay special attention to gleaning information off the Internet, and do NOT pass it off as your own, or without proper citation. Learn to paraphrase ideas in your own words. Do not purchase, borrow, or revise another student's work. Do not "double dip" an assignment you did in another class to turn it in for this one unless special arrangements have been made with the instructors.

**Accommodations for Disabilities.** If you have a disability requiring assistance, please contact Disability Support Services at Student Educational Opportunity (SEO) at 766-6189 (TTY: 766-3073). They will give you the proper paperwork to turn in to me. Please do this as soon as possible.

**Withdrawal.** The last day to withdraw from individual semester courses with a W is November 9, 2018

**Incompletes.** Incomplete grades are very rarely given and only under special circumstances. No incompletes are given if the student's current grade does not allow for at least the possibility of C with the completion of the remaining work. See the general bulletin for more information about incompletes.

## Fall 2018 Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic/Area	PowerPoint	Video(s)	Holmes & Holmes	Packet Reading(s)
1	Aug 29 – Sept 4	Introduction	1	Welcome to the Course Inside the Killer's Mind	1-3	Serial Murder in United States
2	Sept 5 – Sept 11	Theories of Serial Killing	2		4	Lester - Theories of Serial Murder Hickey (Chapter 3) Castle & Hensley (2002) – Military
3	Sept 12 – Sept 18	Classifications Letters from Death Row	3	Rifkin		Rifkin Letters Jablonski Letters Hickey - Introduction
<b>Quiz 1</b> [Available Tuesday September 18 <sup>th</sup> from 8:00am – 11:00pm MST]						
4	Sept 19 – Sept 25	Historical Cases Ed Gein	4	Jack the Ripper	5	Keppel et al. (2005) - Jack the Ripper Haining - Psycho-Killer
<b>Discussion 1: Biological/Psychological/Sociological Explanations?</b> [Post due Tuesday, September 25 <sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon) MST]						
5	Sept 26 – Oct 2	Team Killers Lucas & Toole, Hillside Stranglers	5a & 5b	Hillside Stranglers		Egger - Biachi: A Case Study
6	Oct 3 – Oct 9	Manson Family	6a & 6b	Watch Manson Women Schram Audio File		History of Murder Manson Family Rolling Stone Interviews OPTIONAL: Graham book excerpts (hook.gifs)
<b>Quiz 2</b> [Available Tuesday, October 9 <sup>th</sup> from 8:00am – 11:00pm MST]						
7	Oct 10 – Oct 16	Ted Bundy Gary Ridgway - Greenriver Killer	7	Bundy Bundy Trial (Only first 19 minutes)	6, 7, 10	Egger - Bundy: A Case Study FBI Ted Bundy Profile King Co. Report (Skip individual cases)
8	Oct 17 – Oct 23	John Wayne Gacy Jeffrey Dahmer	8a & 8b	Gacy	8 & 9	Egger - Gacy: A Case Study Crime Scene... Lust Murderer
<b>Discussion 2: Reduced Time?</b> [Post due Tuesday, October 23 <sup>rd</sup> at 12:00pm (noon) MST]						
9	Oct 24 – Oct 30	Satanic Murders Richard Ramirez	9	Ramirez		Killing Cults Richard Ramirez Satanic Serial Murder

10	Oct 31 – Nov 6	Female Killers Aileen Wuornos	10	Wuornos OPTIONAL: Monster	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Thompson &amp; Ricard (2009) - Female Teams</li> <li>◆ Gurian (2009) - Female Serial Murderers</li> <li>◆ Farrell et al. (2013) – Female Classifications</li> </ul>
<b>Journal Article Critique</b> [Due Tuesday, November 6 <sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon) MST]						
11	Nov 7 – Nov 13	Controversial Convictions: Boston Strangler/Berkowitz	11	Boston Strangler Berkowitz (Son of Sam)		Confessions of DeSalvo 1 & 2 Son of Sam Clues Strangler News Article
<b>Quiz 3</b> [Available Tuesday, November 13 <sup>th</sup> from 8:00am – 11:00pm MST]						
12	Nov 14 – Nov 20	Serial Murder in the World Forensics	12	How to Commit the Perfect Murder	12	Serial Murder in Japan/S.A. Snook et al. (2005) - German Serial Murder White (2005) - Forensic Paraphilia
13	Nov 21 – Nov 27	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>				
14	Nov 28 – Dec 4	Profiling Victims	14	Profiler	14 & 15	Profiling Tracker Chapters 4 & 5 Hickey - Victims
<b>Discussion 3: Reopening Cases?</b> [Post due Tuesday, December 4 <sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon) MST]						
15	Dec 5 – Dec 11	<b>Work on Final Paper</b> [Due Monday, December 10 <sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm MST]				

\*\*\*\*All information is tentative. I will make any changes necessary for the benefit of students\*\*\*\*

I have read and understand the terms of the syllabus

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement of the syllabus is listed on WyoCourses. Please go to the Assignment section on the left-hand side of the course shell and enter your name and the date in the “Syllabus Acknowledgement” assignment. Thanks!