

CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY

PSY 450: The Psychology of Serial Killers

Fall 2022

August 22 – December 9, 2022

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Textbooks:

Dobbert, D. L. (2009). Psychopathy, perversion, and lust homicide: Recognizing the mental disorders that power serial killers. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc (ISBN 978-0-313-36621-5).

Schechter, H. (2003). The serial killer files: The who, what, where, how, and why of the world's most terrifying murderers. New York, NY: Random House (ISBN 0-345-46566-0).

Catalog Course Description

This course explores the minds of serial killers and mass murderers with a focus on the factors that psychologists have identified which can lead to the creation of such killers. Additionally, the course will explore many of the myths surrounding their complex psychological dynamics of serial killers. A variety of serial killers, from sexual predators to psychotic killers, from murder teams to odd eccentric stalkers will be explored. Finally, the possible motives of the serial killer will be addressed including lust, control, glory, profit, thrill, delusions, rage, the desire for company, the need to please a partner, and even murder as an intellectual exercise.

Program Linking Statement

This course develops and assesses the skills and competencies for the Psychology program student learning outcomes I.) Students will identify key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology; and IV.) Students will exhibit the value of educating the whole person through the description and explanation of the dynamic nature between one's mind, body, and social influences.

Course Overview

This course we will explore the minds of serial killers and mass murderers with a focus on the factors that psychologists have identified which can create such a killer. Additionally, the course will explore the contexts within which serial killers are created including many of the myths surrounding their complex psychological dynamics. A variety of serial killers, from sexual predators to psychotic killers, from murder teams to odd eccentric stalkers will be explored. Finally, the possible motives of the serial killer will be addressed including lust, control, glory, profit, thrill, delusions, rage, the desire for company, the need to please a partner, and even murder as an intellectual exercise.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student performance, relative to the following specific course objectives, will be assessed. You will be asked, at various points throughout the course to demonstrate through quizzes, papers, and activities, what you have learned in this course.

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. describe the complex psychological dynamics of the serial killer and mass murderer (approaching problems with sophistication);
2. explain the possible biological, psychological, environmental, and social cultural factors affecting the development of serial killers and mass murderers (demonstrating effective writing, interpersonal and oral communication skills);
3. identify the different types of serial killers and mass murders (using and engaging in critical thinking)
4. explain the cultural issues and variations related to serial killers and mass murderers (being able to consider and explain the role of cultural, racial, ethnic and economic factors, and of privilege and discrimination, in people's behaviors);
5. locate and interpret current research related to serial killers and mass murderers (attunement to scientific evidence);
6. describe current issues related to serial killers and mass murders (identifying psychology's major applications).

Course Requirements

Course Requirements Grades for the course will be assigned based on the quality of student work as demonstrated by successful completion of the following requirements:

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|--|---------------------|
| 1. Weekly Activities (13 @ 20 points) | = 260 points |
| 2. Class Discussions (6 @ 10 points) | = 60 points |
| 3. <u>Final Exam (1 @ 100 points each)</u> | <u>= 100 points</u> |

TOTAL = 420 points

1. Weekly Activities (13 @ 20 points = 260 points)

Each Monday an activity will be posted on Canvas under the specific week. The activity will be due by the following Sunday (midnight). See the scoring rubric at the end of the syllabus. No late activities will be accepted or graded.

2. Class Discussions (6 @ 10 points each)

Six class discussion question will be posted. Sometime between Monday and Thursday each week, you should respond to the question. Then, sometime between Friday and Sunday, you should go back and read all of the submissions and respond to at least three of your classmate's posts. It is expected that each student's posts for each week will be approximately one page in length. The following guidelines should be used to actively and intelligently participate in the class discussions (adopted from <http://www.rasmussen.edu/student-life/blogs/college-life/tips-for-writing-thoughtful-discussion-responses//> (Links to an external site.)).

- Ask open-ended questions to promote discussion. Open-ended questions require individuals to write more than a simple one- or two-word answer. Open-ended questions require the use of critical thinking skills and allow individuals to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about a particular topic.
- Don't be afraid to disagree. It is okay to disagree with what someone has to say or play the "devil's advocate." However, when you choose to disagree, remember to do so respectfully. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and it is okay for you to offer your own interpretation.
- Give reasons for your opinion. It is important to provide reasons for your thoughts and feelings about the topic. You may even choose to make a personal connection or share a personal experience with your classmates. Applying class information to real-world situations is a great way to demonstrate that you truly understand what you are learning.
- Think outside the box. Online discussions can get boring when everyone's posts begin to sound the same. Don't be afraid to propose a new idea or ask a probing question to generate conversation.
- Include outside resources. It is often helpful to include outside resources in your responses. Share an article or a website that is relevant to the topic of discussion. Introducing new, relevant ideas from resources, other than the provided class materials, can help take learning to the next level.

3. Final Exam (1 @ 100 points each)

One exam will be taken during the semester. The exam will cover material from the books and videos and other information made available during the semester. The exam may include multiple choice, short answer and essay type questions.

Grading

Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments for each week are due by 11:59 pm on Sunday night of the week that they are assigned. *No late assignments will be accepted or graded.* Final grades will be based on the quality of work and will be assigned based on a straight percentage basis using the following chart:

90%	-	100%	A
80%	-	89%	B
70%	-	79%	C
60%	-	69%	D
59% or below			F

Attendance

Students are expected to attend regularly all courses for which they are registered. Students should notify their instructor when illness prevents them from attending class and make arrangements to complete missed assignments. Notification may be done by calling the instructor's campus extension or the Psychology program office (735-4751 or 739-8393). It is the instructor's prerogative to modify deadlines of course requirements accordingly. Any student who stops attending a course will receive a failing grade.

Unexcused absences equivalent to more than three days of classes may lead to a grade reduction for the course. Any absence exceeding three days or more must be reported to the Associate Provost and the Records Office by the instructor.

Federal regulations require continued attendance for continuing payment of financial aid. If attendance is not continuous, financial aid may be terminated. When illness or personal reasons necessitate continued absence, the student should officially withdraw from all affected courses. Anyone who stops attending a course without official withdrawal may receive a failing grade.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic

dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, and plagiarism.

Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Dean of the Academic Division. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor and the Dean of the Academic Division and may range from an 'F' grade for the work in question to an 'F' for the course to suspension or dismissal from the University.

Students with Disabilities

If you need individual accommodations to meet course outcomes because of a documented disability, please speak with me to discuss your needs as soon as possible so that we can ensure your full participation in class and fair assessment of your work. Students with special needs who meet criteria for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions must provide written documentation of the need for accommodations from Kōkua 'Ike: Center for Student Learning by the end of week three of the class, in order for instructors to plan accordingly. If a student would like to determine if they meet the criteria for accommodations, they should contact the Kōkua 'Ike Coordinator at (808) 739-8305 for further information (ada@chaminade.edu).

Title IX Statement

Chaminade University of Honolulu (CUH) recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. Sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse will NOT be tolerated at CUH. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, we encourage you to report this matter promptly. As a faculty member, I am interested in promoting a safe and healthy environment, and should I learn of any sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, I must report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you want to speak to a confidential source you may contact the following:

- Chaminade Counseling Center| 808 735-4845.
- Any priest serving as a sacramental confessor or any ordained religious leader serving in the sacred confidence role.

Scientific Method Definitions

The **METHODS OF SCIENCE** are only tools, tools that we use to obtain knowledge about phenomena.

The **SCIENTIFIC METHOD** is a set of assumptions and rules about collecting and evaluating data. The explicitly stated assumptions and rules enable a standard, systematic method of investigation that is designed to reduce bias as much as possible. Central to the scientific method is the collection of data, which allows investigators to put their ideas to an empirical test, outside of or apart from their personal biases. In essence, stripped of all its glamour, scientific inquiry is nothing more **THAN A WAY OF LIMITING FALSE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT NATURAL EVENTS.**

Knowledge of which the credibility of a profession is based must be objective and verifiable (testable) rather than subjective and untestable.

SCIENCE is a mode of controlled inquiry to develop an objective, effective, and credible way of knowing.

The assumptions one makes regarding the basic qualities of human nature (that is, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physiological processes) affect how one conceptualizes human behavior.

The two basic functions of scientific approach are 1) advance knowledge, to make discoveries, and to learn facts in order to improve some aspect of the world, and 2) to establish relations among events, develop theories, and this helps professionals to make predictions of future events.

Research Design in Counseling

Heppner, Kivlighan, and Wampold

A **THEORY** is a large body of interconnected propositions about how some portion of the world operates; a **HYPOTHESIS** is a smaller body of propositions. **HYPOTHESES** are smaller versions of theories. Some are derived or born from theories. Others begin as researchers' hunches and develop into theories.

The **PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE** decrees we can only falsify, not verify (prove), theories because we can never be sure that any given theory provides the best explanation for a set of observations.

Relations

Research Method In Social

Kidder

THEORIES are not themselves directly proved or disproved by research. Even **HYPOTHESES** cannot be proved or disproved directly. Rather, research may either support or fail to support a particular hypothesis derived from a theory.

Scientific research has four general goals: (1) to describe behavior, (2) to predict behavior, (3) to determine the causes of behavior, and (4) to understand or explain behavior.

Cozby

Methods In Behavioral Research;

In order to verify the reliability and validity of scientific research it is important to replicate the results. It is the preponderance of evidence that establishes/supports the theory.

<http://allpsych.com/researchmethods/replication.html> (Links to an external site.)

Marianist Educational Values

Chaminade University is a Catholic, Marianist University. The five characteristics of a Marianist education are:

Educate for Formation in Faith

Catholic Universities affirm an intricate relationship between reason and faith. As important as discursive and logical formulations and critical thinking are, they are not able to capture all that can be and ought to be learned. Intellectual rigor coupled with respectful humility provide a more profound preparation for both career and life. Intellectual rigor characterizes the pursuit of all that can be learned. Respectful humility reminds people of faith that they need to learn from those who are of other faiths and cultures, as well as from those who may have no religious faith at all.

Provide an Excellent Education

In the Marianist approach to education, “excellence” includes the whole person, not just the technician or rhetorician. Marianist universities educate whole persons, developing their physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social qualities. Faculty and students attend to fundamental moral attitudes, develop their personal talents and acquire skills that will help them learn all their lives. The Marianist approach to education links theory and practice, liberal and professional education. Our age has been deeply shaped by science and technology. Most recently, information and educational technologies have changed the way faculty and students research and teach. At Marianist Universities, two goals are pursued simultaneously: an appropriate use of information technology for learning, and the enhancement of interaction between students and teachers. As Catholic, Marianist Universities seek to embrace diverse peoples and understand diverse cultures, convinced that ultimately, when such people come together, one of the highest purposes of education is realized: a human community that respects every individual within it.

Educate in Family Spirit

Known for their strong sense of community, Marianists have traditionally spoken of this sense as “family spirit.” Marianist educational experience fosters the development of a community characterized by a sense of family spirit that accepts each person with loving respect, and draws everyone in the university into the challenge of community building. Family spirit also enables Marianist universities to challenge their students, faculty and staff to excellence and maturity, because the acceptance and love of a community gives its members the courage to risk failure and the joy of sharing success.

Educate for Service, Justice, and Peace

The Marianist approach to higher education is deeply committed to the common good. The intellectual life itself is undertaken as a form of service in the interest of justice and peace, and the university curriculum is designed to connect the classroom with the wider world. In addition, Marianist universities extend a special concern for the poor and marginalized and promote the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all people.

Educate for Adaptation to Change

In the midst of rapid social and technological change, Marianist universities readily adapt and change their methods and structures so that the wisdom of their educational philosophy and spirituality may be transmitted even more fully. “New times call for new methods,” Father Chaminade often repeated. The Marianist university faces the future confidently, on the one hand knowing that it draws on a rich educational philosophy, and

on the other fully aware for that philosophy to remain vibrant in changing times, adaptations need to be made.

Selected from *Characteristics of Marianist Universities: A Resource Paper*, Published in 1999 by Chaminade University of Honolulu, St. Mary's University and University of Dayton

Each of these characteristics is integrated, to varying degrees, in this course however, the main focus is on the value of educating for adaptation and change. Psychology, by its nature, looks at how people adapt and change depending on the environment and circumstances that they are in. The inability to adapt and change can often lead to psychological problems or disorders. When taken to extremes the inability to adapt and change can lead to some of the extreme behavioral responses that we see in serial killers.

Native Hawaiian Values

Education is an integral value in both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture. Both recognize the transformative effect of a well-rounded, value-centered education on society, particularly in seeking justice for the marginalized, the forgotten, and the oppressed, always with an eye toward God (Ke Akua). This is reflected in the 'Olelo No'eau (Hawaiian proverbs) and Marianist core beliefs:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana) E ola au i ke akua ('Olelo No'eau 364) May I live by God
2. Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na'auao) Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono ('Olelo No'eau 1957) Acquire skill and make it deep
3. Educate in Family Spirit ('Ohana) 'Ike aku, 'ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohana 'ohana ('Olelo No'eau 1200) Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped; such is a family relationship
4. Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha) Ka lama kū o ka no'eau ('Olelo No'eau 1430) Education is the standing torch of wisdom
5. Educate for Adaptation and Change (Aina) 'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi ('Olelo No'eau 203) All knowledge is not taught in the same school

Academic Conduct Policy

From the 2018-2019 Undergraduate Academic Catalog (p. 42):

Any community must have a set of rules and standards of conduct by which it operates. At Chaminade, these standards are outlined so as to reflect both the Catholic, Marianist values of the institution and to honor and respect students as responsible adults. All alleged violations of the community standards are handled through an established

student conduct process, outlined in the Student Handbook, and operated within the guidelines set to honor both students' rights and campus values.

Students should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the ideals of the University. This includes knowing and respecting the intent of rules, regulations, and/or policies presented in the Student Handbook, and realizing that students are subject to the University's jurisdiction from the time of their admission until their enrollment has been formally terminated. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more details. A copy of the Student Handbook is available on the Chaminade website.

For further information, please refer to the Student Handbook: <https://studentaffairs.chaminade.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2018-19-NEW-STUDENT-HANDBOOK.pdf> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

Course Schedule

**Note – For some weeks you will see that you should be watching Youtube videos. From past experience, some videos are often taken down. If that is the case, feel free to watch other related Youtube videos.*

(Please follow the syllabus regarding which assignments and activities should be completed each week. Assignments for each week are due by Sunday night of that week at midnight)

Week 1: August 22 – What It Means and Who They Are

Read Chapters 1 & 2 Schechter

Complete Activity 1

Participate in Discussion 1

Week 2: August 29 – History of Serial Murder

Read Chapters 3 & 4 Schechter

Complete Activity 2

Participate in Discussion 2

Week 3: September 5 – Sex and the Serial Killer and Why They Kill

Read Chapters 5 & 6 Schechter

Focus on David Berkowitz: Son of Sam - watch the A & E video Biography David Berkowitz/The Son of Sam which has 4 parts on youtube (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 3

Week 4: September 12– Evil in Action and How It Ends,

Read Chapters 7 & 8 Schechter

Focus on Richard Speck - watch the youtube video on Richard Speck (A & E Biography Richard Speck - 5 parts)

Complete Activity 4

Week 5: September 19 – Serial Killer Culture and Definitions

Read Chapter 9 Schechter

Complete Activity 5

Participate in Discussion 3

Week 6: September 26 – Lust Homicide, Psychopathy, and Sexual Paraphilias

Read Chapters 1 – 3 Dobbert

Focus on Albert Fish - watch the "The Real Life Hannibal Lecters" which has 6 parts on youtube (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 6

Week 7: October 3 – Mudgett, Kurten, and Gein

Read Chapters 4, 5 & 7 Dobbert

Focus on Ed Gein - watch the A & E video Biography *Ed Gein* which has 5 parts on youtube (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 7

Participate in Discussion 4

Week 8: October 10 – Nelson, Lucas, and Chikatilo

Read Chapters 6, 8 & 9 Dobbert

Focus on Andrei Chikatilo - watch the A & E video Biography *Andrei Chikatilo* which has 5 parts on youtube (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 8

Week 9: October 17 – Cole, Hansen, and Gacy

Read Chapters 10, 11 & 13 Dobbert

Focus on John Wayne Gacy - watch the youtube videos on John Wayne Gacy - from Crime Stories (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 9

Week 10: October 24 – Brudos, Nilsen, and Bundy

Read Chapters 12, 14 & 15 Dobbert

Focus on Ted Bundy - watch the youtube videos on Ted Bundy - True Crime Stories and/or Born to Kill (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 10

Participate in Discussion 5

Week 11: October 31 – Collins, Kemper, and the Hillside Stranglers

Read Chapters 16, 17 & 18 Dobbert

Focus on Gary Ridgway - Watch the youtube video Twisted: The Green River Killer (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 11

Week 12: November 7 – Long, Rogers, and Wuornos

Read Chapters 19, 20 & 21 Dobbert

Focus on Aileen Wuornos - watch the youtube video Serial Killer: Aileen Wuornos (you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on her)

Complete Activity 12

Week 13: November 14 – Rifkin, Dahmer

Read Chapters 22 & 23 Dobbert

Focus on Jeffrey Dahmer - watch the youtube videos on Jeffrey Dahmer - From A & E
(you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 13

Participate in Discussion 6

Week 14: November 21 – Lessons for Future Prevention

Read Chapter 24 Dobbert

Focus on Richard Ramirez - watch the youtube videos on Richard Ramirez - from A & E
(you may also want to watch some of the other youtube videos on him)

Complete Activity 14

Week 15: November 28 – Lessons for Future Prevention

Read Chapter 25 Dobbert

Complete Activity 15

Week 16: December 5 – Final

December 5 - 7 Final Exam – Take on Canvas.