



Chaminade
University

School of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Psychology

PSY450 The Psychology of Serial Killers

Online Asynchronous

Credits: 3

Section: 90-1 & 91-1

Term: Fall 2026 Term, 8/17/26 – 12/11/26

Instructor Information



Instructor: Dale Fryxell, PhD

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Phone: 808 739-4678

Office Location: Brogan 111A

Office Hours: by appointment

Brief Bio

Dr. Fryxell is the Dean of the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences and is a Professor of Psychology. He is a community psychologist with research interests in the areas of anger/aggression/violence; developmental disabilities; drug and alcohol prevention; and childhood behavioral difficulties.

Communication

My goal is always to respond to all emails or phone calls, Monday through Friday, within 48 hours. Also, I try to grade all assignments within one week of the due dates, so if for some reason you don't see a grade and comments for an assignment within that time frame, make sure to let me know.

College & Department Information

College of Education and Human Development

Office Location: Brogan Hall, Room 110

Phone: 808.739.4652

If you have questions regarding the Psychology program, reach out to your Instructor or the College of Education and Human Development.

Course Description & Materials

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.

Course Description

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.

Time Allocation

This is a three-credit hour course requiring a minimum of 135 clock hours of student engagement, per the official CUH Credit Hour Policy. Students enrolled in this course are anticipated to spend 52 hours researching and writing weekly activities, 5 hours studying for and taking the final exam, and 6 hours participating in class discussions. There will be an additional 72 hours of work required beyond what is described here including reading course materials and reviewing course presentations, averaging 4.5 hours each week.

The unit of semester credit is defined as university-level credit that is awarded for the completion of coursework. One credit hour reflects the amount of work represented in the intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement for those learning outcomes. Each credit hour earned at Chaminade University should result in 45 hours of engagement. This equates to one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum

of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester, 10 week term, or equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. Direct instructor engagement and out-of-class work result in total student engagement time of 45 hours for one credit.

The minimum 45 hours of engagement per credit hour can be satisfied in fully online, internship, or other specialized courses through several means, including (a) regular online instruction or interaction with the faculty member and fellow students and (b) academic engagement through extensive reading, research, online discussion, online quizzes or exams; instruction, collaborative group work, internships, laboratory work, practica, studio work, and preparation of papers, presentations, or other forms of assessment. This policy is in accordance with federal regulations and regional accrediting agencies.

Required Materials

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).

Recommended Items

NA

Canvas (<https://chaminade.instructure.com>)

Canvas is our online learning system and will be where all course materials will be found.

Canvas Technical Assistance:

- Search for help on specific topics or get tips in Canvas Students
- Live chat with Canvas Support for students
- Canvas Support Hotline for students: +1-833-209-6111
- Watch this video to get you started
- Online tutorials: click on "Students" role to access tutorials
- Contact the Chaminade IT Helpdesk for technical issues: helpdesk@chaminade.edu or call (808) 735-4855

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Psychology Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

1. Students will identify key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology.
2. Students will exhibit the value of adaptation and change through the critical thinking process of interpretation, design, and evaluation of psychological research.
3. Students will exhibit effective writing and oral communication skills within the context of the field of psychology.
4. 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 Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

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).

Marianist Values

This class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles and you should take every opportunity possible to reflect upon the role of these characteristics in your education and development:

1. Education for formation in faith.

2. Provide an integral, quality education.
3. Educate in family spirit.
4. Educate for service, justice and peace, and integrity of creation.
5. Educate for adaptation and change.

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 'Ōlelo No'eau (Hawaiian proverbs) and Marianist core beliefs:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana) E ola au i ke akua ('Ōlelo 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 ('Ōlelo 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 ('Ōlelo 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 ('Ōlelo 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 ('Ōlelo No'eau 203) All knowledge is not taught in the same school

Course Activities

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:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Weekly Activities (15 @ 20 points) | = 300 points |
| 2. Class Discussions (6 @ 10 points) | = 60 points |
| 3. <u>Final Exam (1 @ 100 points each)</u> | <u>= 100 points</u> |

TOTAL = 460 points

1. Weekly Activities (15 @ 20 points = 300 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//>).

- 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.

Citations and References

Any assignments that includes cited research should include a Reference page, listing your full source/references. Examples of references in APA format:

- Please cite a source every time you copy a phrase, quote, or paraphrase someone else's words. If you use someone's words verbatim, you will have to use quotation marks and in parenthesis note the author's last name, year of publication, and the page from which you took the quote.
- Example of how to cite a direct quote: "Past research has indicated that "becoming parents heightens couples' awareness of their identity intersections and they turn towards mutually supporting each other" (Iwamoto, 2020, p. 121).
- If you paraphrase or just report on what you've read of someone's publication, use the parentheses but omit the page number.
- Always use the (Author, Year) format. Please refer to APA formatting requirements in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition. The Purdue website can also be helpful: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

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.

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.

Late Work

No late assignments are accepted.

Changes to the Syllabus

While the provisions of this syllabus are as accurate and complete as possible, your instructor reserves the right to change any provision herein at any time. Every effort will be made to keep you advised of such changes, and information about such changes will be available from your instructor.

Final Grades

Final grades are submitted to [Self-Service](#):

- A = 90% and above
- B = 80 - 89%
- C = 60 - 79% and below
- F = 59% and below

Important Information

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, in addition to more obvious dishonesty.

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 Academic Division and may include an “F” grade for the work in question, an “F” grade for the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University.

For the most up to date information, please refer to the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) on the Chaminade University Catalog website.

[Title IX and Nondiscrimination Statement](#)

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator. For pregnant and parenting students, I am also obligated to provide you with similar resources for support and protections available to you. My goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources and support you need.

Contact information and reporting options: chaminade.edu/titleix/nondiscrimination/. File a report via the Campus Incident Report Form.

[Nondiscrimination Policy & Notice of Nondiscrimination](#)

The university is committed to comply with all State and Federal statutes, rules, and regulations which prohibit discrimination. The university is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender identity and expression, age, religion, color, national origin (including shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics), ancestry, citizenship, disability, genetic information, marital status, breastfeeding, arrest and court record (except as permissible under State law), sexual orientation, or status as a covered veteran. Inquiries about Title IX or general Civil Rights concerns may be referred to the University’s Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be

found HERE. On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES.

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the Campus Incident Report form. Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates.

The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

[AI \(Artificial Intelligence\) Statement](#)

Chaminade University recognizes the increasing role of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in academic and professional environments. AI encompasses, but is not limited to, generative AI platforms, automated writing or content generation software, coding assistants, and similar tools. Students must ensure all submitted work genuinely reflects their knowledge and effort. Using AI to produce or significantly complete graded assignments, exams or other academic tasks – defined as use that substitutes for or substantially replaces a student's own analysis, reasoning or written expression – without explicit instructor approval is considered academic misconduct and will be dealt with according to the University's Academic Honesty Policy.

If an instructor has reasonable grounds to question whether submitted work genuinely reflects a student's own knowledge, authorship, or mastery of course material — or whether it meets the course's expectations for AI use — the instructor may require the student to provide additional or alternative evidence of authorship and content mastery. Such evidence may include drafts, notes, revision history, source materials, process explanations, oral discussion, in class work, or completion of an alternative assessment. A student's refusal or inability to provide such evidence may be considered, along with other available information, in evaluating whether the work meets course requirements and stated learning outcomes. Instructors will not rely solely on AI detection software or other automated tools in making grading or academic integrity determinations. Such determinations will be based on the totality of the available information and handled in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures. See the catalog section Student Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work for further information.

[CUH Alert Emergency Notification](#)

To get the latest emergency communication from Chaminade University, students' cell numbers will be connected to Chaminade's emergency notification text system. When you log in to the

Chaminade portal, you will be asked to provide some emergency contact information. If you provide a cellphone number, you will receive a text from our emergency notification system asking you to confirm your number. You must respond to that message to complete your registration and get emergency notifications on your phone.

Assessment for Student Work

Chaminade University may use student work anonymously to assess achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes as part of ongoing quality improvement efforts

Student with Disabilities Statement

Accessibility Services recognizes disability as a valued aspect of diversity and ensures equal access to the educational environment in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended; and the principles and professional standards of the Association on Higher Education and Disability. Access is supported through reasonable accommodations and referrals to campus and community resources. Appointments with the Accessibility Services Coordinator are available through Stellic at <https://chaminade.stellic.com> and may be held virtually or in person. Drop-in appointments are also welcome.

Students seeking support must meet with the Accessibility Services Coordinator as early as possible, even if they are unsure whether they have appropriate documentation of their disability or its impacts. The Accessibility Services Coordinator prioritizes listening to students's experiences and will discuss any documentation needs during the initial intake meeting. Students may seek support at any time.

Learn more at <https://chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations>

Kōkua 'Ike: Tutoring & Learning Services

Chaminade is proud to offer free, one-on-one tutoring and writing assistance to all students. Tutoring and writing help is available on campus at Kōkua 'Ike: Center for Student Learning in a variety of subjects (including, but are not limited to biology, chemistry, math, nursing, English, etc.) from trained Peer and Professional Tutors. Please check [Kōkua 'Ike's](#) website for the latest times, list of drop-in hours, and information on scheduling an appointment. Free online tutoring is also available via tutor.com. tutor.com can be accessed 24/7 from your Canvas account. Simply click on Account > tutor.com. For more information, please contact Kōkua 'Ike at tutoring@chaminade.edu or 808-739-8305.

Chaminade Counseling Center

Students may consider counseling when they may need an unbiased perspective on issues they are facing or when they are unable to manage their own difficulties independently and their day-to-day functioning is being impacted. For more information regarding the Counseling Center services, please visit: <https://chaminade.edu/student-life/counseling-center/counseling-services/>Links to an external site.

Email: counselingcenter@chaminade.edu

Phone: 808-735-4845.

Readings & Due Dates

It is very important that you manage your time effectively and submit assignments by the due dates that are outlined in the syllabus. Generally, most assignments are due by Sunday night at midnight of the week that they are assigned. No late assignments are accepted!

**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 17 – What It Means and Who They Are

Read Chapters 1 & 2 Schechter

Complete Activity 1

Participate in Discussion 1

Week 2: August 24 – History of Serial Murder

Read Chapters 3 & 4 Schechter

Complete Activity 2

Participate in Discussion 2

Week 3: August 31 – 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 7– 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 14 – Serial Killer Culture and Definitions

Read Chapter 9 Schechter

Complete Activity 5

Participate in Discussion 3

Week 6: September 21 – Lust Homicide, Psychopathy, and Sexual Paraphilias

Read Chapters 1 – 3 Dobbert

Focus on Albert Fish - watch the 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: September 28 – 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 5 – 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

Fall Wellness Week – October 12 – 16

Week 9: October 19 – 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 26 – Brudos, Nilsen, and Bundy

Read Chapters 12, 14 & 15 Dobbert

Focus on Ted Bundy - watch the *YouTube* e 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: November 2 – 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 9 – Long, Rogers, and Wuornos

Read Chapters 19, 20 & 21 Dobbert

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

Complete Activity 12

Week 13: November 16 – 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 23 – 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 30 – Lessons for Future Prevention

Read Chapter 25 Dobbert

Complete Activity 15

Week 16: December 7 – Final

December 7 or 8 Final Exam – Take on Canvas.

Activity Assessment Rubric

Activity # _____

Performance Area	Rating = 4	Rating = 3	Rating = 2	Rating = 1	Score
Structure	Written work has clear and appropriate beginning, development and conclusion. Paragraphing and transitions are also clear and appropriate.	Written work has adequate beginning, development and conclusion. Paragraphing and transitions are also adequate.	Written work has weak beginning, development and conclusion. Paragraphing and transitions are also deficient.	Organizational structure and paragraphing have serious and persistent errors.	
Content	The length of the written work provides in-depth coverage of the topic, and assertions are clearly supported by evidence.	The length of the written work is sufficient to cover the topic, and assertions are supported by evidence.	Written work does not do an adequate job of covering the assigned topic, and assertions are weakly supported by evidence.	Written work does not cover the assigned topic, and assertions are not supported by evidence.	(this category will be multiplied by 2)
Mechanics	Written work has no major errors in word selection and use, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	Written work is relatively free of errors in word selection and use, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	Written work has several major errors in word selection and use, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	Written work has serious and persistent errors in word selection and use, sentence structure,	

spelling,
punctuation
, and
capitalizati
on.

Total

Average Score = Total/4

Total Score = Average score times 5 /20