

**The University of Western Ontario  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
Sociology 4442 200F: Serial Killers – 2021**

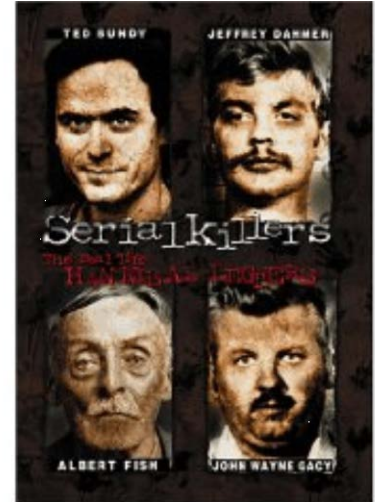
Professor: Kim Ashby

E-Mail: [kim.ashby@uwo.ca](mailto:kim.ashby@uwo.ca)

Class Times: **Zoom Synchronous** – Mondays: 1:30 -4:20pm

Office Hours: By appointment

Web Site: <https://owl.uwo.ca>.



**Course Description:**

This course will critically examine the social construction of serial murder as a phenomenon that has existed for centuries, but only recently has become a concern of the criminal justice system and the public in general. The goal of the course is to synthesize historical and contemporary analyses of serial murder, assess the impact of the media on public perceptions of serial killing, and to extend our understanding of the etiology of serial murder in contemporary society.

**Prerequisite(s):**

**Enrollment in one of the Honours Specializations or Honours Double Majors in Sociology.** Unless you have the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

## **Objectives of the Course:**

This course will undertake to familiarize students with the facts versus the myths of serial murder, to understand serial murder from a sociological framework, to critically analyze media views of serial murder, to evaluate serial killing within a criminological framework, and to contextualize serial murder as a reaction to broader societal fears and concerns.

- Describe the various components of serial crime, serial criminals and their relationship to each other.
- Discuss theory of serial crime and criminal issues
- Appreciate the psycho-social, cultural, and individual diversity relevant to serial crimes.

## **Learning Outcomes:**

The successful student will be able to:

- Identify and describe the various components of serial crime.
- Identify, explain and assess the theories of serial crime.
- Explain the psycho-social, cultural and individual diversity relevant to serial crime.
- Analyze in writing, the 'Trauma Control' model, as it applies to a given case study.
- Review the media coverage of a given case and assess the accuracy of the coverage and explain ways in which the media reports fuel or contest myths about serial crimes.
- Synthesize select readings presenting key arguments and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of given perspectives.

**Required text:** (available at the UWO bookstore)

Hickey, Eric W. (2016). Serial Murderers and Their Victims, 7<sup>th</sup> edition: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

[https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2021A&courses%5B0%5D=200\\_UW/SOC4442F](https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2021A&courses%5B0%5D=200_UW/SOC4442F)  
ebook added to course

**Required readings:** (access Readings on OWL homepage)

**No Exams....**

### **Method of Evaluation**

Oral Test	15%
Participation 9/10 Classes	45%
Research Paper (Dec. 8)	40%

### **Course Participation Requirements**

Students must have access to a stable internet connection and a laptop or computer. Class will be synchronous via Zoom every Monday, starting at 1:30pm. Please post an introductory comment about yourself and the serial killer you find most fascinating, in the 'Introductory' Forum between September 9 to 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Class Participation (45%) & Weekly Oral Test (15%)**

All students must contribute actively, on a weekly basis, in the **10** Zoom lectures, starting September 20<sup>th</sup>. Students will be expected to engage with the material presented, doing exercises and answering questions. At the end of term, a student's *poorest* weekly participation mark will be dropped.

One or two students will be randomly assigned in the first week, to respond to weekly "**Oral**" questions, posed by the professor in each of the 10 following weeks. The "Oral" test will be conducted in the last half hour, before the end of class. It will be only the professor and the one or two designated students. The "oral" questions will be based on the lecture materials and readings.

### **Research Paper (40%)**

This formal paper must be 16 pages in length, double-spaced, and typed in 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides. Research papers are due by 5pm on Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. They will be uploaded to the Assignment tab on the left side of OWL. Late submissions will result in a **5%** reduction per day, past the due date, and will not be

accepted after Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. Please note that late penalties will not be waived unless relevant medical or other appropriate documentation is provided. This paper will be divided into 2 sections.

First, each student is to select a serial killer who has been caught, prosecuted and convicted. This section of the term paper will analyze in detail the 'causes' of the serial killer's actions using Eric Hickey's "Trauma Control" model presented in the text. Other relevant theories examined in the readings are to be incorporated into the analysis.

In the second part of the paper (the last third), the case will be reviewed in terms of the accuracy and completeness of the media coverage, and address ways in which the media reports fuel or contest myths about serial killers.

Source materials (articles, the Internet, books) to be used for this term paper can be selected from reputable presses, databases, and peer reviewed academic journals; although, there is rarely scholarly articles on specific serial killers. For media information about the case of the serial killer that you selected, please identify it in your references.

**Important Editing Note: Failure to edit for grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, tense alignment, noun/verb agreement will result in a *significant loss of marks*.**

## **How To Contact Me**

Please email/ message (OWL) me to discuss any questions you have regarding the course or if you need to speak with me, then we can set-up an appointment. If you e-mail me, I will reply to you within 24-48 hours if you use your UWO account. Please inset the class code – **Soc. 4442** in the subject line of your email, so I may determine your concerns.

## **Plagiarism**

Students must write their responses to questions and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

## **Plagiarism Checking**

All research papers will be uploaded to the assignment page on the class web site before 5pm. on Monday, April 12, 2021. These papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement,

currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Late Assignments**

If you miss the due date for an assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date the assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor's documentation, you will be allowed to hand in your assignment at a later date.

### **Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness**

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

[https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic\\_consideration.html](https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html)

### **Accessibility Options:**

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

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### **Mental Health**

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western ([http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.