



Western
UNIVERSITY · CANADA

The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 4437F 001

Advanced Deviance - Mass Murderers

Fall 2022

Tuesdays – 9:30am – 12:30pm, SSC 5230

In-person

Instructor: Kim Ashby

Office Hours: By appointment

Department of Sociology, Office: SSC # 5417

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Course Description: Current theory and research in the Sociology of Deviance.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third or above in any Department of Sociology module, or fourth year in any module. Unless you have either the prerequisites 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. The 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.

Anti-requisite(s): None

Objectives of the Course:

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

- Describe and discuss the various components of massacres, mass murderers and their relationship to each other
- Discuss theory of mass murder
- Appreciate the psycho-social, cultural, and individual diversity relevant to mass murderers.

Learning Outcomes:

The successful student will be able to:

- Identify the similarities and differences in the three forms of multicide.

- Identify, explain and assess the controversies surrounding mass murder.
- Explain the psycho-social, cultural and individual diversity relevant to mass murder.
- Analyze in writing, the typologies, motivations and factors contributing to mass murder as they apply 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 moral panics.
- Synthesize select readings presenting key arguments and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of given perspectives.

Course Material:

Required text: (available at the UWO bookstore)

Ramsland, Katherine M. (2005). "Inside the Minds of Mass Murderers: Why They Kill". Praeger Publishing.

Required readings: (access Readings on OWL homepage)

In class, students will require a computer. If the class is forced to on-line due to a Covid resurgence, students will require a stable internet connection and computer with a working microphone and webcam.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

Please book an appointment to come to my office or to have a Zoom meeting to discuss any questions you have regarding the course or simply to chat about some issue raised in class. If you e-mail me, I will reply to you within 24-48 hours if you use your UWO account and insert "Soc 4437" in the subject line. However, I do not read e-mails on the weekends.

Method of Evaluation:

Class Participation 15%

Weekly Reading Synopses 10%

PP Facilitators 40%

Exam 35%

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, synchronously (i.e., at the time indicated in the timetable). The grading scheme will **not** change.

COURSE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

With the exception of legitimate medical/personal excuses (documentation required to be submitted) students are expected to attend at least 80% of the class meetings for this course. A passing grade in the course cannot be obtained without meeting this attendance requirement. This class will be a community of learners, so everyone must be present to learn and to help others learn. Punctual and regular attendance at classes is expected.

The evaluation methods described in this course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Participation: (15%)

Because this class is run as a seminar, it is essential that students come prepared to participate. Before-class preparation involves carefully reading and considering the assigned readings. Once in class, participation involves questioning and discussing the readings. Your participation grade will be calculated on both the frequency and cogency of your comments. You will find that your grade for this course will be adversely affected if you are absent or habitually unprepared to participate meaningfully in class discussions. **Less than 3 comments/ interactions** per class will forfeit participation for a given class.

Paper Option: Students unable to attend class (for whatever reason), can recoup their marks by writing a 2-page double-spaced paper synthesizing the key ideas, theories, concepts and perspectives of a designated paper. This paper must be uploaded to the appropriate OWL site by **9am of the Friday morning** following the class. Turnitin will check for plagiarism. Late submissions will not be assessed.

Synopsis of Weekly Readings: (10%)

Students will write a one-page synopsis of the weekly articles covered in each lecture's readings. The *point form* synopses of the articles will be turned in at the beginning of each class— they will address key points, perspectives or concepts taken by the readings and important to the discussion of mass killers.

Paper Option: Students unable to submit a synopsis (for whatever reason), can recoup their marks by writing a 2-page double-spaced paper synthesizing the key ideas, theories, concepts and perspectives of a designated paper. This paper must be uploaded to the appropriate OWL site by **9am of the Friday morning** following the class. Turnitin will check for plagiarism. Late submissions will not be assessed.

Discussion Leaders and Case Study: (40%)

Each week, one or two students will be prepared to facilitate the involvement of the class through activities and exercises covering the assigned materials. The power point facilitation must be set-up to ask many questions that class members can answer. The power point presentation is not to give all the ideas (lots of writing on each pp), but through questions, exercises and cases, elicit responses from class members. The power point presentation will be uploaded to the Assignment folder by **9:00am, the morning of the class**. Finally, in their facilitation, the leaders will set-up a case of a mass murderer who is an example of the type of killer being discussed.

The case analysis will examine, *at a minimum*, the following factors:

Precipitants

Predisposers

Facilitators

Motivation

Anticipated gain

Victim relationship

Victim traits

Victim selectivity

Spatial mobility

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.

Plagiarism

Students must write their 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. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking

All reaction papers will be uploaded to Turnitin.com on the class web site. 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 (www.turnitin.com).

Exam: (35%)

The exam will be composed of multiple-choice and will be two (2) hours long. It will be held during the December exam period.

Scantron Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade:

For work worth less than 10% of the total course grade, please see options detailed in evaluation components.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Upon Academic authorization, an extension will be negotiated with a student.

Absences from Final Examinations:

Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Note: Missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the

Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

Important Policies

Academic Consideration for Missed Work: Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. The student medical certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation: When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

Accessibility Options: Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences: 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: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

A Note on Plagiarism: Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

Plagiarism Checking: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking 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 (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

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

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters:

[Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\).](http://Academic%20Counselling%20-%20Western%20University%20(uwo.ca).)

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

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