Florida State University
College of Criminology and Criminal Justice
CCJ 4938 Special Topics in Criminology - Homicide

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What You Will Learn

This course is designed to provide a systematic understanding of theoretical issues and empirical research about homicide. Overall, a range of topics will be covered with additional attention to more prevalent types of murder and suspicious deaths in the United States. Some of the topics include confrontational homicide, intimate partner violence, various types of mass killings, cult killings, and gang violence. Emphasis will be placed on how to use the existing homicide literature as a guide to craft policies and relevant programs in our society to solve or prevent these violent acts. By the end of the course, you will be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the causes and consequences of homicide.

Course Objectives
Upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the complexities of violent behavior and homicide in the United States.
2. Identify the various theoretical explanations used to explain violent behavior that may lead to homicide
3. Identify and describe different policy implications for intervention and prevention of homicide
**Required Course Materials**

*Book*

*Course Notes/Presentations*
I will post weekly notes and/or presentations that reinforce the material that is presented in the book or that is germane to the week’s topic. Note that these notes/presentations are not a substitute for reading the book. Failure to read the book will likely result in a substantially lower final grade.

*Other Materials*
You need to make sure that you are able to access the Internet, view and read PDF files, watch streaming audio/video, and use word processing programs. If you do not have a high-speed internet connection at home you need to set aside time in your schedule to access the online material from a computer with a sufficient connection speed. Not having appropriate Internet/computer resources is not a valid excuse for late assignments.

**Evaluation and Grading**

Course grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Discussion Postings</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

450 Total Points

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
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</tbody>
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**Course Structure and Format**

This course is organized in a highly structured format. Each week, you will be provided with a “Weekly Introduction.” The Weekly Introduction provides a short overview of the material that
will be covered. Any terms, concepts, or issues that are difficult to understand or that are not explained in the book will be discussed in the Weekly Introduction. Additionally, the Weekly Introduction contains an outline of the week’s objectives, the assignments that are due that week, the weekly discussion question, and any other information that is pertinent to that particular week. Along with the Weekly Introduction, you will be provided with a weekly PowerPoint presentation and other interactive learning materials that will reinforce what you read in the book. You should read the Weekly Introduction before reading anything else as it will outline what is expected of you for that week.

Discussion Board
On the Mondays when there is not a quiz or test assigned, I will post a discussion question and you will be expected to provide a response by the following Thursday at 11:59 pm EST. Responses will vary in length, but they should be at least 2-3 paragraphs. In addition, you must also post a reply to at least one other student’s original posting (by Sunday at 11:59 pm EST). To receive full credit, then, you must make, at the minimum, two posting each week. Each discussion question is worth 10 points (10 points x 7 weeks = 70 points). Simply posting a response does not entitle you to 10 points. Rather, in order to earn the full 10 points, you must answer the question, cite all of the assigned readings for that week, and post the answer on time. Responses must be free of grammatical errors, they must be well-written, and they must be proofread. Your answer must convey to me that you read all of the readings; if it does not, you will lose points.

On discussion weeks, discussion posts that meet these requirements will receive a score of “10.” Answers that do not meet these guidelines will receive a lower grade. If you fail to post a reply, you will lose at least 2 points. In addition, it is expected that all students read all of the class postings. Discussion questions cannot be made up and late postings will not be accepted. I will not respond to all of the class postings (that is your role as a student), but rather will selectively choose to comment on postings during the semester. The class postings are designed to simulate a “real-life” classroom and thus all of you need to take the lead in generating and sustaining the discussion board. And given that this is an upper-level class, it is expected that you will be able to provide thought-provoking comments that spawn intelligent conversations. Although this is a distance learning class, I will still hold you to the same standards that I hold all other undergraduate classes. What this means is that your weekly class postings will be graded in line with undergraduate-level expectations. All grades will be posted via the Canvas grade book.

Examinations
There will be three (3) exams given in this course. Each exam will be worth a maximum of 100 points. Exams may be a combination of multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions, or a single essay question. The exams will cover all material addressed in class and in the readings up to that point in time. However, you should be aware that the subjects we cover are generally cumulative in nature. As a result, areas covered early in the course are relevant throughout the entire course. More details about the exams will be provided as the exam dates approach. Briefly, the exam questions will be posted on the Tuesday of the exam week and the
exams will be due by 11:59 pm EST on Wednesday. Using this scheduling process, the questions for Exam #1 will be posted on Tuesday, 10/1/2019 and the completed exam must be delivered to me by Wednesday, 10/2/2019 at 11:59 pm EST. The questions for Exam #2 will be posted on Tuesday, 11/5/2019 and the completed exam must be delivered to me by Wednesday, 11/6/2019 at 11:59 pm EST. The questions for Exam #3 will be posted on Tuesday, 12/10/2019 and the completed exam must be delivered to me by Wednesday, 12/11/2019 at 11:59 pm EST. Importantly, if for some reason an exam needs to be reset (regardless of the situation), I will assign that student an essay exam. The essay exam will consist of 5 or 6 questions. Each question will require at least 5-typed pages to adequately answer the question. Additionally, if you wish to review your exam, you will need to set up an appointment to meet (either in person or by phone) with the TA to go over your exam.

Online Quizzes
Four times throughout the semester, you will be required to complete an online quiz that assesses your understanding of the material for that week. All of the quizzes are worth **20 points** and collectively the online quizzes account for a total of **80 points** (4 Quizzes x 20 pts = 80 pts). These quizzes will consist of multiple choice and/or true/false questions. Note: All quizzes will be posted on Tuesday and are due by Wednesday at 11:59pm of the week that they are assigned.

Policies and Requirements

Course Expectations

1. You are expected to read all of the assigned readings by the assigned date.
2. Even though this is a distance learning course, you are expected to complete all of the assignments on time.
3. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated (see below).
4. Extend courtesy and respect to your fellow students in any online discussions.
5. Late assignments will not be accepted unless: (1) you notify me within 24 hours of missed assignment and (2) provide me with an acceptable reason for why the assignment was late. I may request written documentation for the excuse if deemed necessary. If you do not follow this procedure then you will receive a zero on the assignment.
6. If you have a problem, please do not hesitate to contact me
7. This syllabus is not a contract. I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time throughout the semester, and it is your responsibility to stay abreast of any changes made.
8. All work must be original and created for this semester’s course.

**Academic Honor Policy**
The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy)
While you are encouraged to support one another and work collaboratively when appropriate, plagiarism or other academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Incidents of cheating or plagiarism of any type will be rigorously pursued. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “zero” for that particular assignment.

I reserve the right to screen for plagiarism, including electronic citation checkers (e.g., SafeAssign). For this course, you may be required to submit assignments to SafeAssign. All written materials will become source documents in the SafeAssign database and will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. Assignments with scores that indicate a high potential for plagiarism (>40%) will be reviewed in accordance with the College’s protocol.

Original Submissions
All work must be original to you and done for the first time this semester, for this class.

ADA Requirements
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:
Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
850-644-9566 (Voice) | 850-644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu | http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu

Free Tutoring from FSU
On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services’ comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options at http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>What’s Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 (8/26/19)</td>
<td>Introduction to Course: Introducing You to Homicide</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Post a bio/brief introduction about yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 9/2/19: No Class (9/3/19)</td>
<td>Who’s Killing Whom and How Much; Murder by the Numbers</td>
<td>Chapters 2 and 3</td>
<td>Post a response to the weekly discussion question and at least one reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 (9/9/19)</td>
<td>Why We Do It: Theories of Homicide</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Post a response to the weekly discussion question and at least one reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 (9/16/19)</td>
<td>Confrontational Homicide</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Quiz #1 Chapter 5 DUE: TUES 9/17- WED 9/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5 (9/23/19)</td>
<td>Intimate Partner Homicide</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Post a response to the weekly discussion question and at least one reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6 (9/30/19)</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>Exam #1 DUE: TUES 10/1 – WED 10/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7 (10/7/19)</td>
<td>All in the Family; School Killings</td>
<td>Chapters 7 and 8</td>
<td>Post a response to the weekly discussion question and at least one reply</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 (10/14/19)</td>
<td>Workplace Mass Killings</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Quiz #2 Chapter 9 DUE: TUES 10/15 – WED 10/16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 9  
(10/21/19) | Tool of Terror | Chapter 10 | Post a response to the weekly discussion question and at least one reply |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week 10  
(10/28/19) | Serial Killing | Chapter 11 | Quiz #3 Chapter 11 DUE: TUES 10/29 – WED 10/30 |
| Week 11  
(11/4/19) | Exam 2 | NONE | Exam #2 DUE: TUES 11/5 – WED 11/6 |
| Week 12  
11/11/19: No Class  
(11/12/19) | Cults and Gangs | Chapter 12 | Post a response to the weekly discussion question and at least one reply |
| Week 13  
(11/18/19) | Solving Homicides; Murder in Court | Chapters 13 and 14 | Quiz #4 Chapter 14 DUE: TUES 11/19 – WED 11/20 |
| **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**  
11/25 – 11/29 | | | |
| Week 15  
(12/2/19) | Victims, Society, and the Future | Chapter 15 | Post a response to the weekly discussion question and at least one reply |
| Week 16  
(12/9/19) | Exam 3 | NONE | Exam #3 DUE: TUES 12/10 – WED 12/11 |