University of Arkansas - Fort Smith 5210 Grand Avenue
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General Syllabus
CRJU 33573 Serial Killers

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite: PSYC 11003 General Psychology or SOCI 10103 Introduction to Sociology and ENGL 10203 Composition II or ENGL 24103 Advanced Composition

Effective Catalog: 2025-2026

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Insights into the mind and criminal behaviors of serial killers. Case studies will be used to examine common characteristics of serial killers and their victims.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Differentiate between myths and facts involving serial murderers.
2. Identify and analyze the various murder classifications and victim typologies.
3. Apply concept of psychopathy insofar as it relates to serial killers.
4. Compare and contrast the common characteristics of serial killers and their victims.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the problems inherent in the investigation of this phenomenon.
6. Examine and discuss the international scope of serial killing.
7. Analyze and describe the theoretical perspectives and research utilized in explaining serial killings.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will use the essay format to complete writing assignments and a research paper. Students will be able to discuss particular aspects of serial killers in a seminar setting. Students will make oral presentations of their research projects.

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills: Students will identify problems/issues and develop solutions/analysis. Students will analyze and compare common characteristics of serial killers.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will examine ethical dilemmas within the investigation of serial killers and develop ethical frameworks to resolve specific ethical issues.

III. Major Course Topics

A. Visionary serial killers
B. Mission serial killers
C. Hedonistic serial killers
D. Power/control serial killers
E. Psychological profiling of serial killers
F. Organized/disorganized typology
G. Serial murder from an international perspective
H. Female serial murder