

## **The Psychology of Murder**

**School of Psychology**

**Module Code: PSY020N240J**

**Credits: 20 UK credits**

### **Module Rationale**

This module has been designed with ‘murder in mind’! Murder and why individuals commit such heinous crimes is a fascinating topic of study. Throughout history scholars have tried to understand the motivation behind taking another person’s life. The principal aim of this module is to introduce you to the psychology of murder. Initial sessions will provide a background through exploring the importance of psychology in the field of criminology and what exactly do we mean by murder. Our intellectual journey will then progress to delve into the most fascinating area of murders: the world of the serial killer, mass murderer and the growing issue of terrorism. From exploring actual crimes, we will gradually build up a picture of the psychological motivations behind such serious crimes – are murderers mad, sad or bad? To further understand the motivation behind murder we will explore why certain victims are selected (female, homeless, children) and debate how such crimes should be punished in our society. The module will comprise of lectures, workshops, and debates as well as a walking tour of some of the famous London murder sites.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the module students will have an understanding of:

- The relationship between psychology and criminology
- Legal definition of murder and the issue of responsibility
- A range of psychological perspectives to understanding murder
- The forensic details of murder including profiling
- The psychology of victimology

### **Assessment**

The assessment for this module will comprise of two components:

- A 2000 word case study of an actual murder case (80%)
- A class presentation of a case study (20%)

### **Teaching and attendance guidelines**

The in-person section of this module will be taught over ten sessions, each lasting three hours, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> January. During the week of 20<sup>th</sup> January, students will be assigned a series of daily tasks designed to develop skills in research, analysis and reflection. These tasks will be

accessed online in an asynchronous format, students will not be required to attend a live session during the final week of learning.

While attendance is not factored into the grade for this module, students who wish to perform well in their assessment should aim to attend all sessions and complete all tasks to achieve the best possible academic outcome. If you are unable to attend a session, please notify the module convenor and follow any instructions to catch up on content you have missed.

### **Sample Timetable**

#### In-person teaching

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> January	Introduction to module and assessments  Introduction to Psychology of Murder. Homework: Case study
7 <sup>th</sup> January	Serial Killers Psychopathy and case study.
8 <sup>th</sup> January	Profiling Introduction to Poster requirements, criteria and group formulation
9 <sup>th</sup> January	Mass murders, workshop and time for poster group work.
10 <sup>th</sup> January	Referencing, structuring and critical writing Local walking tour

#### **Week 2:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>
13 <sup>th</sup> January	What makes a good presentation?  Q&A Session and Applying Theory and Models to the Moors Murders. Poster Preparations
14 <sup>th</sup> January	Mental Health, Substance Misuse and crime. Case study
15 <sup>th</sup> January	Jack the Ripper Tour
16 <sup>th</sup> January	Time for Poster Work and Feedback from Drafts
17 <sup>th</sup> January	Presentations

**Week 3:**

Online learning

Day	Topic
20 <sup>th</sup> January	Domestic abuse and victims and the law  Introduction to written case study, criteria and structuring. Guidance on critical writing
21 <sup>st</sup> January	Workshop - Critical analysis of research papers.
22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Stalkers – examples of written case studies and criteria.
23 <sup>rd</sup> January	Resilience and Risk Moodle quiz to recap learning from weeks 1 and 2
24 <sup>th</sup> January	Working as a forensic psychologist Recap of module and next steps

**Indicative Bibliography**

Roland, P (2007). In the minds of murderers. Arcturus: London

Wilson, C. & Seaman, D (2007). The Serial Killers: A Study in the Psychology of Violence. Virgin Books:

London


Hollin C.R. (2012). Psychology and Crime: An Introduction to Criminological Psychology. Routledge:

London

Newman, T. (2017). Criminology. Third Edition. Routledge: Oxon

**Grading scale**

The below table is intended to aid Study Abroad students and partner institutions in calculating the conversion of UK percentage marks to the relevant grading system for their home country. The information listed below is an approximation. Final grade conversions are the responsibility of each student's home institution. Calculations may vary by institution. Students should consult their home advisors for information on exactly how their credits and grades will be transferred.

 <b>UK Classification / Percentage</b>		 <b>US Grade / GPA</b>		 <b>Australia Grade / Percentage</b>		 <b>ECTS Grade</b>
First	80-100	A+	4.3	High Distinction	85-100	A
	70-79	A	4.0			
Upper Second	65-69	A-	3.7	Distinction	75-84	B
	60-64	B+	3.3			
Lower Second	55-59	B	3.0	Credit	65-74	C
	50-54	B-	2.7			
Third	46-49	C+	2.3	Pass	50-64	D
	43-45	C	2.0			D/E
	40-42	C-	1.7			
Fail	35-39	D	1.0	Fail	0-50	E/F
	0-34	F	F			F