**PSYC 405-DL4 – Mystery, Madness, and Murder**

Instructor: Raul Ramirez

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Office hours: by appointment

Prerequisites: PSYC 100 or permission of instructor

Readings: All required readings will be available online through GMU’s digital library

**Introduction**

Welcome to Mystery, Madness, and Murder. In this course we will explore some of the more taboo and less explored topics in psychology. Topics we will explore include why psychopathy occurs, what motivates or predisposes individuals to commit violent or sexual crimes, how and why hallucinations occur, and other topics. Throughout the course we will try to critically examine these topics through both behavioral and physiological data. My goal is to have us explore less covered topics and learn how to efficiently gather and process scientific information.

As this is an upper level course, I want to promote agency with all of the students and enable you to develop and refine your research and writing skills. As such, we will be get our readings directly from primary scientific sources and will spend class time both learning from the strengths of the articles and understanding their limitations.

**Discussion Board**

I aim to promote intelligent discussion on the readings that will be presented during the course. To facilitate discussion, we will be using blackboard’s discussion boards. For each article everyone will be required to create 1 topic about a reading or reply to someone’s topic on a reading. A topic could be a question about the reading, an insight you had about the reading, or an opinion you had about the readings.

The discussion board posts are due a week after the posted date for the articles. For example, the first four articles discussion board’s postings are due by 9/7/2020.

On the calendar, you will see that we have openings for “class‘ choice“ articles. If you have a topic you are interested in, email me and I’ll see if we can get articles related to that topic that are suitable for this class. I have many other topics we can choose from otherwise.

**Exams**

There will be one take home midterm and one take home final for this course. Due to the open ended nature of this course, the exams will consist of open ended essay questions, where you will be required to critically, thoughtfully, and clearly respond to the questions. You will be allowed to use your notes and any research articles you need, but you must cite the sources that you use. The exam should be taken independently. While asking general questions with your classmates is fine, working together on the essay questions is not allowed. Late exams will incur a 10% reduction per day (e.g. an exam turned in 2 days late will have a maximum possible score of 80%).

**Paper**

Your assignment for this paper is to write a brief literature review on a topic of you choosing related to our topics. Your topic should be relatively narrow so you won’t have too much information to review. **You are required to present a summary of your topic and 2-3 references related to your topic by 10/28/2020.** This summary will help me guide your literature review well in advance of the papers due date.

While a clear writing style and formatting is important for the paper, content is most important. Make sure that your evidence is based on the research that you have studied rather than personal opinions or conjecture.

Your paper must be written in APA style and have a minimum of 6 references from peer reviewed journals. The minimum page requirement is 5 pages; the maximum page limit is 10 pages (double spaced and not including the reference list). Remember to include a reference list. A title page and abstract are not required and will not count towards the page limits.

**Paper is due by 12/5/2020.**

**Grading**

Participation: 16% (Discussion Board)

Midterm: 28%

Paper: 28%

Final: 28%

Total: 100 %

**Grading Scale (As a percentage of total points)**

A = 100-94 A- = 93-90

B+ = 89-87 B = 86-84 B- = 83-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60

F < 60

**Drop/Add**

· Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes

**Last Day to Add Classes: August 31**

**Last Day to Drop with No Tuition Penalty: September 8**

**Final Drop Deadline (50% Tuition Penalty): September 15**

**Unrestricted withdrawal period: Wed. Sept 16 - Mon. Sept 28**

· After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

**Mason Honor Code:**

***Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.***

For information regarding the specifics of the honor code, visit <http://oai.gmu.edu/>. If you have a specific question regarding the honor code in this class, please ask me. Any engagement in academic dishonosty can result in an automatic failure of the course and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

**Communications:**

"Official Communications via GMU E-mail: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices form the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly."

**Accommodations:**

“If you are a student with disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 709-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.”

**Technology**

A computer will be required to access digital libraries for your Paper and to use Blackboard. If you do not have access to a computer, there are many computer labs around campus that are available to you.

**Calendar**

**Disclaimer:** The information on this calendar is subject to change.

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| Week of | Readings | Topic |
| 24-Aug |  | Introduction, Syllabus, course organization, and scientific method primer |
|  |  | How to find scholarly articles. |
| 31-Aug | Baliousis, M., Duggan, C., McCarthy, L., Huband, N., & Völlm, B. (2019). Executive function, attention, and memory deficits in antisocial personality disorder and psychopathy. *Psychiatry research*, *278*, 151-161.  Salekin, R. T. (2016). Psychopathy in childhood: Toward better informing the DSM–5 and ICD-11 conduct disorder specifiers. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, *7*(2), 180. | Antisocial personality disorder and Psychopathy |
|  | Müller, J. L., Sommer, M., Döhnel, K., Weber, T., Schmidt‐Wilcke, T., & Hajak, G. (2008). Disturbed prefrontal and temporal brain function during emotion and cognition interaction in criminal psychopathy. *Behavioral sciences & the law*, *26*(1), 131-150.  Blair, R. J. R. (2001). Neurocognitive models of aggression, the antisocial personality disorders, and psychopathy. *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*, *71*(6), 727-731. | antisocial personality disorder (physiological effects) |
| 7-Sep | Fletcher, P. C., & Frith, C. D. (2009). Perceiving is believing: a Bayesian approach to explaining the positive symptoms of schizophrenia. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, *10*(1), 48.  McGuire, P. K., David, A. S., Murray, R. M., Frackowiak, R. S. J., Frith, C. D., Wright, I., & Silbersweig, D. A. (1995). Abnormal monitoring of inner speech: a physiological basis for auditory hallucinations. *The Lancet*, *346*(8975), 596-600. | Hallucinations and schizophrenia |
|  | Teunisse, R. J., Zitman, F. G., Cruysberg, J. R. M., Hoefnagels, W. H. L., & Verbeek, A. L. M. (1996). Visual hallucinations in psychologically normal people: Charles Bonnet's syndrome. *The Lancet*, *347*(9004), 794-797.  Hermesh, H., Konas, S., Shiloh, R., Reuven, D., Marom, S., Weizman, A., & Gross-Isseroff, R. (2004). Musical hallucinations: prevalence in psychotic and nonpsychotic outpatients. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* | Hallucinations and Charles Bonnet Syndrome |
| 14-Sep | Holmes, E. A., Brown, R. J., Mansell, W., Fearon, R. P., Hunter, E. C., Frasquilho, F., & Oakley, D. A. (2005). Are there two qualitatively distinct forms of dissociation? A review and some clinical implications. *Clinical psychology review*, *25*(1), 1-23.  Macleod, A. D. (1999). Posttraumatic stress disorder, dissociative fugue and a locator beacon. *Australian and New Zealand journal of psychiatry*, *33*(1), 102-104. | Mystery:  Dissociative Fugue |
|  | Berlucchi, G., & Aglioti, S. M. (2010). The body in the brain revisited. *Experimental brain research*, *200*(1), 25-35.  Sellers, J. (2017). Out-of-Body Experience: Review & a Case Study. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*, *8*(9). | Out of body experiences |
| 21-Sep | Banissy, M. J., Kadosh, R. C., Maus, G. W., Walsh, V., & Ward, J. (2009). Prevalence, characteristics and a neurocognitive model of mirror-touch synaesthesia. *Experimental Brain Research*, *198*(2-3), 261-272.  Fitzgibbon, B. M., Giummarra, M. J., Georgiou-Karistianis, N., Enticott, P. G., & Bradshaw, J. L. (2010). Shared pain: from empathy to synaesthesia. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, *34*(4), 500-512. | Synesthesia |
|  | Marshall, W. L., & Kennedy, P. (2003). Sexual sadism in sexual offenders: An elusive diagnosis. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 8(1), 1-22.  Kirsch, L. G., & Becker, J. V. (2007). Emotional deficits in psychopathy and sexual sadism: Implications for violent and sadistic behavior. Clinical psychology review, 27(8), 904-922. | Sadism |
| 28-Sep | Harenski, C. L., Thornton, D. M., Harenski, K. A., Decety, J., & Kiehl, K. A. (2012). Increased frontotemporal activation during pain observation in sexual sadism: preliminary findings. Archives of general psychiatry, 69(3), 283-292  Denov, M. S. (2004). The Long-Term Effects of Child Sexual Abuse by Female Perpetrators A Qualitative Study of Male and Female Victims. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19(10), 1137-1156. | Physiological and Gender differences in Sadistic behavior |
|  | Bartholomew, R. E., & Wessely, S. (2002). Protean nature of mass sociogenic illness From possessed nuns to chemical and biological terrorism fears. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, *180*(4), 300-306.  Palmer, I. (2004). The psychological dimension of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism. *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*, *150*(1), 3-9. | Mass sociogenic illnesses (Mass Hysteria) |
| 5-Oct | Loharikar, A., Suragh, T. A., MacDonald, N. E., Balakrishnan, M. R., Benes, O., Lamprianou, S., ... & McNeil, M. M. (2018). Anxiety-related adverse events following immunization (AEFI): a systematic review of published clusters of illness. *Vaccine*, *36*(2), 299-305.  Lee, Y. T., & Tsai, S. J. (2010). The mirror neuron system may play a role in the pathogenesis of mass hysteria. *Medical hypotheses*, *74*(2), 244-245. | Mass sociogenic illnesses (Mass Hysteria) |
|  |  | **Class’s choice** |
| 12-Oct |  | Class’s choice |
|  |  | Class’s choice |
| 19-Oct | Mullen, P. E., Pathçº, M., Purcell, R., & Stuart, G. W. (2014). Study of stalkers.  Duntley, J. D., & Buss, D. M. (2012). The evolution of stalking. *Sex roles*, *66*(5-6), 311-327. | Stalking |
|  | Sheridan, L. P. Is cyberstalking different?. ***Psychology, crime & law***. (12/2007) ,  13 (6), p. 627 - 640.  Nijdam-Jones, A., Rosenfeld, B., Gerbrandij, J., Quick, E., & Galietta, M. (2018). Psychopathology of stalking offenders: examining the clinical, demographic, and stalking characteristics of a community-based sample. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *45*(5), 712-731. | Stalking continued |
| 26-Oct | Gibson, K., Morgan, M., Woolley, C., & Powis, T. (2011). Life after Centrepoint: Accounts of adult adjustment after childhood spent at an experimental community. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, *40*(3), 42.  Whitsett, D., & Kent, S. A. (2003). Cults and families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, *84*(4), 491-502. | **Cults** |
|  | Aronoff, J., Lynn, S. J., & Malinoski, P. (2000). Are cultic environments psychologically harmful?. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *20*(1), 91-111.  Day, S., & Peters, E. (1999). The incidence of schizotypy in new religious movements. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *27*(1), 55-67. | Cults Continued  Midterm Exams due by end of the week |
| 2-Nov | Shin, L. M., & Liberzon, I. (2010). The neurocircuitry of fear, stress, and anxiety disorders. *Neuropsychopharmacology*, *35*(1), 169-191.  Hofmann, S. G., Ellard, K. K., & Siegle, G. J. (2012). Neurobiological correlates of cognitions in fear and anxiety: a cognitive–neurobiological information-processing model. *Cognition & emotion*, *26*(2), 282-299. | **Fear** |
|  | Silverman, W. K., Ortiz, C. D., Viswesvaran, C., Burns, B. J., Kolko, D. J., Putnam, F. W., & Amaya-Jackson, L. (2008). Evidence-based psychosocial treatments for children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, *37*(1), 156-183.  Hofmann, S. G., Heering, S., Sawyer, A. T., & Asnaani, A. (2009). How to handle anxiety: The effects of reappraisal, acceptance, and suppression strategies on anxious arousal. *Behaviour research and therapy*, *47*(5), 389-394. | **Fear continued** |
| 9-Nov | Azzopardi, P., & Cowey, A. (1997). Is blindsight like normal, near-threshold vision?. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 94(25), 14190-14194.  Trevethan, C. T., Sahraie, A., & Weiskrantz, L. (2007). Can blindsight be superior to ‘sighted-sight’?. Cognition, 103(3), 491-501 | Mystery: Blindsight |
|  | [White, J. W., McMullin, D., Swartout, K., Sechrist, S., & Gollehon, A. (2008). Violence in intimate relationships: A conceptual and empirical examination of sexual and physical aggression. Children and Youth Services Review, 30(3), 338-351.](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/forum?action=list_threads&nav=discussion_board_entry&course_id=_293061_1&conf_id=_322405_1&forum_id=_442590_1)  [Testa, M., Hoffman, J. H., & Leonard, K. E. (2011). Female intimate partner violence perpetration: Stability and predictors of mutual and nonmutual aggression across the first year of college. Aggressive behavior, 37(4), 362-37](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/forum?action=list_threads&nav=discussion_board_entry&course_id=_293061_1&conf_id=_322405_1&forum_id=_442620_1) | Violence in Intimate relations |
| 16-Nov |  | Class’s Choice |
|  | Meyersburg, C. A., Bogdan, R., Gallo, D. A., & McNally, R. J. (2009). False memory propensity in people reporting recovered memories of past lives.*Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *118*(2), 399.   Storbeck, J., & Clore, G. L. (2005). With sadness comes accuracy; with happiness, false memory: Mood and the false memory effect. *Psychological Science*, *16*(10), 785-791. | False Memories |
| 23-Nov | Thanksgiving recess |  |
| 30-Nov | Paper Due December 5  Final Exam Due December 5 |  |
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