* **PSYCHOLOGY 405 (Sections DL5 & DL6) – Fall 2020**

**Mystery, Murder, Madness**

**Course Instructor**: Ali Momen

**Office Hours**: By Appointment Only

**Email:** amomen@gmu.edu

Psychology 405 is an exciting course where you’ll learn to apply psychological principles to areas related to mystery, murder, and madness! The course cover psychological topics related to season 1 of the Serial Podcast, serial killers Richard Kuklinski & Luka Magnotta, and the vigilante Batman. The end of the semester will consist of student group presentations on a semester long project.

**Grading Scheme:**

**Lecture Summaries- 25%**

Each week that I post a lecture, I will also create a *Forum* on the discussion board for that lecture. Within the forum, please create a *thread*. In the subject line of the thread enter your first and last name, and in the message portion submit a 1-2 paragraph summary of the lecture. The purpose of this is to ensure you are watching and paying attention to the lectures.

**Journal Article Summaries- 20%**

Each week that I post a journal article(s), I will also create a Forum on the discussion board for that week’s journals article(s) (just one Forum for all journal articles). Within the forum for a particular week’s journal articles, please create a thread. In the subject line of the thread enter your first and last name, and in the message portion, submit **one** paragraph for **each** journal article. Within each paragraph, summarize the journal article and relate it to topic(s) from the podcast (you may relate information from the journal article to information from *any* episode of the podcast)

**Discussion Board classroom discussions- 20%**

Most weeks I will also create a forum on the discussion board where we discuss, as a class, topics related to that week’s material. The way this will work is, I will create the forum, but *you* will create threads within those forums. These threads are meant to spark discussions on how the particular psychological principles we are discussing that week relate to topics from the podcast. In order to engage in a discussion within a current thread, within that thread *reply* to other people posts. Each student is required to post at least (but post as much as you would like) **two threads a semester**, and contribute at least **3 replies a week.** Forums for a specific week will only be open for that week.

**Final group presentation- 35%**

In the middle of the semester you will form groups (of about 4-5 people) and begin working on a project within your individual group. The project is to create a 25 presentation in which you psychologically analyze a topic related to mystery, murder, and/or madness. I will give more information about this when the time comes.

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| Week | Topic | Podcast episodes/Reading(s)/Watching(s) | Work Due (Due dates at bottom) |
| 8/30/20 | * Introduction to course * Serial and Memory | * Episodes 1-4 * Loftus, 1975 | * Journal Article Summary   Due 9/6 by midnight |
| 9/7/2020 | * Serial and Constructive Nature of Memory | -- | * Lecture Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 9/13 by midnight |
| 9/14/2020 | * Serial and Social Cognition | * Episodes 5-6 * Nisbett & Wilson, 1977 * Graham & Lowery, 2004 | * Lecture Summary * Journal Article Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 9/20 by midnight |
| 9/21/2020 | * Serial and Police Questioning | * Episodes 7-8. * Kassin and Kiechel, 1996 * Kassin, Drizin, Grisso, 2005 * Making a Murder, Season 1, episode 3 (on Netflix) | * Journal Article Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 9/27 by midnight |
| 9/28/2020 | * Serial and Social Perception | * Episode 9 * Findley, 2006; * O’Brien, 2009 | * Lecture Summary * Journal Article Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 10/4 by midnight |
| 10/5/2020 | * Serial and Juror Decision Making | * Episode 10 * O’Brien, 2009 * Berman & Cutler, 1996 * Jones & Kaplan, 2003. | * Lecture Summary * Journal Article Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 10/11 by midnight |
| 10/12/2020 | * Personality Disorders and Serial Killers | * The Iceman interview—Richard Kuklinski Analysis (via YouTube) | * Lecture Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 10/18 by midnight |
| 10/19/2020 | * Personality Disorders and Serial Killers Part 2 | * Don’t F\*ck with Cats (via Netflix) | * Lecture Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions * Due 10/25 by midnight |
| 10/26/2020 | * **No class—Will be attending (virtual) Annual HFES conference** |  |  |
| 11/02/2020 | * Serial Wrap-up lecture and class Debate on whether Adnan Syed is a psychopath (Conducted within the Discussion Board—more information will be given on this) | * Episodes 11-12 * Hare Psychopathy Checklist | * Journal Article Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 10/25 by midnight |
| 11/9/2020 | * Batman and Psychopathology | * Batman Begins | * Lecture Summary * Discussion Board classroom discussions   Due 11/15 by midnight |
| 11/17/2020 | * Groups Projects |  | * Create groups (more info will be provided)   Due 11/23 by midnight |
| 11/24/2020 | **No class—Thanksgiving** |  |  |
| 12/01/2020 | Group project Q&A (Via Zoom) |  | * Continue working on group projects |
| 12/08/2020 | Group presentations (Via Zoom) |  | * Discussion Board classroom discussions |

**Disability Resource Center**

\*\* If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center(DRC) at 703-993-2474.  All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Honor Code**: The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Students should be familiar with the code and connected policies, set out at <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/> This course will be conducted in accordance with those policies.

**Add/Drop and Withdrawal Deadlines**

Last day to add a class – August 31st

Last day to drop a class (No tuition Penalty) – September 8