Mystery, Madness, and Murder
PSYC 405-DL3 Fall 2022

Class “Time:” Weekly, Monday-Sunday
Class Location: Blackboard
Instructor: Rachel Nguyen, MA
Email: rnguye@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30 pm-2:30pm or by appointment
Office: (if by appointment outside hours, Zoom)

Text:
- All materials (Lectures and Peer-reviewed Journal Article) will be provided on Blackboard (Any videos will be linked to Blackboard)
- Serial Podcast (season 1) – Available on Spotify, YouTube, or the official website (https://serialpodcast.org/season-one)

Objectives:
Psychology 405 is an exciting course where you will learn to apply psychological principles to areas related to mystery, murder, and madness,

The first section we will do a deep dive into season 1 of the highly addictive Serial Podcast. Serial Season 1 is a true crime story about the 1999 murder of Hae Min Lee, an 18-year-old student at Woodlawn High School in Baltimore, Maryland. The aim of this section is to learn how principles from different areas of psychology (cognitive psychology, social psychology, clinical psychology, etc.) can be applied to and used to help understand mystery, murder, and madness topics.

Students will also become more familiar with digesting peer-reviewed journal articles to better understand psychological topics related to the podcast and be able to better understand and more efficiently apply knowledge to media topics (through discussion posts, and 2 video presentations).

Course Overview Characteristics:
This course is asynchronous and is available on Blackboard at the start of the semester. There is no physical location or specific time that students need to be online to access the course material.

Students are responsible for managing time to learn course materials and complete course submissions in a timely manner. A schedule is provided at the end of the syllabus.

Proactive Community Q&A Discussion Forum:
If there are any questions, please check and post to the Q&A discussion forum. I am subscribed to it and will receive an email when there are questions or comments. For course related questions, please do post to the Q&A forum. Your post will most likely aid another classmate. For personal-course related items, feel free to send me an email (an example: setting up office hour appointment outside of the weekly scheduled office hour times).
Graded Coursework (5 main categories)

1. **Syllabus Quiz**: *Due the first week of class.* This quiz is to ensure that students read the syllabus and can ask me questions that come up about (1) course requirements and (2) course policies. Graded for accuracy. Can take up to 6 times.

2. **Journal Article Video Presentation**: *Sign up for one to do by the end of the first week of class.* Sign ups will be updated on Blackboard after the first week. By signing up for a specific article to do a presentation on, you are also signing up to complete and upload the presentation by the date it is due in the class schedule (colored orange). Note that these are due by Sunday, 11:59 PM and these due dates are highlighted in orange.

   I will upload a presentation on Loftus, 1975 as an example. Instructions and more information will also be in a lecture and PowerPoint.

3. **Serial Podcast & Journal Article Quizzes**
   - Podcast: Questions from these quizzes will help guide students highlight some of the significant information that will be relevant to lecture and articles.
   - Journal Article: These graded assessments will help guide students in ways to better understand and digest journal articles in a way that will better help making connections to serial.
   - Both types will assess your understanding of the materials in preparation for discussion posts.

   It will be timed, and open book/open notes are allowed. Students can take these up to 6 times OR before the due date, whichever comes up first. The intent is for everyone to become comfortable and familiar with ways to digest information that will make the course more meaningful. For some of the article questions answered incorrectly, there may be feedback that will mention where to read more closely.

   *IF you lose internet connection, you will still be able to continue the assessment. Do not refresh the page unless directed by Blackboard (or if you are not able to interact with the interface). My recommendation is to just continue through the assessment and wait until your internet comes back to save the answers.

   Note that Blackboard will automatically save your multiple-choice answers (with a time stamp) even if you do not click on “Save” or “Submit.”

4. **Discussion Posts (2 Parts):**
   Follow the prompt in applying (1) lecture and (2) articles to Serial (or later, Iceman) when appropriate.
   - Part 1: Answer the prompt *BY 11:59PM Friday, the week it is assigned.*
   - Part 2: Follow the prompt in replying to a classmate’s post *BY 11:59PM Sunday, the week it is assigned.*
5. **Final Video Presentation (2 Main Parts)**: Rubric will be uploaded on Blackboard. 5 minutes min. 7 minutes max.
   a. Part 1: Complete the Proposed Final Presentation Topic Worksheet. In this Worksheet, students will (1) Propose Media personnel they would be interested in covering and (2) Psychology Topics they will cover and apply to the media personnel.
      i. Both needs to be approved by me before starting this. More information in lecture.
   b. Part 2a: Student upload. Part 2b: Comment on classmate’s upload.
Extra Credit--SONA:
Students have the option to complete a maximum of 3 hours of SONA research participation for extra credit. Students will need to register at the following website in order to receive login information and complete the research credits: https://gmu.sona-systems.com. Students are required to attend the experiments they schedule via SONA and are responsible for keeping track of the appointment time, location, and experimenter information.

If a student must cancel their appointment, he/she/they is required to do so at least 24 hours before the time of the experiment. If there is an emergency within 24 hours and you must cancel your appointment, contact the researcher with the contact information provided on SONA.

Those who are unable to fulfill the SONA participation requirement due to extenuating circumstances must discuss an alternative assignment with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the SONA deadline. SONA credits must be completed by the SONA deadline on Saturday, December 7th.

I highly recommend: After completing the experiment, it would be a good idea to check yourself to see if you received your credits later within 2 working days (and kindly remind the experimenter if the credits have not been granted).

Important step: After the credit has been granted, allocate the credit to the class you want to assign it to. For instance, if you are in multiple courses that have SONA participation, you may allocate your credits toward any of the class you’ve signed up for on SONA. Once you’ve allocated our credits to a course, it is saved to that course and cannot be used towards another course. Note that you can make changes on which course you want to allocate your credit to, by the end of the semester.
GRADING AND POINT DISTRIBUTIONS

Point Distributions: Course grading will be broken down into the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Point Breakdown (pts)</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Total (pts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus Quiz</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Article Video Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial Podcast Quizzes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Article Quizzes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Final Presentation Topic Worksheet</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Video Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total possible</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra credit</td>
<td>0.5 – 3 credits max. Each 1 credit is worth 5 points.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2.5-15 possible points</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grading Point Breakdown: With the opportunity to participate in Extra Credit, please note that I do not round up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
<th>Points required (out of 280)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>254.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-97.99</td>
<td>241.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.99</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99</td>
<td>226.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.99</td>
<td>215.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.99</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.99</td>
<td>200.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.99</td>
<td>189.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.99</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>67-69.99</td>
<td>174.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>66.99 or below</td>
<td>Below 174.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
COURSE POLICIES

Communication with the instructor:
Email: Please include in the subject area: **PSYC 405 MMM** and a brief phrase.
For example: **PSYC 405 MMM – schedule online office hour**
Also, only send emails from your GMU email so that I know that I am communicating with you.

I will respond to you within 2 working days Monday-Friday. Writing these descriptions allows students to help me spot their emails.

For any reason I don’t respond within 2 working days, please do send me a follow-up email!

Communication via Discussion Board:
Please treat discussion boards as forums or blogs within a professional context.
Use full sentences and proofread grammar to make your thoughts and posts easy to understand; keep in mind, your audience (instructor and other students).

Please do comment freely as you would during in-person classes while being respectful of other student efforts.

*Instructor feedback to your post:* Please treat these comments as my communication with you in your work and understanding of the course. If you have follow-up questions, I’d be happy to answer them in an email or during office hours.

Participation:
Students are expected to regularly check their GMU email and Blackboard (minimum, weekly) and be proactive about asking questions, turning in assignments, and reaching out to the instructors for questions and comments.

In case of illness, emergency, religious holidays, or participation in official college functions, students remain responsible for completing the requirements of the course.

Turning in assignments:
Students may work on assignments early and **can submit them at ANY time Before the due date** (*with the exception of the Final Video Presentation. Students will be able to submit this final assignment towards the end of the semester*).

Check to make sure there is a confirmation after submission. Blackboard records attempts, attempt date, attempt time, and assignment duration (for instructor view). However, students are responsible for checking to make sure items are submitted.

For issues with submissions, send me an email asap with a screenshot or image/picture of the issue/error. The sooner I receive information, the sooner I will be able to respond to and address issues.

For technology related issues, please contact GMU ITS Support Center
[https://its.gmu.edu/service/its-support-center/](https://its.gmu.edu/service/its-support-center/)
Late assignments:
Due dates are given to ensure that students have enough time to learn course materials and complete any submissions by the end of the semester. Please note again, that you may turn in any submissions before the due date.

**Not accepted**
- Syllabus Quiz: No late submissions accepted.
- Quizzes will be available until just before the due date. *Once the due date passes, the Quiz will not be available, and the Quiz will automatically be graded 0. Answers to Quizzes will be available after the due date at some time.*
- Journal Article Video Presentation: These can be completed at any time before the due date. The assignment (article and upload by date) will be available by the beginning of the 2nd week, and this presentation can be turned in as early as the 2nd week. This deadline is to ensure that other students have the appropriate amount of time to watch student presentations relevant to the subject material covered that specific week.

**Accepted with late penalty**
- Discussion posts – can still be turned in late with a late penalty. See Rubric point deduction.
- Final Video Presentation – can still be turned in late up until the Sunday, December 11th for a late penalty. There will be a 5-point deduction for each day late. Uploads past this date will not be accepted for grade.

Time management resources:
- [https://compass.gmu.edu/topics/self-care/time-management](https://compass.gmu.edu/topics/self-care/time-management)

Emergency/illness related event:
- In event that an incident or event occurs that is out of the student’s control (such as an emergency, accident, illness) and affects their participation in this course, they must let me know as soon as possible via email. If needed or wanted, a follow-up office hour appointment can be arranged.
- Students must be proactive in reaching out to me in a timely manner.
  - For instance, if the student is symptomatically ill or their dependent is ill, they must reach out to me via email and maintain communication so that I am aware of what is going on and can see how I can work with the student in assignment/course completion.
  - Please understand that I will do my best as an instructor to work with the student, but there may be some limitations to what I can provide or help with.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474.
All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
If you have a Faculty Contact Sheet, please be sure to give that to me at the start of class or as soon as possible so that we can work together to make the semester as smooth as possible for you.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:
As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Honor Code:
George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. It is every student’s responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with the Honor Code. The Honor Code is available at: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Important Dates: (it is your responsibility to drop yourself from the course)
- First Day of Classes: August 22th
- Last Day to Add Classes: August 29th
- Last Day to Drop Classes with 100% tuition refund: September 6th
- Final Drop Deadline (with 50% tuition refund): September 13th
- Unrestricted Withdrawal Period (100% Tuition Liability): Sept 14-27
### Class Schedule *Please Print out and set personal reminders*

#### Semester Weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (Monday-Sunday)</th>
<th>Topics students need to cover</th>
<th>Graded Submissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Due by Friday 11:59 PM EST</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **8/22 – 8/28**      | • *Class Intro (Review Syllabus)*  
                      | • Serial episodes 1-2  
                      | • Memory Lecture Part 1 | • Syllabus Quiz  
                      |                                | • Serial Podcast Quiz (ep.1-2)  
                      |                                | • Sign up for 1 journal article presentation |
| **8/29 – 9/4**       | • Memory lecture Part 2  
                      | • Listen to Serial episodes 3-4  
                      | • Read Loftus, 1975 Journal Article  
                      | • Watch Loftus, 1975 Presentation | • Serial Quiz (Ep. 3-4)  
                      |                                | • Loftus, 1975 Quiz  
                      |                                | • Discussion Post  
                      |                                | • Discussion Post REPLY to classmate |
| **9/5 – 9/11**       | • Social Cognition Lecture Part 1-2  
                      | • Read Nisbett & Wilson, 1977  
                      | • Read Graham and Lowery, 2004  
                      |                                | • Nisbett & Wilson and Graham and Lowery, 2004 Quiz  
                      |                                | • Student Presentations on Nisbett and Wilson, 1977 OR Graham and Lowery, 2004 |
| **9/12 – 9/18**      | • Serial episodes 5-6  
                      | • Watch Student Presentation on Nisbett & Wilson, 1977  
                      | • Watch Student Presentation on Graham and Lowery, 2004 | • Serial Quiz (Ep. 5-6)  
                      |                                | • Discussion Post  
                      |                                | • Discussion Post REPLY to classmate |
| **9/19 – 9/25**      | • Police Questioning Lecture  
                      | • Read Kassin & Kiechel, 1996  
                      | • Read Kassin et al., 2010  
                      |                                | • Kassin & Kiechel, 1996 and Kassin et al., 2010 Quiz  
                      |                                | • Student Presentations on Kassin & Kiechel, 1996 OR Kassin et al., 2010 |
| **9/26 – 10/2**      | • Serial episodes 7-8  
                      | • Watch Student Presentation on Kassin & Kiechel, 1996  
                      | • Watch Student Presentation on Kassin et al., 2010 | • Serial Quiz (Ep. 7-8)  
                      |                                | • Discussion Post  
                      |                                | • Discussion Post REPLY to classmate |
| **10/3 – 10/9**      | • Social Perception Lecture  
                      | • Read Findley, 2006  
                      | • Read O’Brien, 2009  
                      |                                | • Findley, 2006 and O’Brien, 2009 Quiz  
<pre><code>                  |                                | • Student Presentations on Findley, 2006 OR O’Brien, 2009 |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (Monday-Sunday)</th>
<th>Topics students need to cover</th>
<th>Graded Submissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/10 – 10/16</td>
<td>• Serial Episode 9&lt;br&gt;• Watch Student Presentation on Findley, 2006&lt;br&gt;• Watch Student Presentation on O’Brien, 2009</td>
<td>• Serial Quiz (Ep. 9)&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post REPLY to classmate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Due by Friday 11:59 PM EST&lt;br&gt;Due by Sunday 11:59 PM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17 – 10/23</td>
<td>• Juror Decision Making Lecture&lt;br&gt;• Read Berman &amp; Cutler, 1996&lt;br&gt;• Read Jones &amp; Kaplan, 2003</td>
<td>• Berman &amp; Cutler, 1996 and Jones &amp; Kaplan, 2003 Quiz&lt;br&gt;• Student Presentations on Berman &amp; Cutler, 1996 OR Jones &amp; Kaplan, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24 – 10/30</td>
<td>• Serial Episode 10&lt;br&gt;• Watch Student Presentation on Berman &amp; Cutler, 1996&lt;br&gt;• Watch Student Presentation on Jones &amp; Kaplan, 2003</td>
<td>• Serial Quiz (Ep. 10)&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post REPLY to classmate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31 – 11/6</td>
<td>• Personality Disorders and Serial Killers Lecture&lt;br&gt;• Read Hare et al., 1990&lt;br&gt;• Read Johnson, 2019&lt;br&gt;• Complete Hare Psychopathy checklist by yourself</td>
<td>• Hare et al., 1990 Quiz&lt;br&gt;• Johnson, 2019 Quiz&lt;br&gt;• Student Presentations on Hare et al., 1990 OR&lt;br&gt;• Student Presentations on Johnson, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/7 – 11/13</td>
<td>• Serial Episodes 11-12&lt;br&gt;• Watch Student Presentation on Hare et al., 1990&lt;br&gt;• Watch Student Presentation on Johnson, 2019</td>
<td>• Serial Quiz (Ep. 11-12)&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post REPLY to classmate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/14 – 11/20</td>
<td>• Watch Iceman Interview on Youtube&lt;br&gt;• Figure out what Media Person and Psychology Topic(s) to cover for the Final Presentation</td>
<td>• Discussion Post&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post REPLY to classmate&lt;br&gt;• Proposed Final Presentation Topic Worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21 – 11/27</td>
<td>• Lecture: Is Adnan Syed a Psychopath?</td>
<td>• Discussion Post (can turn in before break)&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post REPLY to classmate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Student Bartlett and Bartlett, 2011 Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/28 – 12/4</td>
<td>• Read Bartlett and Bartlett, 2011&lt;br&gt;• Bullying in Workplace Lecture&lt;br&gt;• Watch student presentation on Bartlett and Bartlett, 2011</td>
<td>• Bartlett and Bartlett, 2011 Quiz&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post&lt;br&gt;• Discussion Post REPLY to classmate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/9 &amp; 12/11</td>
<td>Final Video Presentation (5-7 Minutes)</td>
<td>Upload to Blackboard Discussion before or by Dec. 9th by 11:59 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comment on 1 student’s presentation by Dec. 11th by 11:59 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Journal Article Student Presentations (highlighted in orange)** — only due for students that have signed up to cover their presentation on that 1 specific article

**NOTE**: I reserve the right to make edits to this schedule based on several factors, including the progression of lecture. Any changes will be communicated on Blackboard announcements and email.