

Killers and Cults

Leadership Gone Awry

LDST 350 | M/W 9:00-10:15am

Course Description

Ted Bundy might be America's quintessential postmodern serial killer, but he also displayed many characteristics society affixes onto its most recognizable and respected leaders: charisma, intelligence, and attractiveness. Similarly, Jim Jones is often regarded as a heinous cult leader who facilitated unthinkable atrocities, but he was also appointed to the Indianapolis Human Rights Commission. This class takes seriously the preoccupation American society has with cults and serial killers as a productive lens for us to study the phenomenon of leadership. Approaching these topics from a historical lens will help us dismantle tropes we have about people who fit into these categories and force us to reckon with the uncomfortable truth that the line between "us" and "them" isn't as bifurcated as we might initially believe.

Class Location: Jepson Hall 102
Instructor: Dr. Lauren Henley (she/her)
Office Hours: Calendly appointment
Contact: lhenley@richmond.edu

Content Learning Objectives

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Defend a working definition of *cult* and *serial killer*.
2. Apply a leadership studies lens to cults/serial killers.
3. Contextualize cults and serial killers (and coverage of these topics) using a socio-historical framework.

Syllabus Contents

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Course Requirements | 4 |
| Materials | 4 |
| Engagement | 5 |
| Key Competencies | 5 |
| To Catch a Killer | 6 |
| Homicide Investigation | 7 |
| Museum Exhibit | 8 |
| Exam..... | 9 |
| Midsemester Reflection..... | 9 |
| Final Reflection..... | 9 |
| Course Values | 10 |
| Common Course Policies..... | 11 |
| Updated Policies..... | 12 |
| Campus Resources..... | 13 |
| Course Schedule | 14 |



Historical Inquiry Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Analyze questions about past events, ideas, and human worlds (political, cultural, social, economic, and/or physical).
2. Demonstrate historical thinking by contextualizing and analyzing primary sources and evaluating the nature and limits of historical evidence.
3. Apply interpretations and methods employed in the given area of historical study.
4. Formulate, advance, and properly document historical arguments, drawing on a combination of primary sources, secondary sources, and other research materials appropriate to the given area of historical study.

What this class is...



Necessarily unsettling

We will talk about violent and heinous acts...often. Be respectful and be intentional, but please know that nearly everything about this class carries a trigger warning, so I will not be preempting discussions with disclaimers unless I believe the materials under consideration are *particularly* disturbing. Topics that may appear frequently in readings and class discussion include: murder (obviously), sexual assault/rape, cannibalism, dismemberment, necrophilia, child abuse, torture, mutilation, etc. If at any point during class you need to step away from the conversation, please display emotional intelligence by discreetly removing yourself from the trigger. If you need to step away for the entire class period, please send me an email as soon as possible so we can chat.

Reading intensive

Seriously. You will notice that most of our class periods have 50+ pages of reading (typically from two different sources). While these readings tend to be accessible and often follow a narrative structure, there is no ignoring that 50 pages is 50 pages. If you are a slow reader and worry about keeping up, come see me during office hours so we can strategize. If you do not want to read a fair bit about cults and serial killers, please drop this class.



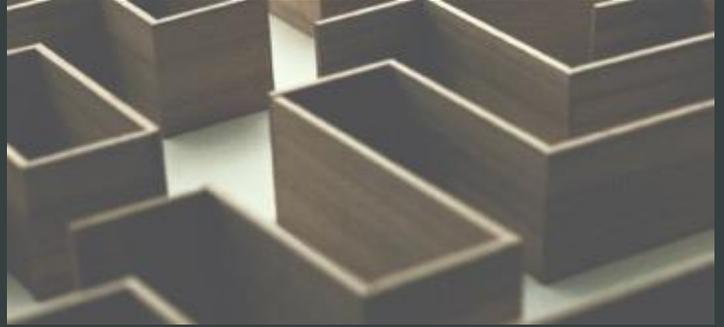
Selective

There are lots and lots of groups that could be considered cults that we could be discussing. There are plenty of serial killers who make ripe fodder for classroom conversation. We're touching the tip of the iceberg in the time we have together. If you don't see someone or something on the syllabus that you expected us to cover, let me know. There's no guarantee we'll get to it this semester, but I am certainly open to modifications. I have tried to present a diversity of types of cults and types of killers, but there is only so much ground we can cover in a single semester.

...What this class isn't

An academic version of *Mindhunter*

I'm not John Douglas. I have no desire to be. As such, though we will look into the way the FBI has shaped public perception of violent crime, we will not be tracking any contemporary serial killers or trying to infiltrate cultish organizations.



An indictment of religion

If you or anyone in your orbit is or has been a member of any of the communities under consideration, do not view our course materials as condemnation of their experiences or yours. The cults we are covering have been given that title by scholars who approach these groups with differing agendas and expertise. By the end of the semester, you should be able to determine for yourself whether you believe this label has been appropriately applied.

A true crime fan club

I get it. These topics are intriguing. But part of our goal is to figure out *why* and *how*. As such, I expect you to conduct yourself in a manner commiserate with the gravity of the subjects at hand. Be curious and open, but don't make crude or offensive jokes about the violent acts we will discuss.



Deliberately scary

I get that the topics under consideration can be frightening. I have not deliberately selected materials to elicit a fear response. That said, it is not fair to your peers to use fear as a reason you were unable to complete an assignment on time. If you know you scare easily, plan to do your reading in broad daylight and/or in public places until you get comfortable with the kind of materials that have been assigned.

Fiction

Some of the topics we talk about might feel surreal or incredulous. Whenever feasible, I will include primary source evidence to confirm the historical (or contemporary) nature of the issue under consideration.



Course Requirements

Grading

This class is graded out of 1200 points. Everyone starts with 10 points and earns additional points based on fulfilling course requirements. Final grades are differentiated in 5% intervals; you must reach the threshold to earn the grade (for example, 1080-1139.999 points is an A-).

Grade Scale

1200: A+
 1140-1199.999: A
 1080-1139.999: A-
 1020-1079.999: B+
 960-1019.999: B
 900-959.999: B-
 840-899.999: C+
 780-839.999: C
 720-779.999: C-
 660-719.999: D+
 600-659.999: D
 540-599.999: D-

Points Breakdown

580 points: Key Competencies
 200 points: Museum Exhibit
 140 points: Exam
 75 points: Engagement
 75 points: To Catch a Killer
 70 points: Homicide Investigation
 30 points: Final Reflection
 20 points: Midsemester Reflection

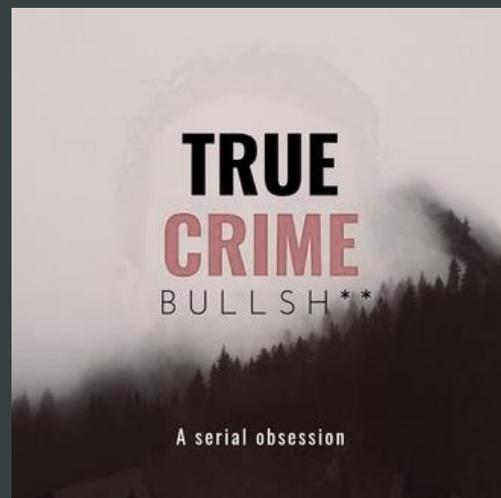
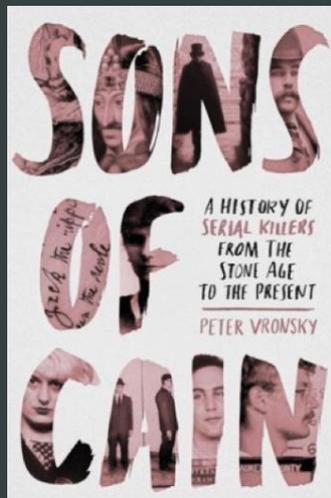
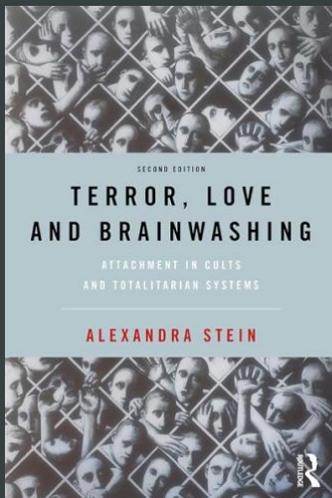
Technology Policy

Unless you have talked with Dr. Henley about a Disability Accommodation Notice (DAN) exception, use of laptops, tablets, cellphones, and any additional technology is prohibited in most class periods. She will let you know when technology is permitted. Handwritten notetaking is preferable.

Deadline policy: Deadlines are firm—there is no grace period. Late work is assessed with a penalty of 10% of the assignment's point value per day it is late.

Materials

- **Book:** Alexandra Stein, *Terror, Love, and Brainwashing: Attachment in Cults and Totalitarian Systems* (Routledge, 2021)
 - I prefer that you have the second edition but recognize it may be cost prohibitive
- **Book:** Peter Vronsky, *Sons of Cain: A History of Serial Killers from the Stone Age to the Present* (Berkeley, 2018)
- **Blackboard:** All other readings can be found under the Weekly Schedule tab
- **Podcast:** True Crime Bullsh** (Season 1)
 - I don't care where you listen to this podcast, but make sure you have access to a reliable streaming platform throughout the semester



Engagement

75 points (25 x 3 points)

During 25 class periods this semester, you can earn up to 3 engagement points. You must attend these periods to earn points. Barring exceptional circumstances as identified by a Richmond or Westhampton College Dean, or an official university athletics travel letter, engagement points cannot be earned outside of the given class period.

Breakdown

- 3 points: Pushing our conversation forward by asking thought-provoking questions AND giving thought-provoking answers/commentary when appropriate. Speaking up consistently throughout the class period.
- 2 points: Joining in the conversation with insightful questions AND/OR comments. Speaking up one or two times throughout the class period.
- 1 point: Physically present in class but clearly distracted OR not making a single contribution to class discussion.



Key Competencies

580 points (58 x 10 points)

Key competencies are timed content comprehension checks comprised of 10 multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank questions based on the day's reading. They are 10 minutes and must be taken using the lockdown browser. We will have 58 key competencies worth 10 points each. Two practice key competencies will be available to you for the material assigned for January 14 if you want to see what's expected. Graded key competencies start with the material assigned for January 19.

There will be 60 key competencies total. You can skip up to two without penalty. You do not need to say in advance which key competencies, if any, you plan to skip.

Key competencies can be retaken up to five times, or until you have earned a 10/10. If you retake a key competency, the first attempt is weighted at 50% of your grade. All other attempts are averaged to account for the remaining 50% of your grade.

For example, if you earned a 7/10 on your first attempt, a 9/10 on your second attempt, and a 10/10 on your third attempt, you would earn 8.25 points. If you only attempted this key competency once, you would earn 7 points.

Key competencies must be completed by the start of the class period for which the material is assigned, including any additional attempts. Key competencies cannot be submitted late.

To Catch a Killer

75 points (April 22)

One of the most important distinctions of serial murder is time. There is this frustrating tension investigators experience where they recognize that having more victims often provides more evidence regarding a killer's modus operandi, signature, and victimology. At the same time, law enforcement agencies do not want additional homicides to occur at all, let alone in their jurisdiction.



To allow you all to experience these tensions in real time, every week throughout the semester, there will be a clue placed somewhere on campus, mainly in Jepson Hall. If a clue is NOT in Jepson, you will receive a riddle to help you determine its location. You will know an item is a clue because it will be in either a red folder or red box and will include "Henley – LDST 350" somewhere on it.

It is your responsibility to locate the clue at some point that week (our weeks will run Monday to Monday). I will not remind you to find clues beyond the first couple of weeks of the semester. You will be expected to solve the case during the last week of class. Details are in the provided debriefing booklet.

Given the competitive nature of this exercise, it does not necessarily behoove you to help your classmates locate clues. If you miss a clue one week, you will likely be at a disadvantage going forward. There are no "make up" clues. This exercise is designed to provide a real-world simulation that carries some risk (i.e. grades) but is neither overly punitive nor actually dangerous.

When you find a clue, photograph it but DO NOT remove it from its location. If you move the clue, not only are you compromising the investigation, but you are robbing your peers of this experience. As this activity heavily relies on an honor system, if it goes awry, I will assign a traditional research paper instead.

The first five people to correctly identify the killer with an appropriate explanation will earn 75 points. The next five people to correctly identify the killer with an appropriate explanation will earn 70 points. The remaining people who correctly identify the killer with an appropriate explanation will earn 65 points.

You must submit your guess via Blackboard for it to count. I strongly encourage you to consult the debriefing booklet throughout the semester rather than the week guesses can begin. If you guess wrong, you must wait 24 hours to try again.



Note: The only classroom where clues *could* be located is our own. Clues will never be located in a gendered bathroom or the Jepson Student Lounge.

Homicide Investigation

70 points (Prep April 13 and 15 | Presentations April 20)

The media has created a tidy image of criminal investigations that belies the on-the-ground experience of law enforcement agencies. While our To Catch a Killer assignment focuses on the big-picture nature of serial homicide, this assignment focuses on the inverse: the immediacy of processing a crime scene thoroughly, correctly, and efficiently. For this activity, your goal is to convince a jury that your team knows how the victims met their end. The jury's verdict will impact, but not wholly determine, your grade.



At the end of the semester, you will be randomly assigned to one of three teams tasked with investigating two homicides. You will receive a random role within your team. Together, you need to process the scenes following proper police protocol.

Every role requires the utmost attention to detail. Failure to process the scenes correctly will result in a significant disadvantage moving forward. When you are processing the scenes, it will be advantageous to think like an investigator. Asking relevant questions of the Senior Director or Central Laboratory could yield more insights than you discern on your own.

Your team will have one class period to think through your case. During this period, you should think critically about the scenes you encountered. What information can you know, based on available evidence? What conclusions have you reached that are conjecture, rather than fact?

The last week of class, each team will have 20 minutes to present their findings in court. A jury vote will determine the outcome.



Disclaimer: On the first day of this activity, you will likely feel overwhelmed. Do not let this feeling cause you to slip up in your role. Doing so could be harmful to your team.

Museum Exhibit

200 points (5-artifact sample by March 6 | Completed by April 27 by 12:00pm)

In pairs or individually, you should curate an imagined museum exhibit about a serial killer and cult leader of your choice (from a predetermined list). This exhibit should convey an argumentative narrative and be critical of the true crime genre. At the same time, it should present vetted information about your selected individuals that would provide a layperson with a comprehensive understanding of their ideology or crimes, followers or victimology, punishment (if applicable), and popular culture image.

Annotations

Every artifact or component should have an annotation, akin to the descriptions found in museum exhibits. Each annotation should include at least one peer-reviewed secondary source that supports its claims.



Requirements

- Introductory statement highlighting the exhibit's purpose, importance, key takeaways, etc.
- Detailed description of the exhibit's layout and visual context
- 20 annotated artifacts/components (10 for your serial killer and 10 for your cult leader)



Artifacts and Components

The artifacts you include do not have to be the exact items from your selected individuals but should be *reasonable representations*. For example, if your killer is Ted Bundy, you could decide to include his Volkswagen beetle. To represent this artifact, you could research the color and year of his model and offer a picture of said vehicle. Conversely, you could include his actual car on display at the [Alcatraz East Crime Museum](#). In either case, you should be mindful of how this artifact interacts with true crime tropes. Your artifacts must be temporally appropriate (i.e., not an iPhone to represent a cellphone for a 1990s killer).

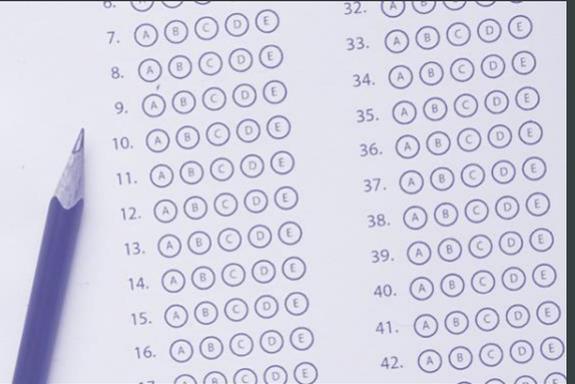
If desired, up to five of your submissions can be interactive components that you describe and/or draw. For example, maybe you want an audience member to feel the length of time it took for a victim to perish after being buried alive, so you create an immersive mini exhibit that simulates being suffocated with dirt. Obviously, simply putting a bucket of dirt in your exhibit would not be nearly as effective as providing an emotional experience, so detailing this kind of component might enliven your exhibit.

Exam

140 points (April 1)

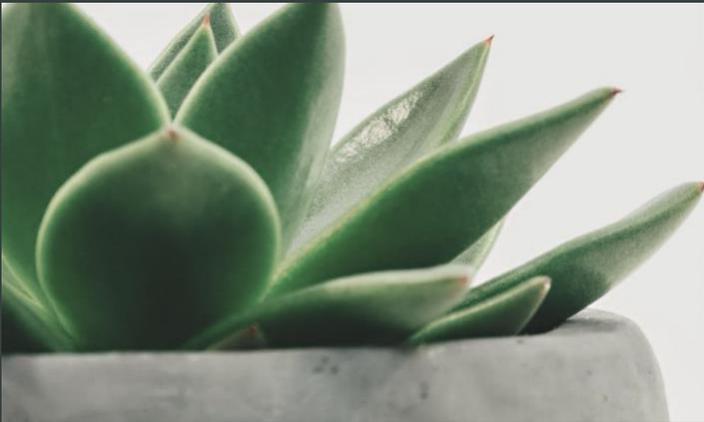
Our exam will take place in class on April 1. It will include:

- 40 multiple-choice questions (2 points each)
- 10 true/false questions with required explanations (1 point for T/F and 2 points for explanation)
- 2 short-answer questions (10 points each)



Midsemester Reflection

20 points (March 4)



A key feature of humanistic enterprise is reflecting on *how* you know what you know, not memorizing facts to regurgitate at a specific moment in time. As a result, at the midpoint in the semester you will be asked to reflect on your experience in class so far. Your reflection should be honest, thoughtful, and suggest ways to grow.

Final Reflection

30 points (April 24)

Your final reflection will be similar to the midsemester one, but with more comprehensive questions. If you partnered with a peer for your museum exhibit, you will also answer questions about the distribution of work between you two. If you worked individually, you will answer a few questions about your thought processes. The reflection is due on Blackboard by 11:59pm on the last day of classes for the semester.



Course Values

Student Rights

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness.
- You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student shall be isolated, excluded, or diminished in any way.

With these rights come responsibilities:

- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with me and with others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers' experiences.
- You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up when someone is excluded.
- You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding me accountable as well.

Recording Policy

You may not record any portion of class, unless you have documentation requiring such for an accommodation. This includes but is not limited to all forms of audio or video recording technology. You may not take pictures of anyone in class without the express consent of the intended party. I will explicitly state when it is okay and/or encouraged to take pictures.

Personal Pronoun Preference

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, nationality, ability, etc. Class rosters are provided to me with your official university name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name and/or gender pronouns. I will model best practices for naming preferred pronouns and recognize that not all students will feel comfortable with this approach. If this is the case, please advise me in whatever method is most comfortable for you as early as possible in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. If your pronouns and/or name change during the semester, please contact me so that I may address you as you desire.

Communication Policy

If you have questions that are not answered in the syllabus or on Blackboard, you are encouraged to reach out to me to seek clarification. **If the answer can be found in the syllabus or on Blackboard, my response will point you in the direction of the source.** This approach encourages you to actually look for answers before reaching out and gives me time to answer more substantive questions. I will respond to student emails within 24 hours of receipt during the week but will not respond to emails sent during the weekend (after 5:00pm ET on Friday through Sunday) until the following Monday.

Whenever you email me, do not address me as anything other than Professor Henley or Dr. Henley (i.e. no Ms./Miss/Mrs.). Your email does not need to be formal but should open with some sort of respectful greeting (i.e. Dear/Hello/Hi Professor Henley).

Common Course Policies

Jepson School of Leadership Studies

Awarding of Credit

To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.

Honor System

The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: "I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work."

Religious Observance

Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.

Addressing Microaggressions on Campus

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.¹ Recent research has found that, when professors do not address microaggressions in class, microaggressions foster alienation of marginalized groups.² Furthermore, both students and faculty that are exposed to microaggressions more often are more likely to have depressive symptoms and negative affect (a negative view of the world).³ A comfortable and productive environment where meaningful learning happens can be collectively created through actions, words, or environmental cues that promote the inclusion and success of marginalized members, recognizing their embodied identity, validating their realities, resisting sexism, ableism, and racism.⁴

The University of Richmond is committed to building an inclusive community. To this end, the Student Center for Equity and Inclusion (SCEI) was created in 2021 and offers ongoing support and assistance for a diverse student body.⁵ With this in mind, as a community member at the University of Richmond, I pledge to address microaggressions in the classroom by holding myself, other students, and faculty accountable for what is said and being receptive to criticism when perpetuating these slights, snubs, or insults.

¹Sue, S., Zane, N., Nagayama Hall, G. C., & Berger, L. K. (2009). The Case for Cultural Competency in Psychotherapeutic Interventions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60(1), 525–548. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163651>

²Bergom, I., Wright, M.C., Brown, M.K. and Brooks, M. (2011), Promoting college student development through collaborative learning: A case study of *hevruta*. *About Campus*, 15: 19-25. <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20044>

³Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Hamit, S., & Rasmus, M. (2014). The Impact of Racial Microaggressions on Mental Health: Counseling Implications for Clients of Color. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 92(1), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00130.x>

⁴Rolón-Dow, R. (2019). Stories of Microaggressions and Microaffirmation: A Framework for Understanding Campus Racial Climate. *NCID Currents*, 1(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/currents.17387731.0001.106>

⁵ <https://inclusion.richmond.edu/>

Updated Policies

Artificial Intelligence Technology & Honor Code

All assignments are expected to be the student's original work. The Jepson School follows the provisions of the Honor System as outlined by the School of Arts and Sciences. This means that no student is to use, rely on or turn in work that was paid-for, copied, excessively summarized without citation, created in collaboration (without permission), produced by AI, or is otherwise not the original work of the student for the specific assignment (without explicit permission).

Disability Services

The University of Richmond's office of Disability Services strives to ensure that students with disabilities and/or temporary conditions (i.e., concussions & injuries) are provided opportunity for full participation and equal access. Students who are experiencing a barrier to access due to a disability and/or temporary condition are encouraged to apply for accommodations by visiting: disability.richmond.edu. Disability Services can be reached at disability@richmond.edu or 804-662-5001.

Once accommodations have been approved, students must

- 1) Submit their Disability Accommodation Notice (DAN) to each of their professors via the Disability Services Student Portal available at this link: sl.richmond.edu/be, and
- 2) Request a meeting with each professor to create an accommodation implementation plan.

It is important to complete these steps as soon as possible because accommodations are never retroactive, and professors are permitted a reasonable amount of time for implementation. Disability Services is available to assist, as needed.

Sometimes things don't go to plan. I get that. I also recognize that, when things aren't going well, it can be hard to reach out. I can't know what you're going through unless you feel comfortable sharing. But, if you do share, I promise I will use my resources to help you and/or connect you to folks who can help.

If at any point during your college years you experience an emergency and don't have the funds to address it, use this [Student Support Form](#) (and chat with me if you feel comfortable doing so).

All students have the right to come to class without worrying about basic needs. If you experience food or housing insecurity during your time at UR, even after our class has ended, please arrange a meeting with me so I can help.



Campus Resources

Weinstein Learning Center

The Weinstein Learning Center is your go-to destination for academic support. Our services are tailored to help you achieve your academic goals throughout your time at University of Richmond. To learn more and view service schedules and appointment times, visit wlc.richmond.edu. Available services include:

Academic Skills Coaching

Meet with a professional staff member who will collaborate with you to assess and develop your academic and life skills (e.g., critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, test preparation, time management, stress management, and more).

Content Tutoring

Peer consultants offer assistance in specific courses and subject areas. They are available for appointments (in-person and virtual) and drop-in sessions. See schedules at wlc.richmond.edu for supported courses and drop-in times.

English Language Learning

Attend one-on-one or group consultations, workshops, and other services focused on English, academic, and/or intercultural skills.

Quantitative and Programming Resources

Peer consultants and professional staff offer workshops or one-on-one appointments to build quantitative and programming skills and provide statistical assistance for research projects.

Speech and Communication

Prepare and practice for academic presentations, speaking engagements, and other occasions of public expression. Peer consultants offer recording, playback, and coaching for both individual and group presentations. Students can expect recommendations regarding clarity, organization, style, and delivery.

Technology Learning

Visit our student lab dedicated to supporting digital media projects. Services include camera checkout, video/audio recording assistance, use of virtual reality equipment, poster printing, 3D printing and modeling, and consultation services on a variety of software.

Writing

Assists student writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Meet with peer consultants who can offer feedback on written work and suggest pre-writing, drafting, and revision strategies.

Revised August 2024

Course Schedule

| | Day | Theme | Materials |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cults: We All Seek Community | | | |
| Introduction | January 12 | Semester Overview | <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned automatically in class |
| | January 14 | Cult Assumptions | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing: Attachment in Cults and Totalitarian Systems</i> (xiii-30) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| Religion or Cult? | January 19 | No Class Early American Messiahs | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (31-50) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Jenkins, "Overrun with Messiahs," in <i>Mystics and Messiahs</i> (3-24) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 2 |
| | January 21 | Ann Lee | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (51-75) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Brewer, "The Shakers of Mother Ann Lee," in <i>America's Communal Utopias</i> (37-56) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| Destructive Cults | January 26 | Branch Davidian | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (76-105) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Corrigan and Neal, "The Branch Davidians and Waco," in <i>Religious Intolerance in America</i> (215-246) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | January 28 | Peoples Temple | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (106-130) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Thrash, "Introduction" and "End Times in Jonestown, Guyana," in <i>The Onliest One Alive</i> (xi-xiv, 83-123) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| Doomsday Cults | February 2 | Aum Shinrikyo | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (131-153) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Lifton, "Aum Shinrikyo," in <i>Losing Reality</i> (107-133) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | February 4 | Heaven's Gate | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (154-193) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Balch and Taylor, "Seekers and Saucers: The Role of the Cultic Milieu in Joining a UFO Cult" (839-860) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| Cults | February 9 | Church of Scientology | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (194-217) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Wright, "Introduction" and "The Convert," in <i>Going Clear</i> (ix-19) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Self-Help | February 11 | NXIVM | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (218-236) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Grigoriadis, " <u>Inside Nxivm, the 'Sex Cult' That Preached Empowerment,</u> " in <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> (UR NYT access) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| Culpability | February 16 | Manson Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Stein, <i>Terror, Love, and Brainwashing</i> (237-259) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Dardenne, "The Case of Charles Manson," in <i>The Press on Trial</i> (159-171) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | February 18 | Sarah Lawrence Cult | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Marcus and Walsh, " <u>The Stolen Kids of Sarah Lawrence,</u> " in <i>The Cut</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| Before: Serial Killers by Another Name | | | |
| "Firsts" | February 23 | In-Class Serial Killer Exhibit Workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, <i>Sons of Cain: A History of Serial Killers from the Stone Age to the Present</i> (3-70) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | February 25 | Introducing Serial Killers | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, <i>Sons of Cain</i> (71-130) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | March 2 | Pre-History | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, <i>Sons of Cain</i> (131-179) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | March 4 | Servant Girl Annihilator and Jack the Ripper | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, <i>Sons of Cain</i> (223-276) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Hollandsworth, " <u>Capital Murder,</u> " in <i>Texas Monthly</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class <input type="checkbox"/> Midsemester reflection due March 4 by 11:59pm ET <input type="checkbox"/> Museum exhibit 5-artifact sample due March 6 by 11:59pm ET |
| | March 9 | Spring Break | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, <i>Sons of Cain</i> (180-220) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episodes 9 and 10 |
| | March 11 | | |
| Angels of Death | March 16 | H. H. Holmes and Jane Toppan | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Dahl, "H.H. Holmes: The Original Client from Hell," in <i>Life Insurance Selling</i> (1-5) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Ramsland, "Historic Angels of Death," in <i>Inside the Minds of Healthcare Serial Killers</i> (11-27) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | March 18 | In-Class Serial Killer Exhibit Workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Kelleher and Kelleher, "Introduction," in <i>Murder Most Rare</i> (ix-xii) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |

| After: Naming "Them" | | | |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stereotyping and Gatekeeping | March 23 | Ted Bundy | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, <i>Sons of Cain</i> (277-303) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, "Classifying Serial Killers: The Typologies of Monstrosity," in <i>Serial Killers</i> (99-146) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | March 25 | Dennis Rader | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch "Bind. Torture. Kill: BTK," in season 2 of <i>Catching Killers</i> (Netflix, 36 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Ramsland, "Introduction," in <i>Confession of a Serial Killer</i> (1-20) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Jenkins, "Popular Culture: Images of the Serial Killer," in <i>Using Murder</i> (81-100) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | March 30 | John Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Censer, "Prologue," in <i>On the Trail of the D.C. Sniper</i> (1-19) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Allan Branson, "African American Serial Killers: Over-Represented Yet Underacknowledged" (1-18) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class <input type="checkbox"/> Exam April 1 in class |
| | April 1 | Exam | |
| Popular Culture vs. Reality | | | |
| Perception | April 6 | Murderabilia and Celebrity | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Vronsky, <i>Sons of Cain</i> (304-366) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Schmid, "Idols of Destruction: Celebrity, Consumerism, and the Serial Killer," in <i>Natural Born Celebrities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | April 8 | Serial Killers as Leaders | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Dutton, "Preface" and "Scorpio Rising," in <i>The Wisdom of Psychopaths</i> (xi-31) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| Application | April 13 | Homicide Investigation | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Douglas et al., "Crime Classification: Past and Present," in <i>Crime Classification Manual</i> (3-20) <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 16 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | April 15 | Digesting Evidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Read Douglas et al., "Mass and Serial Homicide," in <i>Crime Classification Manual</i> (471-490) <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | April 20 | Presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episode 17 <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement points earned in class |
| | April 22 | Course Evaluations + Reflections | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to TCB, episodes 18 and 19 <input type="checkbox"/> TCK guesses begin at 8:00am ET <input type="checkbox"/> Final reflection due April 24 by 11:59pm ET <input type="checkbox"/> Museum exhibit due April 27 by 12:00pm ET |