

**HEFTY DISCLAIMER:** The material covered in this class includes images and descriptions of crimes that are both graphic and disturbing – especially because many of them are real. I will never present this material in a gratuitous way: Case details will be presented only as much as they are regarded as essential to the profiling process. If you are squeamish, or if you have been (or are close to someone who has been) the victim of a violent crime, you need to make a careful, considered decision about whether to remain in this class. On the other end of the spectrum, I have ZERO desire to glamorize any of this material, so if you are the sort of person who really “gets off” on this sort of thing, please take a serious look at the source of your fascination. The last thing I would want to do by offering this course is to feed a person’s fears – or their fantasies.

**PSYCH 330 – *Criminal Profiling* – Course Outline – W12** (MW 4:00 P.M.-5:20 P.M.)

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**Office Hours:** M W 2:30-3:00; W 6:00-6:30; by appointment

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**Course Description** (from the *UW Undergraduate Calendar*): Foundational assumptions for, and basic approaches to, criminal profiling will be considered, along with a survey of relevant techniques in the context of numerous case studies. Limitations and alternatives to profiling will also be addressed.

**Course Purpose, Structure, and Philosophy:** Through a combination of lectures, videos, in-class exercises, and outside assignments, our goal will be to develop a working understanding of the process, problems, and promise of criminal profiling. In particular, we will attempt to use assumptions, principles, and techniques adapted from mainstream psychology in order to evaluate critically, and to offer constructive suggestions for improving, criminal profiling as it is currently practiced.

Profiling is an applied discipline, so this is very much a “learning by doing” course. There will not be a shred of rote memorization, not a single multiple choice question. Some tasks are intentionally presented with minimal structure because that is often the reality that profilers must face – Crime scenes don’t come with flow-charts or fill in the blank questions. Profiling requires organizing the available information in a way that makes the most sense given the specifics of a case. Thus, you will be asked to think, think some more, and justify your thinking. To put it frankly, if you want an easy mark or a structured course that places little demand on you as a student, please find another course. It IS possible to be extremely successful in this course, but only if you are willing to work for it. I am telling you this now so you can develop realistic expectations about what this course will require of you.

#### **Resources:**

**Readings:** There is no textbook for the course. Laura and I will be sifting through the literature in order to direct you to relevant readings on an approximately weekly basis, however.

**Useful Websites:** The three websites below all have sections devoted to criminal profiling. I don’t necessarily endorse or agree with their contents, but they may nevertheless provide useful alternate perspectives.  
[www.crimeandclues.com](http://www.crimeandclues.com)    [www.crimelibrary.com](http://www.crimelibrary.com)    [www.corpus-delicti.com](http://www.corpus-delicti.com)

St. Jerome’s also subscribes to the *Journal of Behavioral Profiling* that is also worth checking out.

**A Reminder:** You will get something out of this course in proportion to what you put into it. I strongly recommend that you take the initiative to consult the various resources above. Doing so will help you to grasp the “big picture” of profiling, which will undoubtedly aid you in the construction of your end-of-term profile.

#### **Course Schedule:**

**04 Jan -- Profiling the Instructor, the Course, and Yourself**

**09 Jan -- Profiling Profiling I (History, Goals, Limitations, Mythologies)**

**11 Jan -- Profiling Profiling II**

**16 Jan -- Profiling Profiling III**

**18 Jan -- Profiling the Profiler I (Biases, Backgrounds, Egos)**

**23 Jan -- Profiling the Profiler II**

**25 Jan -- Profiling the Victim I (Why Him/Her?)**

**30 Jan -- Profiling the Victim II MASTERMIND REPORT DUE; TRASH REPORT ASSIGNED**  
**01 Feb -- Profiling the Offender I (A General Model)**  
**06 Feb -- Profiling the Offender II (General Model continued)**  
**08 Feb -- Profiling the Offender III (General Model continued)**  
**13 Feb -- Profiling the Offender IV (General Model concluded) TRASH REPORT DUE;**  
**MIDTERM ASSIGNED**
**15 Feb -- Profiling the Offender V (Typologies)**  
**20 Feb -- BREAK WEEK – NO CLASS**  
**22 Feb -- BREAK WEEK – NO CLASS**  
**27 Feb -- Profiling the Offender VI (Geographic Profiling)**  
**29 Mar -- Profiling the Offender VII (Geographic Profiling continued)**  
**05 Mar -- Profiling the Offender VIII (Linguistic Profiling)**  
**07 Mar -- Profiling the Offender IX (An Extended Case Example); MIDTERM DUE**  
**12 Mar -- Profiling the Offender X (Case Example continued)**  
**14 Mar -- Epilogue: What Good Is Profiling, Really? FINAL CASE ASSIGNED**  
**19 Mar -- Profiling, the Final I (Evidence Analysis)**  
**21 Mar -- Profiling, the Final II (Evidence Analysis continued)**  
**26 Mar -- Profiling, the Final III (Evidence Analysis concluded)**  
**28 Mar -- FINAL CASE DUE.**  
**02 Apr -- Go. Be happy.**

**Evaluative Tasks (Otherwise known as marking scheme; due dates as noted above):**

(10%) **Logic Training** -- Because making logical inferences is so critical to the process of criminal profiling, it seems important to practice your inferential skills apart from a crime context as part of evaluation in this course. The practice will occur in game form. Specifically, you will be asked to complete AT LEAST 50 rounds of the game Mastermind, located at this site (if there are any problems with the site, let me know):

<http://www.web-games-online.com/mastermind/index.php>

SET UP THE GAME WITH THESE SETTINGS BEFORE YOU PLAY: Code length: 4; Allow duplicates: check. Record your score for each new game (give yourself a 10 if you don't break the code in 9 tries). *For each set of 10 games you complete*, report your average score (out of 10) for that set, followed by a summary analysis of the kinds of strategies you are employing, the kinds of mistakes you are making, and if/how these things change over time. Thus, you will need to submit a typed report that includes your average performance for at least 5 sets of 10 games, with each being followed by an interpretive analysis as described. You will be marked on having completed the assigned number of games, the clarity and correctness of your reported results, and the depth and quality of your self-analysis – NOT on your scores or their degree of improvement over time (if any). The goals of this assignment are to give you practice making logical inferences, and to get you thinking about how you think. Start on this early, as other tasks come up quickly near its due date.

(20%) **Evidence Assessment Training** -- As a “hands on” exercise in physical evidence analysis, particularly as it relates to recognizing the appropriate limits of logical inference, you will be asked to go through someone's trash. PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY, AND FOLLOW THEM TO THE LETTER.

1) Find a CONSENTING individual to participate in this task. You MUST ask them to provide a signed statement that they agree to have their trash analyzed as “evidence” for a class assignment. You shouldn't know the volunteer very well, because a lot of background knowledge about that person will seriously bias your analysis. (Be sure to state how you know this person.) ***Having a third-party “mediator” who is willing to collect the trash to keep the source anonymous to you is ideal.*** The person should also have a reasonable trash “supply” -- a lone piece of gum in an otherwise empty bag will not be terribly informative. (But what might that tell you?)

2) Empty the trash, spread it out (presumably on a dropcloth, newspaper, etc.). As part of your writeup, make an inventory of each piece of “evidence.” (Feel free simply to state the number of repeated items: “approx. 100 pumpkin seeds” versus “booger-filled tissue #24”). Then, spend some time looking at each piece (or set of pieces), both separately and in relation to other pieces. What does this tell you about the person (or persons) -- their habits, interests, recent experiences, etc.? How confident are you? On what basis?

The rest of your writeup consists of whatever inferences you are making about the person(s) involved, how confident you are, and on what basis. In essence, you are to talk me through your reasoning, from physical evidence to arrived-at conclusion. You will be marked on the reasonableness of your inferences, and whether you have demonstrated awareness of what the evidence can and cannot tell you. The mechanical use of jargon is discouraged. Your writeup should be typed, and as long as it takes to do a thorough job.

3) Because collaboration is one of the essential practical skills that profiling requires, you are strongly encouraged to COMPLETE THIS ASSIGNMENT IN GROUPS of up to 4 or so individuals. Only one “set” of trash per group needs to be analyzed. Ideally, no other people, especially the “analyzed,” should be present during the analysis itself, once again to minimize bias.

4) Although not required, you are encouraged to discuss the results of your analysis with the analyzed as an informal check on your accuracy. If you do so, please include a brief summary of this discussion in your report.

5) PLEASE RESPECT THE PRIVACY OF THE COOPERATING INDIVIDUAL throughout this process. If there is any sensitive information that should not be part of your report -- you know, credit card numbers, broken crack pipes, hand scrawled notes about killing Burris -- PLEASE do not include it in your report, simply list it as “undisclosed.” When in doubt, check with the analyzed before submitting the report.

(30%) **Take Home Midterm** -- There will be a midterm examination. It will be take-home, open-note, open-outside-resources, and group option. It will consist of one or more open-ended questions intended to foster original, critical thought about a number of profiling-related issues (in other words, material we’ve covered in class may be a starting point, but only that). Additional details will be discussed in class.

(40%) **End-of-Term Profile** -- The final will consist of an annotated profile based on case materials to be distributed in class. You will get the basics: a crime scene sketch, autopsy results, and some evidential details. You will then come up with questions that you will present to the “talking case file.” They must be phrased so as to require “Yes/No” or short answers, and answerable based on physical evidence or testimony of survivors (eyewitnesses, people who had contact with the victim), not on private knowledge (“What did the fly on the wall see?”). Three classes will be devoted to question-and-answer sessions for the various “task force” groups that have assembled themselves. Because profiling is a team effort, **working in a group is REQUIRED** – You know this now, so please do not expect or demand otherwise. (If this is unacceptable to you, please drop this course.) Each group will subsequently prepare a complete profile of the presumed offender (if applicable) based on the initial and subsequent information. This document should be typed, and as long as necessary to do a thorough job. Additional details regarding the execution, submission, and marking scheme will be discussed when the case is distributed in class.

In order to encourage accountability and responsible group participation, please note that I will be asking you to evaluate your fellow group members at the conclusion of this process. Group members who are singled out for their efforts above and beyond what might be expected may be awarded bonus marks; group members who are identified as having been disruptive, irresponsible (missing meetings and deadlines, etc.) may be penalized. **SHOULD YOU CHOOSE NOT TO SUBMIT AN EVALUATION, YOU ARE STILL SUBJECT TO THE EVALUATIONS OF YOUR FELLOW GROUP MEMBERS.**

**Class Attendance:** Especially because there is no formal text for this course, I’d strongly recommend attending class. Should you miss, for whatever reason, you need to find someone in the class willing to provide you with missing notes (if you “don’t know anyone,” then it’s time to introduce yourself). If your absence is not legitimate, you are on your own. If your absence is legitimate -- i.e., due to documented illness, family emergency, or religious observance -- then I am happy to answer questions about (but not re-teach) missed material.

**Deadline Extensions:** Extensions will be permitted ONLY in the event of documented illness, emergency, or religious observance that made it *impossible* for you to complete the various take-home tasks in the allotted time. They will NOT be granted because you procrastinated, forgot, overslept, were in a bad mood, etc. Unless it is absolutely impossible, I should be notified of the situation BEFORE the due date, not after. You are aware of all deadlines well in advance, so please do not attempt to take illegitimate advantage of this policy.

**Special Needs:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term. If you require an adapted learning or testing environment, please provide us with OPD documentation *at the beginning of the term*.

**For the Ethically Challenged:** *I think cheating is lazy, disrespectful, and immoral, and I find it very sad that some people may try to get a course mark without having earned it honestly. I hope you're not one of them.*

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** All students registered in courses at St. Jerome's University are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under St. Jerome's University Academic Discipline Policy and UW Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm).

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. In such a case, contact the St. Jerome's University Grievance Officer. Read St. Jerome's University Handbook, Section 4, item 8, [www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU\\_handbook/grievance\\_policy.html](http://www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU_handbook/grievance_policy.html).

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under St. Jerome's University Academic Discipline Policy or Grievance Policy if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, contact the St. Jerome's University Appeals Officer. Read St. Jerome's University Handbook, Section 6.4, [www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU\\_handbook/examinations\\_grades\\_standings\\_and\\_appeals.html](http://www.sju.ca/faculty/SJU_handbook/examinations_grades_standings_and_appeals.html).

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (UW):** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

CONSULTATION WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR OR THE COURSE TA WITH REGARD TO A SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT WILL BE CONSIDERED CHEATING. THIS INCLUDES FORMER PSYCH 330 STUDENTS, LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL, FRIENDS OR FAMILY, ETC. FAILURE TO QUOTE ON-LINE OR PRINT SOURCES PROPERLY WILL BE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM.

**Etiquette:** Please TURN OFF cell phones, etc. when in class. Please do your "social media," surfing, gaming, pimping, etc. elsewhere. Thanks. When e-mailing me or the TA, include your name, UWID, and the class in which you are enrolled, and allow at least 24 hours for a response. I will do my best to accommodate inquiries outside of class, but please be aware that I won't always answer your question in the way that you would prefer. In such cases, I'm not trying to be coy or obstinate, but have decided that whatever you want to know is something that you need to figure out for yourself.

**MAKING AN INFORMED CHOICE:** Criminal Profiling – as a third-year psychology course – will demand a lot of you, especially in terms of thinking and people skills. I have devised the course to represent the subject matter fairly, I hope, but that means that it is neither a traditional course, nor an easy one. Know what you are getting into, and decide – EARLY – whether you wish to commit yourself to it. If you have decided to do so, then welcome aboard. If not, I hope you find a course that better suits your expectations.