

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/LS 372 –^{Criminal Profiling} – Course Outline – W16 (MW 1:00pm-2:20pm)

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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, and crime scenes don’t come with flow-charts or fill in the blank questions, so this course has substantial “learning by doing” components. 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. If you want an easy mark or a structured course that places little demand on you as a student, then this is not the course for you. It IS possible to be successful in this course, but you will have to work for it.

Resources:

Readings: Assigned readings are on e-reserve (see schedule below), accessible through the UW Library system. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with accessing e-reserves, a help sheet will be available on LEARN.

Course Schedule:

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

06 Jan -- Profiling Profiling I (History, Goals, Limitations, Mythologies)

Reading: Egger, S. (1999). Psychological profiling: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 15, 242-261.

11 Jan -- Profiling Profiling II

13 Jan -- Profiling Profiling III

Reading: Snook, B., Cullen, R. M., Bennell, C., Taylor, P. J., & Gendreau, P. (2008). The criminal profiling illusion: What’s behind the smoke and mirrors? *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 35, 1257-1276.

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

Reading: Bennell, C., Corey, S., Taylor, A., & Ecker, J. (2008). What skills are required for effective offender profiling? An examination of the relationship between critical thinking ability and profile accuracy. *Psychology, Crime, and Law, 14*, 143-157.

20 Jan -- Profiling the Profiler II

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

Reading: Young, T. J. (1992). Procedures and problems in conducting a psychological autopsy. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 36*, 43-52.

27 Jan -- Profiling the Victim II

01 Feb -- TEST ONE

03 Feb -- Profiling the Offender I (A General Model)

Reading: Crabbé, A., Decoene, S., & Vertommen, H. (2008). Profiling homicide offenders: A review of assumptions and theories. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 13*, 88-106.

08 Feb -- Profiling the Offender II (General Model continued)

10 Feb -- Profiling the Offender III (General Model continued); TRASH REPORT DUE

15 Feb -- READING WEEK – NO CLASS

17 Feb -- READING WEEK – NO CLASS

22 Feb -- Profiling the Offender IV (General Model concluded)

24 Feb -- Profiling the Offender V (Typologies)

Reading: Canter, D. V., Alison, L. J., Alison, E., & Wentink, N. (2004). The organized/disorganized typology of serial murder: Myth or model? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 10*, 293-320.

29 Feb -- Profiling the Offender VI (Geographic Profiling)

Reading: Snook, B., Taylor, P. J., & Bennell, C. (2011). Geographic profiling: The fast, frugal, and accurate way. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 18*, 105-121.

02 Mar -- Profiling the Offender VII (Geographic Profiling continued)

07 Mar -- Profiling the Offender VIII (Linguistic Profiling)

Reading: Woodhams, J., & Grant, T. (2006). Developing a categorization system for rapists' speech. *Psychology, Crime, and Law, 12*, 245-260.

09 Mar -- TEST TWO

14 Mar -- Profiling the Offender IX (An Extended Case Example)

16 Mar -- Profiling the Offender X (Case Example continued) FINAL CASE ASSIGNED

21 Mar -- Profiling, the Final I (Evidence Analysis)

23 Mar -- Profiling, the Final II (Evidence Analysis continued)

28 Mar -- FINAL CASE DUE

30 Mar -- Go. Be happy.

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

Midterm 1 (20%) and Midterm 2 (20%) – These will be in-class and traditional-format (multiple-choice); they are intended to assess your retention and comprehension of the information and principles covered in lecture and the assigned readings. Scannable computer cards will be used, so please bring a couple of pencils and an eraser on test

days. Also, ***be prepared to present your WAT card during tests.*** Tests are weighted proportionally to the material that they cover; they are not cumulative. The mark received for a test stands, so if you have documented circumstances that may unfairly affect your performance, you need to address this BEFORE rather than after the test is written (see missed test policy below). Marks will be posted on LEARN as soon as they are available.

Evidence Assessment Training (20%) – 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 THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY, AND FOLLOW THEM TO THE LETTER.

0) Because collaboration is one of the essential practical skills that profiling requires, you are **REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THIS ASSIGNMENT IN GROUPS of 3-6 individuals.** Group members are expected to act responsibly: to show up for scheduled meetings, do their fair share of tasks, meet agreed-upon deadlines, etc. If a group member shows signs of unwillingness to meet his or her obligations, then the other group members should first try to resolve the situation informally by respectfully reminding that group member of his/her responsibilities. Should the group member prove unresponsive, a second approach would be to set up a meeting between (ideally ALL) group members and myself, in the hope that we can resolve the situation informally. Obviously, it will be important to attempt any resolutions well in advance of the assignment deadline – otherwise, we end up in a “too little, too late” situation.

As a third “line of defense,” students will be expected to complete peer evaluations of all group members’ contributions AFTER the assignment has been submitted. In order to ensure confidentiality, the evaluation form will be posted on LEARN to be downloaded, completed, and returned to the instructor. Whether or not you choose to complete an evaluation form, other group members can still complete one in reference to you. Thus, unless everyone in your group is happy and agrees that everyone contributed equally, it is in your best interest to complete an evaluation form. If the evaluations show a clear indication that a group member did not make a fair contribution to the submitted assignment – *especially if there is evidence that the group attempted to resolve the situation before the assignment was submitted (for example, e-mail exchanges among group members or meetings with me)* – then that group member will be subject to a mark deduction of **no less than 10%** for the submitted assignment. Alternatively, if there is clear consensus that a group member “went above and beyond,” then s/he may receive a 10% bonus.

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, and this signed statement **MUST** be included when you submit your report. Ideally, you should not know the donor at all: ***Having a third-party “mediator” who is willing to collect the trash to keep the source anonymous to you is therefore strongly recommended.*** If prior knowledge of the donor is **ABSOLUTELY UNAVOIDABLE**, then you should state up front what you already know about the donor, and what specific measures you took to prevent prior knowledge from biasing your evidence analysis.

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(s) -- 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) Only one “set” of trash per group needs to be analyzed. Ideally, no other people, especially the donor, 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 donor 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 DONOR throughout this process. If there is any sensitive information that should not be part of your report – credit card numbers, broken crack pipes, voodoo dolls labeled “Burris” – PLEASE do not include it in your report, simply list it as “undisclosed.” When in doubt, check with the donor before submitting the report.

End-of-Term Profile (40%) – 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 illustration 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?”). Two 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 of 3-6 individuals is REQUIRED.** (The membership need not be the same as the membership for the trash assignment – although this would be natural and sensible if you all work well together.) THE SAME PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH A GROUP MEMBER WHO IS NOT DOING HIS/HER FAIR SHARE APPLY HERE, INCLUDING PEER EVALUATIONS.

Each group will prepare a 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.

Extra Credit: Up to 4% extra credit is available via research participation in the SONA system. Detailed instructions appear in the “W16 SONA INSTRUCTIONS” handout available for download via the course website. On a personal note, as an active researcher myself, I would ask that you PLEASE TAKE ANY RESEARCH PARTICIPATION SERIOUSLY – careless completion of a study’s materials is a waste of everyone’s time and seriously undercuts the research process.

Class Attendance: *This is not a distance education course.* Thus, although whether or not you choose to attend class is entirely up to you, you are responsible for all material covered. Should you miss class, for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to find a classmate who would be willing to provide you with the notes you missed. If your absence is *legitimate*, then I will be happy to answer questions about the missed material once you have consulted with a fellow student. To make the most of consultation time outside of class, come prepared with specific questions regarding whatever material you may be having trouble with, and be prepared to discuss what you know (or think you know) about a topic -- that can speed up and simplify the clarification process tremendously.

UW Policy regarding Illness and Missed Tests: UW Examination Regulations

(www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf) state that: 1) A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html. 2) If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor. 3) The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations. 4) Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

Thus, you are entitled to test rescheduling for *legitimate* medical, compassionate, or religious grounds. Alternate test dates/times will not be granted because you forgot, overslept, were in a bad mood, had a plane to catch, didn’t come to class or read the course outline, had a bird poop on your head, etc. Whenever possible, please inform me PRIOR to the scheduled test to arrange an alternate writing time. A make-up test should be written as quickly as possible upon your return to classes, with the obvious provision of access to missed material (see Class Attendance below). When arriving to write a make-up test, please have the appropriate documentation in hand to support a medical, compassionate, or religious claim. Make-up exams may differ in format from the original.

Special Needs: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, 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 AS Office at the beginning of each academic term. If you require an adapted learning or testing environment, please provide us with AS 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: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her 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](#).

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. For students who decide to file a grievance, students should refer to [Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances](#). In such a case, contact Dr. Scott Kline (scott.kline@uwaterloo.ca), Associate Dean of St. Jerome’s University.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 71 – Student Discipline or Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances if a ground for an appeal can be established. In such a case, contact Dr. John Rempel (jrempel@uwaterloo.ca), Appeals Officer of St. Jerome’s University.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity website (Math): <https://math.uwaterloo.ca/math/current-undergraduates/regulations-and-procedures/cheating-and-student-academic-discipline>

Academic Integrity Office (UW): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

NOTE: CONSULTATION WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR OR THE COURSE TA WITH REGARD TO A SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT WILL BE CONSIDERED CHEATING.

Etiquette: Please TURN OFF cell phones, etc. when in class. Please do your social media, gaming, etc. elsewhere. Thanks.

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. 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.