

University of Roehampton International Summer School

Department of Psychology
Module Title: The Psychology of Murder
Module Code: PSY010N240H
Module Tutor: Dr Diane Bray

Module Rationale

This module has been designed with 'murder in mind'! Murder and why individuals commit such heinous crimes is a fascinating topic of study. Throughout history scholars have tried to understand the motivation behind taking another person's life. The principle aim of this module is to introduce you to the psychology of murder.

Initial sessions will provide a background through exploring the importance of psychology in the field of criminology and what exactly do we mean by murder. Our intellectual journey will then progress to delve into the most fascinating area of murder: the world of the serial killer. Exploring actual crimes we will gradually build up a picture of the psychological motivations behind such serious crimes – are murderers mad, sad or bad? To further understand the motivation behind murder we will explore why certain victims are selected (female, homeless, children) and debate how such crimes should be punished in our society.

The module will comprise lectures, workshops and debates as well as a walking tour of some of the famous London murder sites.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module students will have an understanding of:

- The relationship between psychology and criminology
- Legal definition of murder and the issue of responsibility
- The difference psychological approaches to understanding murder and have a critical perspective
- The forensic impact of murder including profiling
- The psychology of victimology
- The psychology of punishment

Assessment

The assessment for this module will comprise of two components:

- A 2000 word case study of an actual murder case (80%)
- A class presentation of the case study (20%)

Proposed Timetable

Day	10-11am	11.15-12.15pm	12.30 – 1.30pm
Monday	The relationship between psychology and crime	What is murder?	The Serial Killer: Jack the Ripper
Tuesday	The Psychology of Murder	The Psychology of the Serial Killer	The Psychology of the Mass Murderer
Wednesday	Houses of Horror	Houses of Horror	Houses of Horror
Thursday	Medics who kill	Medics who kill: Why?	The Psychopath
Monday	The victim	The victim	Murder Workshop
Tuesday	Children who kill	Children who kill (mass murder)	Murder of children
Wednesday	Review of Assessment	Assessment Workshop	Profiling the Serial Killer
Thursday	Murder Tour of London	Murder Tour of London	Murder Tour of London
Monday	The psychology of female killers	The psychology of female killers	Debate: the psychology of punishment
Tuesday	Class presentations	Class presentations	Class presentations
Wednesday	Murder in the USA	Murder in the USA	Murder in the USA
Thursday	Murder at the movies	Film	Film

Indicative Bibliography

Roland, P (2007). *In the minds of murderers*. Arcturus: London

Wilson, C. & Seaman, D (2007). *The Serial Killers: A Study in the Psychology of Violence*. Virgin Books: London