



CRJU 420-001
Analyzing Homicide
Fall 2023
MW 2:20-3:35p
Close-Hipp Building, Room 201

Professor: Ashley Mancik, Ph.D. (she/her/hers)

Email: mancik@mailbox.sc.edu

Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00p (in Close-Hipp Lobby) and by appointment

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Course Description

Relationships between patterns and trends in homicide, and theoretical explanations for why offenders engage in homicide. Examines homicide offending and victimization, as well as societal response to homicide. Special emphasis is placed on different types of homicide, including confrontational homicide, intimate partner and family homicide, and multiple victim homicide, and by victim and offender demographics.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites required for this course.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define homicide and distinguish between different legal classifications of criminal homicide (e.g., murder vs. manslaughter).
2. Explain the data sources available to measure criminal homicide and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.
3. Describe and compare the prevalence of homicide, overall, and for homicide disaggregated in various ways.
4. Understand societal responses to homicide and how this differs by type of homicide, characteristics of the homicide incident and those involved, and temporal and geographic variation.

Course Delivery

Unless documented in the course schedule below or announced in class or on Blackboard, this class will **meet in-person in the Close-Hipp Building (Room 201) during our regularly scheduled class time (MW 2:20-2:35p)**. Every effort will be made to not change the method of course delivery. However, in

rare circumstances, such as if 30% or more of the students in class have documented excused absences or if I test positive for COVID-19, the class may transition to online for a short period of time.

COVID-19 Safety Requirements and Recommendations

At this time, UofSC does not require face coverings to be worn in instructional areas. However, University and class policies and procedures related to COVID-19 safety precautions may change throughout the semester. I will announce any changes I am made aware of in class and/or via an announcement on Blackboard. For the most up-to-date information consult https://sc.edu/safety/coronavirus/safety_guidelines/index.php. For specific inquiries, you can also call the coronavirus phone bank M-F from 8a-5p at 803-576-8511.

Potential Exposure to COVID-19.

If you believe you may have come into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, the university offers free on campus saliva testing (https://sc.edu/safety/coronavirus/testing_and_services/testing/index.php) or there are several other locations where you may choose to get tested.

Testing Positive for COVID-19.

If you test positive for COVID-19, you are required to isolate for at least 5 full days from your first symptom or when you receive positive test results if you are asymptomatic. Following isolation, you are required to wear a mask or face covering for 5 days whenever you are around others. To limit any potential spread, if you are experiencing COVID-like symptoms, even if you have not tested positive yet, please do not come to class.

Required Text

Hough, Richard M., & McCorkle, Kimberly D. (2020) *American Homicide*. 2nd edition. SAGE Publications. ISBN-13: 9781544356037

Note: You may use the 1st edition of the textbook, but if you use the 1st edition make sure the topic lines up with the topic for the day.

This course includes readings from the textbook as well as journal articles, news articles, and government reports. Readings outside the textbook will be posted on Blackboard at least one week prior to their assigned due date. Occasionally, I may provide additional suggested readings for those who are interested in learning more on a given topic. These will be clearly marked as OPTIONAL, SUGGESTED, or RECOMMENDED readings, and you will not be tested on the optional readings directly. However, we may cover similar or related material in course lecture or discussions, and you will be responsible for knowing that information.

Blackboard

Required and supplemental non-textbook readings, PowerPoints, announcements, review sheets, and other course material will be posted on Blackboard. Your grades will also be posted on Blackboard. Check often for updates. <https://blackboard.sc.edu/>.

Course Assessment

Your grade in this course will be based on three exams, attendance/participation, and several in-class and out-of-class assignments. All grades will be posted to Blackboard in a timely manner.

Course Component	% of Total Grade
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%
Attendance/Participation	10%
Assignments	15%
Total	100%

Exams (75%). Three exams will be given throughout the semester. Exams will be 50 questions and consist of a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. Each question is worth 2 points. None of the exams are cumulative, but some material does build on material presented earlier in the semester. Students will be responsible for the material presented in class *and* any assigned readings. That is, some exam questions may come solely from material discussed in class and other exam questions may come from material solely covered in the assigned readings. I will post a review sheet on Blackboard prior to each exam, and you may take an optional practice exam for review (good performance will result in bonus points added to your exam – see “Extra Credit” section below). Exams will be administered in class on specific dates as listed in the course schedule below. **Makeup exams are not offered without a documented University excuse, as defined by University policy.** Students must notify me or the teaching assistant before the exam begins and provide valid documentation of their absence to be considered for a makeup exam. Makeup exams must take place within one week of the scheduled exam date and may be a different format than the originally scheduled exam (e.g., essay).

Attendance and Participation (10%). Attendance and participation are crucial to success in this course. Attendance will be taken daily. Only university approved absences will be excused. See the USC handbook for policies on excused absences [http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=52&navoid=1280#Attendance Policy](http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=52&navoid=1280#Attendance_Policy).

You will be allowed to make-up any assignments you miss due to an excused absence, including being in quarantine or isolation. Additionally, **if you are ill, you should not attend class and should contact the University Health Services to arrange testing for COVID-19.** Even if you test negative, this will still be considered an excused absence. Make-up assignments may vary from the original assignment and appropriate documentation of an excused absence is required. Students may miss two classes without penalty (i.e., you will not lose any points on attendance/participation). Tardiness will not be tolerated and students who are late to class or leave class early will not receive attendance credit for that day. If you know you will need to leave early on a particular day, let me know before the start of class. If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining the missed course material from another student in the class.

We will have various group assignments and discussions throughout the course. Participation includes participating in class discussions and assignments, being respectful of your fellow classmates’ and the instructor’s comments, and paying attention in class (i.e., not sleeping, texting, or working on assignments for another class).

Assignments (15%). Throughout the semester you will have several in-class and out-of-class assignments to complete associated with the current topic and material. The assignments vary and include activities such as watching documentaries, pulling and analyzing homicide data from the internet, applying case

examples to material covered in class, and more. Hand-written assignments will be accepted for in-class assignments. Only .doc, .docx, and .pdf files will be accepted for out-of-class assignments. More detailed instruction will be provided with each assignment.

Extra Credit. Extra credit will be offered in the form of exam reviews. Depending on your performance on the reviews, you may receive up to 3 points extra credit per exam. Exam reviews will be completed through Blackboard and consist of 25 multiple choice and true/false questions that are similar in content and difficulty to the questions you will see on the actual exam. If you answer all 25 practice questions correctly, you will receive 3 points added to your exam grade. If you answer 24 of the 25 questions correctly, you will receive 2 points, and if you answer 23 of the 25 questions correctly, 1 point will be added to your exam grade. Additional extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester, at the instructor's discretion.

Grading Scale

Please come see me early in the semester if you are having trouble with any of the requirements for this course, including the assigned readings. I am here to help, but I cannot help if I do not know it is needed. Please do not hesitate to set up an appointment with me as soon as you believe you need help.

Below is a breakdown of the letter grade you will earn for the corresponding percentage grade you earn in this course.

Grade	Interval	Grade	Interval
A	90-100	C	70-74
B+	85-89	D+	65-69
B	80-84	D	60-64
C+	75-79	F	0-59

Course Policies and Disclaimers

Academic Integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. **This includes the use of ChatGPT or other AI tools to complete any course assignments.** Any act or attempted act will be reported to USC's Office of Academic Integrity and is considered a VERY serious matter. The University of South Carolina has clearly articulated its policies governing academic integrity and students are encouraged to carefully review the policy on the Honor Code in the Carolina Community. If you have questions about academic integrity issues, contact me or see the University policy handbook. https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_conduct_and_academic_integrity/index.php.

Laptops and Cell Phones. I will allow laptops for note-taking purposes on a trial basis. However, if laptops become distracting or if the TA or I catch you using your computer for anything other than taking notes or class assignments, your **laptop privileges will be revoked**. If this becomes a significant problem, the entire classes' laptop privileges will be removed. Cell phones should be turned off or silenced and put away during class.

Class Conduct. Students are expected to be courteous and respectful of one another. Talking with peers, sleeping, or being disruptive all constitute class misconduct, and you may be asked to leave. This class is about homicide and will include discussion of sensitive and controversial topics. **It is important that each of us is respectful of each other's opinions and experiences.** Students are expected to come to

class on time and remain for the entire class period. Coming to class late or leaving early constitute class misconduct and will be counted as an absence for that day. If you need to leave class early, let me know before class or you may be asked to explain your exit from class. **The posting of class material to the internet, whether for a fee or not, is expressly prohibited and is a violation of the student code of conduct.** Class materials include notes, handouts, study guides, exams, or recordings. Recording lectures or taking pictures of PowerPoint slides is not permitted for any reason. However, PDFs of the PowerPoint slides will be posted on Blackboard after class.

Grades. If you wish to dispute a grade, you must submit a request in writing within one week of receiving the grade, explaining the discrepancy and the reason you think the grade should be changed. I will review your request and let you know my decision. All decisions are final.

Course Communication. Class announcements will be posted on Blackboard and emailed to your University email address. If you primarily use another email account, you should make sure that the Blackboard account is linked to that email address. It is your responsibility to ensure that your email account works properly in order to receive announcements and emails from Blackboard.

If you are trying to get in touch with me, **email is the best way to contact me.** Include the course title (e.g., CRJU420) in the subject line of the email. I generally respond to emails quickly, within 24-48 hours, with the exception of holidays/university breaks. If I do not respond within this time frame, please resend your email. All email correspondence should be done in a professional manner. This includes appropriately addressing the professor, respectful communication, complete sentences, and no texting language. Emails that do not adhere to these standards may be ignored at the instructor's discretion.

Inclusion of Diverse Learning Needs. This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a documented disability and need for an accommodation in this course should contact the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) and the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible (within the first week of the semester). In order to receive reasonable accommodations from me, you must be registered with the SDRC (1523 Greene Street, LeConte Room 112A; 803-777-6142, sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu). SDRC staff will coordinate accommodations for students. See the SDRC website for more information: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/sds/>.

Harassment. It is unacceptable and a violation of University policy to harass, discriminate against, or abuse any person on the basis of race, sex, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientations, genetics, or veteran status. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational mission. Contact the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs if you believe a violation has occurred (1600 Hampton Street, Suite 805, Columbia, SC, 29208, (803) 777-3854). See https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/equal_opportunities_programs/documents/complaint_processing_procedure.pdf for detailed information on filing a complaint and the complaint process.

Faculty Statement on Disclosures of Instances of Sexual Misconduct. If, at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am **obligated to inform the University's Title IX Coordinator.** The University needs to know information about such incidents in

order to offer resources to victims and to ensure a safe campus environment for everyone. The Title IX Coordinator will decide if the incident should be examined further. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in an assignment, or in office hours, **I promise to protect your privacy--I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator.** For more information on interpersonal violence policies, where to get help, and how to report information, please refer to www.sc.edu/sexualassault. At USC, we provide 24-hour crisis assistance and victim advocacy and counseling. Contact USCPD at (803) 777-4215 and they can put you in touch with Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention and Prevention (SAVIP) trained advocates, who are on call 24/7 and can provide support, information, referrals, and temporary housing. You can call the SAVIP office directly at (803) 777-8248 during regular business hours.

Diversity and Inclusion. The University of South Carolina is committed to a campus environment that is inclusive, safe, and respectful for all persons, and one that fully embraces the Carolina Creed. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. To that end, all course activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among colleagues, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, background, and point of view each student brings. You are expected, at all times, to apply the highest academic standards to this course and to treat others with dignity and respect. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Course Evaluations. Participating in the end of course evaluation is your opportunity to provide constructive feedback. I use the information you provide to revise my assignments, and to modify my teaching strategies. My department uses your feedback to evaluate my teaching as well. I appreciate you taking the time to thoughtfully complete the evaluation form. More information on completing course evaluations will be provided later in the semester.

Course Calendar

The schedule below is tentative. Modifications will be made as necessary and announced in class or via announcements on Blackboard.

You are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to coming to class that day.

Book chapters are based on the 2nd edition of the textbook.

BB = Blackboard

Week	Date	Topic Covered	Assigned Reading
Week 1	Aug 28	Syllabus/Course Introduction	-----
	Aug 30	Defining Homicide <i>Last day to change/drop a course without a grade of "W" being recorded.</i>	Ch. 1
Week 2	Sept 4	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY	-----
	Sept 6	Law and Homicide	“SC Homicide Law” (BB)
Week 3	Sept 11	Measuring Homicide	Ch. 2

	Sept 13	Measuring Homicide <i>In class activity (bring laptop)</i>	“The Nation’s Two Measures of Homicide” (BB)
Week 4	Sept 18	Patterns and Trends	Ch. 3
	Sept 20	Patterns and Trends	“Crime Decline in Context” (BB)
Week 5	Sept 25	Race and Homicide <i>Start Boyz N the Hood film</i>	“Racial Disparities in Homicide Victimization” (BB)
	Sept 27	Race and Homicide <i>Finish Boyz N the Hood film</i>	“Boyz N the Hood Still Relevant 30 Years Later” (BB)
Week 6	Oct 2	EXAM ONE	-----
	Oct 4	Confrontational Homicide	Ch. 5
Week 7	Oct 9	Confrontational Homicide <i>Start Tough Guise II documentary</i>	Pizarro et al. (2019) (BB)
	Oct 11	Gender and Homicide <i>Finish Tough Guise II documentary</i>	Fridel & Fox (2019) (BB)
Week 8	Oct 16	Intimate Partner Homicide	Ch. 6
	Oct 18	Death Penalty <i>Guest Speaker</i>	“Washington Supreme Court Strikes Down State’s Death Penalty” (BB)
Week 9	Oct 23	CLASS CANCELLED – OUT OF CLASS ASSIGNMENT <i>Private Violence documentary</i>	“Domestic Slayings: Brutal and Foreseeable” (BB)
	Oct 25	Family Homicide	Ch. 7; “Men Who Murder Their Families” (BB)
Week 10	Oct 30	Age and Homicide	Blumstein (1995) (BB)
	Nov 1	EXAM TWO	-----
Week 11	Nov 6	Mass and Spree Homicide	“Mass Shootings: Definitions and Trends” (BB)
	Nov 8	Mass and Spree Homicide <i>Last day to drop a course or withdraw without a grade of “WF” being recorded.</i>	Capellan et al. (2019) (BB)
Week 12	Nov 13	Serial Homicide	Ch. 12
	Nov 15	CLASS CANCELLED – ASC CONFERENCE TRAVEL	-----
Week 13	Nov 20	Impact on Family, Friends, and Society	Ch. 15

	Nov 22	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK	-----
Week 14	Nov 27	Impact on Family, Friends, and Society <i>Guest Speaker – Sherrerd Hartness</i>	“I Didn’t Just Lose Carlotta that Day” (BB)
	Nov 29	Solving Homicide	Ch. 13
Week 15	Dec 4	Solving Homicide <i>Guest Speaker – Lt Haley Nelson (SLED)</i>	Mock Homicide Investigation Activity Due
	Dec 6	Preventing Homicide	Pridemore (2003)
Week 16	Dec 13	EXAM THREE 12:30p Close-Hipp, Rm 201	-----