

True Crime
Policies, Procedures, and Information

Contact Information

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Respect

This classroom is a place of respect, integrity, and growth; an environment where we work toward common goals. Everyone in our room has an equal right to learn and be heard. This means we are responsible for our words and actions.

Course Objectives

- By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- 1. Analyze the true crime genre and its cultural significance
- 2. Evaluate ethical concerns in true crime consumption and reporting
- 3. Examine psychological profiles of criminals and their portrayal in media
- 4. Critically assess media bias and its influence on public perception of crime
- 5. Develop research and argumentation skills using incomplete evidence
- 6. Create original true crime narratives using ethical storytelling techniques

Grading Policy

- Major Assessments - 40%
 - Two major assessments per marking period
- Minor Assessments - 35%
 - Reading, writing, speaking/listening, and/or language minor assessments, quizzes, vocabulary etc.
- Participation/Performance - 25%
 - Includes classwork, homework, and other small assignments

Late Work

When a student does not hand in an assignment on time, it will be marked as “Missing” in the gradebook on that same day. A “missing” will be replaced with a number grade after submission of the assignment, if that assignment is eligible for late submission (see below).

Homework

Per district policy, homework and classwork will not be accepted late Homework in our class is usually prep work for the following classes, not just busy work. Missed work should be made up by seeing Dugas as soon as possible for materials and due dates.

Major and Minor Assessments

All projects, quizzes, and other large assignments will be due after ample working time in class. Work will be accepted **up to 5 calendar days after the due date**, with a 5% per day late point penalty for each day (meaning that a project handed in 2 days after the due date will have 10 points subtracted from its rubric grade, and so on).

Absences

Students are expected to use Google Classroom to review work they may have missed due to an absence. **Students are also expected to communicate any needs - such as scheduling a makeup assessment or an extension for missed work - with me as soon as possible in the event that they miss class. Communication is key!**

Students will also be held to all expectations and requirements as set forth by the English Department. Policies and Information can be found on the district website and in the student handbook.

Expectations for Student Behavior and Participation

1. Attend all classes and participate actively in discussions
2. Complete all assigned readings and media consumption before class
3. Respect diverse opinions and maintain sensitivity when discussing victims
4. Submit all assignments on time
5. Collaborate effectively in group projects and activities

Required Texts and Media

- Podcast: Crime Junkie (selected episodes)
- Article: "Why Are We Obsessed with True Crime?" by Laura Hensley
- TedTalk: "Are You an Ethical True Crime Fan?"
- Podcast: Dateline NBC (selected episodes)
- Killers of the Flower Moon (Young Readers Edition)
- No Choirboy by Susan Kuklin
- Movie: Just Mercy (selected clips)
- Netflix series: When They See Us

Weekly Schedule

Week 1-3: The Ethics of Obsession with True Crime

- Define true crime genre and its evolution
- Discuss ethics of true crime consumption
- Analyze victim representation and victimology
- Examine impact of crime narratives on society
- Activities: Ethical debate, personal response essay, create ethical reporting checklist

Week 4-6: Serial Killer Archetypes & Psychological Profiles

- Explore causes and media portrayal of serial killers
- Analyze various criminal archetypes (The Bragger, The Expert Manipulator, etc.)
- Study case files of infamous serial killers
- Activities: Case file presentations, rap battle project, Socratic seminar

Week 7-9: Justice & Injustice in True Crime

- Examine media bias in crime reporting
- Discuss wrongful convictions and systemic issues in justice
- Analyze high-profile cases (Amanda Knox, Central Park 5, etc.)
- Activities: Debates on capital punishment, media bias analysis

Week 10-12: Unsolved Mysteries & Forensic Fiction

- Explore famous unsolved cases (JonBenét Ramsey, Tupac Shakur, etc.)
- Discuss the role of science in crime-solving narratives
- Practice forming arguments based on incomplete evidence
- Activities: Create a "Cold Case" podcast script, write a persuasive essay

Week 13-14: Final Project Development

- Students work on their final projects: creating an original true crime narrative
- Individual consultations with teacher
- Peer review sessions

Week 15: Final Presentations and Course Wrap-up

- Students present their final projects
- Reflect on course learning and ethical considerations in true crime
- Final discussion on the future of true crime narratives