

Department of English & Writing Studies

True Crime: Writing Podcasts & Purplish Prose
Writing 2292G (001)
Winter 2021

Instructor: Dr. Michael Arntfield
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Course Location: Online Only

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom

Course Date/Time: Asynchronous

Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. If the student does not have the requisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student's record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to his or her fees in the event that he or she is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

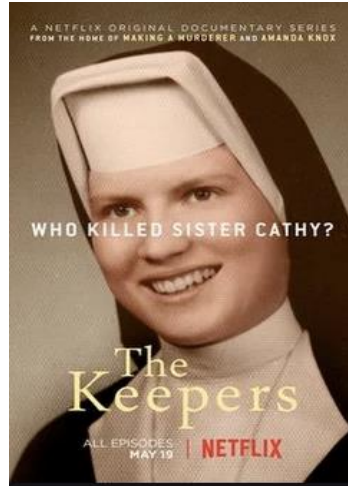
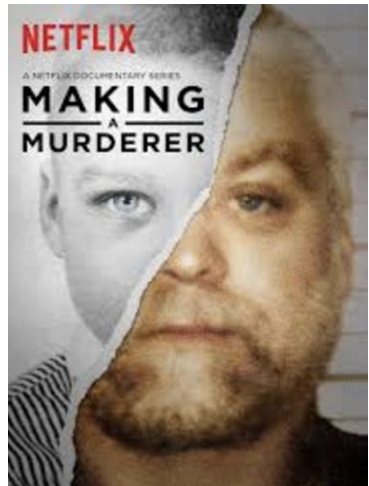
Course Objectives & Description:

This course interrogates the various iterations of "true" crime as both a literary and multimedia tradition over the course of the last two centuries, including how the ostensibly factual retelling of criminal occurrences is shaped by larger cultural and technological forces. With a focus on writing for streaming and podcasting productions, this course additionally explores the impact of the current true crime zeitgeist on the administration of justice and integrity of actual investigations, particularly through narratives focused on cold cases and the wrongfully convicted.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

- 📖 Appelman, J. R. (2018) *The Kill Jar: Obsession, Descent & A Hunt For Detroit's Most Notorious Serial Killer*. New York: Gallery Books
- 📖 Arntfield, Michael (2018) *Monster City: Murder, Music & Mayhem in Nashville's Dark Age*. New York: Little A Books



Methods of Evaluation

1. Review of True Crime Streaming Series – 500-750 words (20%)
2. True Crime Podcast “Deck” – 750-1500 words (30%)
3. Podcast Sample Episode – 30 minutes (40%)
4. Peer Editing & Online Engagement (10%)



Tentative Course Schedule:

Part I: The Four Waves

‡ Week 1: Dickens & Poe: The Unlikely Origins of True Crime
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 2: Cold Blood & Tiger Kings: Ascent & Decline of the Genre
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

Part II: A Contradiction in Terms: Is True Crime Really True?

‡ Week 3: Assessing Veracity & Authenticity Pt. 1
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 4: Assessing Veracity & Authenticity Pt. 2
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 5: Virtual Q&A with Professor

! Assignment #1 Due via OWL by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, February 12, 2021

Part III: The Great Deregulation: The Emergence of Podcasting

‡ Week 6: READING WEEK – NO CLASS
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 7: Plotting & Pitching a Podcast
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 8: Feature vs. Episodic Podcasts

! Assignment #2 Due Via OWL by 4:30 p.m. on March 5, 2021

‡ Week 9: Podcasts as Radio Theatre
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 10: Technical & Production Considerations Pt. 1
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 11: Technical & Production Considerations Pt. 2
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 12: Virtual Q&A with Professor
Read: Appelman & Arntfield as able

‡ Week 13: NO CLASS

! Assignment #3 Due via OWL by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 9, 2021

→ Assignment Format

All assignments are to be typed, using 12 point font unless otherwise specified. All assignments must have your name, course name, section number, and the professor's name on the first page.

When using sources in a paper, you will be expected to follow MLA, APA, or CMS standards for documentation, detailed in *The Brief Penguin Handbook* sections 22, 23, 24, and 25.

→ Assignment Deadlines

Assignments are due via OWL by 4:30 p.m. on the date specified on the schedule. Late essays will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day, including weekends, unless I've granted an extension at least 72 hours in advance and in writing. A "day" runs from 4:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. You must apply for extensions, via self-reporting, no less than a week ahead of the due date. I don't like to penalize late assignments; however, since the purpose of this course is to prepare you for a career in writing, you need to know that deadlines are not a matter of negotiation. For these reasons, all assignments will be due on the date specified barring some catastrophic event. Following any other policy would be an injustice to you as a future writer.

N.B.: NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE TERM ENDS AT 4:30 P.M. ON MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2021.

How to Submit Assignments

Assignments are due via OWL no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date specified on the schedule. Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day unless I have granted you an extension, as explained in the previous section. Note that assignments submitted after 4:30 p.m. (the end of the "business day") are graded as though they are received the day after they are uploaded.

Hard copies of assignments are not currently being accepted via the drop-box. Further, do not:

- fax assignments
- e-mail assignments

Also, be aware that **you are responsible for keeping copies of all assignments submitted.**

~~N.B.: In addition to submitting final drafts on/by the due date for each assignment, you are required to bring a rough draft of each assignment to class for each of the scheduled peer review sessions. Failure to attend a scheduled peer review session with a sufficiently completed rough copy to enable a meaningful review, or to otherwise participate in the peer review session, will result in the earned mark for that assignment being reduced by 10%. In other words, an assignment that would have normally earned a 75, for example, will instead receive a recorded grade of 65. This penalty will be applied in addition to any other penalties incurred, e.g. for late submission.~~

→ Attendance policies

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- ~~You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but excused provided you don't miss any more.~~
- ~~However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).~~

- If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68).

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors. See also: '**Medical Accommodation Policy**' below.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course will count as non-attendance, and will attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at Western University **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a Writing class in order to write such a test in another class, that is your choice; your absence will not be excused.

Attendance also extends to tardiness. If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on-time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance.

↳ Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholoff.pdf

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Note: *In this course you will be required to submit an electronic copy of the final version of each of your essays to turnitin.com through your section's OWL homepage.*

↳ Prerequisites

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. If the student does not have the requisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student’s record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to his or her fees in the event that he or she is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

Accommodation Policy

Note: the official Western Accommodation Policy appears below. This is in effect, but may be modified temporarily by the university during the academic year as conditions change.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors by email within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Additional Resources:

Registrarial Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Policy on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Note that the use of racist, discriminatory, or any language that works against the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will not be tolerated in any course or university communication, whether oral or written.

~~Dr. Mike’s Policy on Social Media & Wireless Devices:~~

~~Note that while the responsible use of smartphones, notebook computers, tablets, and other devices as learning tools in this course is certainly encouraged, and while I understand that smartphones in particular are increasingly integral to students’ social experience at Western, it is expected that these technologies will be used appropriately in the context of the classroom. Please respect your professor (me) and peers (your friends and classmates) by refraining from SMS texting, BBMing, iMessaging, or using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, et al. other than during the designated break times. Students who are found to be distracted by and/or routinely engaged in social media, or found using wireless devices for personal business during lectures, peer review sessions, or in-class assignments will be deemed to be *mentally absent* and will have their attendance and participation marks affected to the same degree as someone who has failed to attend entirely. Please don’t make this an issue. Please use discretion and common sense.~~