Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

**Teacher:** Lorna Veraldi, Associate Professor  
School of Journalism and Mass Communication

[lorna.veraldi@fiu.edu](mailto:lorna.veraldi@fiu.edu)  
Office: AC II, 311-A  
Phone: (305) 919-5523

Office hours:  
Monday  12:30 – 1:30 PM  
Tuesday  8:00 – 9:00 AM  
11:00 – Noon  
Wednesday  12:30 – 1:30 PM  
Thursday  8:00 – 9:00 AM  
11:00 – Noon

---

Frères humains qui après nous vivez,  
N’ayez les cuers contre nous endurcis,  
Car, se pitié de nous povres avez,  
Dieu en aura plus tost de vous mercis.

(Brother men who after us live on,  
harden not your hearts against us,  
for if you have some pity on us poor men,  
the sooner God will show you mercy.)

François Villon  
*XIV – L’Epitaphe Villon  
Ballade des pendus*  
(XIV—Villon's Epitaph)  
(Ballade of the Hanged)

**Course description and objectives:** Welcome to IDH 2003, Inhabiting other Lives. The FIU catalog describes this as a class that “exposes students to issues of human commonality and diversity, and invites them to investigate and to understand the interconnectedness of various cultures, times and life experiences.” This semester, we will look through the eyes of a killer to explore and try to make sense of "senseless" violence.

**Required texts:** We will use four books this semester. These books are available in paperback in the campus bookstore. You can also find them in most libraries and many used bookstores.
Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood, A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences.*

De Becker, Gavin. *The Gift of Fear and other Survival Signals that Protect Us from Violence.*

Rose, Reginald. *Twelve Angry Men.* (We will be marking up this script, so you will need to have your own copy, rather than to borrow a library copy.)

Stanislavski, Constantin. *An Actor Prepares.*

**Assignments and evaluation:** This is a small class, and much of our work will be done in class. It is vital that you are here, on time, every time. Attendance and participation will count for 20% of your semester grade. During the semester, you will write at least five papers. Each of the best four grades on your papers will count for 20% of your semester grade.

As you read this syllabus at the beginning of the semester, you have an A. It is yours to keep, provided you keep up with your work. Don't count on repairing damage after the fact; I do not accept extra credit assignments. I do not normally give plus or minus grades. Here are the grades I give for each of these grade point ranges:

- 3.6 – 4.0: A
- 2.6 – 3.5: B
- 1.6 – 2.5: C
- .6 – 1.5: D

(Outstanding) (Above average) (Average) (Below average)

I expect you to come prepared, having completed the reading or other work assigned to you in advance. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to see me before the next class for any assignments or materials distributed in your absence.

**Assignments:**

Here are the dates by which you should have read the following assignments. Additional assignments may be given in class.

- **8/26** Introduction (no advance reading assignment. Please read the entire course syllabus before the end of Drop/Add week.)

- **8/28** Villon's *Ballade des pendus*

François Villon, the fifteenth-century French poet whose words introduce this syllabus, entreated us to inhabit the lives (and deaths) of men who "have been killed by justice." We will use his words as a jumping off place.
Please bring me a copy of your current resume. It is for my information only; I will not grade it or mark it. However, if you would like to discuss it with me, I am happy to meet with you to give you my comments.

9/2  *An Actor Prepares* (vii - 33) (Chpts. 1-2)

Issues concerning crime, especially violent crime, are emotionally charged, and our feelings about these issues deeply rooted. In examining them, we will take our cue from Constantin Stanislavski, an actor, director and teacher who transformed Twentieth Century theater with his idea that acting should not be artifice, but rather "psychological truth." We will use his book *An Actor Prepares* to prepare ourselves for our journey of exploration. Much of what we do this semester will rely not just on reading and writing, but also on using our voices and bodies to explore and understand the psychological truth of violent crime.

9/4  *An Actor Prepares* (35 - 119) (Chpts. 3 - 6)

9/9  *An Actor Prepares* (121 - 208) (Chpts. 7 - 9)

9/11  *An Actor Prepares* (209 - 291) (Chpts. 10 – 14)

9/16  *An Actor Prepares* (291 - 336) (Chpts. 15 - 16)

9/18  *An Actor Prepares*

9/23  *The Gift of Fear* (1 - 88) (Chpts. 1 – 4)

Gavin de Becker, in his 1997 bestseller *The Gift of Fear*, helps his readers to understand violence and to trust their instincts and intuitions to identify and avoid danger. Like Stanislavski, de Becker warns us to aim for psychological truth by putting aside the artifice of "manners" and the paralysis of unfounded fears.

9/25  *The Gift of Fear* (89 - 168) (Chpts. 5 – 8)

9/29  Honors College Convocation: Please join your teachers and colleagues for this traditional gathering on University Park campus.

9/30  *The Gift of Fear* (169 - 279) (Chpts. 9 – 12)


10/7  Honors Excellence Lecture: Robert Stern, Dean of Yale School of Architecture University Park: Paul Cejas School of Architecture
10/7  *In Cold Blood*  (1 - 74) (Part I, "The Last to See Them Alive")

In 1965 Truman Capote established a new literary form, the Nonfiction Novel, after extensive research in a small Kansas farm town where all the members of a family were murdered one night in November 1959. Like the best of actors and journalists, novelist Capote looked for the why of a sad, brutal and seemingly senseless crime.

10/9  *In Cold Blood*  (75 - 155) (Part II, "Persons Unknown")

10/14  *In Cold Blood*  (157 - 248) (Part III, "Answer")

10/16  *In Cold Blood*

**LAST DAY TO DROP THE CLASS: 10/18/03**

10/21  *In Cold Blood*  (249 - 343) (Part IV, "The Corner")

10/23  *In Cold Blood*

10/28  *Twelve Angry Men* (entire script)

We will end the semester by producing a play, with members of the class acting the parts of members of the jury in a murder trial, in the 1955 classic *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose. The play examines the dynamics of "group think" and the emotions, prejudices, interactions and uncertainties of jurors deciding the fate of a young man accused of murder.

10/30  *Twelve Angry Men*

11/4  *Twelve Angry Men*

11/6  *Twelve Angry Men*

11/11  Veteran's Day Holiday (university closed)

11/13  *Twelve Angry Men*

11/18  *Twelve Angry Men*

11/20  *Twelve Angry Men*

11/25  *Twelve Angry Men*

11/27  Thanksgiving Day (university closed)

12/2  *Twelve Angry Men*
12/4 *Twelve Angry Men*

12/5 – 12/6 Exam study days (no classes or exams)

12/8 – 12/13 Official Examination Period (Instead of a written final, we will present *Twelve Angry Men* during our two hour exam period in the university's official exam schedule. Your performance will be part of your participation grade. Drop any class with a conflicting final exam prior to the end of Drop-Add week.)

**About your teacher:** In 1970, I graduated from Eastern Montana College with a B.A. in English and a minor in theater. I taught English to ninth graders for a year, saved some money, and went off to write and to act. I did both for a couple of years, for very little pay. Then one of my smarter sisters pointed out that if I actually wanted to earn a living acting or writing in the second half of the 20th Century, I ought to learn more about television. So I headed off to graduate school to do that.

While I worked on my master's degree at the University of Utah, my interests turned to news and law. After I earned my M.A. in Mass Communication in 1976, I worked as a television news writer, reporter and producer. Then I went back to school again. I studied law part time at night at New York Law School while I worked full time—first for a law firm with an FCC practice and then for a talk radio station. I earned my J.D. in 1981 and was admitted to the New York bar in 1982. I then became Vice President and General Counsel of a media corporation. In 1985, I started my own law practice in New York City. In 1988, I moved to Florida and joined the FIU faculty.

Since I came to FIU, I have continued a limited law practice. I am a member of the Federal Communications Bar Association and currently work on First Amendment issues as a member of the Legal Panel of the Greater Miami ACLU. I serve on the Faculty Advisory Board for the FIU College of Law and teach courses about law and ethics and television in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. I previously taught at the University of Utah and at Hofstra University School of Law.

One of the rewards of an education is learning to put the pieces together. This year, in *Inhabiting other Lives*, my aim is to draw on what I have learned and lived, to knit together the threads of theater, law and media. This is the first time I have taught this class, and the sweater we knit may be lumpy. But I hope it will be warm.

I hope that you will find this class both intellectually challenging and useful. Your future achievements after you complete your studies in the Honors College will be a source of pride and satisfaction to me long after you have graduated. If this class is to meet your expectations, it is important that you understand mine. Here is what I expect from you.
Veraldi's Rules

1. **Spelling, etc.:** Spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, word choice, organization—the elements that make speech and writing clear, accurate and effective—always count.

2. **Office hours:** I am happy to meet with you to discuss this class or your career—or just to talk. You are welcome to call or stop in whenever I am in my office, whether or not I have scheduled office hours at that time.

   If I were in my office all day, you could drop in whenever you happen to have a free moment. Unfortunately, the university requires me to be many other places. So please try to come by during my scheduled office hours. If my scheduled office hours aren't convenient for you, let me know and we will try to work out a mutually convenient time.

   If you are making a special trip to campus to meet with me, please make an appointment in advance, even if you are coming during my scheduled office hours. I won't be able to meet with you unexpectedly if I am busy with another student. And be sure to let me know if you need to cancel a scheduled appointment.

   You are always welcome to send an e-mail message or leave a voice mail message. I will try to respond within 24 hours.

3. **Late papers:** I will accept a late paper only if you supply written evidence of an emergency beyond your control that prevented you from handing the paper in on time (for instance, a doctor's note showing that you were ill on the day the paper was due) or if FIU policy otherwise entitles you to make-up work (for instance, if you are traveling with a university athletic team the day the paper is due).

   Emergencies beyond your control do not include conflicts with your job. I will not accept late papers to accommodate travel to conferences, real estate closings, unexpected meetings with important customers, covering breaking news stories, etc. I expect that you have discussed the schedule for this class in advance with your employer and that he or she has agreed that you may arrange your work schedule to give this class priority during scheduled class time. Emergencies do not include social events or family gatherings, even important ones like weddings and anniversaries.

   If after the drop date an emergency arises that will prevent you from regularly attending class or doing your best work, talk with me about an incomplete as soon as possible. If you have special needs for accommodation of a disability or a religious observance, please discuss appropriate accommodations with me in advance.

4. **Attendance, conduct:** Don't take this class if you know in advance you won't be able to attend regularly or to be on time. Class starts promptly at 2:00 PM and does not end until 3:15. Do not disrupt the class by arriving late or leaving early. Please be realistic about other demands on your time and don't expect the rest of us to work around you.
Your semester grade will depend in part on your attendance. In determining your attendance and participation grade, here is how I will weigh attendance. Absence, late arrival or early departure from class (for any reason, emergency or non-emergency):

2 – No impact on attendance and participation grade (this is to accommodate emergencies).

3 – Attendance and participation grade lowered one full grade.

4 – Attendance and participation grade lowered two full grades.

5 – Attendance and participation grade lowered three full grades.

6 – Attendance and participation grade lowered four full grades.

No matter how good your participation when you are here, if you are late or absent 6 times or more, you will get no credit toward the 20% of your semester grade based on attendance and participation.

Don't bring food or drinks to class. Set your beeper to silent page and turn off your phone before class starts. Save conversations for after class. If at any time during the semester I feel that your behavior is disruptive to the class, I reserve the right to drop you from the class (in which case you will receive a "DF" if the deadline to drop has already passed).

5. Retaining course materials: Save this course outline, any other materials I distribute in class and all work I return to you until you have received your semester grade. If you have a question about your grade on an assignment or your semester grade, let me know immediately.

6. Academic misconduct: The University publishes in its student handbook a section on "Student Rights and Responsibilities." Please read it. University policy requires that academic misconduct be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. Academic misconduct (including cheating on exams, plagiarizing or other misrepresentations about your work) can result in severe penalties, including a failing grade for the assignment or test in question, a failing grade in the class, being dropped from the class or being expelled from the university. Whether you steal someone else's work or pay good money for it, representing someone else's efforts as your own is unacceptable.

7. Time required for class: I know that you are busy with other classes, jobs, family and friends. So are all your classmates. Balancing your responsibilities isn't easy.

A prolific writer whose name I have forgotten was asked how he had managed to write so many books. He replied that every day there are "16 hours until midnight." Like him, each of us can accomplish a lot in 16 hours. But none of us can do (or have) it all. No
one knows better than you how much time you need for your other responsibilities. But I can tell you how much time you need for this class.

As a general rule, you should expect to work about two hours outside class for every hour you spend in class. For an average student in a 3-credit course like this, that means about 6 hours outside class in addition to almost three hours in class every week—about a workday a week. (A course load of 12-15 credits is expected to be the equivalent of a fulltime job.)

The required reading is the minimum you are expected to do to pass this class. If you have time left over after finishing the required reading, use it for the additional work that will help you excel.

I give assignments in advance so you can complete them on a flexible schedule. But if you don't have the equivalent of a workday each week to devote to this class this semester, please take this class when you can make time for it.

As I see it, my job as a teacher is not to make everything easy—even if I could. Most things worth thinking about are not simple. Many of the questions we will explore have no simple solution, no single right answer. I will do my best to help you find the information you need to make judgments about complex problems. In return you must commit yourself to your work.

I cannot give you all the answers. But I hope you will leave this class asking better questions. I hope the work we do in this class will help you to learn to listen better, to read more critically, to write more clearly, to speak more confidently. I hope you will become both more skeptical and more tolerant—even though those two qualities may at first seem mutually exclusive. I hope you will become more critical of yourself even as you become more confident—though those qualities, too, may seem at odds. I hope you will leave FIU with both a credential and an education.

To paraphrase what someone once said of Stanislavski, I hope your work this semester will make you not just a better actor or student, but also a better person.