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

Teacher: Lorna Veraldi, Associate Professor  
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Office hours: Tuesday: 10:00 - Noon  
Thursday: 10:00 - Noon

“For those in the courtroom who decide the accused’s fate—life or death—there is also a price to pay. . . .The simple question—not for me as a judge, but for all of us as citizens – is: Is the penalty worth the price?”

--Judge Michael Ponsor  
“Life, Death and Uncertainty”  
_Boston Globe_, July 8, 2001

Course description, objectives and learning outcomes: Welcome to IDH 2004, 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 continue our exploration of violence in America, with particular attention to the interface of psychology and law in the criminal justice system. We will consider how its various participants experience capital cases. We will try to understand the impact of crime and punishment through the eyes of all those whose lives are affected by capital crimes: the accused, the victim, law enforcement, the prosecution, the defense, the judiciary, the jury and the rest of society. We will explore a variety of scholarly materials in forensic psychology and law in an effort to develop increased awareness of and competence in using these resources.

Required texts: You will need the following two texts this semester. In addition, you will be assigned to read a variety of materials, including scholarly journals and legal decisions available in the library.


Rose, Reginald. _Twelve Angry Men_.

Assignments and evaluation: This is a seminar. 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 30% of your semester grade. During the semester, you will write two papers, each of which will count for 20% of your semester grade. A final project, which may be either an individual effort or group collaboration, may take any of a variety of forms (video or audio documentary or drama, visual artwork, website, script, poetry, dramatic/musical/dance performance, speech, fiction, journalism or research paper). It will count for 30% of your semester grade. All written work will be graded according to Veraldi’s Rules for Written Work, attached.

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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.6 – 4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.6 – 3.5</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>1.6 – 2.5</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>.6 – 1.5</td>
<td>D</td>
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(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 on which we will explore the following issues. Specific reading assignments concerning these issues will be announced in class.

1/6  Introduction (Please read the entire syllabus before the end of Drop/Add week.)

1/8  Introduction (continued)

1/13 The death penalty in America: an evolving standard


1/15 The death penalty in America: an evolving standard

1/20 Twelve Angry Men

1/22 Twelve Angry Men

1/27 Twelve Angry Men

1/29 Twelve Angry Men

2/3 Twelve Angry Men

2/5 Twelve Angry Men

First paper due

Reginald Rose’s teleplay about the dynamics of members of a jury charged with deciding the fate of a young man facing the death penalty has been revised and remade
many times in the half century since its original broadcast on CBS in 1955. During that
time, American attitudes toward capital punishment also have undergone revision. We
will look at the play in its various incarnations as a barometer of attitudes on this
controversial and emotional issue as we examine the landmark 1970s U.S. Supreme
Court rulings underlying the debate.

2/10 Witness to an Execution
2/12 Witness to an Execution

2/17 Witness to an Execution
2/19 Witness to an Execution

2/24 Witness to an Execution
2/26 Witness to an Execution
Second paper due

In considering the impact of violent crime and of capital punishment, we will look
broadly at the potential impact of the death penalty not just on those convicted of
murder, but on all those who play a role in the administration and enforcement of the
death penalty.

LAST DAY TO DROP THE CLASS WITH A “DR” GRADE OR TO WITHDRAW
FROM THE UNIVERSITY WITH A “WI” GRADE: SATURDAY, 2/28/04

3/2 The Psychology of Murder
3/4 The Psychology of Murder
Group meetings for final project

3/9 The Psychology of Murder
3/11 The Psychology of Murder
Group meetings for final project

3/16 The Psychology of Murder
3/18 The Psychology of Murder
Group meetings for final project

3/23 Spring Break
3/25 Spring Break

3/30 The Psychology of Murder
4/1 The Psychology of Murder
Group meetings for final project

Research in social science and psychology has played an increasingly important role in
capital cases. We will explore a variety of issues through the eyes of forensic scientists:
serial murder, assassination and terrorism, murder within families, and school violence.
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. After I earned my J.D. in 1981 and was admitted to the New York bar in 1982, I 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 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.

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 making a presentation or handing in a paper 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 a presentation 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 an F (no grade points) toward the 30% 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.

When you leave this class, I hope inhabiting the lives of all those affected by crime and punishment will help you to participate in making sound policy decisions about these vital societal issues.