

Sociology 368Y: Violence in America
Summer B 2016

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office hours: Tuesday 2:50-4:00, Thursday 10:30-11:30, and by appointment.
I am also available on a daily basis via e-mail and by appointment via Skype (amie.nielsen2).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, issues relevant to the study of violence in the United States will be covered. While the emphasis throughout will be on street violence (i.e., homicide, robbery, rape, and aggravated assault), other forms (e.g., corporate violence, intimate partner violence) will also be covered. In particular, we will: Examine violence in historical, international, and situational contexts, examine the major explanations of violence, and examine the factors associated with violent crime. We will also consider how we seek to control violence in the U.S.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be knowledgeable about:

- the extent, nature, and trends in violence in the U.S. as well as how violence in America compares to other countries
- how and what we know about violence in the U.S.
- the situational and contextual elements involved in many forms of violence
- major theoretical explanations for violence
- major correlates of violence, especially at the macro level
- other forms of violence, such as intimate partner violence and terrorism
- how the U.S. seeks to control violence

REQUIRED TEXTS

Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Rodriguez, Luis J. 2005. *Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Both of the books should be purchased (e.g., through Amazon). Additional course readings (chapters and articles) are available through links in each of the modules. The full citations for these readings are listed on the last two pages of this document.

GRADING

There are two components that comprise the final grade in this course. These include four exams (40% total; each is worth 10%; 400 total points) and assignments, discussions, and essays (60% total; 600 total points). For the assignments, discussions and essays, the point value of each is indicated in Blackboard. Late materials submitted (i.e., not within the timeframe of each module) will have 20% of possible points deducted before being graded.

There are four exams in this course. The exams include the material covered in that section of the course. The exams are both multiple choice and essay questions; questions are derived approximately equally from the readings and from lecture/text. Exams must be taken by the last day of the module; failure to do so results in the grade of 0 on the exam. With the exception of having a documented, University-approved reason students **MUST** be submit the exam by the end of the module unless extreme, documented circumstances prevent it. I determine whether a situation meets the standard of “extreme.” Unless circumstances completely preclude this, students **MUST contact me within 24 hours** of a missed exam to earn consideration for a make-up exam to be administered. In the event of a University-approved reason for missing an exam, the make-up exam must be taken within two school days of your return.

The approximate grading ranges are as follows: A=900-1000, B=800-899, C=700-799, D=600-699, F=below 600. The range includes pluses and minuses as well as the full letter grade (e.g., A- begins at 900). Pluses and minuses are used for the final grade. No curve will be used on the individual exams. A curve may be applied to the final course grade.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Any student who engages in academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and facilitating academic dishonesty), as defined and discussed in the Student Honor Code, will face the most severe penalty possible. At a minimum, students will fail the course and will face prosecution under the Honor Code.

TOPICS/READINGS

All readings should be completed during the module. **RR** indicates that the reading is available through Blackboard and/or Reserve Readings, and **text** refers to a book.

Topic

Readings

Module 1: Violence in Comparative Perspective

June 27 – July 1

Violence in Historical and

RR: Brown;

Module 6: Other Types of Violence (1)

July 22 – 26

Gender Issues (including intimate partner violence and rape) RR: Martin & Hummer

School, Gangs and other Youth Violence RR: Anderson, M. et al.
RR: Decker et al.

EXAM 3 (by 11:59 p.m. on 7/26)**Module 7: Other Types of Violence (2)**

July 27 – 31

Corporate Violence RR: Lee & Ermann

Terrorism RR: LaFree & Ackerman

Module 8: Societal Responses to Violence

Aug. 1 - Aug. 5

Criminal Justice and Violence RR: Morenoff & Harding
RR: Ackerman et al.

EXAM 4 (by 11:59 p.m. on 8/5)**

Note: ** The last quarter of the course is shorter in length than the other three quarters.

RESERVE READINGS

- Ackerman, Alissa R., Meghan Sacks, and David F. Greenberg. 2012. Legislation Targeting Sex Offenders: Are Recent Policies Effective in Reducing Rape? *Justice Quarterly* 29: 858-887.
- Brown, Richard Maxwell. 1989. Historical Patterns of Violence. Pp. 23-61 in T. R. Gurr (ed.), *Violence in America*. Volume 2: Protest, Rebellion, Reform. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Blumstein, Alfred and Joel Wallman. 2006. The Crime Drop and Beyond. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 2: 125-146.
- Brunson, Rod K. and Jody Miller. 2009. Schools, Neighborhoods, and Adolescent Conflicts: A Situational Examination of Reciprocal Dynamics. *Justice Quarterly* 26: 183-210.
- Decker, Scott H., Chris Melde, and David C. Pyrooz. 2013. What Do We Know About Gangs and Gang Members and Where Do We Go From Here? *Justice Quarterly* 30: 369-402.
- Jacobs, Bruce A. and Richard Wright. 1999. Stick-Up, Street Culture, and Offender Motivation. *Criminology* 37: 149-173.
- Kirk, David S. and Andrew V. Papachristos. 2011. Cultural Mechanisms and the Persistence of Neighborhood Violence. *American Journal of Sociology* 116: 1190-1233.
- LaFree, Gary and Gary Ackerman. 2009. The Empirical Study of Terrorism: Social and Legal Research. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 5: 347-374.
- Lee, Matthew T. and M. David Ermann. 1999. Pinto 'Madness' as a Flawed Landmark Narrative: An Organizational and Network Analysis. *Social Problems* 46: 30-47.
- Luckenbill, David F. 1977. Criminal Homicide as a Situated Transaction. *Social Problems* 25: 176-186.
- Martin, Patricia Yancey and Robert A. Hummer. 1989. Fraternities and Rape on Campus. *Gender & Society* 3: 457-473.
- Martinez, Ramiro Jr. and Matthew T. Lee. 2001. On Immigration and Crime. Pp. 485-520 in *Criminal Justice 2000: The Changing Nature of Crime*, Volume 1. Edited by G. LaFree. Washington DC: National Institute of Justice.
- Morenoff, Jeffrey D. and David J. Harding. 2014. Incarceration, Prisoner Reentry, and Communities. *Annual Review of Sociology* 40: 411-429.
- Parker, Robert Nash and Kathleen Auerhahn. 1998. Alcohol, Drugs, and Violence. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 291-311.

Sampson, Robert J. and William Julius Wilson. 1995. Toward a Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality. Pp. 37-54 in J. Hagan and R. D. Peterson (eds.), *Crime and Inequality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.