

## **Violence in the United States**

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Course Title & Number: Violence in the United States

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### **Course Description**

Violence is an enduring problem in this country. In this course, we will examine the history of violence in the United States and compare historical trends to current patterns. In addition, we will evaluate the efficacy of theoretical explanations of violence, covariates of violence, and contemporary policies to prevent or curtail violence.

### **Learning Goals**

- 1.) Obtain increased knowledge of historical and contemporary violence in the United States.
- 2.) Acquire a better understanding of theories to explain violence and covariates of violence.
- 3.) Evaluate the effectiveness of contemporary policies to prevent or reduce violence.
- 4.) Using course content as the context, increase proficiency in written and oral communication skills.
- 5.) Conduct original research related to violent offending and victimization.

Pre-Requisites: None

Requirements for Graduation: First Seminar Program

Units: 1 Course Unit

### **Course Materials**

Course materials will be available on SOCS in the "Course Readings" folder.

Note: Students should bring the source of the reading, book or article, with them to class each day as we might need to refer to specific passages.

## Course Requirements

### Quizzes

As an incentive for students to keep up with the class readings, and so students can fully participate in class discussions, there will be a short 5-minute quiz on the day's assigned reading at the beginning of class. Quizzes will occur on days when there is no other assignment due (i.e., reflection, paper, or exam). Approximately **16 quizzes** will be given over the course of the semester; however, **only 12** will count toward the final grade. In other words, the lowest **four** quiz scores, including zeros, will be dropped. Because four scores will be dropped, students will not be permitted to make up the quizzes, regardless of whether the absence would be considered excused or unexcused. Each quiz will be worth five points for a total of 60 points toward the final grade. If a student is late to class the day a quiz is given, the student will not be permitted to take the quiz.

### Writing Assignments

This course is designated as a writing intensive course; as such, College policy requires there to be between 16-20 pages of polished writing assigned in the class. For all writing assignments, a paper copy and an electronic copy of the paper (uploaded to SOCS) are required. The electronic copy needs to be submitted to SOCS prior to class, and the paper copy needs to be submitted at the beginning of class on the specified date.

Writing assignments will be worth 130 points toward the final grade.

### Reflections

Throughout the semester, students will be assigned **three** reflection papers, of approximately one-two double-spaced pages in length. The purpose of these reflections is to practice skills that will be used in the longer writing assignments, demonstrate student understanding of course material, and to generate class discussion. The topics and deadlines of each reflection and the rubric that will be used to assess reflections are included at the end of the syllabus. Each reflection is worth 10 points.

In order to receive full credit, an electronic and paper copy is due at the start of the class. Unlike the quizzes, the reflections can be made-up; however, in cases of non-legitimate absences, the penalty of one letter grade each day the paper is late will be applied.

### Bullying Assignment

Using a case study, students will apply two criminological theories to explain bullying. The Professor will provide feedback on a complete first draft of this assignment (**due on September 23<sup>rd</sup>**) prior to student submission of the final draft (**due on October 3<sup>rd</sup>**). This assignment will be worth 50 points toward the final grade.

### Nature of Violence

As a class, we will conduct a research study that examines the nature of violent offending and victimization. Our class will collect data from two online sources, analyze them, and make conclusions based on the results. The Professor will provide feedback on a complete first draft of this assignment (**due on November 18<sup>th</sup>**) prior to student submission of the final draft (**due on December 5<sup>th</sup>**). This assignment will be worth 50 points toward the final grade.

More information about each of the writing assignments will be discussed in class.

The required citation format for writing assignments is the American Psychological Association (APA) style. Please visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/> and in particular the links to In-text Citations and Reference Lists to see examples of internal and external citations.

Students will submit assignments in class on the day of the deadline. While this is the Professor's preference, she will also accept papers that have been noted with the date and time (by CRI office staff) and placed in her mailbox in the Department of Criminology Office (located on the third floor of the Social Sciences Building). Please do not email me papers, slide under my office door, or place in the bin on my office door. They will not be accepted. Please no exceptions. Complete and final writing assignments are due at the start of class, if submitted afterwards – even on the same day – they will be treated as late. In addition, an electronic copy of the assignment must be uploaded to SOCS prior to the start of class on the day the assignment is due. Upon submission to SOCS, the paper will automatically be screened for plagiarism. If either the paper copy or the electronic copy is late, then the paper is late. One letter grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late. If a student knows in advance that he or she will not be able to attend class the day a paper is due, then he or she can submit the paper to the Professor early or make arrangements for a classmate to submit the assignment.

### Exams

There will be two exams in the class: a mid-term examination (**on Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>**) and a final examination (**TBD**). Each exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions. Except in cases of emergencies, there will be no make-up exam given unless the student speaks with the Professor prior to the scheduled exam date. If a make-up exam is needed, the Professor reserves the right to alter the format of the exam. The final exam will take place during the time allotted during finals week (for more information regarding the College's policy on Finals Week, please see <http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/finalevaluations.htm>). Each exam is worth 100 points for a total of 200 points.

## Course Schedule

This is a general outline and is subject to change based on the discretion of the Professor. Additional or substituted readings may be added at the discretion of the Professor. Any changes to the course reading and/or assignments will be announced in class. Therefore, if a student misses a class, it is his or her responsibility to find out if the outline and/or readings assignments have changed.

Date	Topic	Assignment to be completed before class
29-Aug	Course Introduction; <b>Q1</b>	
3-Sep	Micro-Theories of Violence; <b>Q2</b>	Positivist and Classical Schools (S)
5-Sep	Micro-Theories of Violence; <b>Q3</b>	General Strain Theory (S); Differential Association Theory (S)
9-Sep	Micro-Theories of Violence; <i>Reflection #1</i>	Labeling Theory and Techniques of Neutralization Theory (S)
12-Sep	Micro-Theories of Violence; <b>Q4</b>	Low Self Control and Life Course Theories (S)
16-Sep	<i>The bully project</i> Documentary	
19-Sep	Macro-Theories of Violence; <b>Q5</b>	Institutional Anomie Theory (S); Social Disorganization Theory (S)
23-Sep	Macro-Theories of Violence; <i>Writing Assignment #1 Draft</i>	Subculture Theory (S)
26-Sep	Macro-Theories of Violence; <b>Q6</b>	Conflict Theory (S); Routine Activities Theory (S)
30-Sep	Guns, Alcohol, Drugs, and Violence; <b>Q7</b>	Goldstein et al. Article (S); Alvarez & Bachman Excerpt (S)
3-Oct	The History of Violence in the U.S.; <i>Writing Assignment #1</i>	
7-Oct	The Media, Gangs, and Violence; <b>Q8</b>	Thornberry Excerpt (S)
10-Oct	Cover any remaining material; <i>Reflection #2</i>	
14-Oct	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	
17-Oct	Violence in the U.S.; <b>Q9</b>	<i>Violent land</i> Excerpt Part One (S)
21-Oct	Violence in the U.S.; <b>Q10</b>	<i>Violent land</i> Excerpt Part Two (S)
24-Oct	Prep Day for Writing Assignment #2	
28-Oct	<b>Fall Break-No Class</b>	
31-Oct	Measuring Violence; <b>Q11</b>	Inciardi Excerpt (S)
4-Nov	Prep Day for Writing Assignment #2	
7-Nov	Measuring Violence; <i>Reflection #3</i>	
11-Nov	Preventing and Punishing Violence: Rationales of Punishment and Early Intervention; <b>Q12</b>	Hanser Excerpt (S); Gilligan Excerpt (S)
14-Nov	Preventing and Punishing Violence: Mandatory Arrest; <b>Q13</b>	Sherman et al. Article (S)

18-Nov	Preventing and Punishing Violence: Incarceration; <i>Writing Assignment #2 Draft</i>	Gilligan Excerpt (S)
21-Nov	The Criminal Justice Response to Violence; <b>Q14</b>	
25-Nov	Preventing and Punishing Violence: Death Penalty; <b>Q15</b>	Inciardi Death Penalty Excerpt Part I (pp. 382-391) (S)
28-Nov	<b>Thanksgiving Break-No Class</b>	
2-Dec	Preventing and Punishing Violence: Death Penalty; <b>Q16</b>	Inciardi Death Penalty Excerpt Part II (pp. 392-402) (S)
5-Dec	Cover any remaining material; <i>Writing Assignment #2</i>	

### Grading

Final grades will be based on the accumulation of points the student receives for each assignment.

### Maximum Point Values

In-Class Quizzes	60 points
Writing Assignments	130 points
Exams	200 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>390 points</b>

Final course grades will be calculated by dividing the total points earned by the total points possible in the class. The resulting percentage will be assigned the corresponding letter grade as indicated below:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%

C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	59% or below

### Attendance

Consistent with TCNJ's attendance policy

(<http://www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/policies/attendance.html>), students are expected to arrive to class on-time, prepared, and able to actively participate in class and group discussions. Chronic absence and tardiness will negatively affect the final grade in the course.

### Academic Integrity Policy

Students are expected to complete assignments and exams with academic honesty and integrity. I take acts of plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously. They will not be tolerated. This includes plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting work that is not

the student's own, or helping someone commit a dishonest act. For more information regarding the College's standards of academic integrity, visit the following link: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>. Any incident of serious academic dishonesty will result in the student failing the course. The Professor will also report the incident to the School's Academic Integrity Officer. Possible sanctions from the Board include suspension or expulsion.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with a documented disability who may require accommodation should notify the Professor and the Office of Differing Abilities Services (609-771-2571). More information regarding student support is available at: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~affirm/ada.html>.

### **Use of Student Work for Professor's Dossier**

Periodically, I am required to compile a dossier that is used when making promotion decisions in the Department of Criminology. Student work is included for it informs the teaching philosophy and provides evidence of teaching effectiveness. Any student work that will be used will not include the student's name or any other identifying information. Any student who wishes that his or her work not be used should contact me.

### Rubric to Assess Reflections

10	<i>All of the following are present in the reflection:</i>
	Reflection completely addresses all aspects of the writing prompt.
	All arguments are supported with scholarly evidence.
	The assignment is free of grammatical errors and other writing issues.
	The assignment is cited in APA style.
9	<i>One of the following is missing or insufficient:</i>
	An aspect of the writing prompt is underdeveloped.
	An argument is not supported with scholarly evidence.
	The assignment is mostly free of grammatical errors and mechanics issues.
	The assignment is mostly consistent with APA style.
8	<i>Two of the following are missing and/ or insufficient:</i>
	An aspect of the writing prompt is underdeveloped.
	An argument is not supported with scholarly evidence.
	The assignment suffers from grammatical errors and mechanics issues.
	The assignment is not consistent with APA style.
7	<i>Three of the following are missing and/or insufficient:</i>
	An aspect of the writing prompt is underdeveloped.
	An argument is not supported with scholarly evidence.
	The assignment suffers from grammatical errors and mechanics issues.
	The assignment is not consistent with APA style.
6	<i>All of the following are missing and/or insufficient:</i>
	An aspect of the writing prompt is underdeveloped.
	An argument is not supported with scholarly evidence.
	The assignment suffers from grammatical errors and mechanics issues.
	The assignment is not consistent with APA style.
0-5	The assignment is too short, incomplete, underdeveloped, poorly-written, and/or incorrectly cited to demonstrate student understanding of the assignment.

## Reflections

### Reflection #1

**Deadline: September 9<sup>th</sup>**

After reading either the Lionel Tate or Columbine case study posted on SOCS, please address the following question in a one to two page double-spaced response:

What theory best explains the violence described in the case study?

*In your response, be sure to provide a brief summary of the theory and to make specific connections using theoretical terminology and relevant information to the case.*

*Remember to use APA style to cite any readings that you reference in the paper.*

Directions to upload an electronic copy of reflection to SOCS:

- SOCS → FSP → Dropbox → Reflection #1 → upload document

Note: the electronic paper must be one of the following formats: MS Word (.doc), WordPerfect (.wpd), PostScript (.eps), Portable Document Format (.pdf), HTML (.htm), Rich Text (.rtf) and Plain Text (.txt).

### Reflection #2

**Deadline: October 10<sup>th</sup>**

Please address the following question in a one to two page doubled-space response:

Country A has a much violent crime rate than Country B. Select two macro level theories (i.e., those discussed in class beginning on September 19<sup>th</sup>) and explain how each would account for the varied rates of violence.

*In your response, be sure to provide a brief summary of each theory and to make specific connections using theoretical terminology.*

*Remember to use APA style to cite any readings that you reference in the paper.*

### Reflection #3

**Deadline: November 7<sup>th</sup>**

Please answer the questions from the UCR and the NCVS (which appear on the final two pages of this document).

Unlike the first two reflections: (1) You may handwrite the answers to the assignment and (2) You do not need to submit to SOCS; however, a paper copy will be collected at the start of class.



### Reflection #3

#### I. The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)

- A.) Go to <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>
- B.) Under the heading “Publications” (in the middle of the page)” click on “Crime in the United States” followed by “2011.”
- C.) Under the heading “Offenses Known to Law Enforcement,” click on “Violent Crime.”

- 1.) Using the information presented in the Overview, has violent crime increased or decreased since 2010? What is the 10 year trend: Has violent crime increased or decreased?
- 2.) Navigate to Table Two. In most common to least common, please rank the incidence of the four violent crimes (murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) by highest rate per 100,000 to lowest rate in 2011:
  - a. (most common) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. (least common) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) Under Data Tables, please click on Table Four “Crime in the United States by Region, Geographic Division, and State, 2010–2011,” of the four regions of the U.S. (NorthEast, South, West, and MidWest), please rank in highest to lowest order the region with the highest overall violent crime rate per 100,000 in 2011:
  - a. (highest) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. (lowest) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.) Navigate back to the UCR home page. Please select “Go To Arrest Tables” under the “Persons Arrested” tab. In the chart, please input the information for the group with the highest number of arrests for the particular offense. Please complete the following chart:

	<b>Age</b> <sup>1</sup> <i>Table 38</i>	<b>Gender</b> <i>Table 42</i>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b> <i>Table 43A</i>
<b>Murder</b>	20-24	Male	Black
<b>Forcible Rape</b>			
<b>Robbery</b>			
<b>Agg. Assault</b>			

<sup>1</sup>please use the following age categories: 13-15, 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, and 65 and above (this will require you to add some columns together).

**II. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)**

Please navigate to the NCVS report for 2011:

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv11.pdf>

- 1.) From 2010 to 2011, has the total number of violent crimes increased or decreased (Table One)? Look at Table Two, from 2002-2011, has violent crime increased or decreased?
- 2.) Which of the UCR violent crimes is not included in the NCVS?\_\_\_\_\_.
- 3.) Of the remaining three, please rank them in order from most common to least common:
  - a. (most common) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. (least common) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.) Using Table Five, please indicate which group has the highest victimization rate per 1,000:

	<b>Age Category</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>
<b>Total Violent Crime</b>			
<b>Serious Violent Crime</b>			

- 5.) Please review Table Six and rank which region of the U.S. has the highest violent crime rate and serious violent crime rate.

**Violent Crime Rate**

- a. (highest) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. (lowest) \_\_\_\_\_

**Serious Violent Crime Rate**

- a. (highest) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. (lowest) \_\_\_\_\_