



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Faculty of Arts

Department of Sociology

Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

SOCI 425

The Sociology of Violence

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| • Fall 2018 | • Tuesday/Thursday 11.00am-12:15pm | • SA 119 |
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Instructor: Nestar Russell

Office: SS930

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Phone: 210-9433 (email preferred)

Office Hours: By appointment, preferably after class (Tuesday/Thursday, 12.30-1.30pm).

Course Description

This course sets out by presenting and critically evaluating a variety of popular theories on the causes and control of violence in modern society. After this theoretical survey, the course then undertakes a rather in-depth exploration into the topic of violence and Norbert Elias's Figural Sociology, where evolving networks of interdependent humans are the central unit of investigation. According to Canadian scholar Steven Pinker (2011: 59), Elias is perhaps "the most important thinker you have never heard of..." Elias's approach to "doing sociology" is somewhat unusual because, like some Classical sociologists, he utilizes a more long-term 'historical' methodological approach to better understanding contemporary society. Also, instead of solely focusing on "criminal" acts of violence, somewhat unusual is that Elias's theoretical lens confronts (instead of avoids) the so-called illegitimate/legitimate violence divide. During the final leg of this course, students in small groups will give brief research presentations exploring any questions of their choosing stimulated by the instructor's earlier theoretical survey.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

- Undertake a largely but not exclusively sociological survey of a wide variety of theories on the topic of violence.
- Gain a long-term historical perspective on the issue of violence in modern society.

- Develop a theoretically informed view on a variety of violence-related sub topics, including homicide, issues of masculinity, organizational malevolence, intimate partner violence, warfare, and genocide (among others).

Required Textbooks, Readings, Materials

Ray, L. (2011). *Violence and society*. London: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-84787-036-0

Additional non-required reading: Spierenburg, P. (2011). *A history of murder: Personal violence in Europe from the Middle Ages to the present*. Cambridge, UK: Polity. ISBN: 978-0-7456-4378

Impromptu readings may be added.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Thurs. Sept. 6: Introduction

Week 2— Tues. Sept. 11: Discussion on group presentations (creativity) and definitional issues on the topic of violence

Thurs. Sept. 13: Common theories of violence (part 1)

Week 3— Tues. Sept. 18: Common theories of violence (part 2)

Thurs. Sept.20: Common theories of violence (part 3)

Week 4— Tues. Sept. 25: Collective violence theories

Thurs. Sept. 27: Documentary

Week 5— Tues. Oct. 2: Hand in Documentary Observational Report, class discussion/questions on the documentary, Hobbes versus Locke, and finally, First Short Answer Test review

Thurs. Oct 4: First Short Answer Test

- Week 6— Tues. Oct. 9: Violence and the long view: Hunter-gather versus agricultural societies
- Thurs. Oct. 11: Civilizing Process (part 1)
- Week 7— Tues. Oct. 16: Civilizing Process (part 2)
- Thurs. Oct. 18: Violence and Figural Sociology (part 1)
- Week 8— Tues. Oct. 23: Violence and Figural Sociology (part 2)
- Thurs. Oct. 25: Violence and Figural Sociology (part 3)
- Week 9— Tues. Oct. 30: Violence and Figural Sociology (part 4)
- Thurs. Nov. 1: Group formation period, topic/discussion period, and Second Short Answer Test review
- Week 10— Tues. Nov. 6: **Second Short Answer Test**
- Thurs. Nov. 8: Documentary
- Week 11— Fall Break
- Week 12— Tues. Nov. 20 Documentary (class discussion/questions)
- Thurs. Nov. 22 Group presentations
- Week 13— Tues. Nov. 27 Group presentations
- Thurs. Nov. 29 Group presentations
- Week 14-- Tues. Dec. 4 Group presentations

Methods of Evaluation

- First Short Answer Test: **Thursday 4 October, 11.00am**. The test will be on all lecture materials, film clips/viewings, impromptu readings, and class discussions up until 12.15pm on 2 October, as well as Chapters 1, 2, (pp. 1-42) and 4 (pp. 63-82) in the textbook (worth 30% of the final grade).
- Second Short Answer Test: **Tuesday 6 November, 11.00am**. The test will be on all lecture materials, film clips/viewings, impromptu readings, and class discussions between 11am on 9 October and 12.15pm on 30 October, as well as Chapters 3 (pp. 41-62) and 5-10 (pp. 83-197) in the textbook (worth 35% of the final grade)
- Documentary Observational Report: 400 words long (maximum). Date: **late September** (worth 10% of the final grade)
- Group Presentation (20 minutes, approximately), plus a 5 minutes question period (worth 25% of the final grade)*
*25%: 15/25: instructor's group assessment mark; 6/25: group contribution/effort mark (decided by fellow group members**), 4/25 for individual attendance at group presentations.
**If all group members give a fellow member a "0" for their group contribution/effort mark, that student will obtain an automatic "0/25%" for their overall Group Presentation mark.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 95.99%	4.0	Excellent-superior performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good – clearly above average performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory - basic understanding
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal pass - marginal performance
F	<50%	0	unsatisfactory performance

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

Grade Reappraisal

Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one's mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a re-assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

Email

Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line, and include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. All emails violating customary email conventions will be ignored. All other emails will be answered within one business day. I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline will not be answered. Also, please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours.

Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at Social Science - Food Court.

Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

Ethics Research

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

Deferrals

When possible, please provide advance notice if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar’s Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/student-forms>

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It’s available at

https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

Student Representation

The 2018-19 Students’ Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington (suvpaca@ucalgary.ca).

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student’s Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>

You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

Safewalk

The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Student Resources

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)