

Perspectives on Violence

SOCY 3034—Fall 2010

Instructor: Katherine Martinez

Office: Ketchum 414

Class: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00-3:15

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-2:00

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You are responsible for everything in the registration handbook, this syllabus, and materials covered in lecture.

Course Description

This course examines violence from a social constructionist lens with emphasis on the terms we use to describe violence in Western societies. The goal of the course is to foster critical thinking about what we imagine to be “violent” and to try and understand how definitions of violence can vary greatly across person, time, and place; we will examine how the words we use (e.g., “violence”) can reflect power and privilege in society. Many of the articles assigned for this class focus on how our minds and bodies are affected by structural and institutional forms of violence; thus, we specifically focus on institutional and structural forms of violence in class and try to determine how these forms of violence impact our interpersonal relationships and experiences. Rather than provide one definition of violence, we will examine many definitions of violence, many explanations of violence, and many representations of violence, so that you may develop your own understanding of how violence discourse is created, by whom this discourse is created, and for whom this discourse is created.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Engage in thoughtful discussions about violence discourse while critically examining the histories and functions of this discourse.
2. Grasp the major concepts and theories covered in this course, including (but not limited to) discourse and social constructionism.
3. Apply a social constructionist perspective to various discourses of violence.
4. Formulate a clear and concise argument as to the reasons why and specific circumstances in which some types of behaviors are considered “violent” and others are not.

Required Text

You will be required to read articles posted to CULearn. It is your responsibility to notify the instructor at least 24 hours before the assignment is due if you are having troubles accessing CULearn or the articles posted to CULearn. I highly recommend printing the articles and

bringing them to class; it will be useful to have the articles in hand when we discuss them in class.

In addition, you will be required to choose one autobiographical book from the list provided by the instructor. This is a book that you will read in your free time and use to create an analytical piece that incorporates class and article concepts to describe the violence experienced by the book's author.

Course Requirements

Administrative Drops

As per University policy

(http://registrar.colorado.edu/students/registration/registration_packet/drop_add.html#administrative):

Administrative drops are initiated by departments. If you have not met all the prerequisites for a course, or if you do not attend your courses regularly during the first few weeks, you may be administratively dropped from any course. Check with departments for policies concerning administrative drops. Note: Nonattendance does not constitute withdrawal and you may still be charged for your classes unless you officially withdraw before the published deadline.

Class Participation and Attendance (60 points)

Participation represents more than just being present during an *entire* class (i.e. attendance). Questions and comments about the readings, movies, or lectures are strongly encouraged. Such student participation lets me know where your interests lie and generally make the time spent in class more dynamic and appealing for everyone. You are welcome to ask questions at any point during class, in addition to asking questions that you feel may lead us off topic. Remember that most often when you have a question about the materials covered, another student has a similar question. Because perspectives on violence can vary greatly, discussion about these perspectives may be sensitive, upsetting, and/or highly politicized. To ensure that these discussions are productive and do not make individuals feel they are being personally attacked, we must set some discussion ground rules:

1. Critique ideas, **NOT** people.
2. Listen attentively to the ideas and opinions of classmates without interrupting.
3. Share speaking time so that all students have the opportunity to contribute to discussions.
4. Experiment with introducing divergent ideas; even if you don't personally believe in them, they may spark interesting and productive debates.
5. Avoid universalizing statements that declare whole groups of people wrong/sinful/sick because of their politics, ethnicity, religion, appearance, etc.

Regular attendance is also strongly encouraged since many lectures and discussions, while on the same topic as the readings, will not be a simple repetition of what you have already read.

Students are expected to have completed the readings *prior to the class for which they have been assigned.* In this way, you will be able and are expected to take an active role in class discussions. If you are late to class or have an unexcused absence, it is your full responsibility to ask your classmates for missed materials. I do not require students to notify me of missed classes, although partial credit for this class is earned with attendance/participation. You can earn up to 60 points for attendance/participation. You may miss three classes without penalty, but for each additional class missed after the third, you will lose 15 points. You will receive half credit for the days missed that are excused absences—you have a doctor's note. If at any point during the semester you miss more than three consecutive classes, you must meet with the instructor to discuss your progress in the course and plans for the remainder of the semester. It is in your best interest to attend all classes. In addition to these policies, the following classroom behavior is expected:

1. Students may not use their laptops to take notes during class because they cause significant distractions.
2. Students must turn off their cellular phones before entering the classroom. If you have an emergency and must keep your phone on during class, switch it to vibrate. Do **NOT** text during class; if you are caught doing so, you will be asked to put your phone away the first time and then asked to leave the class if it happens a second time.
3. Students using class time to read the newspaper, complete a crossword puzzle, write letters to friends, and/or sleep will be asked to leave the class. The goal for class time is for you to learn and be engaged with the material; if this is too tough, please take the day off.

In-class Assignments (50 points)

There will be 5 in-class assignments that will be randomly given throughout the semester and are worth 50 points total. These assignments will include short response papers to videos watched in class, mini-analysis papers of the course and/or literature content, and pop-quizzes. Because these assignments will be randomly given, you must keep up on the readings and attend class regularly.

Personal Chronology of Violence Paper (40 points)

This paper gives you an opportunity to reflect back on your own personal experiences of violence from childhood to the present. The purpose is to describe at least one significant incident of violence that was noteworthy for creating and/or changing your definition(s) of violence. In this paper, you should reflect on Coady's article to describe your own definition of violence. These papers should be 2-3 pages in length, stapled (**I do not accept paper clipped papers**), double spaced, using Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. Do not include a title page. Because this paper is expected to be rather personal, it will largely be graded on composition; this means you must pay attention to formatting, grammar, and spelling. However, this paper will also be graded according to your overall use and understanding of Coady's definitions of violence.

Reading Worksheets (100 points)

At the beginning of the semester you will be given five (5) handouts with a list of the articles to be read for each of the five sections for this class. On this worksheet you will find a list of

important concepts and ideas for each article. You should review these concepts prior to reading each assigned article so that you know what you should understand from the articles. To receive full credit for the worksheets, you must write one to three sentences explaining each concept/idea provided for the assigned articles. These worksheets will be useful for class discussions as well as your analytical paper. See the schedule for the due dates of each worksheet.

Analytical Paper (100 points)

For this assignment, you are to choose one of three autobiographies to read: (1) *Beyond the Tears* by Lynn C. Tolson, (2) *Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun* by Geoffrey Canada, or (3) *Not My Turn to Die* by Savo Heleta. Once you have read the entire book, you will construct an analysis of the violence that the author of your chosen book has experienced; you will do so using at least TWO concepts from the assigned articles and at least TWO concepts from class. See the handout for further instructions.

Group Presentation (50 points)

Your final presentation will be given in groups of three. As a group you are to choose an organization (for profit or not for profit) in or outside the United States that works to end violence. Since each group must choose a different organization from one another, you will need to develop a list of at least three organizations you are interested in and would like to explore. These organizations can be working to end interpersonal, institutional, and/or structural forms of violence against humans, animals, and/or the environment. It is your goal to gain as much information about your organization as possible from literature found at the library, at the organization, or online. You should seek out specific information about your chosen organization (for example: what are the organization's goals, when was it created, why was it created, for whom was it created, has it's structure changed over the course of it's existence, etc). Once you have done this, you will create a class presentation that is both **informative** and **evaluative**. This means you will need to assess the effectiveness of this organization in reaching its goals based on what you have learned about violence in this class—this means that you should also use at least FIVE class terms to discuss your organization. This presentation should be creative (please let me know if you need to use a computer or projector). Each group will present 10 minutes worth of information, with an additional 5 minutes for questions.

Missed Assignments

Make-ups for this class will be extremely difficult, as each assignment is rather involved and will take much time and effort. Therefore, **make-ups will only be allowed in cases of serious illness or death in the family with a note from the doctor/hospital or funeral notice**. You must notify me **PRIOR** to the assignment due date that you need to make-up the assignment. Once you return to class, you will have 24 hours to complete the missed assignment. There are no make-ups for the final presentation.

Grade Distribution and Evaluation Criteria

REQUIREMENTS	POINTS
Participation/Attendance	60
In-class Assignments (5)	50
Personal Chronology of Violence	40
Reading Worksheets (5)	100
Analytical Paper	100
Group Presentation	50
Total	400

LETTER GRADE	PERCENTAGE GRADE	DESCRIPTION
A	90-100	This work goes above and beyond the requirements. The work demonstrates a full command of the material(s) presented with a clear and concise argument and/or statement, few grammatical errors, and skillful writing. The assignment exhibits originality and insight into class themes.
B	80-89	This work fulfills all of the requirements with clarity. The work demonstrates a solid understanding of the material(s) presented and provides a clear and concise argument and/or statement.
C	70-79	This work fulfills all of the requirements, no more, no less. The work demonstrates some understanding of the material(s) presented with some clarity and/or the mounting of an argument.
D	60-69	This work fulfills more than half of the requirements, but not all of them. The work demonstrates some clarity, but does not demonstrate comprehension of the material(s) presented. The assignment is less than satisfactory.
F	59 and below	This work fails to fulfill half or more of the requirements. The work demonstrates a lack of understanding of the material at hand, a lack of clarity, and a failure to present a sound argument and/or statement.
Zero	0	This work fails to fulfill any of the requirements. The assignment lacks clarity and/or does not adhere to assignment guidelines. The assignment is incomplete, has not been turned in, or shows signs of plagiarism.

*Please keep all of your graded assignments until the end of the semester. It is your responsibility to visit me during office hours with your graded assignment for grade disputes. If you do not have this assignment in hand, the grade posted to CULearn will not be reconsidered.
**Grades will not be given over telephone or email. You must visit me during office hours to discuss grades.

This is a difficult class with tough but engaging topics. In order to receive the grade you would like, I encourage you to spend as much time preparing for the class as you spend reading the materials. I also encourage you to seek materials outside the class (i.e., newspaper articles, videos, music, research studies) that interest you and relate to the class to share with the class. Finally, I encourage you to see me during office hours. These visits provide you with the opportunity to receive clarification on any material presented in class, the readings, or assignments. You may also use office hours to discuss any concerns you may be experiencing with the class or just to discuss sociologically relevant issues. Being of assistance to you is part of my job, so please do not hesitate to take advantage of this time.

University Policies

Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid that constitutes academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening or intimidating behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council and those students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member involved and non-academic sanctions given by the Honor Code Council (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Please refer to www.colorado.edu/honorcode to view the specific guidelines. If you have any questions related to this policy, contact the Honor Code Council at honor@colorado.edu. Honor code violations will result in a 0 for the assignment at a minimum and may also result in failing this course, probation, or expulsion.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to disciplinary measures. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, nationalities, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and gender variance.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, you should notify me at least two weeks ahead of time to request special accommodation if you have a conflict. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Students with Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

Special Considerations

Due to the nature and topics of this course, you may find some readings, videos, and/or class discussions upsetting or disturbing. If you have been a witness, victim, or perpetrator (direct or indirect) of an act of violence, and you have not largely recovered from that experience, I encourage you to consider whether taking this class is right for you. If at any time during the course of this class you experience significant distress, I encourage you to seek assistance from Counseling and Psychological Services at www.colorado.edu/sacs/counseling and 303-492-6766 or the Office of Victim Assistance at www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/victimassistance and 303-492-8855.

Tentative Course Schedule¹

Terms and Definitions

Tuesday, August 24

Read: *Berger and Luckmann, “The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life” (pgs 19-46)

Thursday, August 26

Read: *Strydom, “The Early Modern Problem of Violence” (pgs 96-120)

Tuesday, August 31

Read: *Arendt, “Excerpt from *On Violence*” (pgs 3-11) and *Coady, Ch 3: “The Idea of Violence” (23-38)

Thursday, September 2

Read: *Brownstein, “The Social Meaning of Violence and Violent Crime” (pgs 1-16)

DUE: Reading Worksheet #1

Theories of Violence

Tuesday, September 7

Read: *Aldama, “Violence, Bodies, and the Color of Fear” (pgs 1-5) and *Galtung, “Cultural Violence” (pgs 39-56)

Thursday, September 9

Read: *Zinn, “Violence and Human Nature” (pgs 32-47)

DUE: Personal Chronology of Violence

Tuesday, September 14

Read: *Gilligan, “The Biology of Violence” (pgs 209-223)

Thursday, September 16

Read: *Wrangham, “Planet of the Apes” (pgs 15-19)

¹ Although I do not anticipate doing so, I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule at any point during the semester. This includes, but is not limited to, adding and/or removing and/or replacing articles and videos. If this does occur, students will be given adequate notice of these changes on CULearn and in class.

Readings with an asterisk () before the author's name can be found on CULearn

Tuesday, September 21

Read: *Bloom and Reichert, "Trauma Theory" (pgs 103-121 and 141-151)

DUE: Reading Worksheet #2

Stories of Violence—Gender and Media

Thursday, September 23

Read: *Millet, "The Theory of Sexual Politics" (pgs 23-58)

Tuesday, September 28

Read: *Moore, "The Problem of Explaining Violence in the Social Sciences" (pgs 138-155)

Thursday, September 30

Read: *Horn, "This Norm Which is Not One" (pgs 109-128)

Tuesday, October 5

Read: *Gerbner, "Television Violence" (pgs 547-557)

Thursday, October 7

Read: *Foltyn, "Dead Famous and Dead Sexy" (pgs 153-173)

DUE: Reading Worksheet #3

Stories of Violence—Sexuality and Race

Tuesday, October 12

Read: *Terry, "Anxious Slippages Between 'Us' and 'Them'" (pgs 129-151)

Thursday, October 14

Read: *Herek, "Psychological Heterosexism" (pgs 254-265)

Tuesday, October 19

Read: *Hayes, "Consuming Cannibalism" (pgs 151-170)

Thursday, October 21

Read: *Markovitz, "Bernhard Goetz and the Politics of Fear" (pgs 209-226)

Tuesday, October 26

Read: *West, "Nihilism in Black America" (pgs 177-182)

DUE: Reading Worksheet #4

Stories of Violence—Nationality and Nonviolence

Thursday, October 28

Read: *Diken and Laustsen, “Becoming Abject” (pgs 111-127)

Tuesday, November 2

Read: *Simić, “Does the Presence of Women Really Matter?” (pgs 188-199)

Thursday, November 4

Read: *Bejarano, “Las Super Madres de Latino America” (pgs 404-428)

Tuesday, November 9

Read: *Neti, “Blood and Dirt” (pgs 77-93)

Thursday, November 11

Read: Chosen book for application paper

DUE: Reading Worksheet #5

Tuesday, November 16

Read: Chosen book for application paper

Thursday, November 18

Read: Chosen book for application paper

FALL BREAK

No class November 23 and 25

Tuesday, November 30

DUE: Group Presentations (Groups 1-5)

DUE: Analytical paper

Thursday, December 2

DUE: Group Presentations (Groups 6-10)

Tuesday, December 7

DUE: Group Presentations (Groups 11-15)

Thursday, December 9

DUE: Group Presentations (Groups 16-20)