

EDHD 221: Aggression and Violence in Everyday Life:

Can Violence Be Prevented?

Fall 2016

Section 0101

Thursday, 4:15-7

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In this I-Series course offering, students will be faced with the challenge of conceptualizing non-traditional and highly creative responses to the question: Can Violence be Prevented?

Students will think about violence prevention in ways that counter current national passivity and paralysis in the face of violence, and instead promote personal agency toward reducing violence of various kinds nationally (e.g., gun violence, rape, bullying), and in relation to their own chosen fields of study.

Course Description

This course explores the history of aggression and violence in the world and in the United States. It examines the extent to which various forms are prevalent today and scientifically supported prevention strategies. Moreover, prevention is understood in relation to a context of childhood, adolescent and adult human development. Theories such as social-cognitive, biological, personality, and lifespan perspectives are used to inform prevention ideas. Methods of studying aggression are reviewed, as are theories and methods of preventing aggression and

violence. Aggression and violence are examined within each stage of human development, from infancy through the later decades of life, with regard to its prevalence, severity, forms, risk factors that exacerbate aggression and protective factors that reduce the likelihood of aggression. Most important, after considering each form of aggression and violence, this course explores “model” and “promising” prevention programs at each stage of development.

Required Readings

Lysiak, M (2013). *Newtown: An American Tragedy*. NY: Gallery Books.

American Psychological Association (2013). *Gun violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy*. Retrieved from <http://WWW.APA.org.pubs/info/reports/gun-violence-prevention.aspx>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007) The effectiveness of universal school-based programs for the prevention of violence and aggressive behavior. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 56, August 10.

Marcus, R.F. (2007). *Aggression and violence in adolescence*. NY:Cambridge.

Seteedeh, Ramin (2008) Young, gay, and murdered in junior high. *Newsweek*, July 18, 2008.

Diaz, T. (2013). *The last gun: How changes in the gun industry are killing Americans and what it will take to stop it*. NY: New Press,

Nine additional articles will be posted on our Canvas site.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this I-Series/Distributive Studies (History & Social Sciences) course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the major questions and issues in aggression and violence and the developmental forces (protective) which serve to prevent violence;
2. Describe the sources on aggression that the experts and developmental scientists use to prevent violence;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of basic terms, concepts, and approaches that experts in aggression and violence and developmental scientists employ in dealing with issues in aggression and violence and the prevention of violence;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions involved in firearm- related violence and the factors which serve to prevent firearm violence;
5. Communicate major ideas and issues in aggression and violence and the developmental factors which serve to prevent violence through effective written and/or oral presentations;

6. Articulate how this course on aggression and violence and the developmental factors related to it has invited them to think in new ways about their lives, their place in the University and other communities, and/or issues central to their major disciplines or other fields of interest;
7. Demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and ideas in aggression and violence and the developmental forces which serve to prevent violence in history or the social sciences;
8. Demonstrate understanding of the methods that produce knowledge in aggression and violence and the developmental forces which serve to prevent violence in history or the social sciences;
9. Demonstrate critical thinking in aggression and violence and the developmental forces which serve to prevent violence in evaluating causal arguments in history or in the social sciences, analyzing major assertions, background assumptions, and explanatory evidence;
10. Explain how culture, social structure, diversity, or other key elements of historical context have an impact on individual perception, action, and values in aggression and violence and the developmental forces which serve to prevent violence;
11. Use information technologies to conduct research and to communicate effectively about social science and history in aggression and violence and the developmental forces which serve to prevent violence.

Assessments (all are MSGE)

- ❖ **Descriptive report** on causes, impact, and possible prevention strategies related to the students' previous personal experiences with **multi-media presentation of sources** to the class; 18 % of final grade;
- ❖ **Identification and description of at least one source** used by experts in aggression and violence and developmental scientists used to prevent violence. **Presentation in panel format** to the class; 18% of final grade;
- ❖ **Online final examination** 100 M-C format, given during finals week covering all course readings. Study guide to be distributed; 20 % of course grade;
- ❖ **Mock "Debate"** on political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions of firearm violence in the United States. Students will present arguments for and against various stances related to the topic which will be presented to the class with discussion and debate; 15% of final grade;
- ❖ **Five page analysis of media presentation**; 15% of final grade;

- ❖ **Group project focused on violence prevention in specific contexts chosen by students;14 % of final grade.**

Class Assignment	Percent (%) of Grade
Descriptive Report/Multi-media presentation	18%
Panel Presentation/Expert Sources	18 %
On line final examination	20%
Mock “Debate”	15%
Five Page Analysis/Multi-Media Paper	15%
Context Specific Violence Prevention Presentation	14%
Total	100%

Course Schedule

Week One: September 1-Aggression and violent behavior in historical context; Why has violence declined?

Sub-topics:

- 1) In what ways have the prevalence and severity of violence in the world changed over the past 2,000 years?
- 2) What has been the impact of “rights” movements and humanitarian thinking on the reduction of aggression and violence, and how might those movements be extended to prevention practices ?
- 3) The Causes of violence (overview)- Ricard (2013) *Altruism*
- 4) What forms of aggression and violence remain problematic around the world and In the U.S.A.?

Video: Pinker, S. (2011). Angels of our better nature (TED talk)

Student Discussion:

How has civilization tamed violence and how has it not?

Week Two: September 8-Failures to tame aggression in the past and present; still work to do.

Sub-topic:

The 2008 murder of Lawrence King (age 15), at EO Green Middle School, Oxnard, California by Brandon MacInerney (age 14)

Video: “Valentine Road” (HBO)

Reading: Setoodeh, Ramin (2008). Young, gay, and murdered in junior high. *Newsweek*, July 18, 2008.

[**Note:** see full references in reference section]

Student Discussion: hand in product of student group discussion

Outline the legal case for the prosecution and defense of Brandon MacInerney, and identify the main arguments leading to the judgment

Week Three: September 15- Definitions and Theories of Aggression and Violence

Sub-topics:

Three Theories and Definitions

- a) Definitions of aggression and violence; prevalence of various forms
- b) Theories of aggression and violence
 - 1) Biological and evolutionary theories (Raine et al)
 - 2) Learning and social-cognitive theories of aggression: The “General Aggression Model” (Dewall et al)
 - 3) Developmental psychopathology model of the origins of violence (Dodge et al)

Readings : 1) DeWall, Anderson & Bushman (2011). The general aggression model: Theoretical extensions to violence

2) Raine, A. (2014) Dissecting the biological roots of crime.

3) Dodge et al. (2008) Testing an idealized dynamic cascade

model of the development of serious violence in adolescence

4) Marcus, R. (2007) Chapters 1-Prevalence, & 2) Developmental Pathways.

Activity: Students *organize* into 6 groups of 10 each to plan and devise a multi-media presentation for **Week Four** in which each group presents two episodes offered by their members, association with any of the three theories (above), and two recommendations for prevention related to each theory. Group reports are submitted to the teaching assistant and instructor and are reviewed at least two days prior to next class (**4 p.m. Tuesday Sept 20**).

Week Four: September 22 Multi-media presentations on student experiences, theories, and prevention

Activity: Twenty Minute Student Presentations; with questions from class members

Group One

Group Two

Group Three

Group Four

Group Five

Group Six

Week Five: September 29- Identification of the sources violence experts and developmental scientists use to prevent violence:

Activity: Students will identify sources and programs used to prevent violence, such as The Federal Emergency Management Agency, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, American Psychological Association, National School Safety and Security Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the US Dept. of Homeland Security.

Following the identification of sources, students will join groups they are most interested in, and the group will meet to describe the source's

primary purpose, forms of violence addressed, prevention strategies used, and the reasons for promoting the activity. Each group will create a presentation on their source, and submit their presentation to the teaching assistant in order to get constructive feedback.

Students will present their report in panel format in the following class, Week Six, and respond to class questions.

Readings: Diaz, T. (2013). *The last gun: How changes in the gun industry Are killing Americans and what it will take to stop it.* NY:New Press

Week Six:October 6- Student Presentations on Sources.

Activity: Student panels present their reports on sources to the class and will respond to questions from classmates.

Week Seven: October 13- The Development of Aggression and Violence Across the Lifespan

Instructor: Presents an overview of the development of aggression and violence from childhood through adulthood, using *longitudinal studies* such as the Pittsburgh Youth Study, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the National Youth Survey, and *cross sectional* findings from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Instructor will differentiate between US and other developed countries, point out differences within the US, impact of culture, SES, families, gangs and intimate partners.

Readings: Four research studies on the development of violence, from childhood through adulthood:

Naerde, Ogden, Janson, & Zachrisson (2014). Normative development of Physical aggression from 8 to 26 months.

Broidy et al. (2003). Developmental trajectories of childhood disruptive behaviors and adolescent delinquency: A six-site cross-national study

Xie, Cairns, & Cairns (2002). The development of social aggression and physical aggression: A narrative analysis of interpersonal conflict. *Aggressive Behavior*, 28(5),341-355

Mehari et al. (2014). Cyberbullying among adolescents: Measures in search of a construct. *Psychology of Violence*

Due:Optional for extra credit- Students will write a 5-page report in which they show that they understand the developmental trends in aggression and violence across the lifespan, the factors which serve to inhibit or prevent violence in families, relationships, or in the US.

Week Eight: October 20- Understanding the political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions involved in violence and methods of prevention.

Sub-topic:

Overview of gun violence in the US

Video: Mike Wallace: “Slaughter in Schools”

Activity: Will organize into teams of 10 to begin organizing a debate for next class,

Week Nine . Teams will address the following questions: 1) How well can gun violence be predicted and prevented; 2) What should be done to prevent gun violence? And 3) Which theories, prevented earlier, might be used to suggest prevention ideas, and what are they? 4) in what ways do political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions enter into the debate about guns?

Students will submit their responses to the teaching assistant for presentation the following week: due on Monday, October 28.

Readings:

American Psychological Association (2013). Gun violence: Prediction, Prevention, and policy.

Lysiak, M. (2013). *Newtown: An American tragedy*

****Quiz: Online 20 item quiz on American Psychological Association (2013)**

Week Nine: October 27- Debates about Guns and Gun Violence in the US.

Activity: Students will be led through a synthesized list of their submitted “debate” responses. Special emphasis will be put on discussion and debate for responses which conflict one another and students will discuss merits of the arguments.

Distribute: Students given rubrics with which to rate movies, TV, video games

Hartman et al. (2014). How violent video games....content analysis of moral disengagement factors.

Week Ten: November 3- Analyzing Media Messages

Class Cancelled: Students Work Outside of Class

Activity: (see rubric given out on October 27)

Students will identify and describe a popular action T.V. show, video game, movie, or other media production which has violent content. Students will describe a violent plot, consequences of that violence, and portrayal of “good” and “bad” characters within the production. Students will also specify how the message might be changed to prevent or inhibit violence. Responses are to be sent to the teaching assistant prior to the start of the next class, Week Eleven

Week Eleven: November 10- Violence and Violence Prevention in Different Settings, as Chosen by Students to Study

Sub-topic: Students choose from the following violence prevention settings: 1) prevention in schools; 2) prevention in the workplace; 3) prevention at athletic events; 4) prevention in homes; 5) prevention on the streets; 6) prevention in communities.

Violence prevention in various settings such as work places, schools, athletic events, family/homes, streets, and residential communities.

Students will identify one of those settings as more relevant to their interests and future careers. For example, a student thinking about becoming a law enforcement officer might select violence on the street as a setting they might best like to study. Students wishing to become teachers might specify a middle school setting to study. Students would then organize into groups of 10 focused on specific settings. Specific instructions on will follow, but students will be asked how they might contribute toward making the environment safe, and clarify what sources and information might help them to create a safe environment.

Video: “The In-Crowd” and Bullying.

Activity: Students will organize into groups of ten for the purpose of presenting their ideas in One hour presentation to the whole class during Weeks Twelve, Thirteen, and Fourteen.

Week Twelve: November 17- Student Presentations

Group One: Prevention of Violence in Schools

[Class Discussion]

Group Two: Prevention of Violence in the Workplace

[Class Discussion]

November 24- Thanksgiving Recess

Week Thirteen: December 1-Student Presentations

Group Three: Prevention of Violence at Athletic Events

[Class Discussion]

Group Four: Prevention of Violence in Families/Homes

[Class Discussion]

Week Fourteen: December 8- Student Presentations

Group Five: Prevention of Violence on Streets

[Class Discussion]

Group Six: Prevention of Violence in Communities

[Class Discussion]

Final Examination (100 item multiple-choice): Given online during finals week.

CLASS POLICIES

Academic integrity: The University of Maryland, College Park has a student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. The code prohibits students from cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else's work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without permission, or failing to properly cite information other than your own (found in journals, books, online, or otherwise). Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and any sign of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials.

Special needs: If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see the instructor so necessary arrangements can be made. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the University, please contact Disability Support Services in the Shoemaker Building (301.314.7682, or 301.405.7683 TTD) as soon as possible.

Religious observances: The University of Maryland policy on religious observances states that students not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever possible, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. However, they must contact the instructor **before** the absence with a written notification of the projected absence, and arrangements will be made for make-up work or examinations.

Course evaluations: As a member of our academic community, students have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit course evaluations each term through CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Missed single class due to illness: Once during a semester, a student's self-authored note will be accepted as an excuse for missing a minor scheduled grading event in a single class session if the note documents the date of the illness, acknowledgement from the student that information provided in the note is correct, and a statement that the student understands that providing false information is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected to attempt to inform the instructor of the illness prior to the date of the missed class.*

Major scheduled grading events: Major Scheduled Grading Events (MSGE) are indicated on the syllabus. The conditions for accepting a self-signed note do not apply to these events. Written, signed documentation by a health care professional, or other professional in the case of non-medical reasons (see below) of a University-approved excuse for the student's absence must be supplied. This documentation must include verification of treatment dates and the time period for which the student was unable to meet course requirements. Providers should not include diagnostic information. Without this documentation, opportunities to make up missed assignments or assessments will not be provided.

Non-consecutive, medically necessitated absences from multiple class sessions: Students who throughout the semester miss multiple, non-consecutive class sessions due to medical problems must provide written documentation from a health care professional that their attendance on those days was prohibited for medical reasons.

Non-medical excused absences: According to University policy, non-medical excused absences for missed assignments or assessments may include illness of a dependent, religious observance, involvement in University activities at the request of University officials, or circumstances that are beyond the control of the student. Students asking for excused absence for any of those

reasons must also supply appropriate written documentation of the cause and make every attempt to inform the instructor prior to the date of the missed class.

References

- American Psychological Association (2013). Gun violence: Prediction, prevention, and policy. Retrieved from <http://WWW.APA.org.pubs/info/reports/gun-violence-prevention.aspx>.
- Broidy, L., Nagin, D., Tremblay, R. et al. (2003). Developmental trajectories of childhood disruptive behaviors and adolescent delinquency: A six-site cross-national study. *Developmental Psychology*, 39, 223-245.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007). The effectiveness of universal school-based programs for the prevention of violence and aggressive behavior. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 56, August 10.
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- Jones, S., Miller, J., & Lynam, D. (2011). Personality, antisocial behavior, and aggression: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, (39(4), 329-337.

- Liu, J., Lewis, G., & Evans, L. (2013). Understanding aggressive behavior across the lifespan. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 20(2), 156-168.
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- Marcus, R.F. (2009). Cross-sectional study of violence in emerging adulthood. *Aggressive Behavior*, 35, 188-202.
- Marcus, R.F. , & Jamison, E. (2011). Violence in emerging adulthood: A developmental perspective. In M.A. Paludi (Ed). *The psychology of teen violence and victimization. Vols. 1&2:From bullying to cyberstalking to assault and victimization; prevention strategies for families and schools* (pp. 23-35). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Mehari, K. , Farrell, A., & Ahn-Thuy, H. (2014). Cyberbullying among adolescents: Measures in search of a construct. *Psychology of Violence*, 4(4), 399-415.
- Naerde, A., Ogden, T., Janson, H., & Zachrisson, H. (2014). Normative development of physical aggression from 8 to 24 months. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(6), 1710-1720.
- Raine, A. (2014). Dissecting the biological roots of crime. Invited Address, Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, August.
- Sampson, R., & Laub, J. (2005). A life-course view of the development of crime. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 602, 12-45.
- Xie, H., Cairns, R., & Cairns, B. (2002). The development of social aggression and physical aggression: A narrative analysis of interpersonal conflict. *Aggressive Behavior*, 28(5), 341-355.

