

SOCI 3113 - Sociology of Violence

W + F 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM, OA 1022

Course Director

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Office Hours: F 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM, OA 3013

Course Description

The fact of violence goes almost without saying. Media reports of violent behaviour are common and violence is a prominent theme in both culture and entertainment. To speak of one's personal experience with violence is subsequently quite complicated because we are continuously reminded of the violence that happens to others and could possibly happen to ourselves.

We could even say that violence has become normalized, assumed, and taken for granted in society. This is apparent because our everyday use of the term tends to avoid a number of additional questions. For instance, is violence always physical? How does violence affect a person's sense of self? When is violence socially acceptable? Are witnesses just passive participants? Is there a space for ethical violence? Is it in our nature as humans to be violent?

So while violence may be a pervasive fact of our lived social worlds, it is apparent that we rarely think about the concept itself or the range of relations that arise from its existence. Although SOCI 3113 will come to emphasize sociological understandings of violence, we will nevertheless apply interdisciplinary methods of inquiry to examine the complex relationship between violence and social life.

Course Objectives

Students will practice being active agents, both individually and collaboratively, in the pursuit, production, and distribution of knowledge. They will apply skills like critical reading, analytical writing, effective researching, and collaborative problem solving in order to reveal taken for granted assumptions about violence.

Beyond providing structured practice conducting academic research, a key goal of this course is to promote critical thinking and problem-based learning. This will help students advance their research skills and gain specialized knowledge of an extremely important social issue.

Course Organization

Class will meet twice weekly for a total of three hours. In each week, the first class will explore a particular aspect of violence. The second class will be discussion oriented and use the assigned reading to guide conversation. Since time will be split between group/class discussions and workshops, students are expected to attend all classes and have read all assigned materials in advance.

Please note that participation constitutes an important element of this course and a sizeable portion of the final grade. Although attendance will not be taken, your involvement in discussions during class is both important and necessary.

Evaluation

Final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

1. Reaction Papers: (3 x 15%)	45%
2. Research Project:	40%
3. Participation:	15%

1. For any three weeks, students are responsible for writing a **reaction paper** that provides a critical overview of a given reading and how it conceptualizes violence. Top marks will be awarded for assessments that go beyond the reading itself and connect the material with a world event, situation, or condition. Each paper should be 3 pages, double-spaced, and follow standard writing conventions concerning style and citation. Although a bibliography must be included, no additional sources are necessary.
2. The final **research project** is your chance to explore a particular aspect of violence in more detail. Hard copies of essays are due in class on December 2nd and should follow standard academic formats relative to style, referencing, and structure. Essays should be between 15 - 20 pages, double-spaced, and include only scholarly sources. No conceptual limits will be placed on the topic you select but at least two course readings must be incorporated in your analysis. I would be happy to help you brainstorm ideas if needed.
3. Given the emphasis on discussion and collaboration, **participation** is a crucial component of your final grade. This entails attending lectures, doing readings in advance, and taking part in class discussions.

Students are expected to make every effort to hand in their work on time, so assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends. In those rare instances where circumstances beyond the student's control have prevented an assignment from being submitted on time, exceptions to the lateness penalty may be granted. Such situations will require supporting documentation and be at the sole discretion of the professor.

Numeric marks will be assigned in conformance with Lakehead's standard grading structure. For a rough breakdown of the expectations associated with each letter grade, please consult the 'Literature & Theory' section of this reference:

- <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english/markings-standards>

Email Policy

Please include a subject line that begins with "SOCI 3113" in every email you send me. This will draw attention to your message and help me respond to it more quickly.

Important Course Information

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information concerning student behaviour and disciplinary procedures. Pay specific attention to the guidelines and restrictions surrounding plagiarism; it will not be tolerated:

- idc.lakeheadu.ca/uploads/docs/Academic%20Integrity%20guide%20Orillia.docx

Class and Reading Schedule

No textbooks are required for purchase. All readings will be posted in electronic format on the course website.

Week 1	September 7 + 9	Course Introduction
Syllabus		
Week 2	September 14 + 16	Topologies of Violence
Wolff, R.P. (1969). On violence. <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> , 66(19), 601-616. + Coady, C.A.J. (1986). The idea of violence. <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i> , 3(1), 3-19.		
Week 3	September 21 + 23	Manifestations of Violence: Law
Benjamin, W. (1986). Critique of violence. In P. Demetz (Ed.), <i>Reflections: Essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writings</i> . (E. Jephcott, Trans). New York: Schocken Books.		
Week 4	September 28 + 30	Manifestations of Violence: Everyday
Lawrence, P. (1997). Violence, suffering, Amman: The work of oracles in Sri Lanka's Eastern War Zone. In Das et al. (Eds.), <i>Violence and Subjectivity</i> (pp. 171-178). Berkeley: University of California Press. + Kleinman, A. (1997). The violences of everyday life: The multiple forms and dynamics of social violence. In Das et al. (Eds.), <i>Violence and Subjectivity</i> (pp. 226-241). Berkeley: University of California Press.		
Week 5	October 5 + 7	Manifestations of Violence: Outsiders
Girard, R. (1972). <i>Violence and the Sacred</i> . (P. Gregory, Trans.). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. (pp. 1-38)		
Week 6	October 12 + 14	No Class - Reading Week

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Week 7 October 19 + 21 **Manifestations of Violence: Language**

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. (G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (pp. 66-89)

Week 8 October 26 + 28 **Subjects of Violence: Villain**

Collins, R. (2008). *Violence: A micro-sociological theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (pp. 39-82)

Week 9 November 2 + 4 **Subjects of Violence: Victim**

Collins, R. (2008). *Violence: A micro-sociological theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (pp. 134-155)

Week 10 November 9 + 11 **Subjects of Violence: Witness**

Fowles, J. (1999). *The Case for Television Violence*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. (pp. 74-93, 119-132)

Week 11 November 16 + 18 **Ethics of Violence: Consequences**

Singer, P. (1993). *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (pp. 218-246)

Week 12 November 23 + 25 **Ethics of Violence: Precariousness**

Butler, J. (2006). *Precarious Lives: The powers of mourning and violence*. New York: Verso. (pp. 19-49)

Week 13 November 30 + December 2 **Course Conclusion**

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