

Violence Against Women
SYA 4930 Fall 2007
T, R 12:30 – 1:45
HCB 0214

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:45-2:45pm
and/or by appointment

Course Syllabus

Overview of the Course

This seminar explores the intersections of gender and violence. We shall analyze dynamics between men/boys and women/girls and situate them within the context of U. S. society and culture. Our aim is to understand their origins, forms and effects and to identify changes that can be made to reduce and prevent their occurrence. The meanings and nature of interpersonal violence, the effects of being the recipient of violence, the effects of perpetrating violence, and society's responses to violence are addressed. The role of gender in promoting and preventing violence is explored at three levels: individual, interpersonal, and macro (structural, cultural, societal). The role of the entertainment industry and media in representing and perpetrating gendered constructions of violence is considered. Legal remedies (state & federal laws, law enforcement), education/public service campaigns, social movements (e.g., aimed at preventing or stopping violence such as the anti-rape movement), and other such responses, remedies or prevention activities are explored. Emotional threat, intimidation, fear, and the concept of violation are addressed. Domestic violence, coerced sex, sexual terrorism, rape, stalking, assault, battery are among the issues we shall consider.

Course Objectives

Broad Course Objectives

1. Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the primary axes of social inequality, and their dynamics, and effects, in contemporary society.
2. Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to define and apply core sociological concepts to an understanding of social life.
3. Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to interpret & weigh evidence as to whether asserted conclusions about social conditions or processes are warranted.
4. Upon completion of the course of instruction, the student will be able to accurately compare and contrast two sociological theories (including their proponents) and their implications for explaining social phenomena, situations, or events.

Specific Course Objectives

1. To gain understanding of interpersonal violence & how it relates to gender
2. To gain understanding of the gender institution
3. To grasp the scale and scope of violence in the U. S. relative to gender
4. To analyze data on the relationship between gender & violence
5. To grasp the content of required readings and other pertinent sources on gender & violence (e.g., FBI and other credible data)
6. To write a report based on social science research evidence/data on one or more aspects of violence relative to gender
7. To demonstrate ability to debate and discuss course content while being respectful of others
8. To understand and be able to explain at least two social science theoretical perspectives on interpersonal violence relative to gender (to do this, you must *understand what theory is and does*)
9. To demonstrate skill at using the internet to (a) find social science research articles on gender & violence; and (b) obtain statistics from official/governmental sources on gender and violence in the U. S.
10. To leave the course with a richer understanding of conditions in society that encourage/foster and discourage/prevent violence by some men and boys toward women and girls.

Texts

The following texts can be found in the bookstore or through Amazon.com. However, if you choose to purchase via Amazon, please remember that these books will be needed fairly quickly and delayed shipping time is not an excuse for not reading. *I have gone out of my way to make the cost of materials for this course inexpensive – I have placed most readings on blackboard. Thus, I expect you to read **all** of the materials. All of the readings will be utilized throughout the course. In order to participate in class effectively you will **NEED** to have read the required readings prior to attending class. Unannounced quizzes (e.g., to confirm that students are reading and understanding the readings or to confirm that students did another assignment) may be given on occasion, in oral or written form and count against your participation grade.*

**Required Books (other readings are located on blackboard):*

Sanday, Peggy Reeves (1990). *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*. New York University Press, New York.

Martin, Patricia Yancey (2004). *Rape Work: Victims, Gender, and Emotions in Organizational and Community Context*. Routledge, New York.

Schwartz, Dianne (2000). *Whose Face is in the Mirror? The Story of One Woman's Journey from the Nightmare of Domestic Abuse to True Healing*. California: Hay House.

Weiss, Elaine. (2000). *Surviving Domestic Violence: Voices of Women Who Broke Free*. Agreka Books.

Class Policies

Seminar vs. Lecture Format

Students must participate appropriately and competently for a seminar. What is a **Seminar**? A seminar is a joint endeavor among students and faculty where members work individually and collectively to better understand the issues of the course. In a seminar, members participate in discussions after reading assignments, completing assigned tasks, and considering data on and explanations for the phenomena under study. A seminar does not consist primarily of lectures by the professor nor is it based on the participants' personal opinions or biases. *See students' and professor's responsibilities, styles of participating, behavior toward each other, and grounds for student assessment below.* Films or DVDs/videos and invite guest speakers will be part of our seminar. This material should be considered required course content, the same as readings and other tangible assignments.

Courtesy in the Classroom.

Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. This means no cell phones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the professor or discussion leader), reading newspapers, etc. during class. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about kids or other family members, keep it on vibrate. Entering and leaving is distracting to your instructor and other students. Therefore, you need to be on time for class and stay until the end. If you must enter late or leave early, please inform me before class begins and take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Please make sure the door does not 'bang' as you enter or leave. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade (see below). Class discussions of the issues we study can stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussions must be scholarly.

(1) Scholarly comments are:

Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement; related to the class and course material; advance the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs; are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

(2) Unacceptable behaviors in the classroom are:

(a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Interrupting your instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be called on by the discussion leader or myself to prevent this problem. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors (see above). (d) Using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students, and being physically aggressive. (e) Ignoring your instructor's authority to protect the integrity of the classroom. Anyone who violates these guidelines will be asked to cease and desist and may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

Failure to abide by these principles can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is required. Five or more unexcused absences will result in an F grade for the course. The following and only the following absences are eligible to be excused: Religious holidays, as specified in FSU policy (see elsewhere in syllabus); absences due to representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events; verified emergencies and/or medical illness. Medical illnesses are serious in nature and require continued treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Colds, the flu, fatigue, and stress do not qualify as medical illnesses. If you have a chronic illness that could affect your attendance, it is imperative that you alert me to this at the beginning of class. Documentation for an absence to be excused is required. Please provide a copy of the documentation to your professor and keep a copy for your own records. While one is not penalized for the absence of excused absences, he or she remains responsible for all content missed, including assignments, knowledge, or skills that were covered in the missed class(es).

At the very least, once you have 5 absences, your grade will be lowered by one step (i.e. a B becomes a B-, a C+ becomes a C, etc.)

Incomplete Grades

Missing work is insufficient reason for a grade of Incomplete (I). An I will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an "I" must be passing the course.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in The Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook. The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>).

The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Unless otherwise stated in writing, student **may not** work in groups or use multiple submissions. Examples of academic penalties include, but are not limited to, one or a combination of the following: (1) a lower or failing grade in the course, (2) a lower or failing grade or score on the assignment or examination, or (3) additional work to provide evidence of the student's academic performance and/or evidence that the student knows and understands the course material.

ADA Policy

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
(850) 644-7164
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

Late Assignments

Each 24 hour period for which an assignment is late reduces the maximum possible grade by ten percent up to two weeks after which the assignment will not be accepted. Lateness in completing readings, written assignments, and/or any assignment with a due date will lower your grade.

Evaluation and Grading: Course Requirements

This course requires you to read, analyze, & observe the world around you, attend class, participate in class discussions, complete in class quizzes and/or writing assignments, take three exams, and write a final paper. Most class sessions will consist of lectures by the instructor, talks by guest speakers, presentations of other types (e.g., videos), or group activities and discussions.

An assignment sheet will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard detailing the assignments further. In addition to the weekly assignments, you will also have a final exam and participation points. You will be expected to participate regularly in class. Your participation requires that you make insightful relevant comments and come to class prepared to ask pertinent questions. Activities done in class, quizzes, and other in-class assignments may count as a portion of your participation grade.

Grade Breakdown

| | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Discussion Board Postings (20pts each): 100 points = | 100 Points | 15% |
| Assignments: 260 points (each varies in point value) = | 260 Points | 62% |
| Final Exam: 100 points | 100 Points | 15% |
| Participation: 40 points = | 40 Points | 8 % |
| | 500 Total | 100% |

I also assign pluses and minuses according to standard FSU guidelines. For grades A through D, the bottom 3 points in each grade range will receive a "-" (e.g., 80 to 82 = B-). For a grade of B, C, or D, the top 3 points in each grade range will receive a "+" (e.g., 77 to 79 = C+). There is no A+, F+ or F-. There is no rounding of scores (if your final percentage is 79.7%, this constitutes a C+ in the course not a B-).

Use of BlackBoard

This course will extensively use BlackBoard to aid in communication as well as to provide course materials in an efficient manner. We will go over a tutorial on the third day of class after the add/drop period. Please note that you will need an FSU Webmail account to use this interface.

Communication

I will make every effort to be available to discuss both this course and any outside concerns and questions. I invite you come visit me during my office hours or via email. I check my email numerous times a day and may perhaps be the quickest way to reach me. I make every effort to respond to telephone or email inquiries within 24 hours. If you find that you are having trouble with material in this course, I encourage you to see me promptly to discuss how I can further assist you in being successful.

Please note that this syllabus should be considered a course guide and is subject to change with notice.

Violence Against Women Course Calendar 2007

| Wk | Dates | Topics | Assigned Reading | Assignment Due and Homework |
|-------|----------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8/28 8/30 | Introduction Defining & Studying Violence | <i>Gilligan</i> | Assignment 1: What is Violence? Online Quiz Due Thursday |
| 2 | 9/4 9/6 | Theories on Violence Gender and Violence | <i>Jasinski</i> | Discussion Board Posting Due 9/3 |
| 3 | 9/11 9/13 | Gender and Violence | <i>Medzian Dobash & Dobash</i> | Assignment 2: Childrens Movies and Songs |
| 4 | 9/18 9/20 | Media and Violence | <i>Gordon and Riger</i> | Assignment 3: Media Advertisements |
| 5 | 9/25 9/27 | Intro to Domestic Violence | Meyers Benedict (Virgin or Vamp) | Discussion Board Posting Due 9/24 |
| 6 | 10/2 10/4 | Emotional Abuse Physical Abuse | Loring Book: Schwartz (pgs. 1-151) | Assignment 4: Newsclipping and Reflection |
| 7 | 10/9 10/11 | Concluding Domestic Violence Deterrents to Domestic Violence | Weitzman Book: Weiss | Discussion Board Posting Due 10/8 |
| 8 | 10/16 10/18 | Are All Societies Violent Towards Women? Culture and Violence | Russell Herman and Hirschmann | Assignment 5: Choice |
| 9 | 10/23 10/25 | Stalking | Emerson | Discussion Board Posting Due 10/22 |
| 10 | 10/30 11/1 | Stalking on College Campuses Cyberstalking | Scully and Marola | Assignment 6: Choice |
| 11 | 11/6 11/8 | Rape | Book: Martin (Intro, 1, 3, 4, 5) | Assignment 7: Safety Log |
| 12 | 11/13 11/15 | Rape Rape and the Media | Benedict (Athletes and Rape) Martin and Hummer | Discussion Board Posting Due 11/12 |
| 13 | 11/20 11/22 | Rape on College Campuses | Book: Sanday pgs. Xi-135 | Assignment 8: Experience with Violence |
| 14 | 11/27 11/29 | Rape on College Campuses -----No Class----- | Book: Sanday pgs. 135-197 Koss | Discussion Board Posting Due 11/26 |
| 15 | 12/4 12/6 | Perpetuation of Violence Music and Violence | Ferraro | Assignment 9: Movie Review |
| 12/12 | | Final Exam Period | 7:30am in our Classroom | Assignment 10: Group Paper and Presentation |

Readings should be done in prior to class meeting. Be prepared to discuss the readings if asked in class as well as repsond to "pop" quizzes. The length of the readings varies by week but averages around 30 pages/week. Most readings can be found on the course website.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS (unless otherwise noted) ARE DUE AT THE START OF CLASS ON THURSDAYS.

Discussion Board Postings are due by 8pm on the dates listed (which is the day before we meet for Tuesdays class).

Class Assignments

Each week you will have an assignment due in class. These assignments are generally due on Thursday and will vary week to week. Discussion board postings are due on the date specified in the course calendar by the start of class. *This course is titled Violence Against Women so there is an emphasis on gender. Be sure to include aspects of how gender plays a role in all assignments.*

Discussion Board Posts: Blackboard Writing Assignments

You will notice on our course Blackboard site a discussion board. Six (6) times throughout the semester you are to write one “critical post” on an assigned reading and one “reaction post” to a critical post by another student in the class to the readings assigned for the week. The “critical post” should be no less than 150 words and is due by 8pm Monday of the given week. The “reaction post” is to be between 75 and 100 words and is due by 12 noon Tuesday before we meet for class. I will drop your lowest discussion board post (i.e. only five (5) will count toward your grade).

Both critical and reaction posts should stick to the 4 guidelines outlined above for the essays. However, being that these are much shorter, leeway is given. Mainly, I want you to go beyond your initial reaction and think critically and sociologically.

Other Class Assignments

1. What is Violence? (worth 10 points)

Write a one page (or longer) essay (typed, double-spaced) on gender & violence that addresses what you view as “violence” versus “not violence” at this point in your thinking. **How** are gender and violence linked? **Why do you think** gender and violence are linked (as far as you understand)? You may look up terms in the dictionary, talk to friends, or do whatever you like but do NOT worry about ‘getting it right.’ Rather, explore your personal thoughts and beliefs and reasoning behind them. Include examples to show what you mean, e.g., is a teacher who spans a child at school acting violently? Why or why not? Come to class prepared to discuss.

2. Children’s Movies and Songs (worth 15 points)

Either watch a movie for children or listen to some songs for children (as we did in class) and find one that either promotes/encourages/condones/normalizes violence or teaches gender. In a two to four page paper, reflect on this and what implications this might have for children. Be sure to give a short summary of the work you are critiquing in case I have not seen it.

3. Media Advertisements (worth 25 points)

Select 5 (VERY GOOD) ads featuring people from any magazine that seemingly promote violence against women. Create a thesis statement which addresses this. Throughout this two to four page paper, support and defend your theses. If you feel that some ads promote violence while others do not, differentiate which you view as being problematic and explain why and how you made the distinction. Explain what you mean by “promotes violence against women” and describe the images used and how gender is constructed in the ads and how violence is portrayed (if at all). Discuss the limits of your claim – if you argue that your ads promote violence against women because they depict women as passive objects, also describe any ways that they promote strong images of women. If possible, describe how race, class, and sexuality are constructed in your ads and discuss any patterns you notices which relate to your thesis.

4. Media and Violence (worth 20 points)

This assignment will require you to read through news accounts of violence against women and locate an article and critique, reflect, and react to it in two to four pages. The article must be current (within the last year) and you must include the clipping with your reaction. In this assignment you should do the following:

- Summarize the story in no more than half of a page.
- Locate any potential bias that might be observable in the story as we discussed in class. Who do the reporters interview? What arguments are they making? Do they adhere to myths about violence against women? Are the victims properly portrayed as victims? How do they refer to the victim and perpetrator?

5. Article Review (worth 20 points)

This assignment requires that you reflect on the weeks readings. An example of this assignment will be posted on blackboard to help guide you. You should give a SHORT summary of the article(s) – meaning about a half page at most. The rest of your paper should reflect on the article(s). *Although this is a reflective or reactive paper, it is nonetheless an academic paper. Here are a few guidelines to follow.*

- **Goals.** To reflect on the assigned readings, to address questions posed to you by the instructor, and to address your own questions. If you are in a quandary about what to do, reflect on the things you have read and ask yourself what they may mean, may be examples of or lead to, etc.

- **General advice.** Stay close to the readings; ponder the readings; think about what the readings are saying and their implications. Write about the assigned book or articles. Remember to finish reading the book (articles) before you write the RP; thus allow time to think and write before the due date.
- **Length.** Two pages, single-spaced maximum. Font **no smaller than** Times New Roman 10.
- **Framework.** Consider the RP a learning experience in how to think and write critically. Don't get up tight about it or try too hard to be "right." Write in the first person. I want to know what YOU are thinking about the readings. Please give yourself permission to be the "voice" in the Reflections Paper, although I do ask you to write from the readings.
- **When you make a claim (assert that something is "true") you must explain the claim/assertion and "back it up"** by reference to data, findings in the readings, to logic, or another source.
- **Refer extensively to the readings**, to their data and/or themes and claims. Write "from" the evidence in the readings. Reflect on the author's findings, data, interpretations, conclusions and assess the significance of what the author finds, concludes, etc.
- **I suggest you pose an analytical question for yourself and compare the evidence from the readings to address it.** Suppose your question were this: What prompts some boys or men to be rapists or to assault others? You might then assess the findings and claims of the readings for this question. Distinguish your opinion and interpretations from findings or interpretations of the author. Do **not** assume that anything is "obviously true."

6. Choice of Assignments from List Below (worth 30 points)

In this exercise you may choose one of the following to complete:

- A. You may develop an alternative project as long as you consult with me and receive approval beforehand.
- B. Design a campaign to increase public awareness about a particular form of violence against women. Be creative in doing so and create a write-up for me along with any materials you develop.
- C. Find an article on violence against women and thoroughly critique it.
- D. You may interview 4 people in depth about violence against women. You need to turn in the transcript of these interviews as well as a two to four page summary of what you learned from these interviews. For more information on this option, please see the instructor.

7. Safety Log (worth 10 points)

This assignment requires that you maintain a safety log over the course of 48 hours. You will need to record all activities and measures you take to maintain your safety. This will require you to be critical about actions you take for granted. Please record a timeline of your activities and corresponding safety measures. Begin this assignment on 10/17 from the time you awake and conclude it on 10/18 when you go to sleep. You must also include a one page reflection on what you notice about the safety measures you take.

8. Experience with Violence (worth 20 points)

Write a two to four page reflection on violence and your experiences with it. I am not asking you to disclose your personal experience of being a victim of violence necessarily (although please feel free to do so). Rather, if you are uncomfortable writing about a personal experience as victim, you may write about situations that you have witnessed or heard about. Be sure to analyze how gender plays a role

9. Movie Review (worth 40 points)

There are many popular and educational films that address gender and violence. Find a documentary or drama that describes violent behaviors, attitudes, or the issue of gender and violence – your main tasks are to apply concepts covered in class; discuss the usefulness of this course in interpreting the behaviors described in the film; identify patterns of gender ideology and violence in the film). Please focus on these tasks and minimize the amount of film descriptions in your review.

10. Group Paper and Presentation (worth 70 points)

More information on this assignment will be provided in class - due during the Final Examination Period at the conclusion of the semester. You will be expected to work as a group.