

**Responses to Violence  
(CCJS 225:0101)  
Spring 2023  
Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30pm – 4:45pm  
Tydings Hall (TYD) 1101  
University of Maryland, College Park**

"When you get these jobs that you have been so  
brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is  
that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you  
have some power, then your job is to empower  
somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game."

Toni Morrison

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**Professor:** Dr. B. Hitchens  
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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1:00pm-2:00pm; and by appointment

**Graduate TA:** Taryn Curie  
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**Office Hours:** Thursdays 12:00-1:00pm; and by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

What are the complex dimensions of violence in the United States and worldwide, and how has humanity responded to these phenomena? This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to discuss historical, sociological, criminological, and psychological aspects of violence and the ways we respond to it. Students will explore various types of violence throughout the semester and will be encouraged to think critically about the etiology of violence and ways to prevent it. Students will engage with reading materials, videos, and documentaries as we explore these topics. Along these lines, students will work in groups to identify a type of violence at issue today and develop a creative intervention strategy based on the principles learned in this course. Students will be expected to outline the assumptions needed to reduce violence and to identify potential risks to those assumptions that could lead to unintended consequences. The goal of this course is to teach students to use scientific innovation to develop creative solutions that might be employed in the near future as violence prevention strategies continue to evolve.

### **LEARNING GOALS**

The course will further the following learning goals:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major theories, terms, and concepts that are used to explain violent criminal behavior, explain how criminology can be used to analyze contemporary issues with violent crime and the criminal justice system.
2. Students will use their understanding of theories of criminal behavior to develop policies for social change.
3. Students will identify common themes and undertones of violence that are specific to American

- culture that may explain or influence the prevalence of violence in American society as a whole.
4. Students will communicate major ideas and issues about violence through effective written work and oral presentations.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Students are responsible for purchasing and reading the following textbook:

**Violence: The Enduring Problem (4th Edition)** by Alex Alvarez & Ronet Bachman. Publisher: SAGE. ISBN: 9781544355658.

There are additional readings found on the ELMS website. **THESE READINGS ARE REQUIRED.**

- Students should download the readings as soon as possible. Waiting until the day before the test to download articles is strongly discouraged.
- Students are encouraged to put all of the readings in a three-ring binder for ease of access during and outside of class.

### **SENSITIVE CONTENT DISCLAIMER**

Due to the nature of the material discussed in this course, some of the content that we talk about (or things that we watch when doing case studies) may contain explicit, graphic, and/or vulgar images and/or speech. Some of the topics that we discuss may generate some discomfort, such as assault, murder, rape, genocide, terrorism, slavery, child abuse, domestic violence, suicide, and racism. If you think that these topics would be triggering for you to talk about and/or learn about, I would encourage you to consider if this class is appropriate for you to stay enrolled in.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **1. Exams (40%)**

There are two exams each worth 20% of your final grade. Both Exams will be administered in person and during class. *Exam 1* will be 66 multiple-choice/true-false questions, with each question being worth 1.5 points each. *Exam 2* will be mix of multiple-choice/true-false and short-answer questions, with points varying. Exams will feature content from the lectures, class discussions, course readings, and any other activities that are assigned. All content mentioned in lectures or that appears on the Keynote/PowerPoint slides are fair game for quizzes and exams, so take notes accordingly. Exams will not be cumulative. Exams will not be curved in the course. Exams are considered to be Major Scheduled Graded Events and therefore the University medical excuse policy which allows one student signed honor statement attesting to illness does not apply to them. There will be no extra credit opportunities offered for this course. Exams are not returned to students; students who wish to review their exam should arrange to meet Dr. Hitchens in her office during office hours.

*Make-up policy.* See policy details under classroom business.

#### **2. Quizzes (20%)**

You will have a total of five short quizzes, which will (all together) account for a total of 20% of your overall grade. Quizzes will be given during the first 10 minutes of class, so be sure to arrive on time. Students who arrive late will only be given the time remaining to complete their quiz (i.e., if you are 3 minutes late, you will have 7 minutes to complete your quiz); students who arrive more than 10 minutes late will not be allowed to take the quiz. I will be sure to send an email to the whole class letting you know what the quiz will cover. Content eligible to appear on quizzes includes the lectures, classroom discussions, course readings, and any other activities that are assigned. All content mentioned in lectures or that appears on the PowerPoint slides are fair game for quizzes, so take notes accordingly. Please plan accordingly, as I will not make any exceptions to this policy. No late assignments will be accepted unless

they are accompanied by a signed doctor's note and arrangements are discussed with me prior to the assignment deadline.

### 3. Group Project [Paper + Presentation] (25%)

You will have one group project, which will account for a total of 25% of your overall grade. The Group Project will include a *group paper* (50 points) and *group presentation* (100 points). Scores for the group presentation will be based on both the professor's assessments and students in the audience. Students will investigate a specific type of violence that our nation struggles with today or an ongoing violent conflict that our nation experiences. Students can select topics such as the prevalence of school shootings in America, or other topics such as intimate partner violence, urban gun violence, gang violence, hate-motivated violence, mass shootings, genocide, or terrorism. Students will continuously research and investigate the violence type of their choice throughout the semester, so it is crucial to select a violent crime that is interesting to them. Students will demonstrate their ongoing engagement with their selected type of violence by learning as much as they can about it (via research using academic sources) and developing an original, unique intervention strategy to combat this particular type of violence. More details will be provided as time approaches.

### 4. Anonymous Group Peer Evaluation Worksheet (5%)

Each member of the group will use a rubric to evaluate all group members (excluding self). The rubric will become available on the day of group assignments so that you all will know how to evaluate your peers and how they are evaluating you. The completed evaluation should be done in Word and uploaded to ELMS by **Friday, May 12 by 11:59 PM**. You can upload it any time after your presentation, by the due date. Note: Any student who fails to evaluate his/her peers will have 5 points deducted from their presentation grade. If any group member is discovered to be free riding on the work of others, their presentation grade will be lowered. A more detailed guide on the assignment and grading criteria will be posted on ELMS.

### 5. Participation (10%)

Participation grades will be based on both active participation throughout the semester and attendance during the group presentations (Weeks 13 – 15). From Weeks 1 – 12, I will not take attendance but will expect you attend to lecture and contribute some sort of active behavior (examples: engaging in discussions, asking questions, answering questions etc.) during class. Simply showing up will not be a part of your grade. You are expected to arrive on time and remain throughout the entire duration of the lecture. Participation is an ongoing process; therefore, your participation grade will not be posted until the end of the semester. Participation points can only be earned during lectures, so if you are absent from a lecture, you will not earn participation points for that day. No extra credit will be offered in the course.

### COURSE GRADE

<i>Grades will be determined as follows:</i>		<i>Grades are based on following scale:</i>				
Exam 1 (in class)	20%		Grade	% of total	Grade	% of total
Exam 2 (online)	20%		A+	100-97	C+	79-77
Group Project	25%		A	96-93	C	76-73
Quizzes	20%		A-	92-90	C-	72-70
Group Peer Evaluation Worksheet	5%		B+	89-87	D+	69-67

Participation	10%		B	86-83	D	66-63
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		B-	82-80	D-	62-60
<i>Note:</i> <i>Course Grades are rounded at the professor's discretion</i>					F	Below 60

### **FINAL GRADES**

Your final course grade is based on the number of points you earn during the semester. If you think that I have miscalculated your points or didn't enter an assignment grade, you may contact me, and I will review the calculations. You may not email me to request that your grade be changed for any other reason (for example, to request additional points, rounding up, extra credit, redo an assignment, etc.), and it would be highly unethical for you to do so. Specifically, it is unethical to expect me to provide only one student with any special accommodations, and it would be unethical for me to falsify your record. **If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.**

### **KEYS TO PERFORMING WELL IN THIS CLASS:**

1. *Attend all class meetings.* The surest way to perform poorly in this class is to miss days. Think of attending class like a job; be there on time and pay attention.
2. *Review Keynote/PowerPoint slides.* Be sure to compare your notes from class with the Keynote/PowerPoint slides available on ELMS. Students will not obtain all the information they need to do well in the class if they only read the slides.
3. *Take detailed lecture notes.* A common theme for students who perform poorly in this course is to have poor notes. Another common theme is that students do not understand their own notes – this means that students do not understand the material during lecture and thus have almost no chance of correctly answering questions covering that material. Taking notes is not easy, so be prepared to work. A helpful suggestion is to type up your notes after each class. In the event that you miss class for any reason, *obtain the class notes from a classmate.* I will not provide class notes to students who are unable to attend class.
4. *Ask questions.* At times I may speak too fast, the material may be complicated, you may miss a line of argument, etc. But I cannot clarify unless I am made aware that something needs to be clarified. Times to ask questions are during class, before class, or in my office hours.
5. *Take advantage of my help.* Discussing lecture, reading and class materials and especially the writing assignment with me during my office hours can really help students. The key here, however, is to take advantage of this opportunity early.
6. *Take notes on the readings.* In particular, make sure you take notes on the questions I ask about the readings in class and during discussions.

### **CLASSROOM BUSINESS**

**ATTENDANCE:** Regular attendance to class is highly encouraged by Dr. Hitchens, as it is a key way to do well in the course. During class, I go over slides that provide key ideas, themes, and research that connect with your weekly readings. It is very hard to pass this class without regular attendance.

**ELMS:** I will be using ELMS to post materials related to our course such as the syllabus, readings, grades, and handouts. Go to <http://elms.umd.edu> and log in with your Directory ID (logon ID) and password to use this feature. I will send announcements via ELMS too. **Grades listed on ELMS are raw scores (percentages) and have not been weighted to calculate your final grade. Please do not rely on the Assignments or Total column to determine your final grade.** Graduating seniors are graded on the same scale as all other students.

**UMD COURSE RELATED POLICIES WEBSITE:** It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html> for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

**CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS:** This class explores issues that might invoke strong emotions. Therefore, you are expected to think openly and critically. You do not have to agree with the readings or others in the class, however you need to approach them with a critical and an open mind. You will find that not everyone will agree with you on principles that are important to you, and thus, listening to and engaging with others' points of view will be a valuable learning experience. Interesting and valuable discussions are best in an environment where everyone is comfortable to openly discuss and engage.

**EMAIL:** Students may email me or my graduate teaching assistant (Taryn Curie) with questions and/or concerns during the semester. However, it is the student's responsibility to determine whether I have already provided the desired information in class, on the syllabus, or on ELMS. In other words, before emailing either of us, please make sure that you can't answer your own question with information that I have already provided. Also, every email should have "CCJS 225:0101" or "Responses to Violence" in the subject line, and include an appropriate greeting (e.g., "Hello Dr. Hitchens") and closing in the body of the email. We will try my best to quickly respond, but you should expect a response between 24-48 hours of your email.

**DEMEANOR:** Fortunately, most students understand what they're here for and how to conduct themselves in a college-level class. Unfortunately, some don't. When I close the door to begin class, I expect that private conversations will end and I will have your attention for the duration of the class. Among the things I expect you not to be doing in class: putting your head down or sleeping, talking to each other during class, cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other disruptive behaviors.

**MAKEUP EXAM POLICY:** Students are encouraged to never miss an exam. In the event a student must miss an exam, makeup exams will only be given in cases of excused absences. Excused absences include: religious observances, mandatory military obligation, illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member, required participation in university activities, death in the immediate family, and required court appearances. Official documentation is required. Exams are considered to be Major Scheduled Graded Events and therefore the University medical excuse policy which allows one student signed honor statement attesting to illness **does not apply** to them. I will not accept a Health Center honor statement to verify an illness. If you go to the Health Center and a doctor will not write you a note, you will need to get a copy of your medical record from them to verify your illness. By law, you are entitled to get a copy of this and it is your responsibility to do so.

I must be notified by email or in person **PRIOR** to missing an exam for me to consider giving you a makeup. *If you have a problem on the day of an exam*, please email me and inform me of the nature of the situation. Even if this means you have to use your cell phone to send me a quick email, I need to be

notified in advance. If you know in advance that you will not be able to take a scheduled exam on time with an approved absence, you will be expected to take the exam **prior** to the exam date. All makeup exams/assignments must be completed within two weeks of the missed exam/assignment. Makeup exams may be a different format than the original exam. Failure to adhere to these policies will result in a grade of zero for the exam.

**USE OF TECHNOLOGY:** In this class, students will be allowed to use their personal computers to take class notes. If a student is found to be using personal technology devices in any way that is not related to taking class notes, the student will lose the privilege of using any personal technology device for the duration of the semester. I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand. Research is mounting on the benefits of taking notes by hand than typing them on a computer for effective learning. All cell phones need to be silenced when class begins. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** If I find you texting, you will get a verbal warning first and then a second warning will be delivered by email. If I have to warn you three times, I will drop you from the class.

**DISABILITY SUPPORT:** I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) and who provide me with a University of Maryland ADS Accommodation Documentation plan. This documentation must be emailed to me by ADS no later than **February 6, 2023**. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with ADS or who do not provide me with documentation that has not been reviewed by ADS after February 6, 2023. ADS students who require additional time for exams are expected to take the exam during the same time period as the rest of the class and must plan their time so they complete the exam before the open window closes.

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:** If you are unable to take the any exams during the allotted exam period due to a religious observance, you will need to discuss this with me by **February 6, 2023**.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

*Below is the course outline; note that it is subject to modification. All non-book readings are available on ELMS.*

<b>Class Schedule of Topics and Readings</b>		<b>Readings</b>
WEEK 1	WEDNESDAY (Jan 25) <b>-Introduction to Course</b> -Syllabus	
	MONDAY (Jan 30) <b>-Violence in an American Society: Defining Violence</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 1
WEEK 2	WEDNESDAY (Feb 1) <b>-Violence in an American Society: Historical Context</b>	(1) “Prologue” and “Bloody Edgefield” in <i>All God’s Children: The Bosket Family and the American Tradition of Violence</i> (Butterfield) (2) “Prologue” in <i>In My Father’s House</i> (Butterfield)
	MONDAY (Feb 6) <b>-Measuring Violent Crime in America</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 1 (2) “Racial and Ethnic Patterns in Criminality and Victimization” (Like-Haislip)
WEEK 3	WEDNESDAY (Feb 8) <b>-Theories of Violence</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 2
	MONDAY (Feb 13)	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 3

	- Assault and Murder: Overview (Part 1)	
	<b>Quiz #1: Monday, Feb 13</b>	
WEEK 4	WEDNESDAY (Feb 15) - Assault and Murder: Overview (Part 2)	
	MONDAY (Feb 20) - Assault and Murder: Urban Gun Violence	(1) “The Politics of Murder and Revenge” (Duck) (2) The Long Reach of Violence: A Broader Perspective on Data, Theory, and Evidence on the Prevalence and Consequences of Exposure to Violence (Sharkey)
WEEK 5	WEDNESDAY (Feb 22) - Street Violence in the Era of Social Media	(1) “When Twitter Fingers Turn to Trigger Fingers: A Qualitative Study of Social Media-Related Gang Violence” (Patton et al) (2) “Code of the Tweet: Urban Gang Violence in the Social Media Age” (Stuart)
	MONDAY (Feb 27) - IN-CLASS TIME TO WORK ON GROUP PROJECT (1 of 3)	<b>Exam #1 Review</b>
	<b>Quiz #2: Monday, Feb 27</b>	
WEEK 6	WEDNESDAY (Mar 1) - Urban Violence Prevention/Intervention	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 12 (2) “Cure Violence: A Public Health Model to Reduce Gun Violence” (Butts et al) (3) “Street Participatory Action Research in Prison: A Methodology to Challenge Privilege and Power in Correctional Facilities” (Payne and Bryant)
	MONDAY (Mar 6)	<b>EXAM #1 (in class)</b>
WEEK 7	WEDNESDAY (Mar 8) - Perceptions of Violence in the News: Media Stereotypes along Racial and Class Lines	(1) “‘Action News’ & the Rise of Anti-Black Local ‘Crime’ Reporting” with Layla Jones ( <i>Citations Needed</i> Podcast); Saved on ELMS and available online at: <a href="https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/live-interview-action-news-the-rise-of-anti-black/id1258545975?i=1000566517326">https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/live-interview-action-news-the-rise-of-anti-black/id1258545975?i=1000566517326</a>
	<b>Group Contracts Due: Wednesday, Mar 8 (in class)</b>	
	MONDAY (Mar 13) - Serial, Mass and Spree Killing	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 4
	<b>Group Topics Due: Monday, Mar 13 (via email)</b>	
WEEK 8	WEDNESDAY (Mar 15) - Serial, Mass and Spree Killing	(1) “White Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry: The Racial Project in Explaining Mass Shootings (Mingus and Zopf)

		(2) 'Most Violence is not Caused by Mental Illness' ( <i>The Daily Podcast</i> ); Saved on ELMS and available online at: <a href="https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/most-violence-is-not-caused-by-mental-illness/id1200361736?i=1000565622865">https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/most-violence-is-not-caused-by-mental-illness/id1200361736?i=1000565622865</a>
	<b>Quiz #3: Wednesday, Mar 15</b>	
	<b>SPRING BREAK March 19-26</b>	
	MONDAY (Mar 27) - <b>Violence in the Home</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 5 (2) “Are You Safe to Talk?”: Perspectives of Service Providers on Experiences of Domestic Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic” (Leigh et al)
WEEK 9	WEDNESDAY (Mar 29) - <b>Rape and Sexual Assault</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 6
	MONDAY (Apr 3) - <b>Hate Crimes and Domestic Terrorism</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 8
	<b>Quiz #4: Monday, Apr 3</b>	
WEEK 10	WEDNESDAY (Apr 5) - <b>State Violence: International Terrorism</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 10
	MONDAY (Apr 10) - <b>State Violence: Genocide (Part 1)</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 11
WEEK 11	WEDNESDAY (Apr 12) - <b>State Violence: Genocide (Part 2)</b>	(1) Alvarez & Bachman – Chapter 11
	MONDAY (Apr 17) - <b>State Violence: Police Violence</b>  - <b>IN-CLASS TIME TO WORK ON GROUP PROJECT (2 of 3)</b>	(1) “Causes and Cures VII: Structural Violence” (Lee) (2) “The Slow Violence of State Organized Race Crime” (Ward) (3) “‘Police Took My Homie I Dedicate My Life 2 His Revenge’: Twitter Tensions Between Gang-Involved Youth and Police in Chicago” (Patton et al)
	<b>Quiz #5: Monday, Apr 17</b>	
WEEK 12	WEDNESDAY (Apr 19) - <b>Costs of Violence</b>	<b>Exam #2 Review</b>
	MONDAY (Apr 24)	<b>EXAM #2 (in class)</b>
WEEK 13	WEDNESDAY (Apr 26) - <b>IN-CLASS TIME TO WORK ON GROUP PROJECT (3 of 3)</b>	
	<b>Group Paper Due Date: Friday, April 28 by 11:59 PM via ELMS</b>	
	MONDAY (May 1) - <b>GROUP PROJECT 1, 2, 3</b>	



WEEK 14	WEDNESDAY (May 3) - <b>GROUP PROJECT 4, 5, 6</b>	
	MONDAY (May 8) - <b>GROUP PROJECT 7, 8, 9</b>	
WEEK 15	WEDNESDAY (May 10) <b>GROUP PROJECT 10, 11, 12</b> <b>Last Day of Class</b>	
	<b>Group Peer Evaluation Due Date: Friday, May 12 by 11:59 PM via ELMS</b>	