



Learning Objectives and Outcomes

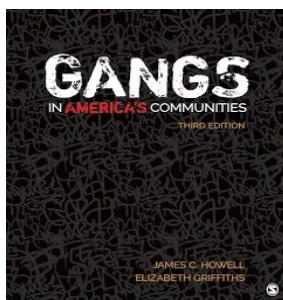
This elective course introduces students to the origins, evolution, and contemporary landscape of gangs in the United States. It examines major gang types—including street, transnational, outlaw motorcycle, and prison gangs—while exploring gang subculture, common myths, and the societal impact of gang activity. Students will analyze national trends, contributing factors, and the influence of gang violence on communities and criminal justice policy. The course also reviews key strategies for addressing gang issues, including suppression, enforcement, prevention, and intervention efforts.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

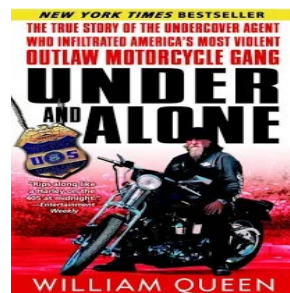
- Describe the historical origins and evolution of gangs in the United States and analyze current trends in gang violence, with emphasis on patterns in the DMV region.
- Examine gang formation and recruitment processes, assessing sociological factors, subcultural influences, and root causes contributing to gang persistence and expansion.
- Explain the dynamics of gang proliferation, including migration, diffusion, and imitation across communities and jurisdictions.
- Identify major youth/street gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs, and differentiate their structure, hierarchy, indicia, and organizational practices.
- Assess the societal impact of gangs and evaluate policies, legislation, and intervention strategies used to reduce gang activity and gang-related violence.

Required Resources

Course website: elms.umd.edu



Gangs in America's Communities
James C. Howell/Elizabeth Griffiths
ISBN-13: 978-1544300221
March 16, 2018- 3rd Edition



Under and Alone
William Queen
ISBN-13: 9780345487520
June 2007

Shawn Eastman

seastman@umd.edu

Class Meets

Thursdays

3:30 pm - 6 pm

Building III

Room TBD

Office Hours

Contact me

Prerequisites

N/A

Course Communication

Time sensitive information will be sent via ELMS announcement. To discuss questions, absences, or accommodation, you may contact me via email (listed above) or via ELMS. Here is a link with helpful guidance on writing professional emails: ter.ps/email



Campus Policies

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 professor conduct.
- Accessibility and accommodations.
- Attendance and excused absences.
- Grades and appeals.
- Copyright and intellectual property.

Please visit 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.

****Information on emergency closings:** We follow USG and not College Park for closing information. To sign up for Universities at Shady Grove alerts, visit: <https://shadygrove.usmd.edu/campus-resources/campus-alerts>.

Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

This class will consist of discussions, lectures, videos, written assignments, quizzes, guest speakers, and simulations. The assignments to follow in this syllabus are general instructions. See specific instructions for each assignment.

Submitting Assignments and Late Penalties

All assignments, to include knowledge checks and written submissions, must be submitted via ELMS. Assignments will only be accepted for full credit when they are received by the beginning of class on the due date assigned. For every day that a submission is late, 5% will be deducted from the total score (starting on the due date after the time deadline). All papers must be related to the assigned topic. All assignments must be the original work of the student.

Knowledge Check

There will be three knowledge checks throughout the semester, each worth 50 points. A Knowledge Check tests your knowledge of the material covered in class. The format may consist of multiple choice, true/false, and/or short answer/essay style questions. Unless it is an excused absence, there will be no opportunity to make up a missed Knowledge Check.

Each Knowledge Check, numbered 1-3, will appear in the "Quiz" feature on ELMS.

- Knowledge Check 1- Due 10/1
- Knowledge Check 2- Due 11/12
- Knowledge Check 3- Due 12/10

Under and Alone Book Review and Research Paper

Students will read *Under and Alone* by William Queen and complete a five-page research-based paper analyzing the undercover investigation. The paper must include:

- A brief summary of the book
- Research on the Mongols Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (at least two reputable sources)
- An evaluation of the investigation, including two legal hurdles, plus a comparison to a similar case using one additional source
- Personal reflections on the book and the investigation



Full instructions are provided in the document titled “Under and Alone Book Review/Research Paper” under “Files” on ELMS. The assignment is worth 200 points and is due 12/3.

Gangs Town Hall Exercise

Students will complete four written assignments over the semester; all connected to a scenario involving increased gang activity in a fictional county. Each assignment asks students to apply course concepts to different aspects of the problem. Detailed instructions for each assignment, including formatting requirements and the scoring rubric, will be provided separately.

For the final assignment, each student will be assigned a stakeholder role (such as law enforcement, educators, parents, local government, defense attorneys, ACLU, etc.) and will write from that stakeholder’s perspective. A Town Hall exercise will take place in class, where students will discuss and defend their positions. The Town Hall discussion itself is not graded, but participation is required, and the written Assignment 4 will support that in-class activity.

Full instructions are provided in the document titled “Gangs Town Hall Exercise” under “Files” on ELMS. Assignments 1 and 2 are each worth 25 points and require students to apply one course concept. Assignment 3 is worth 50 points and requires one course concept. Assignment 4 is worth 50 points and requires two course concepts. All assignments must follow APA format.

- Gangs Town Hall Exercise Assignment 1- Due 9/17
- Gangs Town Hall Exercise Assignment 2- Due 10/8
- Gangs Town Hall Exercise Assignment 1- Due 10/29
- Gangs Town Hall Exercise Assignment 1- Due 11/19

Final Participation Requirement

Active participation in the Town Hall on December 10, 2026, is required. Students who do not participate and do not have an excused absence will receive a 10% deduction from the total project score (maximum drops from 150 to 135 points).

Participation and Attendance

Punctuality & Participation:

Students are expected to arrive on time for all classes, whether held in person or online. Tardiness is disruptive.

While participation is not graded per se, active involvement is a critical part of the learning process. This includes:

- Engaging in discussions.
- Participating in group and individual class activities.
- Maintaining respectful interaction with both the professor and fellow students.

Electronic Device Policy:

Use of electronic devices, such as laptops, tablets, and other portable technology is permitted in class only for official academic purposes, including:

- Taking notes.
- Accessing course materials.
- Participating in course-related activities.



All other uses, including but not limited to texting, browsing social media, watching videos, or working on assignments for other classes, are not allowed during class time, as they are disruptive to both the student and the learning environment.

Students who misuse devices may be asked to put them away and could lose the privilege of using them in future classes. If you require the use of a device for accessibility purposes, please inform me at the beginning of the semester.

AI Policy:

In this course, responsible use of AI is permitted and encouraged where appropriate, provided students adhere to academic integrity standards and follow the provided guidelines. AI may support your work, but it cannot replace your critical thinking, analysis, or original contributions. In sum, it is to be used as a tool and not a crutch. You are fully responsible for the accuracy, completeness, and integrity of any material you submit, even if AI assisted you. Examples of use include brainstorming ideas, reviewing concepts or summarizing reading, generating practice questions or explanations, checking grammar, spelling, and formatting and clarifying confusing concepts. Please beware that AI has citation issues, so you must be sure to cite your work and ensure the citation is accurate. You must be able to answer follow up questions related to your work. The University of Maryland has its own AI tool called TerpAI and can be found by visiting <https://ai.umd.edu/resources/services/terpai>.

Final Class Participation Requirement:

Each student is expected to be prepared for and actively contribute to the Town Hall discussion during the final class. Students who fail to participate in the final discussion without an excused absence will receive a 10% deduction from their total project score (e.g., the maximum score will be reduced from 150 to 135 points).

Absences & Excused Leave:

Single-Class Absence (Medical).

- Make every effort to notify me in advance via email or phone.
- Upon return, submit a self-signed note confirming the medical absence.
- Providing false or inaccurate information is a violation of the Honor Code.

Multiple Absences (Medical).

- Three or more medically related absences requires official documentation from a healthcare provider.

Major Graded Events (e.g., Exams or Presentations).

- Students must notify me in advance and provide a doctor's note to be excused.
- Students with a valid, documented excuse are entitled to makeup up work at a mutually agreed-upon time.

Requesting an Excused Absence

- Excused absences are granted at the professor's discretion.
- All arrangements must be confirmed via email between the student and professor.
- Make-up work and late assignments will be accepted in these cases only if agreed upon in advance.
- Students are responsible for obtaining missed materials from the professor or classmates.

If you have a hardship please contact me as soon as possible so we can work out a solution. The key is communication and prompt notification. If you let me know of an issue we almost certainly can work out a solution. I am more than happy to work with someone that has a valid issue(s) they are experiencing.



For this course, some of your assignments will be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit [Turnitin Originality Checker for Students](#).

Get Some Help!

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you. Everyone can use some help sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by scheduling an appointment with the campus Macklin Center for Academic & Leadership Success. You may learn more about the resources to support you by visiting <https://shadygrove.umd.edu/student-affairs/leadership-communication>. If you just need someone to talk to, visit counseling.umd.edu or [one of the many other resources on campus](#), such as the Center for Counseling & Well-being. You can navigate to and schedule an appointment for any of these resources after visiting the website <https://shadygrove.umd.edu/student-affairs>.



Most services are “free” because you have already paid for it... all you must do is ask for it.

Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live and believe this may affect your performance in this course, please visit go.umd.edu/basic-needs for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

Grades

Grades are not given but earned. Students can expect that the final grade appearing in the “Grade” feature on ELMS is their final grade. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually. 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.

As previously mentioned, students may review their progress at any time by entering the “Grade” feature in ELMS. You will have an ongoing opportunity to evaluate your progress in this course and decide if you need to make any adjustments (additional study, tutoring, conference with professor etc.) to assure your success in this course. If you would like to review any of your grades, or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet. Unless previously arranged, late work will not be accepted for course credit so please plan to have it submitted before the scheduled deadline. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake, I will immediately correct it. ELMS can be accessed via the following link:

<https://myelms.umd.edu/login>

You may consider seeking assistance from the Universities at Shady Grove’s (USG) Student Affairs & Career Readiness office, located on the Shady Grove campus.

Mission: The Universities at Shady Grove’s (USG) Division of Student Affairs & Career Readiness (SACR) is committed to supporting you in your journey to becoming career-ready and prepared for the world of work. We



define career readiness as having the academic skills, key competencies and work experience you need to succeed in the workplace. Our portfolio of services provides you with the tools you need to launch into the workplace prepared, competitive, and ready to thrive.

SACR offers the following services:

- Writing appointments for feedback on assignments and personal statements.
- Statistics and Research Methods assistance with course work, projects, and presentations.
- Academic coaching on time management and study strategies.
- Disability support services for students registered with accommodations.
- Peer-led programs for targeted courses including Guided Study Sessions and Writing Fellows.

Name of Learning Assessments, Number of Assignments (#), Points (each assignment), Category Point Total, and Category Percentage Weight

<u>Name of Learning Assessment</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Points (each)</u>	<u>Category Point Total</u>	<u>Category Percentage Weight</u>
Town Hall Assignments	4	25/50	150	30%
Knowledge Checks	3	50	150	30%
Book Review & Research Paper	1	200	200	40%
Totals	8		500	100%

A+: 97% and above B+: 87% - 89%

A: 94% - 96% B: 84% - 86%

A-: 90% - 93% B-: 80% - 83%

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. Grades are rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, a final score of 89.5% will be rounded to 90% and recorded as an A-.

Course Schedule (Tentative schedule; check ELMS for updates)

Class	Date	Subject	Content
1	9/3	Course Overview & Chapters 2, 3, 4 & 6	Introduction to Gangs, Myths & Realities of Youth Gangs, Defining Gangs & Gang Members, Early Gang Theories & Modern-Day Applications, Girls & Gangs
2	9/10	Chapters 2, 3, 4 & 6	Introduction to Gangs, Myths & Realities of Youth Gangs, Defining Gangs & Gang Members, Early Gang Theories & Modern-Day Applications, Girls & Gangs continued, Town Hall 1 Directions



Gangs

CCJS405

Fall 2026

3	9/17	Chapter 1, Town Hall 1 Due	History of Gangs
4	9/24	Instructor's Presentation, Chapter 7	Regional Perspective & Case Discussion
5	10/1	Instructor's Presentation, Knowledge Check 1 Due	Gang Awareness & Identification, Town Hall 2 Directions
6	10/8	Chapters 5 & 8, Town Hall 2 Due	Social Media & Gangs
7	10/15	Instructor's Presentation	Gang Involvement as Developmental Trajectory, Homicide & Violence
8	10/22	Chapter 7 & 9	National Gang Problem Trends, What Works: Gang Prevention, Town Hall 3 Directions
9	10/29	Instructor's Presentation, Town Hall 3 Due	Hispanic Gangs, Town Hall 3 Directions
10	11/5	Instructor's Presentation	African American Gangs & Folk/People Nation
11	11/12	Instructor's Presentation, Knowledge Check 2 Due	Prison Gangs, Town Hall 4 Directions
12	11/19	Instructor's Presentation, Town Hall 4 Due	Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs
13	11/26	No Class	Thanksgiving Break
14	12/3	Instructor's Presentation, Under and Alone Paper Due	Gang Policy & Legislation
15	12/10	Town Hall, Knowledge Check 3 Due	Town Hall Discussion