**SOC 1440**

**Intimate Violence**

Prof. Gregory C. Elliott Semester I, 2014-2015

Maxcy 202 M-W-F, 11:00-11:50

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For a more complete description of the course, please go to:

[Canvas.Brown.edu](https://brown.instructure.com/courses/179468)

This course will explore sociological perspectives that help us understand acts of violence between people who are involved in or pursuing an intimate relationship. Its purpose is to get beyond the superficial understandings that arise from intuitive approaches to the issue, in order to develop a rigorous analysis of the structural and personal factors that facilitate and inhibit violent behavior in intimate relationships. Although this is a lecture course, I encourage active participation by registered students. An understanding of the sociological perspective is important for full and effective involvement in the classes. Students with no prior courses in Sociology should see me before registering for this course

We will begin with sociological and social-psychological theories of aggression and violence in general, including the frustration-aggression hypothesis and shame as a precursor to violence. Because intimate violence is so often entangled with issues of gender, we will be focusing on the contributions of gender socialization to the problem. We will consider two factors popularly considered to be contributors to intimate violence: pornography and alcohol abuse. Finally, we will investigate specific forms of intimate violence: partner abuse, child abuse, and sexual aggression (including “date rape”); with each topic, we will examine the empirical studies conducted to date and will interpret the results of this research in light of the theories of intimate violence that guided them.

Because this is a course in the Sociology Department, we will apply distinctly sociological perspectives to discover the personal and social processes that would contribute to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Where appropriate, we will borrow from other disciplines (e.g., psychology), to broaden our perspectives, but the essence of our analysis will be founded on sociological principles.

To facilitate analytical acumen, we will view weekly screenings of films (documentary or fictional) appropriate to the topic at issue. The screenings will take place on Wednesdays, at 6:30 PM. For pedagogical reasons, we will view the films together. It is therefore important that you commit to these weekly screenings; if you must miss a particular screening, please let me know in advance. In addition, you will conduct a sociological analysis of each film, providing a two-page essay in which you apply the abstract concepts and processes of Sociology to the material in the film.

A note for non-concentrators: In order to do well in this class, it will be necessary to learn how to view things from a sociological perspective. I will be asking you to bring the theories and concepts of sociology to bear on the phenomenon of intimate violence. I am not asking you to “convert” to the sociological perspective; if, when the semester is over, you find the sociological paradigms unsatisfactory, you may continue to look for other ways of understanding this problem. But I am asking you to try on the sociological lens for one semester’s good faith effort at comprehending intimate violence in a new way.

Grades will be determined in part by your performance on a series of papers. A total of three (3) papers, each 15 pages, will be required. In each paper, you will be asked to extend the sociological perspective presented in the class lectures and the readings to a concrete issue or circumstance relevant to the topic at hand. More details will be given in the information sheets for each topic. Each paper will be worth 25% of the final grade.

The second source of evaluation is class participation. Although this is a lecture course, I will elicit your understandings of how the concepts and processes of Sociology come to bear on the kind of violence under consideration in each class meeting. Each week, on Tuesday, I will lecture, often using material not found in the readings; on Thursday, we will integrate material from Tuesday’s lecture, the weekly film, and the readings in an open class discussion. The class discussions constitute an excellent way to practice your analytical skills in preparation for the papers. Participation contributes 25% to your final grade

A final concern: This course focuses on issues that are deeply disturbing; as a result, it is quite easy to lose one’s analytic frame and adopt an emotional or ideological approach to intimate violence. Although perhaps personally cathartic, such approaches interfere with a thorough understanding of the complex processes that underlie violence in intimate relationships. To help you organize and understand these reactions, I ask you to keep a weekly journal, in which you record your thoughts, feelings, and insights concerning the issues covered by the week's readings and class discussion. On Fridays, please pass in the journal of your reactions to that week's issues. I believe that it would be helpful for you to integrate your spontaneous (and perhaps emotional) responses with more analytical assessment of these issues. As I review your journals, I will suggest connections, further readings, or particular theories and concepts that could help you with this task. Be assured that confidentiality will be strictly preserved. The journal entries need be only as long as you require to express yourself adequately. They will not be graded.

For survivors of intimate violence or those otherwise deeply affected by it, I will endeavor to provide a safe learning environment that will be sensitive to and respectful of your experiences. This course is not designed to provide direct therapeutic relief to individual students. However, I recognize the need for a venue to confront the painful personal issues that might arise as a consequence of participating in So 1440; accordingly, I have made arrangements with Psychological Services, the Office of the Chaplain, and the Office of Student Life to be available for students who may need to discuss their personal experiences of intimate violence and work through questions that remain.

By the same token, this course is not the appropriate arena to advance a particular ideological polemic on the subject of intimate violence. There are other venues for the pursuit of such a goal. I expect students in this course to be open to new and often counterintuitive ways of understanding a very difficult social phenomenon.

In sum, ***it is very important for the success of this course that all students maintain an analytic perspective on the issues that we will confront during the semester***.I ask each of you to make a sincere effort in this regard. If you believe that it will be too difficult for you to maintain an analytic perspective, please see me; you may wish to reconsider participating in this course.

**COURSE READINGS**

The following books are used in this course. They are available in the Brown Bookstore and are also on reserve in Rockefeller Library.

REQUIRED:

Barnett, O. W., C. L. Miller-Perrin, and R. D. Perrin. 2005. *Family Violence across the Lifespan: An Introduction* (second edition)*.* Sage.

Beck, A. T. 1999. *Prisoners of Hate: The Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility, and Violence.* Perennial.

Higgins, G. O. 1996. *Resilient Adults: Overcoming a Cruel Path.* Jossey-Bass.

Rubin, L. 1983. *Intimate Strangers: Men and Women Together*. HarperCollins.

Straus, M. 2001. *Beating the Devil Out of Them: Corporal Punishment in American Families and Its Effects on Children* (second edition). Transaction.

RECOMMENDED:

Gelles, R. J. 1997. *The Book of David: How Preserving Families Can Cost Children's Lives.* Basic Books.

Lefkowitz, Bernard. 1998. *Our Guys: The Glen Ridge Rape and the Secret Life of the Perfect Suburb.* Vintage.

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**Course Outline**

I. Introduction (First Class)

II. Theories of Aggression (Two Weeks)

III. Gender and Intimate Violence (One Week)

IV. The Role of Possible Predispositional Factors: Pornography (One Week)

V. The Role of Possible Predispositional Factors: Alcohol Abuse (One

Week)

VI. Child Physical Abuse (One Week)

VII. Child Sexual Abuse (One Week)

VIII. Child Psychological Abuse (One Week)

IX. The Miracle of Resilience (One Week)

X. Violence between Partners (Two Weeks)

XI. Sexual Aggression in Intimate Relationships (Two Weeks)

Your options for the papers are as follows:

Paper #1: Topics IV or V;

Paper #2: Topics, VI, VII, or VIII;

Paper #3: Topics IX, X or XI.

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**Course Syllabus**

Note: All readings on this syllabus that are taken from books are on reserve in Rockefeller Library; books that have been assigned in their entirety are also available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore. Readings originally published in professional journals are marked by an asterisk (\*) and are available on OCRA (Online Course Reserve Access).

I. Introduction

Required:

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* (second edition). 2005. Ch. 1:“History and definitions of family violence.”

\*S.M. Cunningham. 2000. “What we teach when we teach about violence.” *The HFG Review, 4,* 4-9.

II. Theories of Aggression

Required:

A.T. Beck. *Prisoners of Hate*, entire book.

Film Screening: *Bowling for Columbine*

III. Gender and Intimate Violence

Required:

\*C. West and D.H. Zimmerman. 1991. “Doing gender.” Pp. 13-37 in J. Lorber and S.A. Farrell (eds.), *The Social Construction of Gender*, Sage.

L.B. Rubin. 1983. *Intimate Strangers*, entire book.

Film Screening: *Bastard out of Carolina*

IV. The Role of Possible Predispositional Factors: Pornography

Required:

\*G.M. Hald, N.M. Malamuth, and C. Yuen. 2010. “Pornography and attitudes supporting violence against women: Revisiting the relationship in nonexperimental studies.” *Aggressive Behavior*, *36*, 14-20.

\*J.H. Shope. 2004. “When words are not enough: The search for the effect of pornography on abused women.” *Violence against Women*, *10*, 56-72.

Recommended

V. Vega and N.M. Malamuth. 2007. “Predicting sexual aggression: The role of pornography in the context of general and specific risk factors. *Aggressive Behavior*, *33*, 104-117.

Film Screening: *Not a Love Story: A Film about Pornography*

V. The Role of Possible Predispositional Factors: Alcohol Abuse

Required:

\*D.B. Heath. 1983. “Alcohol and aggression: A ‘missing link’ in worldwide perspective.” Pp. 89-103 in E. Gottheil, K. A. Druley, T. E. Skoloda, and H. M. Waxman (Eds.), *Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Aggression*. Charles C. Thomas.

\*D.H. Coleman and M.A. Straus. 1983. “Alcohol abuse and family violence.” Pp. 104-124 in E. Gottheil, K. A. Druley, T. E. Skoloda, and H. M. Waxman (Eds.), *Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Aggression*. Charles C. Thomas.

\*H.M. Foran and K.D. O’Leary. 2008. “Problem drinking, jealousy, and anger control: Variables predicting physical aggression against a partner.” *Journal of Family Violence, 23,* 141-148.

Film Screening: *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

VI. Child Physical Abuse

Required:

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* Ch. 3:“Physical child abuse.”

M.A. Straus, *Beating the Devil out of Them,* entire book.

\*L. Margolin. 1992. “Beyond maternal blame: Physical child abuse as a phenomenon of gender.” *Journal of Family Issues*, *13*, 410-423.

\*G.C. Elliott, R. Avery, E. Fishman, and B. Hoshiko. 2002. “The encounter with family violence and risky sexual activity among young adolescent females.” *Violence and Victims, 17,* 569-592.

Recommended:

G. Young and T. Gately. 1988. “Neighborhood impoverishment and child maltreatment: An analysis from an ecological perspective.” *Journal of Family Issues*, *9*, 240-254.

L.H. Pelton. 1978. “Child abuse and neglect: The myth of classlessness.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *48*, 608-617.

Film Screening: *Good Will Hunting*

VII. Child Sexual Abuse

Required:

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* Ch. 4:“Child sexual abuse.”

\*J.A. Hunter, D.W. Goodwin, and R.J. Wilson. 1992. “Attributions of blame in child sexual abuse victims: An analysis of age and gender influences.” *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *1*, 75-89.

\*F.K. Grossman, L. Sorsoli, M. Kia-Keating. 2006. “A gale force wind: Meaning making by male survivors of childhood sexual abuse.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *76(4)*, 434-443.

Recommended:

L.A. Fontes (Ed.). 1995. *Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures: Treatment and Prevention.* Sage.

Film Screening: *The War Zone*

VIII. Child Psychological Abuse

Required:

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* Ch. 6:“Child psychological abuse.”

\*M. Webb, D. Heisler, S. Call, S.A. Chickering, and T. Colburn. 2007. “Shame, guilt, symptoms of depression, and reported history of psychological maltreatment.” *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *31*, 1143-1153.

\*E.M. DeRobertis. 2012. “Becoming verbally aggressive toward one’s child: A study of the mother’s perspective.” *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *21*, 422-439.

Recommended:

\*E.D. Krause, T. Medelson, and T.R. Lynch. 2003. “Childhood emotional invalidation and adult psychological distress: The mediating role of emotional inhibition.” *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *27*, 199-213.

Film Screening: *Affliction*

IX. The Miracle of Resilience

Required:

G.O. Higgins. 1996. *Resilient Adults: Overcoming a Cruel Path.* Jossey-Bass.

\*J. Williams and D. Nelson-Gardell. 2012. “Predicting resilience in sexually abused adolescents.” *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *36*, 53-63.

\*D. Iwaniec, E. Larkin, and S. Higgins. 2006. “Research review: Risk and resilience in cases of emotional abuse.” *Child and Family Social Work*, *11*, 73-82.

Recommended:

L. Rubin. 1996. *The Transcendent Child: Tales of Triumph over the Past.* Harper Perennial.

R.J. Gelles. 1996. *The Book of David: How Preserving Families Can Cost Children’s Lives.* Basic Books.

X. Violence between Partners

Required:

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* Ch. 9:“Intimate partner violence in adult relationships.”

\*N.K. Denzin. 1984. “Toward a phenomenology of domestic family violence.” *American Journal of Sociology*, *90*, 483-513.

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* Ch.10:“Intimate partner violence: Abused partners.”

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* Ch.11:“Intimate partner violence: Abusive partners.”

\*C.T. Kenney and S.S. McLanahan. 2006. “Why are cohabiting relationships more violent than marriages?” *Demography, 43,* 127-140

Recommended:

R.A. Berk, A. Campbell, R. Klap, and B. Western. 1992. “The deterrent effect of arrest in incidents of domestic violence: A Bayesian analysis of four field experiments.” *American Sociological Review, 57,* 698-708.

K.J. Ferraro and J.M. Johnson. 1983. “How women experience battering: The process of victimization.” *Social Problems, 30*, 325-335.

Film Screening: *The Burning Bed*

XI. Sexual Aggression

Required:

O.W. Barnett, C.L. Miller-Perrin, and R.D. Perrin, *Family Violence across the Lifespan,* Ch. 8:“Dating violence and sexual assault.”

\*W. Celis, III. 1990. “Date rape and a list at Brown.” *New York Times*, Nov. 18, 1990, Section 1, p. 26, col. 1.

\*T.W. Maurer, and D.W. Robinson. 2007. “Effects of attire, alcohol, and gender on perceptions of date rape.” *Sex Roles, 58,* 423-434.

\*S.. Murnen and M.H. Kohlman. 2007. “Athletic participation, fraternity membership, and sexual aggression among college men: A meta-analytic review.” *Sex Roles, 57,* 145-157.

\*S. Razack. 1994. “What is to be gained by looking White people in the eye? Culture, race, and gender in cases of sexual violence.” *Signs*, *19*, 894-923.

\*H.T. Littleton, C.R. Breitkopf, and A. Berenson. 2008. “Beyond the campus: Unacknowledged rape among low-income women. *Violence against Women, 14,* 269-286.

Recommended:

J.L. Gossett and S. Byrne. 2002. “‘Click here’: A content analysis of internet rape sites.” *Gender and Society*, *16*, 689-709.

R.M. Emerson, K.O. Ferris, and C.B. Gardner. 1998. “On being stalked.” *Social Problems, 45,* 289-314.

K.A. Black and K.A. McCloskey. 2013. “Predicting date rape perceptions: The effects of gender, gender role attitudes, and victim resistance.” *Violence against Women*, *19*, 949-967.

S.A. Basow and A. Minieri. “‘You owe me”: Effects of date cost, who pays, participant gender, and rape myth beliefs on perceptions of rape*. Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *26*, 479-497.

Film Screening: *The Accused*