

# Terrorism, Violence, & Aggression Syllabus

*Tell me and I forget; teach me and I remember; involve me and I learn—Benjamin Franklin*

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**SOCIOLOGY 3569**

**Fall 2012 (Sec 10)**

**6:00—8:30 pm**

**Thurs (BehS 112)**

## COURSE CONTENT

As citizens of an increasingly complex and often terrifying world, we live with daily threats of terrorism, violence, and aggression to greater or lesser degrees. Students of sociology and criminology have long been concerned with these uneasy topics, and continue to pursue some understanding of perpetrators, conditions, societal structures, and political regimes that may encourage such hostility toward one's fellowman. *SOC 3965* will explore various aspects of these subjects as they relate primarily to contemporary life and society.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Each student, upon completion of this course, should be able to recognize, define, and understand core issues of *Terrorism, Violence, & Aggression*. Students will gain a working knowledge of the key elements of the content identified as critical to this field of learning. Students will be able to describe and discuss the various forms of terrorism as well as basic history and theories pertaining to terroristic threats. Students will also be capable of a microanalysis of violence, including the ability to deconstruct the motivations and actions of serial killers, school shooters, domestic terrorists, and other radical offenders. Lastly, students will appreciate the cultural and structural aspects of violence and aggression within a societal setting.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The format of the course will include lecture, student participation and class discussions concerning the core texts, along with student book reports on related topics.

## EVALUATION METHODS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Most upper-level, undergraduate courses in the social sciences require students to demonstrate mastery of material through successful completion of reading, assignments, AND participation. For *SOC 3569*, three *book reports* will contribute **30% each** to the course grade. The remaining **10%** of the course grade will reflect class participation (notations are made of level of responses during discussions). The purpose of this type of system is to assure maximum results through an ongoing effort by students to stay abreast of course materials, particularly the assigned readings. Success will be greatly impacted by familiarity with information *before each class period*, with students coming prepared to participate in class discussions (more about all of the assignments in the syllabus).

- A** An *excellent* work in all or nearly all aspects of the assignment. The student exemplifies originality of ideas, superior depth of thought, and extensive grasp of topics as well as technical superiority.
- B** A competent work with a lapse here or there. Ideas are clear and properly expressed; the writing is technically solid. The assignment is effective in meeting all criteria but does not rise to sustained distinction.
- C** An adequate work, but not good. Student ideas tend to be oversimplified, reductionistic, and lack sufficient explanation or exploration. Problems may also exist with grammar, logic, or ability to express thoughts in a manner reflective of a junior level class.
- D** A minimal effort by the student—the work is marred by problems with almost all aspects of the assignment. This is not considered a competent performance.
- E** A failing mark, generally reserved for assignments which are not submitted or miss the target on virtually every criteria of the project.
- +/-** Plus or minus may be given in addition to each of the grade levels when deemed appropriate by the professor.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Combs, Cynthia (2011). *Terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed). Boston: Longman/Pearson.

Langman, Peter (2009). *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Vronsky, Peter (2004). *Serial Killers: The Method & Madness of Monsters*. Berkley Trade Publishing.

## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (CDS), 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. Please discuss any concerns with the professor as soon as possible. ([www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/aca/guide/faculty/](http://www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/aca/guide/faculty/)).

## PARTICIPATION

Research indicates that students who attend class on a regular basis earn higher marks than those who do not. SOC 3569 has been purposely designed to reward those who attend, having read the assigned chapters *in advance*, prepared to discuss the material. Class size notwithstanding, each student will be able to discuss important aspects of the texts under consideration on a regular basis. One of several marks (+, √, √-, or 0/N) will be noted on the student's card for each time they are called to comment in class. Participation contributes **10%** to the overall course grade, and represents a very critical part of the student's effort. Participation marks will be available for student's perusal upon request before or after class, or by appointment.

## BOOK REPORTS

For SOC 3965, three *book reports* (one on each of the core texts) contribute **30%** each of the course grade. The book report is a serious and important part of the overall class effort, meant to evidence to the instructor the student's working knowledge of topics presented, and will be discussed in depth as the term progresses.

1. **2000 words minimum** (double spaced);
2. 200 word abstract (single space—right and left justified margins);
3. introductory paragraph with overview of entire paper, body, conclusion;
4. an analysis/evaluation of the volume (may be written in first-person and should include student opinions);
5. 10 point academic font, double-spaced, one-inch margins;
6. Please note number of total words at end of paper.

## CLASS CALENDAR

<b>23 Aug</b>	Introduction to course material; presentation of syllabus
<b>30 Aug</b>	<b>Utah VS Colorado Football Game—NO CLASS!</b>
<b>6 Sept</b>	An idea whose time has come? Not a modern phenomenon; Ideology & terrorism: rights from wrongs <b>Combs—Part 1</b> Criminals or crusaders? Terrorism by the state; Terrorism, Inc. <b>Combs—Part 2</b>
<b>13 Sept</b>	Terrorist training; The media—a weapon for both sides? Domestic terrorism in the United States <b>Combs—Part 3</b>
<b>20 Sept</b>	Legal perspectives on terrorism The use of force to combat terrorism; The use of legislation & intelligence to/Resources to combat terrorism; Security measures: a frail defense <b>Combs—Part 4</b>
<b>27 Sept</b>	New terrorist threat—weapons of mass destruction; Future trends <b>Combs—Part 5</b>

4 Oct Utah VS USC Football Game—NO CLASS!

**8—12 October—FALL BREAK—NO CLASSES!**

18 Oct Introduction  
School shooters: beyond the sound bite  
**Langman—Introduction & Chpt 1**  
“I am the law”: two psychopathic shooters;  
A God of sadness”: a schizotypal youth  
**Langman—Chpts 2 & 3**

25 Oct “None of this is real”: four schizophrenics;-----**BOOK REPORT 1 DUE!**  
“Every man is a nightmare”: three traumatized children  
**Langman—Chpts 4 & 5**

1 Nov Beyond the typology;  
Kids caught in the nick of time;  
What can be done: preventing school shootings  
**Langman—Chpts 6, 7, & 8**

8 Nov My two serial killers;  
The post-modern age of serial homicide;  
A brief history of serial murder  
**Vronsky—Chpts 1 & 2 & Preface**

15 Nov Classifying serial killers;-----**BOOK REPORT 2 DUE!**  
The evolution of monstrosity;  
The question of madness  
**Vronsky—Chpts 3, 4 & 5**

22 Nov **THANKSGIVING—NO CLASSES!**

29 Nov Serial killers as children;  
The serial murderer’s first kill;  
The killing times  
**Vronsky—Chpts 6, 7 & 8**

6 Dec The art and science of criminal profiling;  
Surviving a serial killer  
**Vronsky—Chpts 9 & 10**

**BOOK REPORT 3 DUE!**

**NOTE:** Those who wish their grade for the final paper and course mailed to them should attach a **self-adhesive, legal size**, self-addressed, **stamped** envelope with their final paper.