

Violence in Society and Violence in the Media (COMM 3442; # 32014)
Spring 2015

Tuesday and Thursday 12:45 PM – 2:05 PM
Pomerene Hall 306

Instructor:

Name: Brad J. Bushman, Ph.D.
Address: 3108 Derby Hall, 154 North Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210
Phone: (614) 688-8779
FAX: (614) 292-2055
Office hours: 8-11 AM Wednesday and by arrangement
E-mail: bushman.20@osu.edu
Homepage: <http://www.comm.ohio-state.edu/bbushman>
Carmen: <https://carmen.osu.edu/>

Description: This course examines the causes and consequences of human aggression and violence. We begin by describing how researchers define and measure aggression and violence. We discuss various theories proposed to explain why humans behave aggressively. We examine how aggression develops across the lifespan. We consider both situational factors that promote aggression and personal factors that account for individual differences. Next, we examine in detail the research examining the short- and long-term effects of violent media exposure. We examine aggression as part of everyday life (e.g., bullying, workplace aggression, road rage, aggression in sports). We discuss aggression in the family (e.g., child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, elder abuse). We will discuss sexual aggression and aggression that occurs within a group setting (e.g., gang violence, hate crimes, crowd behavior). We discuss terrorism and why people support it. Finally, we discuss how to prevent and reduce aggression and violence.

Because this course satisfies the General Education Curriculum requirement “Social Science: Individuals and Groups,” at the conclusion of this course students should be able to: (a) understand the application of social science theories to the study of individuals and groups; (b) understand the behavior of individuals, differences and similarities between individuals, and the processes by which groups function; and (c) comprehend and assess individual and group values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

Course format: You are expected to master the basic material covered in the textbook and lectures, and to participate actively in class. The lectures in this course are designed to supplement the textbook. As such, you can expect lectures to present ideas that are not necessarily covered in the textbook. Lecture slides will be available on the Carmen webpage at least 24 hours before each lecture, but not all slides shown in lecture are on Carmen (so come to class). If you miss class, get notes from a classmate.

Prerequisites: None, but Introductory Psychology (PSYCH 1100), Social Psychology (PSYCH 2367 or 3325), Introduction to Life Span Developmental Psychology (PSYCH 3340), and Communication in Society (COMM 1100) are recommended. The course draws heavily on psychological research and theory concerning human information

processing, social behavior, development, and learning as well as communication studies research on persuasive communication, media content, and children's use of media.

Course webpage: The course web page is on Carmen: <https://carmen.osu.edu/> It contains the syllabus, announcements, PowerPoint slides, and grades.

Required textbook: Krahé, B. (2013). *The social psychology of aggression* (2nd ed.). New York: Psychology Press. ISBN 978-1-84169-875-5. I will put a few copies of the textbook on reserve at the library.

Exams: There will be four exams, each containing 34 multiple-choice questions (worth 1 point each) and 2 short-answer questions (worth 3 points each). Thus, each exam is worth 40 points, for a total of 160 points. At least 70% of the material on the exams will be from lecture—so come to class. Students who miss an exam for any reason will be required to take a **comprehensive** exam on the regularly scheduled final exam day immediately after taking Exam 4. Your comprehensive exam will replace the exam you missed. Only students who miss an exam will take the comprehensive exam. **YOU MUST BRING A PHOTO ID AND #2 PENCIL TO EACH EXAM (NO PENCILS WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE PROFESSOR OR THE TAs). IF YOU ARRIVE LATE (AFTER THE FIRST PERSON HAS COMPLETED THE EXAM), YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THAT EXAM.**

Academic misconduct: Academic misconduct, such as plagiarism or fabrication, will not be tolerated. The Ohio State University's (OSU) Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples include plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an exam. You cannot use a smart phone or dictionary during the exam. If you do not know what a word means, raise your hand and we will define it for you if we can. Ignorance of the code is no excuse, so please review it carefully: http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp. If my TAs or I suspect a student has committed academic misconduct, we must file a report to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If this committee determines that the student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct, the sanctions could include a zero on the exam, a failing grade in the course, and suspension or dismissal from OSU.

Classroom civility: Students are expected to attend every lecture. Students are also expected to be respectful of the professor, teaching assistants, and other students. Please don't come to class late or leave early. Please don't engage in disrespectful behavior. For example, no listening to iPods, newspaper reading, crossword puzzling, talking (unless participating in class discussion), web browsing, eating, drinking, sleeping, and snoring. Please turn off cell phones. I reserve the right to dismiss disruptive students.

Grading: The following curve will be used to assign grades: A: 25%, B: 30%, C: 25%, D: 13%, and E: 7%. The final curve will also contain +/- grades (e.g., 10% B+, 10% B, 10% B-). This curve is based on OSU norms for classes this level. The curve is meant to protect YOU in case my exams are difficult (e.g., the curve guarantees that the top 25% of students will earn an A, regardless of how difficult my exams are). However, if an actual percentage gives you a higher grade, I will use that grade instead. The following standard percentages will be used:

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|------------|------------|
| A: 93-100% | C: 73-76% |
| A-: 90-92% | C-: 70-72% |
| B+: 87-89% | D+: 67-69% |
| B: 83-86% | D: 60-66% |
| B-: 80-82% | E: <60% |
| C+: 77-79% | |

Please do NOT ask me to raise your grade, even if you just barely missed the next highest grade. It is against OSU policy to change a grade for any reason other than a clerical error.

Tentative Schedule

| MONTH | DATE | DAY | TOPIC | Reading |
|-------|------|------|---|---|
| JAN | 13 | TUE | Defining and measuring aggression and violence Defining aggression and violence; Forms and functions of aggression | Ch. 1 |
| | 15 | THUR | Is violence increasing over time? How does the U.S. compare to the rest of the world? | Ch. 1 |
| | 20 | TUE | Theories of aggression Biological theories of aggression | Ch. 2 |
| | 22 | THUR | Psychological theories of aggression | Ch. 2 |
| | 27 | TUE | Development of aggression and individual differences Age differences in aggression; gender differences in aggression | Ch. 3 |
| | 29 | THUR | Dark tetrad of personality: Narcissism | Paulhus & Williams (2002) |
| FEB | 3 | TUE | Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, Sadism | Buckels et al. (2013); Weierstall et al. (2013) |
| | 5 | THUR | EXAM 1 | |
| | 10 | TUE | Situational elicitation of aggression Frustration; Aversive environmental events | Ch. 4 |
| | 12 | THUR | Social exclusion | Ch. 4 |
| | 17 | TUE | Alcohol | Ch. 4 |
| | 19 | THUR | Weapons effect | Ch. 4 |
| | 24 | TUE | Media violence and aggression Violent media effects; Theoretical explanations for short-term and long-term violent media effects; <i>Who</i> is most affected by violent media? Smoking analogy; Violent media myths; Why people deny media effects | Ch. 5 |
| | 26 | THUR | Linking violence to sex, humor, and religion | Ch. 5 |
| MAR | 3 | TUE | EXAM 2 | |

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|------------|----------|-------------|--|--------|
| | 5 | THUR | Aggression as part of everyday life Bullying at school; workplace aggression; | Ch. 6 |
| | 10 | TUE | Aggressive driving; Aggression in sports | Ch. 6 |
| | 12 | THUR | Aggression in the family Animal abuse | Ch. 7 |
| | 17 | TUE | SPRING BREAK | |
| | 19 | THUR | SPRING BREAK | |
| | 24 | TUE | Child maltreatment; Intimate partner violence; Elder abuse; Explaining aggression in the family | Ch. 7 |
| | 26 | THUR | Sexual aggression Defining and explaining sexual aggression | Ch. 8 |
| | 31 | TUE | Vulnerability factors for sexual victimization; Consequences of sexual victimization; Women as perpetrators of sexual aggression against men | Ch. 8 |
| APR | 2 | THUR | EXAM 3 | |
| | 7 | TUE | Aggression between social groups Theories of intergroup conflict; Gang violence; hate crimes, and crowd behavior | Ch. 9 |
| | 9 | THUR | Terrorism Defining and explaining terrorism | Ch. 10 |
| | 14 | TUE | Why do people support terrorism? Preventing terrorism | Ch. 10 |
| | 16 | THUR | Preventing and reducing aggression Anger management | Ch. 11 |
| | 21 | TUE | General strategies for preventing and reducing aggression; Approaches directed at specific forms of aggression and violence | Ch. 11 |
| | 23 | THUR | Positive media effects | |
| | 30 | THUR | EXAM 4 & Comprehensive Exam (only for students who missed an exam), 2:00-3:45 PM | |

HELPFUL HINTS ON HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS COURSE

ATTEND CLASS. Bright, highly motivated students who have superior study skills can learn alone most of the material in the readings — enough to do quite well on exam questions that cover the material in the readings. However, although I will not review most of the readings material in lectures, a considerable amount of material that is not in the readings will be presented during classes. Research has shown that one of the best predictors of grades is class attendance, and even the brightest students gain more insight by attending classes regularly.

STUDY READINGS EARLY. Some lectures overlap information from the readings, but even for lecture material that is not redundant with the readings, you will learn best by reading and studying the assigned readings by the date on which they are indicated on the syllabus. I will assume in lectures that you have studied the assigned readings, and hence will not focus unnecessarily on terms and concepts that are well defined in the readings. There will be exceptions to this because in some lectures I choose to emphasize particular concepts that are covered in the readings or concepts that the readings do not cover very well. However, lack of emphasis or coverage during lectures does not mean lack of importance of material in the readings. You should also try to complete assigned readings several days before an exam. Studying early leaves much more time for resolving difficulties and reviewing the material -- repetition is a fundamental principle of learning.

READ, STUDY, AND TAKE NOTES "ACTIVELY." Research shows that many individuals read and write passively, that is, without thinking about the meaning of what they are reading. In reading and studying textbook-type material, everyone (professors included) must read actively and as a result somewhat slowly. You must try to understand what you are trying to learn within the framework of what you have already learned. Research shows that learning is much more effective if new information is related to old information. Not only must you work on reading material actively, but you must also stay mentally active during class. Passively writing down what is on the screen or what I say in class without thinking about it — about how it fits with previous material in earlier classes or earlier in that lecture — will not help you learn or understand the material. **You should also rewrite your notes as soon after class as possible.** This takes time, but it will help you remember the material.

BEFORE BEGINNING A READING, ACTIVELY STUDY THE SUMMARY FIRST. Page through the reading, looking at headings and illustrations (e.g., tables, figures) actively to gain a good general understanding of major themes and ideas before you carefully read it. These major ideas serve as part of the framework for you to organize the more detailed information if you are to gain a good overall understanding.

OUTLINE EACH READING. By outline, I mean that you should take organized notes on the reading as you go through it the first time, just as if you were taking notes on a lecture. **Research shows that taking good notes requires active thinking and is much superior to helping you learn any material to underlining or highlighting text.** If you take good notes on readings, you should be able to study primarily from these notes without having to reread material. In the long run, that will save you time, particularly as you become more and more skilled (through practice) at taking quality notes on readings.

These notes and your lecture notes should be reviewed as many times as feasible in preparation for each exam.

ALTER YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDYING. Research consistently shows that college students greatly underestimate the effort and time it takes to do a quality job of learning the new and complex material that is a part of most of your courses. Academic experts generally agree spending **at least 2-3 hours per week outside of class per credit hour** is the norm for good achievement. However, if the course is particularly difficult or if your skills are not as great as the typical students', you will likely need to spend even more time to do well in the course. Thus, in this course you should spend **at least 10-15 hours per week outside of class** learning the course material.

KEEP THE BIG PICTURE IN MIND. Not only must you learn quite an amount of information that you might consider rather detailed, but you should also strive to understand the broader themes and context at all times. Keep in mind what you have learned in previous readings and lectures. Themes work best when understood together rather than in isolation. In fact, individuals who, after a course is completed, have gone back and reread the textbook, report considerably greater understanding of material partly because the context has changed.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, ASK THEM. Class time is not the appropriate time for specific questions about reading material that you are unclear about, although good questions that extend or broaden what you have read or heard in the lectures are strongly encouraged during classes. Such questions enrich class in general. For more detailed questions, seek me out after class, during office hours, or make an appointment.

IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS, SEEK SOLUTIONS EARLY. For example, if you do poorly on an exam, see me at that time (instead of later in the course). In addition, the office of Counseling and Consultation Service offers a variety of services aimed at helping students resolve personal difficulties and acquire the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that will enable them to take full advantage of their experiences at the Ohio State University. It is located at the Younkin Success Center (4th Floor), 1640 Neil Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210, phone: 614-292-5766, email: ccs@studentlife.osu.edu, web page: <http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu/> If I can help you or point you in the right direction, I certainly will, but you must ask for help first.

STUDY TECHNIQUES THAT WORK — AND (SURPRISINGLY) DON'T

Least Effective Study Techniques

- Highlighting and underlining textbooks and other materials
- Rereading
- Summarization
- Keyword mnemonics — the use of keywords and mnemonics to help remind students of course material
- Imagery use for text learning — creating mental images to remind students of material

Moderately Effective Study Techniques

- Elaborative interrogation — uses “why” questions to get students to make connections between new and old material.
- Self-explanation — prompting students to provide their own explanations for problems while learning material
- Interleaved practice — mixing different kinds of problems or material in one study session

Most Effective Study Techniques

- Practice testing — any form that allows students to test themselves, including using actual or virtual flashcards, doing problems or questions at the end of textbook chapters, or taking practice tests.
- Distributed practice — studying material over a number of relatively short sessions.

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking available assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the office for disability services at 292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.