

COMMUNICATION 3442: Violence in Media

Asynchronous/Online only

Spring 2025

Instructor: Lanier Frush Holt, Ph.D.	Office hours: As needed, via Zoom. If you'd like to meet send me an e-mail, and I will send you a Zoom link. It is more efficient for both of us rather than trying to fit you into an office time that only meets <i>MY</i> schedule instead of yours.
Best way to reach me: e-mail: holt.341@osu.edu	

Course Description

This course examines the causes, consequences, and cures to human aggression and violence. It discusses how aggression and violence are defined and measured, aggression theories, individual risk factors, contextual risk factors, protective factors, and aggression targets. It examines in detail violent media research. It also discusses how to reduce anger, aggression, and violent media effects.

Prereq: Not open to students with credit for 442 or 2442. GE soc sci indivs and groups course.

Course Learning Goals and Outcomes

The overarching goal of this course is for students to have a concrete knowledge of how to define aggression, some of its' triggers, understand how aggression operates and is measured, and ways to abate various forms of it. We will also delve into several scholarly approaches that researchers have used to understand the phenomenon and address its' real-work manifestations.

Mode of Delivery

This asynchronous course will be presented fully online. All lectures are asynchronous. Closed captioning can be turned on by pressing the “CC” button. Links to lectures for each week are on Carmen under “Recorded lectures.” **DO KNOW, SINCE YOU CAN PAUSE, RECORD, AND SCREEN CAPTURE THE SLIDES AT ANY TIME, YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE SLIDES, SO THERE IS NO NEED TO STATE THE SLIDES NEED TO BE SHARED WITH YOU, AS YOU ALREADY AND ALWAYS HAVE THE SLIDES AVAILABLE TO YOU!**

How this course works

There is no standard textbook for the course. Any readings will come from scholarly communication and relevant media articles, *all of which will be provided to you via Carmen/Canvas*, and contemporary news articles relating to the topic being discussed that day. If you have difficulty receiving or understanding the materials, please contact me.

Any changes in the course for any reason, will be announced during the class session, via e-mail, or will be announced via Carmen.

Course Website

Check the homepage on Carmen regularly for announcements, course changes, or other matters related to the course.

Here is a synopsis of the assignments and point values for the semester:

Point Values per Assignment

Assignment	Point Value	Maximum Semester Points
Test 1	50	50
Test 2	50	100
Test 3	50	150
Final Exam	50	200*

Total number of semester points: 200*

There are NO extra credit opportunities. Do not ask for any. Pay attention in the class, schedule office hours if you need them.

Course Policies

There are very few course policies, but they are firm: tests **cannot** be made up unless there is a verifiable reason **in advance**. If you miss a test, you must have documentation to make it up, examples of which include a signed doctor's note, the program from the event you are attending, or **prior permission** from me, Dr. Holt. If you miss a test or class for any reason, **do not** expect me to catch you up or tell you what you missed. As you will hear several times: **your education is your responsibility. If you miss a test, DO NOT come to me after the fact asking if you can make it up. The answer is no. I can scarcely conceive a reason why, and how, you can miss a test this is open for 16 hours, you can take at any time within that window, and you can literally take anywhere on the planet.** Again, your education, YOUR responsibility.

Tests/Final Exam: Tests should be taken WITHOUT using notes, readings, or other outside resources (e.g., web based or otherwise) or any other materials not explicitly allowed by me in advance. Violators will be punished to the fullest extent allowed by university policies on academic misconduct.

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF (Mental Health Statement)

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting **ccs.osu.edu** or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Trigger warning

Be advised, this course might deal with controversial and hot-button topics that may cause you anger, frustration, guilt, and a host of other emotions that you may not normally experience in an educational setting. If you feel you are experiencing any of these emotions, please let me know and also seek help from a medical or mental health professional. Sharing such information with me will not be made available to the class nor will it adversely affect your grade.

Also know, I am NOT your counselor. I am not trained in, nor do I have any interest in being held accountable for or improving your mental health. If you are having difficulties, by all means seek the help of someone trained in the appropriate area!

Academic Integrity

All students at The Ohio State University are bound by the code of student conduct (see http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asap). Any evidence of academic misconduct will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct in accordance with The Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct and the rules of faculty governance. Academic misconduct is any activity that compromises the academic integrity of the institution or subverts the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct can be found on the above website.

Reasonable Accommodations

Any student who feels s/he 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 (614) 292-3307 in 098 Baker Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Grades

Be advised, grades are not discussed immediately after an assignment is returned. Students must wait at least **48 hours after the exam** to discuss their grades. All grades are final after one academic week. **Professor Holt has the final say on all grades and grade appeals in the course.**

Grading Scale

A	93-100%	C+	77-79.9%
A-	90-92.9%	C	73-76.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B	83-86.9%	D+	67-69.9%
B-	80-82.9%	D	60-66.9%
		E	59.9% and below

Extra credit points: It is solely at the discretion of the instructor to award extra credit points. At this time, there are no extra credit points, but some may arise as the semester progresses.

Credit hour and work expectation

This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average. [ASC Honors](#) provides an excellent guide to scheduling and study expectations.

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online. I work very hard to provide a positive learning experience. Keep this in mind and remain civilized and respectful in your email and discussion board communications.

Course technology

Previous distance learning courses have provided insights from students on how to improve the learning experience and optimize outcomes. Here are a few tips from previous students to encourage you to be successful in this online course:

- Keep up with the videos and take good notes from the slides.
- Make sure to have access to a reliable internet connection.
- Have access to at least one reliable device and a backup plan in case of a technological issue, especially on test day.
- **If you have questions, talk to Dr. Holt via Zoom EARLY. Do NOT wait until the final exam to arise with a problem as that will not go well.**
- Do the assigned readings before viewing asynchronous lectures, and definitely before doing exams. You will never be able to read enough on exam day to get the article questions right on test day.

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Tests:**
 - All tests will be given online via CarmenCanvas. Unless prior changes have been announced, the exam will open on the date listed for the exam on the syllabus. Students can take the exam at any point on the date (Eastern Standard Time) the exam opens. However, students **will NOT** have the entire day to do the exam. Exams will only be open for the time allotted – usually 80 **continuous** minutes for regular exams, with extra time added for those with verified needs from OSU for time extensions – for the exam. **The allotted time starts the moment the exam is opened online.** Meaning, if a student not requiring extra time opens the exam at 1 p.m. EST, for example, the exam will shut off at 2:20 p.m. EST. When exams close, they will not be reopened without permission from Professor Holt. Also remember, exams cannot be made up if they are missed.
 - **Tests WILL include material on the date the exam opens. For example, an exam that opens on Feb. 28th will include materials from the Feb. 28th lecture.**
 - **All exams close at 11:59 EASTERN STANDARD TIME (EST).** Regardless of where you are taking this course, this course is based at The Ohio State University in Columbus. Hence, all times are based on Eastern Standard Time, from where this course is taught.

- **Carmen:**

- Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
- Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
- **This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.**
 - [Carmen accessibility](#)

- **Carmen Zoom Office Hours:**

- Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom.
- Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with me during office hours.

[Carmen Zoom](#) help guide:

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- **Web cam and microphone**

Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
 - OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.servicenow.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733
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Course Schedule

Note: All readings should be done BEFORE the date listed on the syllabus, (i.e., the June 7th readings should be done prior to class on February 7th), as that is when material related to the readings will be discussed. Also, be advised the readings will not be discussed in detail during the class. Readings augment what is discussed in class and do **not** merely rehash the topic.

As mentioned earlier, whenever possible, a link or the actual reading(s), will be made available to you via Carmen/Canvas. However, in some instances you may have to look up some materials on your own.

The list of readings and dates they will be discussed is tentative and may be changed depending on the speed in which we get through the material and events that transpire in the real world (e.g., if the Jan. 6 Insurrection, or a similar event, happens during the semester, that will be the topic of the lecture rather than what is listed on the syllabus). Also, readings may be added to, and deleted from, the syllabus as the semester progresses.

TENTATIVE Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Responsibilities/ In-class work
Week 1 (Jan. 6 th – 10 th)	Course expectations detailed		Syllabus Review
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the etiology of crime, its construction, and how it moves from the screens in their homes into the images in their minds.		THEORIES USED: Cultivation, Framing, Agenda-Setting	
Week 2 (Jan. 13 th - 17 th)	Media and the Construction of Crime	Gerbner & Gross – Living with Television: The Violence Profile Chiricos, et al. – Crime, News, and Fear of Crime	

Date	Topic	Readings	Responsibilities/ In-class work
Week 3 (Jan. 20 th – 24 th)	The War of Drugs, but the Opioid War is Different		
Week 4 (Jan. 27 th – 31 st)	Crack. Cocaine. Corruption & Conspiracy (Video) Test 1: Friday, Jan. 31 Due at 11:59 p.m. EST		
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Learn about the different types of crimes, which groups generally commit them, and how that leads to disparate outcomes both for the perpetrators and the perceivers		THEORIES USED: Social Identity Theory, Black Sheep Effect	
Week 5 (Feb. 3 rd – 7 th)	White collar crimes White gloved treatment by the Media?	Robinson – the Construction and Reinforcement of Myths of Race and Crime	
Week 6 (Feb. 10 th – 14 th)	Bernie Madoff, American Greed, and the Like	Remizowski – Victims Frustrated by New Attention to Madoff Yang & Kay – Bernie Madoff Died in Prison after Carrying out the Largest Ponzi Scheme in History – Here’s How It Worked	

Date	Topic	Readings	Responsibilities/ In-class work
Week 7 (Feb. 17 th – 21 st)	Home grown, Hardened Domestic Terrorists and Why Aren't the Media Calling Them Such	<p>Ray – Why is it So Hard to Designate Domestic Terrorism Hate Crimes?</p> <p>Sullivan & Benner – Top Law Enforcement Officials say the Biggest Domestic Terror Threat Comes from White Supremacists</p> <p>O'Harrow Jr., et al. – The Rise of Domestic Extremism in America</p>	
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Be able to identify how social and cognitive scientists measure and define violence and criminality and how, despite this, beliefs about crime is still skewed		THEORIES USED: Priming, Framing, Spreading Activation	
Week 8 (Feb. 24 th – 28 th)	Aggression Measurement	Introduction to the class, the nature and basis of violence, how scholars measure and analyze it, and lay out the foundations of what you will learn throughout the summer session.	<p>Aversive Events and Aggression – Groves & Anderson (2017)</p> <p>The Aggressive Brain: Insights from Neuroscience – Bartholow (2018)</p> <p>Test 2: Friday, February 28th Due at 11:59 p.m. EST</p>

Date	Topic	Readings	Responsibilities/ In-class work
Week 9: (March 3rd – 7 th)	Mass Shootings	Aggression on a grand scale: Terrorism and other state, and large-scale individual acts of aggression against individuals and society	Group Aggression – Densley & Peterson (2018)
Week 10: (March 10 th – 14 th)	SPRING BREAK No Class		
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Learn about exogenous factors and the effect they play (and do not play in reality) in triggering criminal activity and other aberrant, aggressive behaviors		THEORIES USED: Spreading Activation, Uses and Gratification	
Week 11: (March 17 th – 21 st)	Alcohol and Aggression	Understand the role alcohol might play in thoughts of aggression, and how drinking influences aggressive thoughts and behaviors.	Automatic Effects of Alcohol and Aggressive Cues on Aggressive Thoughts and Behaviors – Subra et al. (2010) Alcohol-Related Aggression – Social and Neurobiological Factors – Beck & Heinz (2013)
Week 12: (March 24 th – 28 th)	Nature vs. Nurture. Trying to understand the monsters the media cover		Test 3: Friday, March 28th Due at 11:59 p.m. EST
Week 13: (March 31 st – April 4 th)	Video: Richard Kuklinski (The Iceman)		

Date	Topic	Readings	Responsibilities/ In-class work
Week 14: (April 7 th – 11 th)	D.C. Snipers and the Media’s role as both Tool & Weapon		
Week 15: (April 14 th – 18 th)	The Reality of Covering Crime. Hint: It’s not like CSI (any location).		
Week 16:	FINAL EXAM: Thursday, April 24th Due at 11:59 p.m. EST		

About your professor: Dr. Lanier Frush Holt is an award-winning professor having earned the Donald Ecryod Award from the National Communications Association, recognizing him as the Top Communications Educator in the entire field; both the Ohio State University Distinguished Alumni Teaching Award from the administration, and the College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teacher of the Year award from the students. All of these awards are earned by a professor only once in a career, and Dr. Holt is the only professor at OSU to have earned all three. He has also been named the national runner-up for the top journalism educator in the nation as well.

Dr. Holt earned his master’s in journalism, specializing in political communication, and a Ph.D. in Mass Communication, examining the effect media messages have on the perceptions of people of color, women, and other marginalized groups, from Indiana University. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Minnesota.

Prior to his return to academia, Holt worked as a staff reporter for the Rochester *Post-Bulletin*, worked at the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Indianapolis Star* newspapers. He has been quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, interviewed by ESPNU, WOSU, and a host of other media outlets. He has also worked at World Headquarters for Honeywell Inc., the company’s aerospace business unit Sensor & Guidance Products, and done public relations for the Minneapolis NAACP.