

**Violence in Society and Violence in the Media (COMM 3442-0010; #31990)
Spring 2020**

Tuesday and Thursday 9:35 AM – 10:55 AM
Cockins Hall 312

“Kwoosoo” by Mike Stafford (my nephew)



Instructor:

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Office hours: Monday 9 AM - 12 PM Monday and by arrangement. My office door is also open when I am in my office, and you are always welcome to just “drop in.” Please read this [NPR article](#) on how to make office hours less scary, and watch the humorous satirical video in the article.

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Carmen: <https://carmen.osu.edu/>

Description: This course examines the causes, consequences, and solutions to 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 discuss individual risk factors for aggression and violence (e.g., age, gender, trait aggressiveness, “dark” personality traits). We discuss contextual risk factors for aggression and violence (e.g., family influences, aversive events, global warming, social exclusion, alcohol, guns). Next, we examine in detail the research examining the short- and long-term effects of violent media exposure, and why people deny these effects. We discuss targets of aggression and violence (e.g., aggressive driving and road rage, domestic violence, animal abuse, mass shootings, intergroup aggression, terrorism). Finally, we discuss how to prevent and reduce anger, aggression, and violence.

Learning objectives: 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: The course consists of two 80-minute lectures per week. You are expected to master the basic material covered in the readings and lectures. The lectures in this course are designed to supplement the readings. As such, you can expect lectures to present ideas that are not necessarily covered in the readings. 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. You are also expected to participate in class discussion.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites, 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 research from the field of communication on persuasion, media content, and children’s use of media.

Required readings: There is no textbook current enough for this class. Thus, current journal articles (posted on Carmen) will be used instead.

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

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 (i.e., you will have 1 hour and 45 minutes to take both exams). Your comprehensive exam will replace the exam you missed. The comprehensive exam, like the other exams, consists of 34 multiple-choice items and 2 short-answer items. The items will be equally distributed across the chapters. The 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 (PENCILS ARE NOT PROVIDED). IF YOU ARRIVE AFTER THE FIRST PERSON HAS HANDED IN THEIR EXAM, YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE EXAM. ALL EXAMS ARE GIVEN IN OUR CLASSROOM. EXAMS 1-3 ARE GIVEN DURING REGULAR CLASS TIME. EXAM 4 IS GIVEN AT THE TIME AND DATE LISTED ON THE SYLLABUS.**

Grading: The following standard percentages will be used to assign grades:

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

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

Classroom civility: Students are expected to attend every lecture. Students are also expected to be respectful of the professor and other students. Rude remarks or behavior negatively affect the classroom experience of not only the recipient but the rest of class and disrupt learning and teaching. Please don't come to class late or leave early. Please don't engage in disrespectful behavior. For example, no music listening, 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.

Academic misconduct: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Disability services: The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Mental health services: 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 or someone you know are 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 and 24 hour emergency help is also

available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Sexual misconduct/relationship violence: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Diversity: The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Who can I talk to?

Where can I go for help with emotional distress?

Student Wellness Center

614-292-4527

RPAC, 337 Annie & John Glenn Avenue

Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio

614-267-7020

Buckeye Peer Access Line (PAL)

8 P.M. – Midnight (only)

614-514-3333

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

614-221-5445 or 800-273-8255

Text 4hope to 741741 or call 911 for immediate assistance

Counseling and Consultation Service

614-292-5766

1030 Lincoln Tower, 1800 Cannon Dr.
Youkin Success Center, 1640 Neil Ave.

“Let’s Talk”

Thursday evenings, 6-8 p.m.
Multicultural Center, Ohio Union

Psychology Services Center

614-292-2345

105 Psychology Building, 185 Neil Ave.

Stress Trauma & Resilience

614-293-STAR

Harding Hospital, 1670 Upham Dr.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION CARES

Tentative Schedule

MONTH	DATE	DAY	TOPIC	Reading
JAN	7	TUE	<i>UNDERSTANDING HUMAN AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE</i> Defining aggression and violence; Forms and functions of aggression	Elbert et al (2018)
	9	THUR	Violence over time and around the world	
	14	TUE	Biological theories of aggression	
	16	THUR	Psychological theories of aggression	Huesmann (2018)
	21	TUE	Meta-theories of aggression	Allen et al (2018); Finkel & Hall (2018)
	23	THUR	<i>INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS FOR AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE</i> Age and gender differences in aggression	Lansford (2018); Björkqvist (2018)
	28	TUE	Dark tetrad of personality	Paulhus et al (2018)
	30	THUR	EXAM 1	
FEB	4	TUE	<i>CONTEXTUAL RISK FACTORS FOR AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE</i> Family influences	Labella & Masten (2018)
	6	THUR	Aversive events; Global warming	Groves & Anderson (2018); Rinderu et al (2018)
	11	TUE	Social exclusion	Ren et al (2018)
	13	THUR	Alcohol	Parrott & Eckhardt (2018)
	18	TUE	The “weapons effect”	Benjamin & Bushman (2016)
	20	THUR	Violent media effects	Bender et al (2018)
	25	TUE	EXAM 2	
	27	THUR	Violent media myths; Why people deny media effects	
MAR	3	TUE	Linking violence to sex, humor, and religion	
	5	THUR	Gun violence	Cukier & Eagen (2018)
	10	TUE	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS	
	12	THUR	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS	
	17	TUE	<i>TARGETS OF AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE</i> Aggressive driving and road rage	Chester & DeWall (2018)
	19	THUR	Domestic violence; animal abuse	

	24	TUE	Violence against women	Krahé (2018)
	26	THUR	EXAM 3	
	31	TUE	Mass shootings	Rocque & Duwe (2018)
APR	2	THUR	Intergroup aggression	Densley & Peterson (2018)
	7	TUE	Terrorism	Webber & Kruglanski (2018)
	9	THUR	<i>REDUCING ANGER AND AGGRESSION</i> Physical punishment	Grogan-Kaylor et al (2018)
	14	TUE	Anger management	Lee & DiGiuseppe (2018)
	16	THUR	Reducing violent media effects; reducing aggression and violence	Anwar et al (2018)
	27	MON	EXAM 4 & Comprehensive Exam for students who missed an exam, 8:00-9:45 AM	

References

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- Björkqvist, K. (2018). Gender differences in aggression. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 39–42. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.030
- Chester, D. S., & DeWall, C. N. (2018). The roots of intimate partner violence. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 55–59. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.04.009
- Cukier, W., & Eagen, S. A. (2018). Gun violence. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 109–112. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.04.008
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- Groves, C. L., & Anderson, C. A. (2018). Aversive events and aggression. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 144–148. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.027
- Huesmann, L. R. (2018). An integrative theoretical understanding of aggression: A brief exposition. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 119–124. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.04.015
- Krahé, B. (2018). Violence against women. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 6–10. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.017
- Labella, M. H., & Masten, A. S. (2018). Family influences on the development of aggression and violence. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 11–16. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.028
- Lansford, J. E. (2018). Development of aggression. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 17–21. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.015
- Lee, A. H., & DiGiuseppe, R. (2018). Anger and aggression treatments: A review of meta-analyses. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 65–74. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.04.004
- Parrott, D. J., & Eckhardt, C. I. (2018). Effects of alcohol on human aggression. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 1–5. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.023
- Paulhus, D. L., Curtis, S. R., & Jones, D. N. (2018). Aggression as a trait: The Dark Tetrad alternative. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 88–92. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.04.007
- Ren, D., Wesselmann, E. D., & Williams, K. D. (2018). Hurt people hurt people: Ostracism and aggression. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 34–38. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.026
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- Rocque, M., & Duwe, G. (2018). Rampage shootings: An historical, empirical, and theoretical overview. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 28–33. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.025
- Webber, D., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2018). The social psychological makings of a terrorist. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 19*, 131–134. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.024

Helpful Hints on How to Get the Most Out of This Course (and All Courses)

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 reading 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. **To remember about 100% of new information, interact (re-read/discuss/write/engage) with your notes within 24 hours, do a second repetition within a day, and a third repetition within a week.** There are four stages to good note taking: (1) Note taking, (2) Note making, (3) Note interacting, and (4) note reflecting. Research shows that is more effective to take notes with pencil and paper than with a laptop computer.

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 chapters, 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 6-9 hours per week outside of class learning the course material, depending on how high you want your grade to be.

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 (e.g., they perceive chapter 2 differently after having studied chapters 3 and 4).

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

Least Effective Study Techniques

- Highlighting and underlining textbooks and other materials
- Rereading
- Summarization
- Use of keywords and mnemonics to help remind students of course material
- Imagery use for text learning (e.g., creating mental images to remember material)

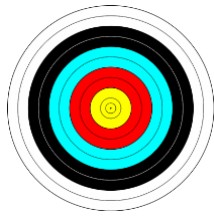
Moderately Effective Study Techniques

- Elaborative interrogation — uses “why” questions to make connections between new and old material.
- Self-explanation — use of 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 (e.g., using actual or virtual flashcards, doing problems or questions at the end of textbook chapters, taking practice tests).
- Distributed practice — studying material over a number of relatively short sessions.

TEST TAKING TIPS. Use what I call the “bullseye approach” to test taking. First go through the entire exam and answer the items you are certain you know. This is like hitting the bullseye of a target. Answering these items first can increase your confidence. In contrast, spending a lot of time thinking about difficult items can frustrate you and increase test anxiety. Numerous studies have shown that test anxiety decreases test performance. Save the difficult items for last. Second, go through the entire exam and cross out the response options you think are false. This is like hitting the second ring of the target; you have a 50% chance of getting these items correct. Third, go back to items that you could cross out two options. This is like hitting the third ring of the target; you have a 33% chance of getting these correct. Finally, go back to the items that you could not cross out any options. This is like hitting the fourth ring of the target; you have a 25% chance of getting these items correct. Never leave an item blank. This is like not even shooting at the target; you have a 0% chance of getting these items correct.



You’ve probably heard the adage, “Don’t change your answer. Your first guess on a multiple-choice question is usually right.” This adage is wrong. According to the data from many studies (Benjamin et al., 1984), you’re nearly three times more likely to switch from a wrong response to a correct one! If you can make a good case for changing your answer, change it. If you’re changing your answer because you’re second-guessing yourself experiencing test anxiety, leave it. If you start feeling anxious, take some deep breaths and try to relax.

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. If you do poorly on an exam, see me at that time (instead of later in the course). After each exam, you can go over the questions and discuss the answers during my office hours.

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 614-292-3307 in room 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.