

Sociology 535-700
Family Violence
Western Kentucky University: Fall 2018

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 9:00-10:00 or by appointment

Course Description: Examination of family violence within the United States. Emphasis placed on spousal violence and child abuse but also on violence within other intimate relationships.

Course Goals:

1. Students should come to a sociological understanding of violence within intimate relationships. Issues of family violence can evoke strong emotions within individuals, throughout this course students will be expected to practice setting aside their “gut reactions” and learn how intimate partner violence is connected to larger societal institutions as well as societal patterns of inequality, particularly along the lines of age and gender.
2. Students will exercise and develop their critical thinking skills by evaluating the issues and controversies surrounding family violence. This includes the ways that social structures and social interaction create, maintain and change the experience and expression of family violence.
This is a relatively young field of research and there are not many “clear” and “right” answers. Students will be required to evaluate and express their ideas regarding the material both orally and in writing.
3. Students will become aware of how their own personal history shapes and colors their view on this topic.

This course will NOT:

-Teach you to detect a victim/offender of family violence
-Teach you to counsel a victim/offender of family violence
-Require you to share any personal experiences you have had with family violence

This course addresses topics that many students may have experienced directly. For some, this can cause emotional trauma. If you feel that you need help working through any emotions you may be experiencing as a result of your enrollment in this course, please make an appointment at Western’s counseling center 745-3159 located at POH 409. Appointments are free and confidential.

Where do I get technical help? Once you are at the blackboard.wku.edu website, you will see a row of red tabs near the top of your screen. If you click “bbhelp” you will be linked to a page that provides video tutorials for many common questions. If you need further technical assistance, contact WKU’s information technology help desk at 270-745-7000. Generally speaking, I will not be able to address technical difficulties you may encounter.

Course Requirements:

Assigned Readings:

Required text: Family Violence in the United States. 2nd edition. Hines, Malley-Morrison and Dutton. Sage 2013. 978-1-4129-8900

Additional assigned reading will be available through blackboard either as .pdf files or links to websites.

Attendance: This course will be conducted entirely on-line. In lieu of a typical face to face three hour graduate level seminar, students will be expected to conduct discussion utilizing the discussion board feature of blackboard. See assignments for further information.

Reading:

As this is a graduate course, the responsibility for learning rests on the shoulders of the student. While in an undergraduate course a student may be assigned a reading, the faculty member may “guide” the student through that reading to aid in understanding. At the graduate level, I expect students to read and understand the material without any help. Of course I expect that you will ask questions of myself or your peers about the reading and any confusion about the reading, but as a rule, I will not “explain” the assigned reading to you. Reading assignment loads in any graduate course tend to be heavy, and this course is no exception. I expect that you read every word, of every assignment, every week. I expect that you will demonstrate your understanding through your posts to the discussion board (see below). For many people (myself included) it is not sufficient to simply “read through” a journal article. I, even after all these years of developing an expertise, must take notes as I am reading. This serves several purposes: 1. It keeps my mind focused on the reading! 2. It shows me where I am confused on a point, if I can’t jot down a note in my own words—I don’t understand what I just read. 3. My notes then serve as a reference so that I never have to read an entire article more than once. I encourage you to find a method to approach comprehension of the reading that suits your strengths and weaknesses.

A good gauge of your reading comprehension is that I expect that once you have read material, you would have the ability to communicate a critical summary of that article. Following are some guidelines to think about in terms of how to critically summarize:

A critical summary is like any other summary of a scholarly article. One summarizes the lit review, the theoretical background, the methods and the findings. In addition, one includes his/her own critical comments/ideas about the article. For example: Are there any concepts that are not clear, or do not make sense to you? How does the author's theoretical perspective shape the methods or findings? Is there another theory that might provide different insights? Are there any gaps in the logic of the research? What about the methods? How are the findings shaped by the methods? Did the author use an appropriate sample? If the sample is not random, would a sample in terms of race, class, gender or age differences matter? How does the article fit in with the larger topic, either substantively or theoretically? What contribution does this author make to the field that is not made by others? How does this article fit in with the other articles assigned this week or in prior weeks?

Discussion Board Postings:

In a traditional face to face graduate level class, class meetings would be conducted in a seminar format. This means the professor may say a few words at the beginning of the evening and then simply moderates the discussion amongst the students. At the graduate level it is the students, not the professor, who guide the learning (ultimately making students responsible for their own learning). We will mimic this format in the on-line course through heavy use of the discussion board. Just as you would spend 3 hours in a face to face

seminar, think of interacting with the discussion board 3 hours per week for writing and reading posts. Although I set a minimum of 3 posts, you can absolutely post more often.

Each week every student is required to make **3** posts to that week's discussion forum.

The following guidelines should be followed.

- 1.) At least one post as a response/engagement to a peer's post. The point of a discussion board is a back and forth discussion. Engage with your colleagues! Responses of "good ideas" or "great job" are always welcome to extend to your peers, but they do not count as posts.
- 2.) Posts should demonstrate you have read and thought about the material. While I don't indicate a word length for posts, posts are expected to contribute in a useful and significant manner to the discussion(s). This is where the ability to prepare a critical summary (see above) really comes in handy! If you read critically, you should be able to discuss critically and specifically, citing material as necessary! I cannot stress enough that the discussion board is where you show me that you are learning! At the graduate level I do not mess around with quizzes or exams. I use the discussion board as evidence that you are learning the content. You must specifically cite the articles. Your posts must address a variety of topics under consideration for that week.
- 3.) No points will be given for "fluff, "rants" or "coffee talk" posts. All students come to class with some pop culture level knowledge of family violence. Students sometimes want to talk about what they saw on Dr. Phil, or about what happened in their apt. complex last weekend, or the experience of their "friend of a friend." Although these kinds of comments are welcome for levity, for a break, or just to note what might be capturing the public attention, if your comment on a discussion board post is the exact same thing you would say to friends chatting over lunch---it is not a good post!! While there is room to discuss popular culture on the boards, don't count it as one of your three. I even suggest you put a "coffee talk" note at the beginning of your post so you are acknowledging that you are aware your post is not academic.

Warning: No points will be given for simply summarizing the reading. Think of it this way—blackboard discussion is a replacement for face to face conversation—so if you wouldn't sit in a seminar and summarize an article without connecting that summary to some greater insight, then it is not applicable to our discussion board. Assume we have all read the assigned material and simply reference the author or title of article to which you are referring, or if necessary, quote or list a page number.

All that being said, feel free to post more than 3 times. Nothing says to me you are not involved in the class like me seeing you make 3 small posts within a 20 minute time frame on Sunday night from 10:00-10:20 pm. Feel free to acknowledge someone's interesting point, indicate you may still have to have a closer read of an article. Feel free to acknowledge that although you haven't read anything and may need to revise your comment, based upon what you have read so far you think....

Posts are due Sunday nights by 11:59 pm. Posts for a week's discussion that are late will not be counted. Because our discussion board is expected to be a discussion, it won't work to have the entire class wait until 11:55 pm on a Sunday to make a minimum of 3 posts. Therefore, students are required to make at least one significant contribution to the discussion board by noon, (12:00 pm CST) on Wednesdays (significant means that you will likely have to have some, though not necessarily all of the reading completed by Wednesday). I will monitor and, when necessary, participate in the discussion boards from Monday through Friday, so if you are concerned about feedback on the direction of the posts of your group, get them going during the week. At the beginning of the semester I will post positive comments in support of those posts which meet expectations so that students have an idea of what counts as "good." If your posts are insufficient (earning a 7 or below) then I will privately e- mail you with suggestions on improving your posts.

There are 14 weeks of content in the semester; I will count 130 points towards your final grade. This means there are 10 extra points built into my grading so the odd week of sloppy/poor posting will not ruin your points earned from discussion board posting.

Each student's contribution will be graded with a value ranging from 1-10 points.

10 points—student posted 3 times, including at least one engagement with another student. The student demonstrated clear understanding of the reading (usually through citation of reading). The student offered comments that extended the conversation of the class in a useful/successful direction. The student incorporated academic knowledge from outside of the directly assigned readings—such as from another course or work experience.

8 points—The student only displays understanding of a portion of the assigned readings. It appears the student has read the material, but has not extended the class discussion.

5 points—the student does not post three times. The student does not display an understanding of the assigned material for the week. It is likely the student skimmed the reading, doesn't understand the reading, or is attempting to look like they did some work by reading other student's discussion board posts.

Assignments:

Writing assignments:

Writing assignment learning Objectives:

- Learn to critically evaluate empirical literature in the area of family violence.
- Become an expert on a “mini” topic within the field of family violence.
- Be able to clearly communicate your expertise in a written format.

Topic selection: Due Wednesday Sept. 26, 11:59 pm.

You will be required to complete three papers this semester, all based on the same topic. To begin, pick a fairly narrow topic within the field of family violence about which you would like to know more. Following are some illustrations of how to choose an appropriate topic.

- Does the sexual abuse of girls by adult male relatives increase the likelihood of:

engaging in prostitution? High school drop out? Illegal drug use? Eating disorders? Becoming a victim of IPV as an adult? Unwed/early motherhood?

- What is the success of group therapy treatment of adult male sexual abuse offenders?

Notice that in each of the topics the research question is very specific. The inquiry will not be about “sexual abuse of girls” but rather specifies who the perpetrator of that abuse was (male, relative). Also notice that the question is not simply concerned about the consequences of this abuse, rather a specific type of consequence. The question is not about the broad consequence of “deviant behavior” but rather what type of deviant behavior (prostitution, illegal drug use).

Because the WKU library is lacking in its holdings of periodicals that publish family violence material, you will have to rely mostly on Inter Library Loan (ILL). While usually articles can be electronically delivered within one week, one does not want to get “stuck.” Further, a student who relies only on articles that are electronically available while passing over better “fitting” articles that require the step of ILL will be penalized with a lower grade. Therefore I strongly urge you to choose a topic very early in the semester. Since you don't have time to wait until a topic is covered in class, I suggest searching journals and websites to see what topics stimulate your interest.

Once you have selected a topic, search through databases and see what is available. Once you have selected a topic, you must submit through blackboard a description of your topic and attach at least 3 empirical articles in .pdf format which address your desired topic.

For the first two papers, you are required to select 3 empirical research articles about your topic. Empirical means measurable, so the articles you select must analyze data, either quantitatively or qualitatively. This requirement eliminates any article you come across that is a meta analysis (meaning an overview of research that has been done on the topic, sometimes called a review article) or that is a theoretical piece that does not analyze data, or a research note or commentary. You will use the same 3 or 4 articles for the first two papers and you will incorporate these articles in your literature review.

The goal of the following two assignments is to have you practice your critical thinking skills within the field of family violence. Simply because an article is published in a peer reviewed journal does not mean that article is perfect (or even good/useful!). One challenge in the field of family violence is improving the quality of research that is conducted. One way we can make research better is by understanding what is poor about existing research.

Theory Paper. 50 points. Due pm Wednesday Oct. 24, 11:59 CST submitted through blackboard. No late papers will be accepted.

Based on your reading about theoretical perspectives utilized in the field of family violence, critique and compare and contrast the use/application of theory across the articles you have chosen. Your critique should include, but is not limited to, answers to the following questions:

Do the authors utilize a specific theory? Is that theory described? Does the data analysis reflect the theory? Do the findings and conclusion follow the theoretical position laid out in the beginning of the paper? Across the articles that you have chosen, compare and contrast the theoretical perspectives. Do all the authors utilize the same theory, specifically or generally? How does an agreement or disagreement of the theoretical approaches affect the outcome of the research? Do you agree with the theoretical perspectives(s) used? Is there another perspective that might better explain the phenomenon under consideration? Which theory do you think makes more sense and why?

You should be able to accomplish this analysis in less than 5 pages. If your paper is getting longer than that, read for parsimony. You should use one inch margins, with a 10 or 12 point font. Essays should be submitted through the assignment button located in the margin of our blackboard website. Papers should utilize either an APA or ASA citation format.

Methods paper. 50 points. 11:59 pm CST submitted through blackboard. No late papers accepted.

Based on your reading about research methods utilized in the field of family violence, critique and compare and contrast the use/application of methods used across the articles you have chosen. Your critique should include, but is not limited to, answers to the following questions:

Do the authors clearly and specifically define their measures (i.e. what is violence?) as well as their sample (clearly described respondents)? Are the definitions/sample appropriate to the research question? Are they using a cross sectional or longitudinal design? Is the method appropriate in terms of its type of data collection (quantitative or qualitative?) If appropriate, are the hypotheses clearly explained and described? How might the findings differ if alternative methods were used? Do you think there is a better: definition, sample, method?

Please note that this paper does not require you to know your R square from your chi square—you don't have to assess the statistical analysis of the articles if you do not possess the skills to do so—if you have the skills, by all means, include it in your analysis.

Essays should be submitted through the assignment button located in the margin of our blackboard website.

FOR BOTH PAPERS AVOID: You will not get credit for a paper which simply summarizes each article in sequential order. You must communicate your thoughts/ideas/opinions/application of course material! All papers should have a beginning (it is here that one might very briefly indicate the research question of each of the articles; a thesis statement that indicates your main point about theory/methods used in the 3 articles) a middle (here is your main critique, organized as how you see fit) and a conclusion (wrap up/restate your main points).

Grading Rubric:

An 'A' paper (45-50 pts) is one that has perfect grammar and organization. It is organized. The student clearly understood the article, but also theory/research as learned in class. The student's voice and ideas are communicated clearly and illustrate a depth of understanding.

A 'B' paper (40-44 pts) is one that might have a few minor grammar or organizational errors, and may not reach sufficient depth of analysis.

A 'C' paper (35-39) points—should not be submitted in a graduate level class. Should you submit a paper which earns a C (or lower) you will be asked to revise and re-submit the paper within one week taking into account the comments I made for improvement. Papers not resubmitted within one week of return will earn the grade initially assigned to the work. Papers which are re-submitted will have an automatic 5 point deduction, precluding the possibility of the student earning an A on the assignment.

Concluding Essay. 100 points. Due Monday Dec. 10, 11:59 pm. No late papers accepted.

This last assignment brings together the first two assignments and asks you to propose what the next step in research should be to extend the knowledge on your subtopic.

An introduction and clear thesis statement. This might sum up the state of the current research, and indicate the direction the research needs to go towards.

A thorough literature review. I cannot give an absolute number of articles that must be included-as depending on the history of the topic-- this number will vary. Typically though, you can limit your articles to a "recent" time period, adding only those earlier articles that are considered "classic" articles. This is where you will incorporate your points from the theory and methods papers submitted earlier in the semester. Not only will a good literature review/summarize/critique existing research, it will also identify gaps in knowledge.

A proposed "next step" research study: Given your critical examination of the state of knowledge on your given topic, you should next propose a research study that will remedy the deficiencies in the existing research. This proposed research should include a specific research question, a brief theoretical perspective and then a methods section. In the methods section you should include: a description of the sample (from whom are you going to obtain the data), how you are going to go about collecting said data? And of course, a thorough description of your measures. You may choose either to propose research given the limits of conducting research with real world constraints OR you may propose a research method that could never actually happen in real life. If you propose a method that could never be carried out in real life, you must justify why it would be necessary in order to fix your critiques of the existing literature and spell out exactly why your method could not be carried out in real life. (usually this is related to time, money, ethics).

Papers should be approximately 12 pages in length using one inch margins and 10 or 12 pt font. Please utilize an APA or ASA citation format. Papers should be submitted through the assignment button located on the main blackboard menu.

Grading Rubric:

An A paper (90-100 pts) is one that has perfect grammar and organization. It is organized. The student clearly understood the article, but also theory/research as learned in class. The student's voice and ideas are communicated clearly and illustrate a depth of understanding.

A B paper (80-89 pts) is one that might have a few minor grammar or organizational errors, but overall illustrates a depth of understanding.

A C paper (70-79) points—should not be submitted in a graduate level class. Typically a 'C' paper is one in that the literature review is primarily summary of articles one by one, there is little critical analysis. The proposed research does not follow from the critiques made in the literature review.

Final Grades

Final Grades will be calculated as a percentage of total points earned.

Theory paper	50 pts
Methods paper	50 pts
Proposal	100 pts
<u>Discussion Board</u>	<u>130 pts</u>
Total points	330 pts

A= 90% or 297-330

B= 80% or 264-296

C=70% or 231-263 (please note that at the graduate level, a grade of "C" is considered a failing grade.)

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center.

Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Any infractions will be handled according to student handbook guidelines. This includes infractions related to exams or written work. Student work may be checked using plagiarism software. If you are unfamiliar with how to properly cite work, please contact Dr. Krull.

Schedule

Week 1 August 27. Unit 1, Module 1 “Background and History”

Week 2 Sept. 2. Unit 1, Module2: Theory

Week 3, Sept. 19 Unit 1, Module 3: Research Methods

Week 4, Sept. 17 Unit 2, Module 1: Intimate partner violence: Incidence

Week 5, Sept. 24, Unit 2, Module 2: Intimate partner violence: Victims

Week 6, Oct. 1 Unit 2, Module 3: Intimate partner violence: Offenders

Week 7, Oct. 8 Unit 2, Module 4 (Fall break week) Same sex partner violence

Week 8, Oct. 15 Unit 2, Module 5 Intervention

Week 9, Oct.22 Unit 3, Module 1 Child abuse physical

Week 10, Oct. 29 Unit 3, Module 2, Child abuse, sexual

Week 11, Nov. 5, Unit 3, Module 3, Child abuse neglect

Week 12, Nov. 12 Unit 3 Module 4, Intervention/prevention

Week 13, Nov. 19 Thanksgiving week. No work assigned

Week 14, Nov. 26 Unit 4, Module 1, Sibling violence

Week 15, Dec. 3, Unit 4, Module 2, Elder abuse

Week 16-Dec. 10 Finals week.