

1. Course

Term: Monday, January 5 - Thursday, April 8, 2004
Number: **077.346 (3.0 credit hours)**
Title: Children and Violence: A Global Perspective
Instructor: Jessica Senehi, associate director
Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice
Room: 322, St. Paul's College
Hours: Slot 9, Tues and Thurs, 11:30

2. Course Description

The impact of violence on children is one of the most pressing problems in the world today. Street children face assault; children are recruited, often forcibly, to be child soldiers; sexual trafficking exploits children; and children witness political violence and even the torture and murder of their own family members. In the U.S., thousands of children lost a parent in the 9/11 attacks. In Africa, millions of children will be orphaned by AIDS. Today's children are tomorrow's world citizens and these events will shape the future in unforeseeable ways. In this course, specific issues of violence against children will be identified, described, and analyzed. Theoretical ideas regarding the causes of violence as well as practical ideas for intervention will be reviewed. The implications for both the political socialization of children as well as how children may be resilient in the face of violence will be explored.

3. Instructor

Office: Room 112, St. Paul's College
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays, 10:30 am to 11:30 am, or by appointment.
Please feel free to call me any time. Leave a message if I'm not available when you call, and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.
Phone: (204) 474-7978 | Home: (204) 489-5865
Email: Jessica_Senehi@umanitoba.ca
Note: I am responsible for conducting this course, but I also believe that the quality of student engagement shapes a course in important ways. If you have any concerns regarding the syllabus or this course at any time, I welcome you to share in the interest of making this as good a course as possible. Such feedback can be considered part of your responsibility as a course participant.

4. Required Texts

- **Goodwin-Gill, Guy, with Ilene Cohn.** *The Role of Children in Armed Conflicts.* New York: Clarendon.
ISBN: 0-1982-5932-8
- **Kindersley, Dorling.** 2002. *A Life Like Mine: How Children Live around the World.* Kindersley Dorling in association with UNICEF.
ISBN: 0-7894-8859-0
- **Straker, Gill, et al.** 1992. *Faces in the Revolution: The Psychological Effects of Violence on Township Youth in South Africa.* Athens: Ohio University Press.
ISBN: 0-8214-1040-7

5. Course Objectives

For students to:

- (1) Develop theoretical knowledge of sociological as well as psychological, and political theories that are relevant to an analysis of violence and how violence impacts children.
- (2) To critically evaluate the theories reviewed in this course.
- (3) To gain an in-depth understanding of specific issues and case studies of how children are impacted by violence.
- (4) To become especially expert in a particular substantive issue of violence against children—the causes, recommendations for addressing the problem, and a particular original idea to address the problem; and to develop the analytical skills required for developing this expertise.
- (5) To learn about the relatively new field of peace and conflict studies, and some of the key concepts that provide an underpinning to that field.
- (6) To enhance reading, writing, and speaking skills.

6. Overview of Course Requirements

I have designed this course so that the focus is on the readings. When grading assignments, I will use a letter grade (e.g., A, A-, B+, B, ...) and when calculating final grades I will change these letter grades to numbers using the college system (e.g., 4.0, 3.7, 3.3, 3.0, ...).

(1) Participation 20 percent of grade

This class will include both lecture and seminar (discussion) formats. Also, there is a lot of reading for this course, and this participation grade is a way you can get credit for that reading. *More detailed description of what is considered good participation will be provided in class.*

(2) Thought paper on the book *Faces in the Revolution* 15 percent of grade

A thought paper (7 pages) on *Faces in the Revolution: The Psychological Effects of Violence on Township Youth in South Africa* is required. The thought paper is a reflective, analytical essay on key ideas in the readings that you would like to discuss. You will not be evaluated on whether or not I agree with your points, but rather on the depth of the analysis and how well that analysis is supported by reasoning and/or evidence. ***Please see Section 7 of the syllabus for more information on my general criteria for evaluation.***

(3) Problem Analysis 30 percent of grade

This assignment will involve research and analysis regarding a particular social problem relative to the course. *A more detailed description of this assignment will be provided in class.*

(4) Recommendations for Addressing Problem 20 percent of grade

This assignment will involve providing recommendations to address the same social problem discussed in Assignment 3. *A more detailed description of this assignment will be provided in class.*

(5) Letter 15 percent of grade

This assignment will involve designing a very specific means of addressing the social problem discussed in assignments 2 and 3, and drafting a letter to someone who may be critical in gaining resources or gaining access to execute the proposed intervention. *A more detailed description of this assignment will be provided in class.*

7. General Criteria for Evaluation

- **Nature of Evaluation**

My goal in evaluating student work is to provide useful feedback. This is a time-consuming process and a responsibility that I take seriously. Always keep in mind that grades are evaluations of the work submitted, not evaluations of a person or a person's overall abilities. Please feel free to discuss the evaluation process with me at any time. Evaluations of written assignments will be based primarily on the quality of the analysis (*See below*). However, assignments that are poorly written, poorly formatted, or handed in late may be graded down (*See below*).

- **Analysis**

Academic writing is nearly always an argument. That is, the academic writer is making a point, and these points need to be backed up with high-quality, persuasive supporting evidence. We need to always be asking ourselves: *How do we know what we know?* Anyone can have opinions about social issues. Backing up analyses with evidence (whether research, documented examples, or references to other literature that provides this evidence) is what scholarship is all about. I do not evaluate students' analyses based on whether or not I agree with them, but rather based on the depth of analysis and the quality of the support for that analysis.

In other words, statements like “in the United States, there aren’t any family values anymore” are unacceptable without supporting evidence. It is critical to get the facts, ask questions, do research, test out your ideas. Frame questions that you can seek answers to before moving too quickly to conclusions.

For example, in this case, it may be better to ask, “What was the nature of American families in a particular time period (e.g., during the revolutionary period, before the Civil War, after the Civil War, at the turn of the 20th century, during the depression, during the 1950s, now, etc.); and/or for particular groups of people (e.g., the poor, the middle class, the very wealthy, coal miners, factory workers, farmers, educators, children, men, women, the aged, African Americans, immigrant Chinese, immigrant Italians, immigrant Russians, gays and lesbians, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, urbanites, rural dwellers, Northerners, Southerners, Mexicans in the Southwest, Westcoasters)? How have families changed? What factors have caused these changes? What do these changes mean? Also, what is meant by the term “family” and “family values” in the first place?

In this case, you might begin by consulting Stephanie Coontz’s book, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (1992), for an historical analysis of families in the U.S. Or, you might consult her book, *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with American’s Changing Families* (1997), for data and analysis on the nature of the modern U.S. family.

- **Writing**

I expect writing to be grammatical (e.g., in terms of paragraph structure, sentence structure, and spelling). Do not rely solely on the spell checker to check your work. If I feel that there is an excessive amount of writing problems (as opposed to content issues) with your work, I will grade that assignment down one to two steps depending on the severity of the problem (e.g., A to A-, or A to B+, etc.). I know that writing skills cannot be developed overnight, and I will not grade subsequent assignments down *as long as the writing skills are improving*. I have a number of books on writing and I will provide you copies of chapters, etc., that focus on your most salient writing problem(s) if that may be helpful.

I may comment on your writing no matter how good your writing is in order to suggest how you can take your writing to the next level (although I will only mark the paper down if the problems are severe). This is intended as useful feedback.

Improving one’s writing skills is incredibly empowering no matter what your plans for the future are. More effective writing skills will enhance the possibility that your writing will be (in the workplace or elsewhere) will be well received. Improving writing skills also improves speaking and analytical skills. People are not essentially “bad writers” or “good writers.” Like other skills, writing improves with practice.

- **Citations and References**

I expect citations and references to be handled professionally. Any official referencing style is acceptable. I will provide guidelines for the *Chicago Manual Style*

as well as some websites that provide this information. Again, any style will be acceptable as long as it is a recognized style and is applied consistently. If references are not cited properly within the text and/or in the bibliography, papers will be graded down one step.

- **Format**

All papers must meet the minimum formatting requirements listed below. After one warning, I will grade papers down one-step if they are not formatted appropriately. Consistent formatting will make my job easier and will make the presentation of your ideas more effective.

Minimum format requirements:

- (1) Font: **Times [New] Roman**
- (2) Size: **12-point type**
bold and italic only for special sections/text
- (3) Pages: **include page numbers**
- (4) Spacing: **Double space**
- (5) Indents: **Indent paragraphs! Do not use double return.**

- **Late Assignments**

Late assignments are not acceptable because I have found that late assignments disrupt the learning process. This course is envisioned as a synergistic learning environment where students learn in interaction with each other and the instructor. If you are not caught up with assignments and readings, you are unable to participate effectively in class discussions, and this affects the quality of the whole course as learning is an interdependent process. Without ongoing feedback on assignments, it is impossible to create a dialogue between the student and instructor regarding the development of student work. Also, it is rarely possible to build up a store of knowledge without a measure of consistency and continuity. But things happen! I will accept one late assignment during the semester. All subsequent late assignments will be marked down a step if they are submitted one week after the due-date (e.g., A to A-), and two steps if they are submitted more than two weeks after the due-date (e.g., A to B+, etc.).

8. Academic Policies

- **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated for any reason. This includes claiming another student's work as one's own or using published work without proper citation. This also includes resubmitting papers that were submitted for credit for a previous class. It is essential that you acquaint yourself with the University's policy on "Examinations and Personations" (p. 28) and "Plagiarism and

Cheating” (p. 29) found in the *Undergraduate Calendar*. If you have any questions about this policy, please ask me.

- **Dropping a Course**

Please note that the voluntary withdrawal date for this term is Wed, Mar 17, 2004.

9. Suggestions on How to Read Articles and Books

Reading new academic literature can be quite challenging. The most effective approach to reading academic material, in my experience, has been to follow and practice the guidelines below:

1 As you read--or after reading through an article once--**take notes** or outline the article. You might also develop a chart organizing the concepts in the reading.

2 Look up words you don't know in a dictionary or encyclopedia. Identify and strive to grasp **new terms and ideas** the author introduces. Imagine explaining new concepts or terms to a friend. Think of examples where the terms or concepts might apply.

3 Identify the **author's thesis**. That is, what is the major point the author is trying to make? Briefly summarize the article in your notes.

4 Identify **major assumptions** the author makes and expects you to accept in arguing her or his thesis.

5 Analyze how the reading relates to or is in dialogue with **previous readings**.

6 Analyze how the reading fits into its particular **historical and social context**.

7 Critically reflect on the reading as a whole and evaluate it's **strengths and weaknesses**.

8 Consider whether or not there are any **alternative arguments** or perspectives that might better explain what the author is trying to explain.

9 **Share your journey**. Discuss readings with your peers and practice explaining concepts to others.

10 **Enjoy! It's worth the effort!**

10. Weekly Topics and Assignments

Class 1: Tues Jan 6

READINGS

Class 2: Wed Jan 8

READINGS

Class 3: Tues Jan 13

READINGS

Class 4: Wed Jan 15

READINGS

Class 5: Tues Jan 20

READINGS

Class 6: Wed Jan 22

READINGS

Class 7: Tues Jan 27

READINGS

Class 8: Wed Jan 29

READINGS

Class 9: Tues Feb 3

READINGS

Class 10: Wed Feb 5

READINGS

Class 11: Tues Feb 10

READINGS

Class 12: Wed Feb 12

READINGS

Class 13: Tues Feb 24

READINGS

Class 14: Wed Feb 26

READINGS

Class 15: Tues Mar 2

READINGS

Class 16: Wed Mar 4

READINGS

Class 17: Tues Mar 9

READINGS

Class 18: Wed Mar 11

READINGS

Class 19: Tues Mar 16

READINGS

Class 20: Wed Mar 18

READINGS

Class 21: Tues Mar 23

READINGS

Class 22: Wed Mar 25

READINGS

Class 23: Tues Mar 30

READINGS

Class 24: Wed Apr 1

READINGS


Class 25: Tues Apr 6

READINGS

Class 26: Wed Apr 8

READINGS

ASSIGNMENT

 to come