SOCL 145:  
Violence and Society  
Prof. Jeff Tirshfield

Fall 2018  
email: jtirshfi@ucsd.edu  
Time: Mon/Wed/Fri 2:00 – 2:50  
Location: WLH 2113  
Course Reader: TBD

Office Hours: Wed 11:00–12:30–Starbucks Coffee  
Price Center or SSB 474, or by appt.

Course Information:
Interpersonal and gender violence, bullying and school shootings, racial and ethnic violence, sportive violence, religious and ideological violence, police violence, State sanctioned torture, and violence in war and genocide. These are the subjects of our class. Based on recent media reports one might assume that we live in an age of exceptional violence, yet a number of scholars suggest that from a historical perspective we live in an age of comparative peace. Others suggest that recent perceived episodic increases in violence are due not only to media coverage and displays of violence, but also to widening definitions of violence. We will question these assumptions and assertions.

We begin with an examination of the connections between conceptions of violence and the social values we attribute to being human; is there a moral imperative to the human condition? From an understanding of the social construction of the values and morality of humanity we progress to the theories, and practice of constructing and using definitions, of violence. The bulk of this class will be empirical examinations of violence in action, where we apply the aforementioned philosophical and theoretical frameworks to examples and empirical studies. In summary, the goal of this class is to delve into the study of violence from a variety of theoretical perspectives and to use that knowledge to deconstruct, examine and attempt to understand violence in action.

After getting comfortable (poor choice of words) with a number of the theoretical strains of, and philosophical arguments for, the use or non-use of violence, and I will ask each of you, working in small groups, once during the quarter (11/5, 11/14, 11/21, 11/30 or 12/07–weeks 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10), to discuss and debate specific topics where violence is central to social interaction. These topics are thematically based and presented via empirical examples within the readings. I expect you, like the scholars we will read, to apply theory to example.

While these presentations/debates are fora for you (collectively) to apply theory to example, I ask that you also come prepared with questions and talking points to start a class discussion. These questions and talking points may be theoretical, methodological, or substantive issues and criticisms that provoke critical thought, and warrant collective consideration. They should be based on the themes that run through the required readings.

We will discuss the weekly class topics and readings during our first class (today), and form presentation/debate groups based on those topics on Monday October 1st. Group size will be as close to uniform as practical. You may volunteer for a particular topic that interests you, or if you prefer, I can assign a topic/group to you. The presentation will account for 15% of your grade.

Please note that there are required readings each week. I expect that you will have read the assigned material before class lectures on the material. To assist you in completing this task, I ask that you provide a two-paragraph reflection of the readings each week, to be turned in via TritonEd by 6:00 pm on the following dates: 09/30, 10/04, 10/09, 10/16, 10/23, 10/30, 11/06, 11/15, 11/25 and 12/02—the dates roughly follow the day prior to the first lecture for that week’s readings. Reflections not turned in by the due date, and time, will not be accepted. These reflections will comprise 10% of your grade. If you have interest in a particular area, for research or for general interest, I am happy to suggest other materials to you.
You are also expected to attend class (contrary to what MOOC evangelists state, the process of quality education is a social activity that requires that warm bodies be in close proximity to each other - just not too close). Because of the size of this class, Socrates and Hegel should win out over the Big Box Lecture. Attendance and class participation will account for 15% of your final grade.

There will be an in-class mid-term. The exam material will be based on the readings and class discussions (another reason to be present). The mid-term will account for 25% of your grade.

Finally, there will be a final. The final exam will be structured in the same fashion as the mid-term, with one twist; the final will include a number of longer essays. The final exam is worth 35% of your final grade.

Oh, one more thing; I am here for you. I teach because I view education as a calling and because I learn just as much from you as you learn from me. That learning feeds back into my research, its sort of an autopoietic system; but as such it requires both you and I to contribute. I am happy to meet with you during office hours, when I practice jiu-jitsu or yoga, or at mutually convenient time, I love to talk shop. Use me as a resource; I know stuff, that’s why they pay me the big bucks.

Evaluation:

- Presentation/debate (15% of course grade)
- Reflections (10% of course grade)
- Attendance/Participation (15% of course grade)
- Midterm exam (25% of course grade) - Matching, Short Answer, Short Essay
- Final exam (35% of course grade) - Matching, Short Answer, Short Essay, Long Essay

Required Materials – available at UCSD Bookstore:

- PDFs contained in the SOCI 145 Violence and Society reader—available at Cal Copy, 3251 Holiday Court, #103, La Jolla, CA 92037 (Villa La Jolla Plaza--just off campus).
- Additional readings may posted on my website: jefftirshfield.com -- click the "teaching" tab, fall 2018, SOCI 145.

The syllabus may be updated throughout the course to address relevant social phenomena or social facts (for you Durkheim fans).

Note on the (non)use of Electronics:

Use of electronics (including laptops) during class is prohibited. This is to ensure a learning environment that is free from distractions; the educational benefits of longhand have also been experimentally demonstrated:


Academic Integrity:

Students should be familiar with UCSD’s regulations concerning plagiarism and integrity of scholarship. Plagiarism is serious, and suspected cases will be referred to UCSD’s Office of Academic Integrity. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask me.
Schedule

Week 1: *Theories of Violence* – An overview of macro-sociological, micro-sociological, psychosocial, behavioral and genetic theories of violence

- Eller. 2006. *Theoretical Approaches to Violence*. 31-60 (reader)

Week 2: *Theories of Violence* – An overview of macro-sociological, micro-sociological, psychosocial, behavioral and genetic theories of violence (con’d)


Week 3: *A Philosophy of Violence*

- Betz. 1977. Violence: Garver’s Definition and a Deweyan Correction. 339-351 (reader)

Week 4: *A View on the History of Violence*


Week 5: *Violence and Religion*


***MIDTERM EXAM on Monday, October 29***

Week 6: *Violence and Masculinities – Violence and Women*

- PRESENTATION/DEBATE: SB 967 vs. the New Title IX Sexual Assault Guidelines: Beyond a reasonable doubt vs. A preponderance of the evidence (and other issues) – 11/05
Week 7: Interpersonal Violence, Bullying and Sportive Violence

- PRESENTATION/DEBATE: Sportive Violence: Its State and Social Functions - 11/14

Week 8: Violence, Race/Ethnicity and the State

- Taibbi. 2015. Sandra Bland was Murdered. http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/sandra-bland-was-murdered-20150724 (URL LINK)
- In class videos

Week 9: War, Genocide and Torture

- Beevor. 2002. “They Raped Every German Female from Eight to 80.” 1-7. (reader)


• Deforges. 1999. *Genocide in Rwanda.* 6-27. (reader)


• *Night Will Fall* – Documentary—during lecture if time (if not, watch at home; held on course reserves)

• PRESENTATION/DEBATE: Genocide—Following Orders vs. Social (and Human) Moral Imperatives – 11/30

**Week 10: Evidence of the Great Decline in Violence--the Future**

• Einolf. 2007. *The Fall and Rise of Torture.* 101-121 (reader)

• UN. 1987. *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.* 1-13 (reader)


• PRESENTATION/DEBATE: Torture – Definitions and National Security – 12/05

***FINAL EXAM Wednesday December 12th, 3:00 to 6:00 pm***