



**DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

College of Arts and Sciences
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
Phone: 210-784-2205 (Chair)

Web: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/criminology-political-science/index.html>



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO**

**CRIM 4348 – Violence
Fall Semester 2025**

**Section 600, CRN: 13146
Online**

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. James O'Berry, Ph.D.

Email: joberry@tamusa.edu

Office Hours: 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and by appointment

Office: 349-D Central Academic

Office Phone: 210-784-2673

Note Regarding Office Hours: Office hours are for **YOU**, the student. These are times when I am guaranteed (unless I state otherwise, like if I have to cancel them for the day) to be physically in my office and available to you. These are times when you can drop in (no appointment necessary) to ask or discuss anything with me face-to-face. You can use this time to ask me anything about class or to talk about other things you want to discuss in general. When I am not meeting with students during this time, I do work on other things, but this does not mean you will be interrupting anything if you stop by. These are not the only times I am available, as I check and respond to my email all day, every day, and I can also meet over video call (by appointment) during times when I am not normally in the office. If you have any questions about any of this, please talk to me!

TEXT: There is no textbook to purchase or obtain for this course. Instead, reading and other materials will be provided throughout the semester.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Types of violence from a historical and cross-cultural perspective, identifying and delineating patterns of violent behavior. Social structure and culture are linked to violence and examined in the context of individuals, groups, and societies. Emphasis is placed on the social control of violence.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

TSI Reading, Math, and Writing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Knowledge – Students should be able to define violence in a criminological context, various explanations for the causes and prevention of violence, accurately cite sources they use in their work in APA style, and recall the basic definitions and understandings of course concepts.

Comprehension – Students should be able to describe complex issues surrounding criminological violence and discuss the various arguments proposed for the causes and prevention of violence.

Application – Students should be able to apply course concepts to various elements of crime and criminal justice as they pertain to the perpetration and prevention of violence. Students should also be able to discuss and debate these topics with other students.

Analysis – Students should be able to analyze various materials to draw conclusions regarding the theoretical causes and explanations of violent crime and its prevention while critically assessing what various perspectives do and do not effectively explain.

Evaluation – Students should be able to evaluate the veracity and logical rigor of various topics within criminal violence. They should be able to craft and defend arguments for why certain explanations may be better or worse at explaining the phenomena of violence. They should also be able to effectively assess violence prevention strategies and why they think they do or do not work.

Synthesis – Students should be able to create a well-structured and logically argued case for various topics within the study of criminal violence. They should also be able to merge ideas with others in discussions and come to a greater understanding within their replies to classmates.

Note: The instructor is not solely responsible for assuring students meet these outcomes. It requires effort and input from the students as well. Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course and must withdraw on their own. Therefore, not showing up for class does not automatically constitute a withdrawal.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students can earn up to a total of 100 possible points for the semester. In this case, the students' final percentage grades are equivalent to the number of points they earn throughout the course.

Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course and must withdraw on their own. Therefore, not showing up for class does not automatically constitute a withdrawal.

1. **Discussion Boards (56% or 56 Points):** This 56% of this grade will be based on the completion of 7 different Discussion Board assignments scheduled to occur throughout the semester (see schedule) (for 8 points each). Further instructions will be provided for each discussion board as they are assigned, but they will all consist of making an initial post of 300 words and two replies to classmates' posts of 100 words each. These initial posts and responses should, at all times, be respectful. Aggression, insults, accusations, and other unprofessional or inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. Any instance of

this kind will be met with a warning the first time it occurs (assuming it is not severe enough to warrant involving the university). Repeated offenses after this first warning will result in students receiving a grade of 0 on any assignments in which they engage in this conduct.

Given the subject of this class, we will be addressing and discussing what are, at times, sensitive and controversial subjects. Discussion regarding these topics should remain appropriate and professional at all times.

The prompts for each discussion board will be released at the start of each week they are assigned.

Students are expected to use proper in-text citations per APA7, but a formal References section is not necessary.

2. **Mini Essays (24% or 24 points):** There will be 4 Mini Essays in the course, with each counting for 6 points or 6% of the student's final grade.

Mini Essays should be approximately 600 words in length and should begin with a brief introduction to the week's topic and a summary of the required readings. The remainder of the essay should focus on discussing and responding to one or more of the main themes of the readings as identified by the students. Such responses should not simply be about agreeing or disagreeing with the readings. Instead, students should express deep thought and consideration of the topic. Students may address specific aspects of the studies, such as the consequences of the scientific findings and arguments presented, any debates between differing perspectives as presented in the readings, policy ramifications, potential future research, etc. In doing this, students should locate and cite additional scientific, peer-reviewed research as necessary. While students are expected to present a thorough understanding of and thought regarding the required readings, creativity in how they respond to them in their papers is encouraged.

Students will also be evaluated on the proper use of the APA7 citation style. Students should properly cite ALL required readings each week, both in text and in a References page at the end of their Mini Essays. In-text citation and References page guides can be found here:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

3. **Midterm and Final Papers (20% or 20 Points):** The Midterm and Final Papers will count for 10 points each or 10% of the student's final grade. These papers will require students to respond to the prompts provided in at least 800 words. Students will have two weeks to complete each of these assignments. More instructions will be provided for each during the appropriate weeks of the semester (see course schedule).

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor during class time or via Blackboard as instructed. Projects will be evaluated based on a grading rubric that focuses mainly on content, APA7 formatting, and grammar.

Grading Policy: Grades will be computed in the following manner:

Discussion Boards	56%
Mini Essays	24%
Midterm Paper	10%
<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Grade Distribution:

90-100% = A
80 - 89% = B
70 - 79% = C
60 - 69% = D
60% or below = F

Important Dates:

August 25	Classes begin
September 1	Labor Day – No classes
September 10	Census Day
November 11	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
November 25	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
November 26	Study Day – No classes
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Break – No classes
December 5	Study Day – No classes
December 6-12	Final exams

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>.

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

Check Blackboard every day for any cancellations, updates, assignment links, etc.

All students are expected to follow Texas A&M University-San Antonio’s Student Code of Conduct at all times. Frequent or disruptive side conversations will not be tolerated and will result in you being asked to leave the class/discussion for the day.

All students must treat other students and the instructor with respect at all times. This requirement means no name-calling, threats, insults, general bigotry, or rudeness. Any of this can result in removal from the class/discussion. The instructor reserves the right to bring issues to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities if they deem it necessary.

There should be no expectation of extra credit of any kind in this class. If the instructor decides to grant extra credit, this opportunity will be available to the entire class, not particular students. If extra credit is offered at a time when a student is not available (such as a surprise bonus question on a test the student does not show up for), the student will have missed the opportunity for said extra credit.

Final grades are indeed final, and the instructor will **not** negotiate final grades for assignments or the course. The grading scale is quite clear and allows the student to easily track their progress towards their desired grade as the semester goes along. The end of the semester is **not** the time to start worrying about one's grades, especially if a student is involved in athletics or scholarships. All students should work from the start of the semester to ensure that they achieve the grades they want. If you believe there is a genuine error with your grade, please raise the issue professionally and respectfully, and the instructor will be glad to look into it to make sure that everything is correct. Coming to office hours or discussing grades via a virtual meeting is the most efficient way to handle this kind of issue.

This course syllabus provides a general plan for the course and is for planning purposes only. It is tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. However, every effort will be made to keep changes to a minimum. In short;

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Class Schedule

Date	Topic
Week 1: Aug 25-Aug 31	Introduction Week Readings: Syllabus Videos: N/A Assignment: Discussion Board
Week 2: Sep 1-Sep 7	What is violence? Readings: Hamby (2017) Videos: Violent Crimes Law Video Assignment: Discussion Board
Week 3: Sep 8-Sep 14	Motivation and Opportunity in Violent Crime Readings: Cohen and Felson (1979) Videos: The Ripple Effects of a Cashless Society; Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment Assignment: Mini Essay
Week 4: Sep 15-Sep 21	Psychology of Violence Readings: N/A Videos: The Psychology of Evil; The Milgram Experiment Assignment: Mini Essay
Week 5: Sep 22-Sep 28	Assault Readings: Fuller (2015) Videos: What is Assault? Assignment: Discussion Board
Week 6: Sep 29-Oct 5	Robbery Readings: Armed Robbers in Action Chapters 3 and 4 Videos: Armed Robbery in Australia Assignment: Discussion Board
Week 7: Oct 6-Oct 12	Homicide Readings: Luckenbill (1977); Salfati & Bateman (2005)

	Videos: Green River Killer Documentary (watch first 45 minutes) Assignment: Start Midterm Paper
Week 8: Oct 13-Oct 19	Midterm Paper: Homicide causes and explanations
Week 9: Oct 20-Oct 26	Intimate Partner Violence Readings: Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) Videos: Why Domestic Violence Victims Don't Leave by Leslie Morgan Steiner Assignment: Discussion Board
Week 10: Oct 27-Nov 2	Sexual Violence Readings: Scully and Marolla (1985); Ferraro (1996) Videos: N/A Assignment: Discussion Board
Week 11: Nov 3-Nov 9	Genocide and Mass Violence Readings: Jonson (2017) Videos: Rwanda Videos; Surviving Sandy Hook Assignment: Mini Essay
Week 12: Nov 10-Nov 16	Subcultures of Violence Readings: Anderson (1994); Cohen and Nisbett (1994) Videos: Elijah Anderson Code of the Street Videos Assignment: Mini Essay
Week 13: Nov 17-Nov 23	Gender and Violence Readings: Miller (1998); Felson (2006) Videos: N/A Assignment: Discussion Board
Week 14: Nov 24-Nov 30	THANKSGIVING BREAK
Week 15: Dec 1-Dec 4 (Last day of class is the 4th)	Violence Prevention Efforts Readings: Degue et al. (2014) Videos: Operation Ceasefire; Trauma & Treatment: Violence Interrupters Help Heal Assignment: Start Final Paper
Week 16: Dec 6-Dec 12	Final Paper: Preventing Violence

University Policies & Resources

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor

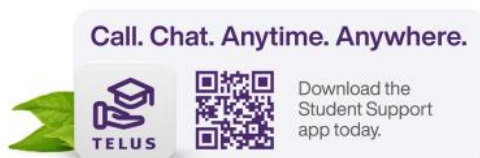
can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student

who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots’ Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state

law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy

acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct.

For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>)

AI Policy

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.