Sociology of Killing SOC 420
Winter 2018

Date/Time   Wed. 10:00 – 12:50   Room   Tory 1-108
Instructor: Kevin D. Haggerty   Office   Tory 6-26   Phone: 492-3297
*e-mail: kevin.haggerty@ualberta.ca   Office Hours: TBA
(*Do Not try and contact me using the E-class email function. I will never receive your message)

Course Prerequisite:   SOC 225 or consent of the instructor

General Outline

‘Thou Shalt Not Kill’ appears to be one of our great social universals. Closer inspection reveals that there are many instances when killing is not only approved, but socially sanctioned and encouraged. This 4th year seminar course will investigate the sociological implications of various approaches to the act of killing other human beings. By examining the diversity of killing, we will explore assorted sociological questions. These include whether society pressures serve to constrain a human tendency to kill, or, alternatively, how social forces can transform otherwise normal people into killers. Are killers different from you and I, or do circumstances transform otherwise normal individuals into killers? What is unique about those situations when it would be deviant not to kill? What do the techniques of state-sanctioned killing tell us about that society? This course uses the act of killing other human beings as an entrée into exploring a host of sociological questions about culture, power, deviance, and the extremes of human conduct. Students should expect that some of the readings and that discussions will be challenging, and at times disturbing.

Course Structure

This is an upper year seminar course. Students are consequently expected to participate actively in generating and pursuing discussion of issues. The aim of a seminar course is for all of us to discuss and analyze the assigned readings. Hence it is a MINIMUM REQUIREMENT for this course that you read all assigned readings prior to every class. If you are not prepared or not able to do so, you should not continue in this course. If you continue in this class but find that you cannot read the assigned material prior to a particular class, I would seriously expect that you not attend class that day.

Students are expected to actively participate in classroom discussion. This includes bringing questions/comments to class about the readings, asking questions, making constructive criticism of classroom presentations, and connecting themes discussed in class with contemporary events.
Special Needs

Students with special educational requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Evaluation

Six factors will be evaluated as part of this course. These are set out below. Students who do not complete any one of the above assignments will receive a mark of ‘0’ on that assignment, and their final grade will be calculated accordingly.

Reference list of 30 articles 5%
Response paper 20%
In-class reading evaluations 20%
300 word abstract of final paper 10%
Final research essay 30%
Classroom participation 15%

Note, The above is the only grade structure. Students will not be permitted to improve their grade by completing additional work or assignments.

Reference List

On February 14th students will hand in a list of 30 reference items pertaining to the topic of their final research essay. These materials will be drawn from academic journal articles, or chapters in edited academic books. Note: book titles are not accepted, nor are materials listed on the course outline. You will hand-in the pertinent bibliographic information for the reference: title, author, year of publication, etc. You should also highlight what you see as the ten most promising references. Formatting and style are not important for this assignment. I am simply interested in seeing that you have accumulated a list of potentially relevant research articles.

Although students are expected to identify a research topic early in the course, they should also feel free to change their topic during the term as their interests change. It is best to talk to the instructor about your plans to change your topic.

Response Paper

On February 14th you will be given a response paper assignment. The specifics of this assignment will be provided on that date, but in essence it will involve your being asked a question related to the topic of killing and analyzing it in light of the material that we have been discussing to that date. This is not a research paper. The response paper will be approximately 1,250 words in length. It is due March 7th.

In-Class Reading Evaluations
You will be required to present oral summaries of assigned readings. You will likely have to make a minimum of two such presentations, but the number could be more or less depending on class size. Each of these will consist of a 5-7 minute critical overview and analysis of the reading. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Students will be asked to present these reading evaluations randomly – that is, I will not give you advance warning that you will be called upon to present a reading evaluation. Names will be drawn ‘from a hat.’ If you are not in-class on a day that your name is called, you will receive a grade of 0 for that presentation. These presentations will be evaluated on 1. Your familiarity with the reading, 2. Your presentational style, and most importantly 3. Your critical engagement with the reading. (Please see the instructions on e-class for more guidance about in-class reading evaluations).

**300 Word Abstract of final paper**

On March 14th you will hand in a 300 word abstract of your final paper. This should be considerably advanced beyond a “I hope to look at…” style of summary. Instead, it should be a concise abstract of the argument you will be making in your final paper and identification of the sources you will potentially be drawing from.

**Final Term paper**

This entire course is designed to build students towards a substantial research paper on any topic they might choose pertaining to the sociology of killing. Students are encouraged to write on any course-related topic that interests them. Students should consult with the instructor concerning their choice of topic. Students are expected to produce exceptional final papers of approximately 2,500 words (not counting reference list).

Although students are expected to identify a research topic early in the course, they should also feel free to change their topic during the term as their interests change.

Term papers are due the last day of class.

**Classroom Participation**

As an upper-year seminar class, students are expected to actively contribute to in-class discussion. This includes having read the material in advance of the class and making informed comments, observations and criticisms of the readings. **Note,** simply attending class and making required presentations will count for a grade of 0 for classroom participation. Active participation involves actively contributing to in-class discussion.

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The instructor is willing to reconsider grades for all components of the course if there is a sound basis for why the previous grading was in error. Individuals who would like to have an assignment re-evaluated should outline in writing the reasons why they believe their assignment/exam deserves a better grade. Assignments must be re-submitted no more than two weeks after the assignment was returned to the student. Any resubmitted assignments will be completely re-evaluated, which means that there could be a reduction in grade if it is determined that errors were made in the students favor in other sections of the assignment.

Facile arguments for an increased grade will only result in an aggravated instructor. Some examples include:

1. The desire to increase your grade because your existing grade falls just below one of the grade cutoffs.
2. A statement such as, “I think my paper deserves a higher grade” without further logical support.
3. A question like “Why did I get a 3 when you said my work was good?” A 3 is defined as good in the University Calendar.
4. A request to change a grade because you need a higher GPA to get into medicine, law, business, honors, graduate school, and so on.
5. Demands by parents or guardians for an increase in grades.

Readings
Copies of the course readings are available through the website on the E-Class system. Some of these are pdf files, some are direct links to the web, while others are links to the library system where you would have to navigate the journal itself to access the article.

These readings are subject to change.
Date.... Topic
(Week of)

January 8th Introduction to Class

January 15th Homicide
Juristat – Homicide in Canada
When Children Kill. Peterborough: Broadview.
A Weekend in Chicago: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/04/us/chicago-
shootings.html
http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2000/03/notes-on-the-murder-of-
thirty-of-my-neighbors/378054/

January 22nd, Murder
When Killing is a Crime pp. 67-90. Boulder: Lynn Reiner
Shalinsky, Audrey, and Anthony Glascock. 1988. “Killing Infants and the Aged in
Nonindustrial Societies: Removing the Liminal.” The Social Science Journal
Stephenson, Svetlana. 2015. "Navigating the World of Violence." In Gangs of Russia,

January 29th, Murder and Serial/Mass Murder I
Dynamics of European Homicide Rates in Theoretical Perspective." British
Journal of Criminology 41:618-638.
Please watch before class the Pinker video on violence (on the e-class system):
ml
Inside the Race to Stop the Next Mass Shooter. Mother Jones
http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/09/mass-shootings-threat-assessment-shooter-
Fbi-columbine
Hilal, Susan M., James A. Densley, Spencer D. Li, and Yan Ma. 2014. "The Routine of Mass
February 5th, Serial/Mass Murder II


February 12th, Infanticide, Women Killing (Reference list due. Response paper also handed out)


Gendercide. 2010. The Economist

February 19th READING WEEK

February 26th, Corporate Killing


March 5th, Capital Punishment (Response paper due)


March 12th, War I (Abstract due at beginning of class)

Grossman, Dave. 1995. “Killing and Physical Distance: From a Distance, You Don't
and Company.
Maclure, Richard, and Myriam Denov. 2006. "'I Didn't Want to Die So I Joined Them':
Structuration and the Process of Becoming Boy Soldiers in Sierra Leone."

March 19th Genocide
York: Penguin.

March 26th Assassination
Gordon, Avishag. 2006. “'Purity of Arms,' ‘Preemptive War,’ and ‘Selective Targeting’
in the Context of Terrorism.: General, Conceptual and Legal Analyses” Studies in
Conflict & Terrorism 29: 492-508
Wilson, David, and Mohammad Rahman. 2015. "Becoming a Hitman." Howard Journal
of Criminal Justice 54 (3):250-264.

April 2nd Genocide II and War II
Kindervater, Katharine Hall. 2016. "The Emergence of Lethal Surveillance: Watching and
Rueda, Gabriela Manrique, and Samuel Tanner. 2016. "To Prevent the Existence of People
Dedicated to 'Causing Trouble': Dirty Work, Social Control, and Paramilitaries in
Columbia." British Journal of Criminology 56:87-104.

April 9th, Terrorism
Haggerty and Bucerius “Radicalization as Martialization”

**Term papers due last day of class**

**Additional information required on all course outlines:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the Evaluation Procedures and Grading System section of the University Calendar.”

**Academic Integrity**

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Codes of Student Behaviour and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Learning and working environment**

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice: [http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/](http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures can be found in the GFC Policy Manual, section 44 available at [http://gfcpolicymanual.ualberta.ca/](http://gfcpolicymanual.ualberta.ca/).

**Plagiarism and Cheating:**

For further information about Academic Integrity and to access the Academic Integrity Handbook for students, visit the Dean of Students website at: [https://www.deanofstudents.ualberta.ca/en/AcademicIntegrity.aspx](https://www.deanofstudents.ualberta.ca/en/AcademicIntegrity.aspx) An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty.
Recording of Lectures:
Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:
Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Policy for late assignments
Late assignments will be docked a full 10% for each day they are late, including each day of a weekend. Hand-in late papers to the Sociology office (5th floor of Tory) during regular office hours. The administrative assistants in the office will date-stamp late papers. Papers that are more than 5 days late will not be marked and will receive a grade of 0.

Student Accessibility Services:
If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact their office immediately (1-800 SUB; Email ssdsrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca).