Syllabus for course on **Family Violence**

**COURSE INFORMATION**
Information about the professor, course, room number, meeting times, instructor’s office hours, etc.

**MAIN TEXT (Required)**

**COURSE LINKAGES**
This course will be linked to electronic resources by Westview Press. Students can access useful resources, including discussion questions and sample exam questions, on this site.

Included here are helpful resources for the projects as well as supplemental readings on contemporary topics including the child abuse sex scandal at Penn State University and in the Catholic Church

**Other books that can be paired with the main text:**


Additional Course Readings which can be placed in weekly folders on BlackBoard or another course interface


**Documentaries and full feature films that can be shown in the course—either during class time or as part of an out-of-class requirement:**
Child abuse/neglect

LaLee’s Kin: The Legacy of Cotton (2001, HBO): This documentary illustrates the ways in which poverty can produce child neglect.

My Sister’s Keeper (based on the Jodi Picoult novel)

The Kite Runner (based on the novel by Khaled Hosseini)

Intimate Partner Violence

Until the Violence Stops (Eve Ensler, director of the Vagina Monologues explores violence in minority communities in the US, including on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation as well as internationally.)

Sleeping with the Enemy details the experiences and flight of an affluent woman (Julia Roberts)

The Burning Bed (Farrah Fawcett) based on a true story tells of a woman who is abused for years and finally kills her abuser as her only route to escape.

Sin by Silence and Defending our Lives, documentaries on the experiences of women who are incarcerated for killing their abusive partners

Enough (Jennifer Lopez), an account of intimate partner violence in a non-white community and the struggles a battered woman faces as she attempts to leave her abusive husband

Raging Bull details the way in which a violent athlete—a boxer, played by Robert DeNiro—erupts in violence at home as well

Mona Lisa Smile (2003) depicts women in the 1950s being socialized into the cult of domesticity and resisting it!

Same sex couples and violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people

Soldier’s Girl, based on a true story details the brutal murder of Army soldier Barry Winchell because he falls in love with a transsexual women.

The Laramie Project tells the story of the brutal murder of a young gay man, Matthew Shepherd

Boys Don’t Cry (The Brandon Teena Story) based on a true story tells of the brutal murder of a young female to male transsexual.
Novels:
Child abuse/neglect


*My Sister’s Keeper*, Jodi Picoult, (2005) (deals with the case of a child who seeks medical emancipation and utilizes a Guardian Ad Litem)

Intimate Partner Violence


COURSE DESCRIPTION
From a sociological perspective, this course will provide students with an overview of one of our society’s “dirty little secrets”: family violence. The course will begin by acquainting students with the tools necessary to study family violence: a history of family violence, theories of family violence and methods use to study family violence. The remainder of the course will be devoted to discussions of different forms of family violence—elder abuse, child abuse, and intimate partner violence—a discussion of how violence is shaped by social location—race, class, and gender as well in heterosexual and homosexual families—as well as by religion, the military, and American culture. The book ends with a chapter devoted to prevention strategies and a discussion of interventions—the response of social service agencies and the criminal justice system.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of this course students should:

- Be familiar with the historical background of family violence
- Be familiar with the individual and social consequences of family violence
- Be familiar with the various theoretical perspectives on family violence
- Be familiar with the methods used to study family violence empirically
- Be familiar with family violence interventions programs and how they work in the community setting
- Understand how women and children have been particularly affected by family violence,
- Be familiar with how family violence is experienced within special populations
  - (e.g., gay and lesbian families, minority families, military families, etc.)
- Have obtained a substantive understanding (background, research, theory, and intervention) of a particular type of family violence,
• Understand how to develop and implement violence prevention program in community settings.

Family Violence across the Lifespan; Theoretical Perspectives
This course is focused on both micro and macro perspectives of family violence and is grounded in race, class and gender theory.

Family Violence and Diversity
This course provides the opportunity for students to apply and share their skills related to cultural competence—knowledge, experiences and self-awareness. Seminar readings, videos, assignments and discussions support cultural competent practice by exposing students to effective interventions with multicultural groups and individuals. The course supports students in their work with victims and perpetrators of family violence who have diverse identities related to ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic class, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, age, physical characteristics, learning challenges, physical challenges, health and mental functioning.

Family Violence, Populations At-Risk, and Social and Economic Justice
Through readings, research, exposure to guest speakers etc., articles and videos presented across the semester, students will also have the opportunity to explore and analyze at risk populations and look at how the criminal justice systems (state and federal) address issues of family violence.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Research Project & Oral Presentation:
Because this should be YOUR course you will each be responsible, in small groups, for researching a substantive area, and leading class discussion based on your research.

You will be assigned, in teams, to the substantive areas (elder abuse, child abuse, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence—2 or 3 groups—same sex couple violence, prevention and intervention) that we are exploring this semester. As a team you will do extensive library research on the area. You are required to research all “sides” of the issue. First you must determine what the various “sides” are. Then you must research each side. In addition:

• The presentation: As a team you will present the issue and all “sides” of the issue. You are responsible for leading class discussion during one of the class periods we have devoted to this issue. You are expected to not only present material but engage in the class in discussion. I would highly recommend that you employ different techniques, such as bringing in discussion questions, skits, video clips, (you may not show whole movies), “game shows”, etc. If you are not sure what is appropriate, please ask me in advance.

Students are required to fill out a “peer evaluation tool” in order to provide feedback about the group process. Grades will not be assigned to anyone who does not complete this portion of the assignment.
**Service Learning Project:**
A portion of your grade in this course will be earned by participating in a service learning experience. Service learning projects are designed to give you practical experience with which to integrate the concepts that we are working on in class. Service learning is not simply volunteering, though you will be doing this, but also involves learning from your involvement in the community by allowing you to link what you learn in the community with concepts we are discussing in class. You will be required to do a variety of tasks in order to fulfill this portion of the grade. Bear in mind that you will NOT be required to conduct library research and write a formal research paper. Therefore, you may think of the hours you volunteer in the community as taking the place of hours you would otherwise spend in the library.

Possible agencies would include:
- Local battered women’s shelter
- Local rape crisis center
- Local family violence prevention program (see Family Services as an example in the text)
- Local child abuse prevention program (see ExchangeSCAN as an example in the text)
- Big Brothers/ Big Sisters
- Guardian Ad Litem Program (may require a significant commitment, but could be worth it for students interested in this type of work)

You are required to work in a volunteer placement for 20 hours across the semester. Most agencies would prefer that you work for 2 hours per week for 10 weeks. You must choose from the list I will distribute over email, and you must have a placement by **DUE DATE**. I will ask for confirmation of your placement by this date. This allows you to complete the 10 weeks of service several weeks in advance of the end of the semester.

You are required to keep a journal which you will turn in to me at the end of your volunteer work. You are required to make an entry for each time you volunteer. These entries should include your reflections, questions, comments, and ideas regarding how this day’s work relates to issues we are dealing with in class. This is due within 1 week of completing your service or by **DUE DATE** at the latest.

You are required to write a reflection paper on your experiences. This paper will follow a particular format. The guidelines for this paper will be emailed to you. The paper must be typed. The paper is due within 1 week of completing your service hours (or no later than **DUE DATE**).

**Traditional Research Paper:**
A traditional research paper allows the student to explore in much greater depth and specific area of interest inside of the overarching theme of Family Violence. The paper should be 8-10 double spaced, typed pages. The title page and bibliography are not part of the 8-10 pages. The paper should rely on a minimum of 5 academic sources: books (not self-help, biography, etc), and articles published in academic journals. In addition,
the paper may draw on statistics gleaned from the types of sources listed in the textbook appendix as well as on the course website and newspaper articles and reports.

Every social/behavioral science college level term paper regardless of the subject (criminology, psychology, sociology etc) has at minimum the following sections:

1. Introduction or purpose of the paper. This opening part suggests acquainting the reader with the problem and stating the thesis.

2. Literature Review: A careful review of the scholarly literature on your topic.

3. Methodology: For this course this section will most likely report on various methods used by authors you read in the “literature review” section above.

4. Body: It is usually divided into various headings and sub-headings connected with different aspects of the topic. For example:

5. Heading 1: History of the problem. You may include past attempts at solutions.

6. Heading 2: Extent of the problem. Who is affected? What impact has it?


8. Heading 4: Possible future solutions.

9. Conclusion: Sums up the points made in the term paper and gives a strong answer to the thesis.

10. Bibliography, formatted to a standard, for example APA or MLA. We recommend the following site for bibliographic guidance: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2

Possible topics for the oral & written reports:

- The protecting of victims vs. the rights of the accused
- Women who kill abusing husbands
- Punishment for murder: The Death Penalty Revisited
- Marital rape
- Incarceration and Intimate Partner Violence
- Protecting children from abusive parents
- Parental rights in the 21st Century
- Children who kill abusing parents
- Child abuse: the hidden crime
- Solving Family Violence
- Violence in Lesbian Families
- Battered Women’s syndrome as a defense
• Elder abuse “scams”
• Elder sexual abuse in an institutional setting
• Domestic violence in the military
• Child abuse in sports
• The Catholic Church sex scandal

Exams:
2 or 3 exams across the semester and a final exam

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE
Participation and attendance are very important. The material covered in class will be interesting and provocative, even controversial. Students are expected to enhance their own learning and the learning of others by contributing to discussions.

GRADING
Grades are earned not awarded! Attendance, class participation, exams are all factored into the final grade.

The following grading system will be used to evaluate student performance:

Grade Scale:

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
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<td>83-85</td>
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<td>under 60</td>
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WEEKLY SYLLABUS
Note: There are 13 modules listed here, but the syllabus can be modified to match the number of meetings per week/semester. In a 15 week course this leaves room for dedicating more than 1 week to certain modules and/or adding additional modules based on the instructor’s own research and interests.
Module 1
Social History of Family Violence

Module 2
Theory & Methods for Studying and Researching Family Violence

Module 3
Elder Abuse

Module 4
Child Abuse

Module 5
Sexual Abuse of Children in Organized Settings. (Boy Scouts; Youth Sports; Pennsylvania State Football)

Module 6
Intimate Partner Violence—the Economy

Module 7
Intimate Partner Violence—Culture & the Military

Module 8
Religion and Family Violence

Module 9
Gay & Lesbian Family Violence

Module 10
Revisiting the “early warning signs” of Family Violence

Module 11
Intervention Programs. The Duluth, MINN Model.
http://www.theduluthmodel.org/

Module 12
The Criminal Justice Response

Module 13
LAST WEEK OF CLASS: Where Do We Go From Here?

Wrap up
Finals Preparation