

Seminar in Social Psychology: Human Aggression

Instructor: Richard Ennis
Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
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Course Objectives

This seminar will explore the causes, consequences, and control of human aggression. We will discuss the prevailing theories of the origins of aggression. We will examine situational influences such as arousal, frustration, and group dynamics. We will explore social issues such as sexual aggression, media influences, terrorism, and violence in domestic, workplace and school settings. Finally, we will debate current methods of controlling and deterring aggression.

Course Requirements

Each of these components are described in more detail on the following pages.

Component	Value
Theory Group Presentation	5%
Investigative Group Presentation	25%
Individual Review Paper	25%
Discussion Papers (15% each)	30%
Class Participation	15%

Theory Groups

These groups will provide the class with a review of the major theories of aggression. Each group will consist of 2 or 3 students assigned to one of the following theoretical perspectives:

Evolution / Sociobiology
Relative deprivation
Frustration-aggression hypothesis
Social learning
Excitation transfer

Each group will prepare a brief written synopsis of their theory which will be made available to all members of the class. These will also be discussed in class and group members will be expected to answer questions.

Investigative Groups

These groups will consist of 2 or 3 students who will investigate a “real world” example of human aggression. Their investigation will be directed by issues and questions raised during class discussion. The group will be responsible for:

- 1) providing background news articles describing the event or issue
- 2) providing a list of references used in their investigation
- 3) reporting their findings to the class in the form of a presentation and guided discussion

Individual Review Paper

You will submit an 8-10 page paper dealing with the topic of your investigation. The paper will be a more formal and complete review of the topic. It must follow the APA format. The paper is due at the class meeting of April 1. An electronic copy of your paper (in either Word or WordPerfect) must also be submitted to me via email. The penalty for late submission of either the hard copy or the electronic copy will be 10% per weekday.

Discussion Papers

You will be required to submit 2 smaller papers based on the class discussions. I will offer various topics during the course of our discussions (approximately one per week) and you may write about any 2 topics. The paper will give you an opportunity to synthesize your thoughts or offer a critical analysis. No additional resources are needed. The paper cannot exceed 4 pages of text and must follow the APA format. The discussion papers are due 1 week after the related presentation. An electronic copy of your paper (in either Word or WordPerfect) must also be submitted on the due date. Given the many opportunities, LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!

Class Participation

A seminar course is a shared learning experience. Participation by every member is an essential ingredient for a successful seminar. Your participation grade will be determined by attendance, group work, and classroom interactions. Poor attendance without proper justification is not acceptable. If you cannot commit to near-perfect attendance, then please drop the course immediately. You will also be expected to assume a full and equal portion of any group work. Each group will be given an opportunity to identify any problems and I will take these complaints seriously. Finally, everyone is expected to be prepared for the presentations by reading background materials and playing an active role in the discussions by making meaningful contributions. You will be evaluated on both the regularity and quality of your in-class participation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week of	Topic
Jan 8 & 10	Course introduction and organization
Jan 15 & 17	Theory Group Presentations
Jan 22 & 24	
Jan 29 & 31	
Feb 5 & Feb 7	
Feb 12 & 14	
<i>Feb 18 - 22</i>	<i>Reading Week</i>
Feb 26 - 28	
Mar 4 & 6	
Mar 11 & 13	
Mar 18 & 20	
Mar 25 & 27	
Apr 1 & 3	