

**Seminar in Social Psychology: Human Aggression**  
**Psychology 455**  
**Fall, 2013**

---

*Instructor:* Richard Ennis  
*Office Hours:* Tuesday, 12:30 - 2:00  
*Office:* PAS 4037  
*Phone:* 519-888-4567 x35333  
*Email:* [rennis@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:rennis@uwaterloo.ca) (Note: please use LEARN for all course-related correspondence)  
*Required Text:* Krahe, B. (2001). The social psychology of aggression. East Sussex, GB: Psychology Press Ltd.

---

### **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 is described in more detail on the following pages.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Value</b>
Chapter Group Presentation	0%
Chapter Group Participation	10%
Thematic Group Presentation	20%
Thematic Group Participation	15%
Individual Paper	40%
Class Attendance and Participation	15%

## Chapter Group Presentations

These presentations will consist of 4 or 5 students randomly assigned to one of the following chapters:

- 3 Individual differences
- 4 Situational influences
- 5 Media violence
- 6 Aggression in the public sphere
- 7 Domestic violence
- 8 Sexual aggression

The presentation should be about 45 minutes and consist of both a summation and discussion of the chapter material. I will present chapters 1 and 2 to give you some idea of the format. The focus should be on thoughts and questions that you have as you read the material. These ideas can be used to generate class discussion. To keep these presentations informal, they will not be graded. Your group participation, however, will be evaluated and worth 10% of your grade (see Group Member Evaluations).

## Thematic Group Presentations

Each theme group will be responsible for an in-depth presentation of the following aggression topics which have been categorized by common themes:

- Aggressive People
  - The development of aggressive behaviour
  - Personality and aggression
- Gender Aggression
  - Gender differences in aggression
  - Sexual aggression
- Family Aggression
  - Child abuse
  - Spouse abuse
- Institutional Aggression
  - School violence
  - Workplace violence
- Collective Aggression
  - Gang violence
  - Terrorism
- Aggressive Stimuli
  - Alcohol and aggression
  - Media violence and aggression
- Sanctioned Aggression
  - Sport aggression
  - Police aggression

The order of presentation will be determined by random draw. The group will have 90 minutes for the presentation and discussion. All members must take an active role. The presentation will begin with an analysis of the issues (what, who, when, where and why) based on the textbook and recent primary resources (i.e., journal articles). The group will also lead the class in a discussion of topic examples (e.g., recent events, prevalent issues, and potential problems). The discussion should be designed to spark debate about the external validity of the theory (i.e., the applicability to “real world” issues identified in the course objectives and textbook chapters). The presentation will be worth 20% of each student’s grade and your group participation will be worth another 15% of your grade (see Evaluations).  
NO LAPTOPS, TABLETS, PHONES, ETC. To ensure the full attention of audience members, only the presenters will be allowed to use electronic devices.

#### Organizational Meeting

I will hold a brief meeting at the end of class (4:00-4:20) with the group members presenting the following week. This is to ensure that all group members are cooperating on the project. I will expect to hear about your progress and the expectations for each group member. Failure to attend this organizational meeting will result in a deduction of 5 marks from the individual’s Thematic Group Participation grade.

#### Individual Paper

More specific guidelines and criteria are on page 6. Each student will submit an 8-10 page paper dealing with some aspect or component of your thematic group presentation. Each group member must submit papers that address different aspects of the seminar presentation (ie., based on your individual contributions to the group product). It must follow the APA format. A hard copy and an electronic copy (in Word or Adobe format) must be submitted to me before noon on Thursday, December 5. Please use the designated LEARN dropbox for submitting your electronic version. Be advised that the electronic copy may be reviewed by a program that identifies potential plagiarism. If submitting early, you may leave the hard copy in my mail slot in the Psychology Department mailroom (3<sup>rd</sup> floor). The penalty for late submission of either the hard copy or the electronic copy will be 10% per weekday.

I appreciate the demands of a heavy workload as the term comes to an end. Therefore, you may exercise the option of an extension if needed. The extended due date for both hard and electronic copies is noon on Thursday, December 12. The hard copy must be in my mail slot by that time. The penalty for late submission of either the hard copy or the electronic copy will be an immediate deduction of 10% and an additional 10% per weekday. In order to exercise this option, you must advise me before the original due date otherwise the original penalties will be applied. Simply email me and state you are taking the extension (no explanation required).

## **Evaluations**

### Thematic Group Presentations

The mark for your presentation will be based on two sources:

- 1) your participation and contributions as judged by your fellow group members.
- 2) critical evaluations of audience members. Each audience member will submit a mark out of 20 based on the following criteria:
  - Depth of analysis (10 marks)
  - Effectiveness of vocal and visual presentation (5 marks)
  - Audience engagement in discussion (5 marks)

The mark must be justified with a brief but thoughtful critique (see Attendance and Participation). The critique must be submitted electronically to the designated LEARN dropbox within 48 hours of the presentation. The final mark will be the mean of 10 randomly selected evaluations. However, I reserve the right to adjust the grade if I feel that mark does not properly reflect the quality of the presentation. A compilation of the critiques will be shared with you following the completion of all presentations. These will be provided anonymously but you are strongly encouraged to provide positive feedback and criticism that is thoughtful, helpful, and sensitive.

### Group Member Evaluations

These will apply to both the Chapter and Thematic presentations. Each group member will submit an evaluation of the relative contributions of all group members. Divide 100% contribution among all group members including yourself. There are no set criteria for this judgement but you must provide some justification for your evaluation of each member. Individual marks will be based on the mean evaluations of your fellow group members with possible influence based on your self-evaluation. I consider your group to be the most informed source of your efforts and I will only adjust your grade under extreme circumstances.

## **Attendance and Participation**

A seminar course is a shared learning experience. Participation by every member is an essential ingredient for a successful seminar. The best designed seminar will fail miserably if the students are not committed and motivated to make it an active learning experience. Therefore, there will be a high premium based on participation. Of course, you can not participate if you're not in class. Therefore, there will be a sign-in sheet at each meeting. The main component of your participation grade will be based on the critical evaluations that you submit following the 7 thematic group presentations. These will be graded on the sincerity, legitimacy, and thoughtfulness of your critique. If you meet these criteria you will receive 2 participation marks. A mark of 1 will be given if I feel you have only provided a superficial critique. A mark of 0 will be given if you fail to submit a critique within 48 hours or fail to provide a legitimate critique. Only those in attendance will be allowed to submit an evaluation. I will use your 5 best marks so this will account for 10 of your participation marks. The remaining 5 marks will be given for overall attendance. You must attend at least 10 class meetings (excluding the first one) to receive 5 marks. In other words, you may miss one class without penalty. 2½ marks will be deducted for each additional class you miss.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
September 10	Course introduction and organization
September 17	Chapters 1 & 2 presentation
September 24	Chapters 3 & 4 presentation
October 1	Chapters 5 & 6 presentation
October 8	Chapters 7 & 8 presentation
October 15	Individual presentations
October 22	Individual presentations
October 29	Individual presentations
November 5	Individual presentations
November 12	Individual presentations
November 19	Individual presentations
November 26	Individual presentations

## **Individual Paper: Guidelines and Marking Criteria**

### **Content** (*Value: 25/40*)

The paper will basically be an elaboration of your personal focus during the Thematic Group Presentation. You should use the same resources and any additional ones required for a coherent paper. This is not, however, meant to be a thorough review of the literature. Just use the resources required. You may use material and resources of the other group members (even other presentations) but your paper and focus must be an individual product.

Grading will be based on the following:

- Is there a clear definition and presentation of the issue?
- Are the appropriate theories introduced (only those that are applicable, NOT ALL the theories we discussed)?
- Is the theoretical analysis logical? Are the assertions and arguments understandable and supported?
- Is the course material clearly and appropriately applied?
- Are conclusions and/or recommendations understandable and consistent with the theoretical analysis?
- Is there evidence of learning (i.e., depth of knowledge; ability to synthesize information)?
- Is it apparent that sufficient effort (mental and physical) has been applied to the assignment?

### **Organization** (*Value: 10/40*)

The organization should facilitate reading of the paper. Your thesis/topic should flow from a presentation of the issues and theory, through your analysis, and end with a summation of your thesis and appropriate conclusions.

Grading will be based on the following:

- Does the paper unfold logically, allowing the reader to easily follow the thesis and arguments?
- Are some sections irrelevant or redundant?
- Are there gaps in the presentation?
- Does each paragraph contribute something new, yet consistent with, the previous content?

### **Format** (*Value: 5/40*)

The paper must follow APA format except as noted here. It must not exceed 10 pages of double-spaced text (excluding title page and references). There must be 1" margins all around. Please use a common font in 11 or 12 point size. Please do not use any covers or binders; simply staple your pages together.

Note: Two-sided printing of the hard copy is not only acceptable, it is encouraged.

Grading will be based on the following:

- Does the paper look scholastic (not messy and careless)?
- Are there too many spelling errors and typos that distract the reader?
- Does poor grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, detract from the readability of the paper?
- Does the paper conform to APA guidelines?
- Do the citations and references match (i.e., all citations are referenced and all references are cited)?

## The Official Version of the Course Outline

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (*i.e.*, if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class) and the outline posted on LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version. Outlines on LEARN may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Access-Ability Services, located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with Access-Ability Services at the beginning of each academic term.

### Concerns About the Course or Instructor (Informal Stage)

We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies (*Myra Fernandes from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014*) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor. Contact information is as follows:

Myra Fernandes

Email: [mafernan@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mafernan@uwaterloo.ca)

Ph 519-888-4567 ext 32142

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See Policy 70 and 71 below for further details.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

[Further details: <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [<http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>], to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about 'rules' for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline [<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>].

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 [<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>].

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals [<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>].

Academic Integrity website (Arts): [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

Academic Integrity Office (UW): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>