

**Seminar in Social Psychology: Human Aggression**  
**Psychology 455**  
**Spring, 2010**

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*Required Text:* Krahe, B. (2001). The social psychology of aggression. East Sussex, GB: Psychology Press Ltd.

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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 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	25%
Thematic Group Participation	25%
Individual Paper	25%
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 the entire class time (2 hours) to make their presentation and 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). Following the presentation, the group will 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). In order to have an effective and interactive class, the group will make their presentation and discussion topics available to all class members by 9:00 a.m. on the Monday preceding their presentation. Each class member is responsible for familiarizing themselves with this material prior to the presentation so they can be active participants in the seminar. The presentation will be worth 25% of each student’s grade and your group participation will be worth another 25% of your grade (see Evaluations).

### **Individual Paper**

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 WordPerfect format) must be submitted to me before or during my office hours on Tuesday, July 27, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. Please use the ACE email system for sending 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. 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, Friday, July 30. 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) critical evaluations of audience members, and 2) your participation and contributions as judged by your fellow group members. Each audience member will submit a mark out of 25 based on the following criteria:

- Depth of analysis
- Effectiveness of vocal presentation
- Effectiveness of visual presentation
- Audience engagement in discussion

The mark must be justified with a brief but thoughtful critique (see Attendance and Participation). The critique must be submitted electronically to my ACE email within 48 hours of the presentation. The final mark will be

the mean of 5 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. The same mark will then be assigned to each member of the group.

### 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 you. 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 6 best marks so this will account for 12 of your participation marks. The remaining 3 marks will be given for overall attendance. You must attend at least 10 class meetings (excluding the first one) to receive 3 marks. In other words, you may miss one class without penalty. One mark will be deducted for each additional class you miss.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
May 4	Course introduction and organization
May 11	Chapters 1 & 2 presentation
May 18	Chapters 3 & 4 presentation
May 25	Chapters 5 & 6 presentation
June 1	Chapters 7 & 8 presentation
June 8	Individual presentations
June 15	Individual presentations
June 22	Individual presentations
June 29	Individual presentations
July 6	Individual presentations
July 13	Individual presentations
July 19	Individual presentations