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Office: Leacock 840  
Office Hours: Thursday 3-5 and by appointment

Course Description
The objective of this seminar is to introduce students to the sociological thinking on conflict and violence. We will read classical and contemporary theory and research from a variety of disciplinary fields (including evolutionary biology, developmental and social psychology, criminology, international relations, and sociology), compare their viewpoints, and analyze them critically. Students will be encouraged to reexamine their personal and cultural assumptions about the causes of violent conflicts and consider various alternatives for the resolution of these conflicts. Topics covered will include classical theories of violent behaviors, expressions of violence, both within and outside of warfare, and specific forms of violence such as domestic violence, rape, criminal violence, war, genocide, and terrorism.

Readings
This is a reading-intensive course (between 70-150 pages a week). I expect you to complete weekly readings prior to the period for which they have been assigned so that you are ready to participate and express your opinions in class. The required readings consist of selections from scholarly books and journal articles. To minimize copying costs, I have tried to choose publications that are available online. Copies of all reading material are available as coursepacks at McGill’s bookstore, but ALSO electronically online on My Courses. The class webpage will function as a primary source of information exchange. I may assign additional readings during the semester and make them available on the class website. Alternatively, depending on our progress, I may remove some of the readings currently on the list.

Course requirements and grading
Your grade in this course will be determined based on your class participation and your performance on the different course requirements. I will offer No extra credit. Please also note that in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change. The final grade will be calculated as follows:

1. Class participation 10%  
2. Discussion facilitation 10%  
2. Book review 20%  
3. Research paper 60%

1. Active Class Participation
This is a small seminar, and its success depends upon students’ participation. It is therefore essential that you complete the assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss them in an informed way. When preparing for class, use the following questions to guide your reading and thinking:
1. What is the author’s main argument? How does s/he support this argument? Do you find their argument persuasive? What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the paper?

2. How does this specific reading tie to the other articles/book sections assigned for the week (and to articles and class discussions from previous weeks)? Do the readings present different viewpoints? Are they in conflict with one another? Which of them do you find to be most persuasive?

Make sure that you bring the assigned materials to class, so you can reference them and remind yourself of their main arguments. While we will not have time to discuss every single point of every reading, we will try to evaluate their main contributions by comparing and contrasting them with one another.

It is important that we maintain an open and pleasant environment for discussion, where everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinions, asking questions, and contributing to the discussion. To do that, you must be respectful of others’ opinions and comments, even if you disagree with them. At the same time, remember to be respectful of others in your own comments and try to keep things in perspective. Even if you feel uncomfortable at first participating in class discussions, it is important that you make an effort to participate and contribute. In addition, you may come to see me during my office hours to discuss any thoughts, topics or concerns you may have.

2. Discussion Facilitation

Each week one or two students will serve as discussion facilitators. This means that they will have to read the weekly readings carefully and prepare questions for class discussion. Please note that you are not asked to prepare a full and lengthy presentation, summarizing each and every reading (keep in mind that we all read them). Rather, you should present very succinctly (no longer than 10 minutes) what you see as the main themes in this week’s readings and the way in which they relate to one another, ending with a few questions that will launch class discussion.

3. Book Review

Students will write a book review on a book of their choice, provided that it is a recent academic book (non-fiction; published in 2015 or 2016) and is related to issues of conflict and violence, broadly defined. I recommend (although it is not a requirement) to choose a book that focuses on a topic on which you intend to write your final research paper.

- You must choose a book for review by February 1st. I will have to approve your choice.
- The book reviews are due by Tuesday, February 23 (late reviews will be penalized: -5% a day)

Book reviews (like all other assignments) must be sent to me as an email attachment to eran.shor@mcgill.ca (I do not accept any hard copies). I will then provide you with feedback on your review, so you can revise it.

IMPORTANT NOTE: By the end of the semester you will be required to select an academic journal and query its book review editor about the possibility of publishing your review in the journal (you will need to bcc me on your email to the editor).

Book reviews should be similar to those one can find in academic journals (e.g., Contemporary Sociology). This means that they should be about 800 word-long. Please see Appendix 1 at the end of this syllabus for more guidelines on how to write your book review and Appendix 2 for a (non-exclusive) list of possible journals that you may query. You should also consult published reviews in relevant journals to become more familiar with their style of writing and structure.
4. Research Paper

Students will write a paper (MAXIMUM 4,000 words, excluding bibliography; DUE 5PM December 4 in electronic form) on a subject related to social conflict and violence. The paper must be based on empirical research. This may include, for example, content analysis of newspaper coverage of a certain issue, the delivery of opinion surveys regarding a certain controversial subject, a few interviews with people who are relevant to the issue you wish to study, a comparative analysis of 2-3 historical case studies (or a theoretical analysis of a single case), or a statistical analysis of relevant data.

- The proposal for the paper is due by Monday, February 29, at 10:00PM
- Final papers are due by Wednesday, April 13 at 10:00PM.

Appendix 3 at the end of this syllabus provides further guidelines on how to write your proposal and your final research paper.

NOTE: I will truncate documents and not read anything beyond the specified maximum word limit. You might find this constraining, and you are right: Much of your subsequent writing will be constrained by similar word counts and this is good training for your professional career. I will not accept late work.

Academic Integrity and Misconduct

McGill University values academic integrity. Academic misconduct (i.e. cheating, plagiarism) will not be tolerated. Suspected infractions will be forwarded to the university’s academic misconduct office for review (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information on McGill’s Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures).

Right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.
## Course Outline

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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>PART I: WHY VIOLENCE? THEORETICAL APPROACHES</td>
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* Rule, James (1988). *Theories of Civil Violence.* Chapter 1: “Civil Violence as the Outcome of Rational Calculation” (pp. 18-41).  
* Fanon, Frantz (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth.* Ch. I: “Concerning Violence” (pp. 27-83).  
| 4    | Feb 4 | PART II: NON-WARFARE VIOLENCE               |                                                                                                                                           |

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1 Note: Dates and topics are tentative; we may move more quickly or more slowly depending on class circumstances and may also add or skip some topics accordingly. Any changes will be announced in class.
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>No class – Reading Week</td>
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<td>PART IV: SPECIAL ISSUE—TERRORISM</td>
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<td>Final paper submission</td>
<td>Wednesday, April 13, by 10:00PM</td>
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Appendix 1: Book Review Guidelines

Book reviews provide a well-defined medium to succinctly explore a literature that interests you. The goal of the review should be to take the reader through the major arguments of the book and develop a critique that enables the reader to locate the book within scholarly traditions and debates.

Non-fiction books usually have certain architecture. A large argument is based upon the coherent linking together of several smaller arguments, each of which is argued through the exposition of some empirical findings that support the point. As you read, you should be noting four things:

1. On what assumptions does the author build? Where do they stand in the scholarly debate on the issue?
2. What is the big argument that the author is trying to make?
3. What are the smaller arguments that according to the author add up to the big argument? Are you convinced that the big picture is equal to the sum of these smaller arguments?
4. What types of evidence does the author provide to demonstrate the book’s thesis? Do these data really demonstrate the points claimed for them? Could one make a different point with the same data?

As you look for these elements of the work, the book review should already be taking shape.

Structure

A good book review also has a certain architecture that roughly mirrors that of the book. Here is a potential structure for the review (a typical book review for most journals is usually about 800 words):

1. **Introductory paragraph.** Situate the author and the book within larger sociological frames of reference. What is at stake here? Why should one be interested in this work? Locate the work and the author in bigger debates and controversies.

2. **Get to the point right away** (about 1-2 paragraphs). "Weber’s main argument centers on/is/…” What is the big point and why should we care? Quite often, the author of the book will tell you why they think you should care. If you are convinced, you can use their reasoning.

3. **What are the smaller arguments** that compose the solid mass of the book and the evidence that the author uses to make his or her case? (3-4 paragraphs). Enumerate them in a way that the reader can follow the plan of the book, but **avoid** a lengthy meticulous account of the contents (i.e. Chapter 1 covers… Chapter 2 covers… etc.). Try to present them in a way that the author would find fair.

4. **Does it add up for you?** (3-4 paragraphs). Are you convinced? If you hated the book, here is your chance to say that (in a professional and respectful way). If you loved it, explain why. A word of advice regarding critics: Do not be cynical or mean. State your criticism clearly and honestly (certainly do not be embarrassed to be critical), but try to remember that someone worked hard on this book and there is no need to insult them. Make sure that the critics you bring are helpful for the reader of the review and are not written just to be argumentative or display your critical abilities.

5. **Concluding paragraph.** You can exit by returning to the biggest issues that are at stake here. What was this book able to accomplish and what is its contribution? Readers should come away from the book review with a sense that they know where this book fits in the literature.

Two types of conclusions to avoid:

1. The fifth grade book report: "I recommend this book to anyone who likes horses".
2. The academic weasel book review (also common weaseling technique in academic articles): "of course, further research is needed…” This goes without saying, and is neither helpful nor informative.

* You may also visit my McGill webpage ([http://www.mcgill.ca/sociology/faculty/eran-shor](http://www.mcgill.ca/sociology/faculty/eran-shor)). Under “Publications” scroll down to “Book Reviews” and you will be able to find a few links to recent reviews, which may be helpful as templates.
Appendix 2: A (Partial) List of Conflict and Violence Journals*  

Aggression and Violent Behavior  
Aggressive Behavior  
Africa Peace and Conflict Journal  
Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression  
Conflict and Health  
Conflict Management and Peace Science  
Conflict Resolution Quarterly  
Conflict, Security & Development  
Critical Studies on Terrorism  
Ethnic Conflict Research Digest  
Genocide Studies and Prevention  
Holocaust and Genocide Studies  
International Journal of Comparative Sociology  
International Journal of Conflict and Violence  
International Journal of Conflict Management  
International Journal of Development and Conflict  
International Journal of Peace Studies  
International Journal of Terrorism and Political Hot Spots  
International Security  
Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict  
Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research  
Journal of Conflict & Security Law  
Journal of Conflict Resolution  
Journal of Conflict Studies  
Journal of Family Violence  
Journal of Genocide Research  
Journal of International Security Affairs  
Journal of Interpersonal Violence  
Journal of Peace Research  
Journal of Policing, Intelligence, and Counter Terrorism  
Journal of Political and Military Sociology  
Journal of Religion, conflict and Peace  
Journal of School Violence  
Journal of Sexual Aggression  
Journal of Terrorism and Security Analysis  
Journal of Terrorism Research  
Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution  
Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology  
Peace, Conflict and Development  
Perspectives on Terrorism  
Politics and Society  
Psychology of Violence  
Security Studies  
Small Wars Journal  
Studies in Conflict and Terrorism  
Terrorism & Political Violence  
Violence and Victims  
War and Conflict Journal  
War Crimes  
War Times Journal  
Women against Violence Journal  

* In addition to these journals, if your book deals with any type of criminal violence, there are many other criminology journals which you may wish to consider
Appendix 3: Instructions for Preparation of Final Paper

A. Paper Proposal
A proposal for the final paper (up to one page) is due by Monday, February 29, at 10:00PM. The proposal will not be graded and is intended to help you begin reading and thinking about your final project and to allow me to give you directions and advice. However, you cannot write your final paper without first submitting a proposal and getting it approved.

The proposal must include the following:
- Your proposed topic/issue, presented in one or two paragraphs that highlight a research question and a research hypothesis
- An outline of your methodology (sampling, sample, method of analysis, etc.) and the empirical data that you propose to collect or use
- A short explanation of why you believe this topic is important/interesting
- A list of at least five academic sources you anticipate using

Here is an example of an effective proposal written by a student:

**Prisoners Perceptions of Reintegration Effectiveness**

Since the late 18th century, prison has become the ultimate form of social control (Stastny 1982). However, with rates of reconviction (a plea or finding of guilt, not just an accusation) in Canada, reaching 44% in the first year of release (violent and non-violent crimes combined), a large question pertains to the effectiveness of the system (Bonta 2003). As Harper's Administration continues to increase the budget for prison construction, a budget that has ballooned by 54% in 2010-2011 and will reach $3.12 billion by 2012-13, a cost-benefit analysis of prison's societal function and role becomes increasingly imperative (Maynard 2010). While much research has focused on the causes of crime, and ways to implement new policies of transformative justice, "Less attention has been paid to the influence of state policy on prisoners' preparation for release and the pathways of reintegration following release"(Visher and Travis 2003:104).

To examine one aspect of this effectiveness problem, I will interview those who have recently been released or are soon to be released from the system about their perceptions of the reintegration process. I will conduct eight in-depth interviews with men in various steps of the process of community reintegration. I will be talking to men who are either living in their own apartments or in a halfway house. The interview will consist of open-ended questions and all forms of anonymity will be preserved. Through these interviews, I will seek to understand their perceptions of the judicial system and the reintegration process.

By questioning ex-prisoners' perceptions of the contributions and inadequacies of the criminal justice system during their process of community integration, I hope to gain an in-depth understanding of the programs, institutions and obstacles involved in the process of integration. As prison is a process of resocialization, a creation of a new culture and norms, this study aims to establish an understanding of what needs are being successfully addressed and what needs are being neglected in order to facilitate prisoner's successful reintegration into the community.

References:
B. Final Paper Guidelines and Requirements

Students will write a paper on a subject related to social conflict and violence. The paper must use resources that go **substantially beyond** the lecture materials and assigned class readings.

The paper **must** be based on **empirical research** – that is on an analysis of data – either data that you will collect yourself or data available from secondary sources (e.g. statistical databases or historical data). Such empirical research may include, for example, content analysis of newspaper coverage of a certain issue, the delivery of opinion surveys regarding a certain controversial subject, a few interviews with people who are relevant to the issue you wish to study, a comparative analysis of 2-3 historical case studies (or a theoretical analysis of a single case), or a statistical analysis of relevant data. You are encouraged to come see me for more information and consultation, and to discuss your plans.

Papers will be **MAXIMUM 4,000 words** (not including bibliography; this will be strictly enforced). They must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman fonts, double-spaced, with all margins set at one inch and no additional spacing between paragraphs. The first lines of all paragraphs must be indented. All pages (except for the title page) **must be numbered** consecutively at the bottom right-hand margin.

**Final papers are due by Wednesday, April 13 at 10:00PM. Late papers will not be accepted under any circumstances.** Papers must be submitted electronically as MS Word attachments to my university email address **(eran.shor@mcgill.ca)**.

**Important things to consider when writing your paper:**
- Each paper must include an **introduction** (in which you clearly state your research question), a theoretical literature review, a **methodological section**, a section describing your research **findings**, a **conclusion/discussion**, and a **reference list**. You are strongly advised to use **subtitles** whenever you begin a new topic, in order to facilitate the reading.
- Whenever you present arguments, data, or opinions you must support them with evidence in the form of examples or (preferably) references to academic sources. In addition, whenever you bring an idea that is not originally yours, you MUST cite your source in the text (e.g.: Durkheim 1897). If you cite a source word for word, your citation must appear in quotes and a page number must be given (e.g. Durkheim 1987:78). In addition, you must make sure that any reference within the text also appears in the bibliographic list at the end of the paper. For more details on the rules of academic writing, please see a brief guide for the American Sociological Association rules of citation at: [http://lib.trinity.edu/research/citing/asa%20style%20citations.pdf](http://lib.trinity.edu/research/citing/asa%20style%20citations.pdf)
- Sources that are directly cited and sources that are simply paraphrased should be referenced within the paper in order to avoid plagiarism. All students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under McGill’s Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

**The grade for the paper will be based on:**

1. **Content and Originality**
   a. Refrain from simply repeating what you find in the literature. Try to reorganize what the literature says on the topic and bring the results from your own empirical research to either highlight new points of view or support existing ones.
   b. Present different views on the issue and make sure to highlight the tension between them, as well as the way most scholars think about this issue today.

2. **Organization**
   a. Clear structure and format
   b. Logical sequencing and continuity of ideas
   c. Clarity of Expression and Conciseness

3. **Presentation Style**
   a. Grammar (e.g. sentence structure, noun-verb agreement, etc.)
   b. Spelling and punctuation
   c. Reliance on academic sources and correct citation (follow ASA Manual style) and full matching between in-text references and bibliographic list.