

Violence & Human Rights

THIS COURSE surveys theory and observations bearing on violence and human rights as cultural constructs; human rights claimed by people regardless of national or international governing bodies, sometimes through violent means; and cultural variation in how people think of and act in forms of violence that range from war, genocide and terrorism, to street crime and domestic violence. We conclude with a critical examination of the assumptions that underline current prevention, deterrence, and intervention policies inside and outside the 'human rights' establishment.

Nine learning modules make up the course:

1. You will learn what it takes to kill someone.
2. You will decide who should exercise what specific forms of responsibility for specific acts of violence.
3. You will learn how honor cultures kill.
4. You will learn how religions, Asian as well as Abrahamic, rationalize violence.
5. You will learn to differentiate the effects of life conditions (poverty) from the effects of cultures (culture of poverty).
6. You will assess the violence suppressing effects of guns and gun controls.
7. You will learn to differentiate the effects of personal characteristics (the 'rotten man' hypothesis) from the effects of power differentials ('I beat her because I can.').
8. You will learn to differentiate defensive violence from predatory violence, or discover that you can't.
9. You will learn where rights come from so you may better understand what has to happen to effectively extend human rights.

REQUIREMENTS: Active participation in 9 online discussions (12 pt font, single spaced, 1,000 word limit for any one contribution – unless you receive permission to make it longer) and a paper (12 pt font, single spaced, 3,000 word limit – unless you receive permission to make it longer). You may draw on earlier papers and discussion board commentary for subsequent discussion board comments or essays – the more, the better, and remember to cite people as well as literature properly. I expect each written contribution to integrate ideas and perspectives that you develop earlier in this class. Your last assignments will thus count as your Final, from which I will evaluate your mastery of the concepts and skills that are part of the course.

BLOG DISCUSSION CONTRIBUTIONS: Paste your submissions into the blog space given you on HuskyCT. If you want specific comments on your submissions, *paste your discussion into an email* to handwerker@uconn.edu and I will embed comments directly.

FINAL: Send your final paper to handwerker@uconn.edu no later than noon, the last day of Finals Week. All work for each Module must be completed by the assignment date. Late submissions default to a grade of 0.0

You must write acceptably well or you will fail this course. I expect correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar in all written communication – that includes emails. Write for adults who may want to know what you've learned, like your parents or grandparents. That means lots of specifics, examples, details, and clearly laid out arguments. Adhere to this rule and you'll do fine: *Write concisely with active verbs.* Use Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* as your guide to good writing. Consult the writing center for additional help.

I will assign grades as points (e.g., 2.0=C, 3.0=B, 3.3=B+, A=4.0, B+/A-=3.5). Use a 12 pt font and single space.

1. For a C, address the question directly and clearly in ways that link what you write to the assigned readings.
2. For a D or an F, submit a commentary with no links to the assigned readings, which addresses the question indirectly, or obscurely, or all three.
3. Your grade will shift from a C to a B as you add details that make it clear that you mastered the required readings and how they apply to the issues you write about.
4. Your grade will shift from a B to an A as you add breadth and specifics that make it clear that you have begun to see the wider implications of the issues you write about.

I want you to produce arguments, not provide opinions. Opinions don't count because we have no reason to think they're any more than your fantasy. Arguments count to the extent that they (1) contain no logical fallacies and (2) provide evidence (the stronger the better) that a claim corresponds with a set of observations. Critically evaluate your own argument, and those of others. Critical evaluations do *not* consist of statements like "I don't believe you," or "I don't understand," or "you should have written on something else," or "but that doesn't account for this contradictory example." No one cares what you 'believe' unless you can justify the belief with evidence. It's your responsibility to get the information so you do understand. It's not your business to tell someone else what topic to write on. And instances do not invalidate generalizations. Critical evaluations consist of statements like "This argument doesn't make sense, and here's why – [cite and explain the logical fallacies and/or evidence weaknesses]," or "This argument makes sense, and here's why – [cite and explain its strengths in logic and evidence]."

Buy these books (Amazon usually ships faster than alternative online sources):

(1) Grossman, Lt. Col. Dave (2009 Revised) *On Killing*. Little, Brown & Co: Boston.
ISBN: 978-0-316-04093-8

(2) Handwerker, W. Penn. (2009) *The Origin of Cultures*. Left Coast Press.
ISBN: 978-1-59874-068-4

(3) Darwish, N (2008) *Cruel & Usual Punishment*. Nashville:Thomas Nelson
ISBN: 978-1-59555-209-9

(4) Moore, Wes (2011) *The Other Wes Moore*. NY: Spiegel-Grau. ISBN: 978-0-385-52820-7

Find all other reading online:

<http://www.anth.uconn.edu/faculty/handwerker/309readings/309%20readings.htm>

I will assume college prep levels of knowledge and skills to find the answer to questions, like 'What counts as plagiarism?' I will give you an F for the *course* if I see you submit someone else's work as

your own. No one can achieve their best without help and I urge you to help one another do better. In the process, you will use someone else's ideas or words. Give them credit for helping you! Citations to others, including to the readings, count heavily in all assignments.

In summary, your course grade will come from the following:

70% from 9 Discussion Board contributions
30% from a Final paper

I will answer questions in class and online, either with email or Skype conversations.

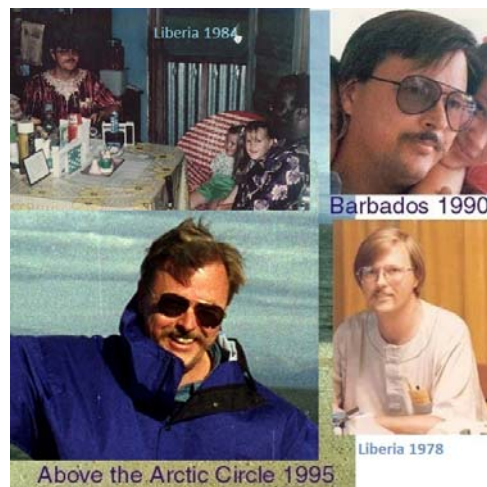
VERY STRONG RECOMMENDATION:

You will do your best if you frame your reading and writing *as a means to achieve the stated 'learning goals.'* You handicap yourself if you focus only on the assignments.

WHO AM I?

Penn Handwerker graduated from Willamette University in 1966 with a B.A. and from the University of Oregon in 1971 with a PhD. I taught at the University of Oregon, Washington State University, and Humboldt State University before coming to the University of Connecticut as a Professor of Anthropology in 1994. I trained as a general anthropologist with an emphasis on the intersection of biological and cultural anthropology, and have published in all five fields (applied, archaeology, biological, cultural, and linguistics) of anthropology. I have conducted field research in

West Africa (~3 years residence in Liberia, with short excursions to Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, during 1968, 1969-70, 1977-78, 1984),
the West Indies (5+ years residence, in Barbados during 1985, 1986, 1990, 1991, and 1992, Antigua during 1988 and 1989, and St. Lucia during 1986 and 1990),
the Russian Far East (Chukotka in 1995),
and various portions of the contemporary United States (Oregon, California's North Coast, Connecticut, and Alaska).



I developed new methods with which to study cultures while I studied topics that included the causes and consequences of entrepreneurship in both food production and marketing, corruption, human fertility, and both inter- and intragenerational power differences. My current research focuses on the possibility that the most effective collective action for community sustainability reflects the cultural assumption that each person knows what's best for him or herself. See <http://www.anth.uconn.edu/faculty/handwerker/> for more information.

WHO ARE YOU?

Please use HuskyCT to tell us a little about yourself.

Module 1: What Does Violence Look Like and How Does it Feel?

Learning Goal 1: Learn what it takes to kill someone and what violence feels like.

Research undertaken in the United States by Rebecca Floor and equivalent research in Denmark, Israel, South Africa, and Colombia by Ben Purzycki, Rich Sosis, Andre Swier, and Vanessa Garcia reveal a consistent order by which people generally experience violence:

FIRST EXPERIENCE

| |
|--|
| Verbally assaulted or threatened -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Verbally assaulted or threatened -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Physically attacked by unarmed person -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Physically threatened by unarmed person -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Family member or friend killed -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Stolen from or attempted to steal from by force -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Break-in or attempted break-in -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Physically attacked by unarmed person -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Physically threatened by armed (gun, knife, other weapon) person -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Stolen from or attempted to steal from by force -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Break-in or attempted break-in -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Physically threatened by unarmed person -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Chased or stalked. -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| <i>Physically attacked by armed (gun, knife, other weapon) person -- Seen done to others</i> |
| <i>Family member or friend killed -- Done to me</i> |
| Physically threatened by armed (gun, knife, other weapon) person -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Physically attacked by armed (gun, knife, other weapon) person -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Shot or shot at -- <i>Seen done to others</i> |
| Chased or stalked -- <i>Done to me</i> |
| Shot or shot at - <i>Done to me</i> |

LAST EXPERIENCE

Where are you on this list of violence experiences?

Readings:

Grossman, Lt. Col. Dave *On Killing*. Little, Brown & Co: Boston, 2009 Revised. ISBN: 978-0-316-04093-8

Discussion 1: What does it take to kill someone, given what appears to be a natural resistance to killing?

Module 2:
When, if ever, Do Victims *Not* Victimize Themselves?

Learning Goal 2: Who should exercise what specific forms of responsibility for specific acts of violence?

Readings:

Grossman, Lt. Col. Dave *On Killing*. Little, Brown & Co: Boston, 2009 Revised. ISBN: 978-0-316-04093-8

Films:

Home Invasion: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Jey1pBl8AY&feature=related>
Another Home Invasion: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuhKCiY-lu0&NR=1>

Discussion 2: How do individuals contribute to their own victimization?

Module 3: How Do Cultures Produce Violence?

Learning Goal 3: Learn how honor cultures kill.

Basic characteristics of cultures:

- consists of shared assumptions, shared understandings about what we should and not do (which we call cultural norms), and coordinated patterns of behavior— plus bodies of knowledge about the things of our world and how they operate, including how to make things happen.
- identifiable only by reference to specific assumptions, norms, and patterns of behavior
- individuals embody multiple cultures, some named, some not, some global, some local
- the assumptions, norms, and coordinated patterns of behavior that make up a specific culture accomplish goals.

Readings (Cultures):

Handwerker, W. Penn. *The Origin of Cultures*. Left Coast Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-59874-068-4 – Chapter 1, 2, 3

Readings:

Darwish, N (2008) *Cruel & Usual Punishment*. Nashville:Thomas Nelson, ISBN: 978-1-59555-209-9

Vandello JA, Cohen D. Male Honor and Female Fidelity: Implicit Cultural Scripts That Perpetuate Domestic Violence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2003; 84:997-1010.

Klein, J An Invisible Problem: Everyday Violence against Girls in Schools *Theoretical Criminology* 2006;10:147-177

Films:

Honor Killing: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGtRVugNjcY&feature=related>

Discussion 3: How do the characteristics of honor cultures correspond with the conditions that, according to Grossman, lead up to a killing?

Module 4: Do All Religions Promote Violence?

*“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.
That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn.”
Hillel the Elder, c.100 BC.*

Learning Goal 4: How do religions, Asian as well as Abrahamic, rationalize violence?

Readings:

- Bagley W. Brigham Young's Culture of Violence. Conference paper, 2002.
<http://www.cesnur.org/2002/slc/bagley.htm>
- Kopel DB The Torah and Self-Defense. *Penn State Law Review* 2004;109:17-42.
- Kopel DB The Scottish and English Religious Roots of the American Right to Arms.
Bridges 2004;12:291-312.
- Kopel DB Self-Defense in Asian Religions. *Journal of Firearms and Public Policy* 2006; 18.
- Qutb, Syed. Milestones. Introduction & Chapter 4, attached to syllabus;
http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/milestones/hold/index_2.htm
- Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders, World Islamic Front Statement, 1998.
<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>
- Noor FA We Should Not Fear Being Called Radical – interview with Abu Bakaar Bashir.
Al Jazeera 2006, 18 August.
<http://english.aljazeera.net/archive/2006/08/2008410133657429527.html>

GRADUATE STUDENTS READ:

- Sosis, Richard and Candace Alcorta [Militants and Martyrs: Evolutionary Perspectives on Religion and Terrorism](#), In *Natural Security: A Darwinian Approach to a Dangerous World*, eds. R. Sagarin and T. Taylor, pp. 105-24, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Israeli R. A Manual of Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2002;14:23-40
- Raphaeli N. Ayman Muhammad Rabi' Al-Zawahiri: The Making of an Arch Terrorist.
Terrorism and Political Violence. 2002;14:1-22

Films:

- Fitna: http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=216_1207467783

Discussion 4: Imagine if you can what a genuine 'religion of peace' would look like?

Module 5: What Dictates Your Behavior?

Learning Goal 5: Differentiate the effects of life conditions (poverty) from the effects of cultures (culture of poverty).

Readings:

Moore, Wes (2011) *The Other Wes Moore*. NY: Spiegel-Grau. ISBN: 978-0-385-52820-7

GRADUATE STUDENTS READ:

Savolainen J, Lehti M, and Kivivouri J. 2008. Historical Origins of a Cross-National Puzzle: Homicide in Finland, 1750 to 2000. *Homicide Studies* 12:67-89.

<http://hsx.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/12/1/67.pdf>

Duncan-Waite, Imani and Woolcock, Michael, Arrested Development: The Political Origins and Socio-Economic Foundations of Common Violence in Jamaica (June 2008). Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper No. 46. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1265642>

[Bellair PE, McNulty TL. Beyond the bell curve: Community disadvantage and the explanation of black-white differences in adolescent violence. *Criminology* 2005;43: 1135-1168](#)

Films:

Haitian Poverty & Crime: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGjVczT6MCA>

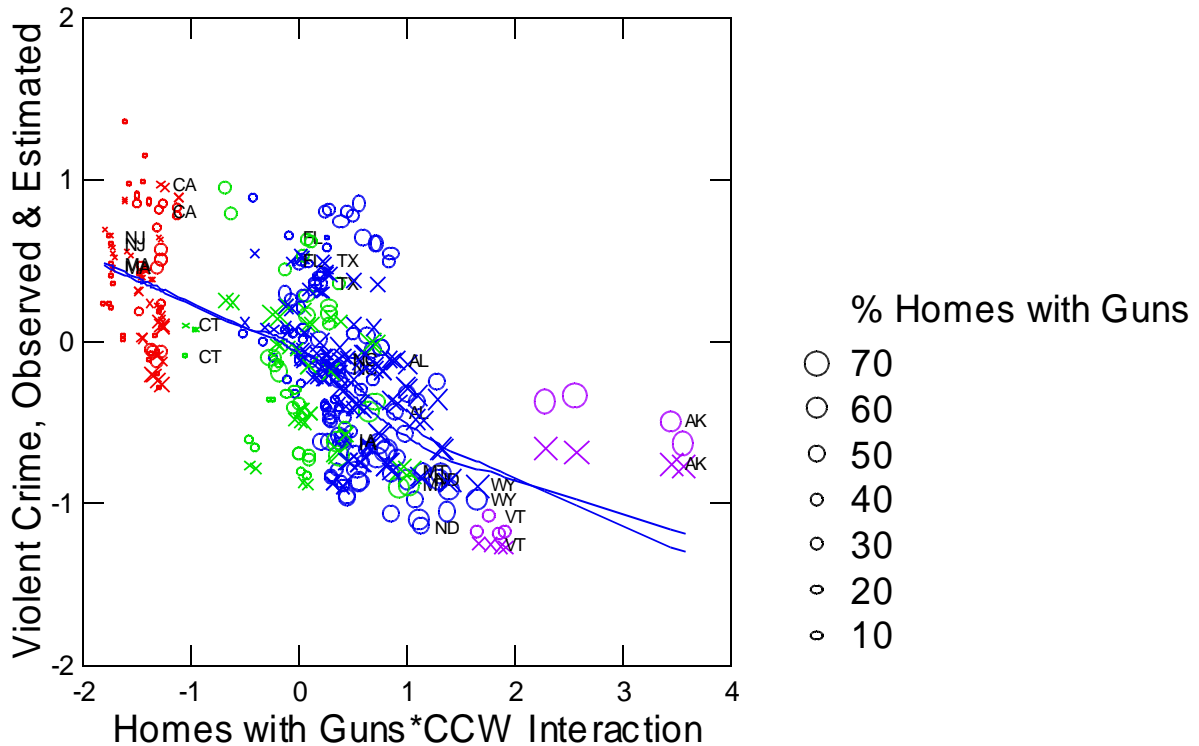
Discussion 5: Does 'poverty' or cultures of poverty produce violence? How, precisely?

Examine the question: do you really have choices? When and under what circumstances (specifically) do you NOT have choices. When your culture directs your actions, do you surrender your personal responsibility for your acts?

Module 6: Do Guns Produce Violence?

Learning Goal 6: Assess the violence-suppressing effects of guns and gun controls.

Violent Crime Rates by the Prevalence of Guns, USA, 2001-2004
CCW = Permit to Carry a Concealed Weapon
Measures Standardized



Readings:

Kates DB, Schaffer HE, Lattimer JK, Murray GB, Cassem EH. Guns and Public Health.

Tennessee Law Review 1994;62:513-596.

Raymond, E. Ethics from the Barrel of a Gun. <http://www.catb.org/~esr/guns/gun-ethics.html>

Hahn RA, Bilukha OO, Crosby A, Fullilove MT, et al. First Reports Evaluating the Effectiveness of Strategies for Preventing Violence: Firearms Laws. Findings from the Task Force on Community Preventative Services, CDC, 2003.

GRADUATE STUDENTS READ:

Kleck G, Gertz M. Armed Resistance to Crime: The Prevalence and Nature of Self-Defense with a Gun. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 86:150-187 (1995).

- Tark J, Kleck G. Resisting Crime: The Effect of Victim Action on the Outcomes of Crime.
Criminology 42: 861-909 (2004).
- Kleck G, Sever B, Li S, Gertz M. The Missing Link in General Deterrence Research.
Criminology 2005; 43:623-659.

Films:

- Pink Pistols: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqxZVTNgekE&NR=1>
- Barista Foils Robber: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv1KvThjqV8&feature=related>

Discussion 6: If guns kill, why didn't we see dramatic increases in the violent crime rates in Texas, Florida, and other states after they passed laws that made it easy to legally carry a concealed handgun; and why do we find the highest violent crime rates in states with the most restrictive gun controls (MA, NJ, CA) and the lowest in states with no gun controls (VT, AK)?

Module 7: A Pack Not a Herd

Learning Goal 7: Differentiate the violence eliciting effects of personal characteristics (the 'rotten man' hypothesis) from the effects of power differentials ('I beat her because I can.').

Readings:

McDonald vs Chicago, SCOTUS opinion 2010.

Frey B. Prevention of Human Rights Violations Committed with Small Arms and Light Weapons. Final Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations, 2006.

GRADUATE STUDENTS READ:

Cottrol RJ, Diamond RT. The Second Amendment: Toward an Afro-Americanist Reconsideration. *Georgetown Law Journal* 1991;80:309-361.

Kopel DB, Gallan P, Eisen JD Is Resisting Genocide a Human Right? *Notre Dame Law Review* 81, 2006.

Kates DB The Second Amendment and the Ideology of Self-Protection. *Constitutional Commentary* 1992; 9:87-104.

Polsby DD, Kates DB Of Holocausts and Gun Control *Washington University Law Quarterly* 2004;75:1237.

Henrich J, McElreath R, Barr A, Ensminger J, et al. 2006 Costly Punishment Across Human Societies. *Science* 312:1767-1770.

[de Quervain DF-J et al.](#) The Neural Basis of Altruistic Punishment. *Science* 2004;305:1254-1258.

[Henrich J, Henrich N.](#) Culture, Evolution, and the Puzzle of Human Cooperation. *Cognitive Systems Research* 2006;7:220-245.

Huth PK. 1999 Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates. *American Review of Political Science* 2:25-48.

Rummel RJ. 1995 Democracy, Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39:3-26.

Films:

Calling 911: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ExC7fE1LaY&feature=related>

Another 911 call: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZU1P38KJno>

Discussion 7: What would a 'Culture of Intervention' to reduce domestic violence look like? Should it, for example, consist of the following?

1. clear criteria by which to identify the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable (violent) behavior.
2. competence in at least one martial art (whether judo or the Art of the Gun).
3. social networks filled with people who assume that friends and relatives should actively protect each other.

Module 8: Is Violence Hard-Wired into Our Brains?

Learning Goal 8: Differentiate defensive violence from predatory violence, or discover that you can't.

Readings:

Handwerker, W. Penn. *The Origin of Cultures*. Left Coast Press, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-59874-068-4 Chapter 4, 5, 6

Handwerker, W. Penn (2010) Why Violence? Because the Irrationalities Induced by Choice Frames Make Perfect Evolutionary Sense. *Available at SSRN:*
<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1523850>

Films:

One Tin Soldier: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7jHp7OchP0>

Discussion 8: Critically evaluate the conclusion that ALL violence arises as a means of self-defense. If some violence arises as a means of something else, how can we tell?

Module 9: Where Did (Do) Human Rights Come From?

Learning Goal 9: Describe the means by which specific individuals or groups acquire specific human rights. Is it true, for instance, that "We sleep soundly in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm." - variously attributed either to [Winston Churchill](#) or to George Orwell.

Readings: Conduct a literature search.

Discussion 9: Are rights given or taken? If rights are given, doesn't that mean that rights depend on the whim of the powerful – and, if so, why would we consider them rights? If rights are taken, doesn't that mean that rights depend on violence for their defense and for their origin. Illustrate with data bearing on the specific means by which specific individuals or groups acquired specific human rights.

FINAL:
How Can We Extend the Application of Human Rights?

Learning Goal 10: Acquire the skills that allow you to produce critical analyses of policies and programs.

Readings: Conduct a literature search.

Final Essay:
How can we extend the application of human rights?

I expect each written contribution to integrate ideas and perspectives that you develop earlier in this class. Your last assignment will thus count as your Final, from which I will evaluate your mastery of the concepts and skills that are part of the course. As you do this, pick a policy and related programs bearing on violence prevention, identify the assumptions on which that policy rests, identify an alternative (set of) assumption(s), and outline some of the policy and program implications of that alternative. All forms of violence are fair game, from war, genocide, and suicide terrorism, to domestic violence, drunk driving, street shootings, school yard bullying, and community disadvantage.