### Interdisciplinary Approaches to Violence and Mental Health Research

**Fall, 2005**

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<th>COURSE NUMBER:</th>
<th>SW834 SECTION 001</th>
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<td>CLASS NUMBER</td>
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<td>CREDIT HOURS:</td>
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<td>PREREQUISITES:</td>
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<td>LOCATION:</td>
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<td>CLASSROOM</td>
<td>3704 School of Social Work Building</td>
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<td>TIME</td>
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**INSTRUCTOR:**

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Rm 3708, School of Social Work

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1. **Course Description**

This seminar will foster theoretical development in the field of interpersonal violence by exploring connections across the social sciences. In particular, various mental health perspectives will be applied to understanding the etiology and consequences of violence. The seminar will include: presentations that exemplify interdisciplinary scholarship, the strengths and limitations of broad frameworks for understanding violence, the methods used by different research traditions, and common ethical dilemmas. Examples of culturally competent research will be used throughout. The nested ecological framework will be the primary organizing framework. Other general theories, such as general systems theory and the theory of triadic influence, may also be applied. Students will describe the research traditions most closely aligned with their professions and disciplines and begin the process of comparing and contrasting different paradigms, research traditions, and general theories. Research traditions tied to qualitative and quantitative methods will be covered and examples will be given of their integration.
2. Course Content

The ecological framework will help students move beyond the research traditions of their own disciplines and the specific theories and methods tied to these traditions. For example, as we cover risk markers for violence we will explore how they can each be explained with theories from multiple levels of the social ecology. Students will place the theory with which they are most familiar in the ecological framework and begin to entertain other perspectives. Because of its breadth, the ecological framework helps students to consider other perspectives—from specific ways to alter a principle of their main theoretical orientation, to integrating parts of it with other theories, considering a wholly different perspective, or re-interpreting theories through a macro theory (e.g., feminist theory, empowerment theory). As an outcome, when developing their own investigations, students are better equipped to test competing hypotheses from different ecological levels and to include variables from different levels in their design.

3. Course Objectives

By the end of the seminar, participants will be able to:

1) Understand the potential of broad conceptual frameworks for understanding the causes and consequences of interpersonal violence.

2) Use different levels of the ecological framework and the theory of triadic influence to expand their conceptual frameworks, reinterpret findings using the “lens” of different theories, and integrate findings and theories, if possible.

3) Understand and be able to critique the application of the ecological framework and other broad, organizing frameworks to several areas of interpersonal violence research, in particular the areas of child abuse, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual aggression, and peer violence among youth.

4) Apply integrated social science knowledge to models of violence prevention and intervention with the theory of triadic influence and other general, applied theories.

5) Resolve the apparent contradiction between the deterministic orientation of risk factor models with the personal responsibility needed for the rehabilitation of violent offenders

4. Course Design

Class discussion and brief lectures and presentations will be the primary modes for delivering and analyzing the content of the seminar. Participants will have the opportunity to help choose class readings and to develop questions for discussion. They will be able to apply the lessons from the seminar to their current research projects and proposals, as well as synthesizing the lessons from the seminar for possible publications.
Because the seminar is designed primarily for trainees in the NIMH Research Training Program on Violence and Mental Health, permission of the instructor is required. Please contact the instructor, Daniel Saunders, Ph.D., School of Social Work, for more information and for permission to enroll.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1) **Brief reactions to weekly readings.** Answer the following questions: a) did the readings help you to think differently about your area of research? why or why not? b) what did you think were the strengths and weaknesses of the reading? c) what questions would you like to pose for class discussion? d) what questions, if any, do you have in wanting to clarify points in the reading? Write 1-2 pages single spaced and also email your reactions to the seminar participants prior to class [20% of grade, pass/fail].

2) **Expansion of your conceptual framework.** Select one publication or paper of a review or study that represents the research tradition, orientation, or discipline with which you are most closely associated in your area of violence research. This can be your own publication or paper. Select another publication of a review or study that provides an expansion or alternative to your paradigm. For example, until now you might not have considered peer influence or physiological factors in your conceptual framework to explain violence or its traumatic effects. The two publications will be assigned for everyone to read. In class you will give a brief overview of the two publications and describe how the second publication did or did not help you re-conceptualize your framework. Class discussion will help you to further develop your conceptual framework. Write a 4-5 page, double-spaced paper that summarizes what you learned from the readings and from class discussion. [graded, 20% of grade].

3) **Final Report.**

   a) **Understanding and Critiquing a Different Theory.** In this part of the assignment, expand upon the second assignment above. Find a theory of violence etiology or a theory of the effects of victimization that differs considerably from a theory you use most often. It can be the same one that you used in the second assignment.

   * Describe the history and nature of the theory and its major principles.
   * Summarize the scientific support for the theory.
   * Discuss how the theory fits or does not fit with your current conceptual framework.
   * Does the theory help you to do any of the following with your conceptual framework: expansion, refinement, reinterpretation, replacement, or other?

   b) **Report of What You Learned in Seminar.**

   * Describe and provide examples of the ways in which the seminar readings, your own readings, and class presentations and discussion changed your conceptualizations about your area of violence research. You may want to describe how you might use or plan to use the lessons from the seminar to shape a current or a new research project, preliminary
exam, dissertation proposal, or a publication. How has the seminar helped you to change your conceptual framework?

* Have various disciplinary orientations (psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology) or research traditions (other than what you describe in Part a) been useful? Explain why or why not.
* What are some possible unintended negative consequences of your conceptual framework, e.g. could victim blaming increase or offender responsibility decrease and how might one avoid these consequences?
* Describe how your old and/or new conceptualizations are tied to particular research methodologies, e.g. qualitative or quantitative. What might be the advantages to using methods that are typically not used in your field?
* What are some common ethical dilemmas in the research conducted in your area?
* Describe how your old and/or new conceptualizations can accommodate cultural differences and social power differences.

You may deviate from the above outline. If you do, please include a very brief rationale for doing so.

[20-24 double-spaced pages, graded, 60% of grade][ Due 12/12/05].

COURSE OUTLINE

NOTE – Readings will be modified throughout the term based on the recommendations of speakers and the needs of seminar participants.

Class 1, 9/8/05: What do you want and need to learn? What are your research traditions? How might you expand your traditions? How do you define your terms? Overview of seminar. Examples of the application of meta theories to violence research.

Class 2, 9/15/05: 1) What are the common barriers to theory development and integration? 2) The social ecology of dating violence.

Required Reading:


sociology, 4, 19-44.

**Recommended Reading:**


**Class 3, 9/22/05: Theory integration: Is it wise to do? What are the ways it can be done?**

**Required reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

practice: The case of social work and social science, (pp. 75-86). Westport, CT: Praeger.


Class 4, 9/29/05: 1) The social ecology of woman abuse. 2) The theory of planned behavior.

Required reading:


Recommended Reading:


Class 5, 10/6/05: The social ecology of youth violence.

Required reading:


**Recommended reading:**


**Class 6, 10/13/05: Diverse theories of sexual coercion.**

**Required reading:**


**Class 7, 10/20/05: 1) Integration of multicultural perspectives into our conceptual frameworks. 2) A confluence model of sexual coercion.**

**Required reading:**


Recommended reading:


Class 8, 10/27/05: 1) Cross-cultural perspectives continued. 2) What is the harm of corporal punishment?

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Class 9, 11/3/05: The effects of multiple traumas and the process of recovery from them.

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Class 10, 11/10/05: The social ecology of child maltreatment

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Class 11, 11/17/05: 1) Critiques of evolutionary psychological perspectives on rape. 2) Diverse theories of the etiology of child sexual abuse.

Required reading:


Recommended Reading:


THANKSGIVING 11/24/05

Class 12, 12/1/05: Chronic physiological effects of trauma vs. psychological resilience to trauma

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Class 13, 12/8/05: 1) Women’s experiences of intimate partner violence: hearing women’s accounts through qualitative research; 2) Lesbian battering

Required reading:


Recommended Reading:


RECOMMENDED JOURNALS

Aggressive Behavior
Aggression and Violent Behavior
Child Abuse and Neglect
Journal of Emotional Abuse
Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma
Journal of Elder Abuse
Journal of Family Violence
Journal of Interpersonal Violence
Journal of School Violence
Journal of Traumatic Stress
Response to the Victimization of Women & Children
Violence Against Women
Violence and Victims

Revised 9-8-05