Family Violence  
(WMST 486/686 and SOC 483/683)  
Fall 20xx  
T-TH: 9:30-10:45

Professor: Mary White Stewart, Ph.D.  
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The goal of this class is for students to gain an understanding of family violence in its various complex forms from a range of perspectives and with an appreciation for the diversity of families in which it occurs. A prerequisite to such an understanding is the analysis of the family in historical and cultural perspectives and an analysis of the construction and performance of gender. Students will be introduced to sociological, feminist, interactionist and psychological perspectives which will be contrasted with one another in terms of their usefulness and applicability. Students will be asked to confront assumptions and stereotypes about sex, violence, family and relationships and to understand the ways in which family violence is embedded in social structure and culture. That is, we may see family violence as somewhat predictable given family structure and expectations rather than simply as an aberration in relationships and within the family.

We will look at family violence as a social construction, as a political and historical reality and as a reflection of economic and social inequality. We will review the major literature in the field, approach family violence from many different academic perspectives, and address the consequences. The underlying foundation for our understanding of the literature and the various forms of violence will be an analysis of the construction of social problems, power and powerlessness, and the intersection of race, gender and class as they shape violence as well as the response to it. Students can expect to be introduced to conflicting perspectives on family violence and to recognize the fluidity of expectations for the family and constructions of normative and deviant behavior. The perspectives will be critically compared and integrated in the process of developing an understanding of family violence that is sensitive to its complexities and the layers of culture, structure, history, gender and identity that contribute to those complexities.

**Rationale:** Family Violence is not explicable from any one perspective, whether that be individualistic, interactional or structural-cultural. All of these perspectives must be integrated with one another as they are imbedded in underlying powerful impact of race, class and gender on experiences in and expectations of the family. All forms of family violence are either prohibited by law or are highly stigmatized, although the definitions of acceptable behavior differ by class, race and other characteristics and social location.
shapes the potential for and the response to family violence. This course will provide students with an opportunity to assess the scholarship in the field, communicate their understanding of different, sometimes conflicting, sometimes compatible perspectives on family violence, and demonstrate an ability to critically analyze, synthesize and integrate the material in this very wide and diversified field.

**General Description of Learning Objective for this class:** Students will be able to describe, explain and integrate a broad range of theoretical perspectives on family violence as they are embedded in class, race and gender considerations and will be able to integrate, synthesize and apply their understandings to a wide range of family violence in a comparative manner.

**Core Objective 13:**

This course satisfies Core Objective 10 and 13: Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues. This objective will integrate communication and critical analysis (CO 1 and CO3) and include emphasis on the impact of economic and social marginalization (CO 10) on the lives of a diverse range of families.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** The student learning outcomes are specifically linked with the Core Objective of Integration and Synthesis. Upon successful completions of this class, students will be able to:

SLO #1: analyze, interpret and critically appraise the scholarship in the area of family violence in diverse race, class and ethnic settings.

SLO #2: integrate and synthesize the readings, lectures and other class materials to communicate an understanding of the complex relationship between family violence and the cultural and social contexts in which it occurs.

SLO #3: apply a range of theoretical perspectives on family violence and show how they reveal the impact of the intersections of race, class and gender on marginalized and normative families.

SLO #4: explain the significance of power differentials in the construction and application of policies, laws and assumptions about family violence and evaluate their impact on marginalized and central populations.

SLO #5: communicate orally and in written composition the importance of individualistic, interactional and structural approaches to family violence.

**Assessment of SLOs**

Assessment will be based on 4 take home exams. Exams require students to: Compare, contrast and integrate the literature on family violence as it reflects the experience of
different social groups. Identify and analyze the impact of socio-cultural variables tied to power as these differentially reflect the reality of and shape the experiences of marginalized and central groups. Apply the scholarship to a range of groups, differentiated by age, race, gender, ability, socio-economic status, and other identities, through specific attention to particular types of violence. The take home exams will provide students with an opportunity to apply theoretical perspectives to a wide range of material.

In written essays and as well as in class discussion students are required to:

Compare, contrast and integrate the literature and theoretical perspectives on family violence as they reflect the experience of different social groups.

Identify, analyze and synthesize the impact of socio-cultural variables tied to power as these differentially reflect the reality of and shape the experiences of marginalized and central groups.

Apply the scholarship to a range of groups, differentiated by age, race, gender, ability, socio-economic status, and other identities, through specific attention to particular types of violence.

Critically assess and clearly communicate the contributions of individual, interactional and social-structural factors in the experience of and response to family violence as it differs throughout the social and economic hierarchy.

RESOURCES:


*Available from on-line booksellers.

All other readings are available on Electronic Reserves through ARES.

Expectations: This will be an intensive experiences in critical analysis designed to broaden students’ perspectives beyond their own discipline and provide an opportunity for integration of previous courses in the major and in the core curriculum as well as skills developed in other Core areas (CO 1, CO 3 and CO 10). Offered to juniors and seniors only, students are to examine complex substantive, social and political issues. Because this is an upper level Core course, it is expected that students come to class with certain skills already in place. You should be relatively comfortable speaking in class and you are expected to be able communicate in a clear, coherent, organized manner. You are expected to be able to articulate your thoughts and link them with your readings on perspectives and research. This does not mean that you are expected to have all the answers, but it does mean that you are willing to work to understand the concepts, ideas and theories being presented as well as their relationship with one another with other
material you already know from other classes. You may find that more writing and reading is required than in some other courses you are taking at this level. Please see me immediately if you are having a difficult time with the writing requirements so that I may refer you to the appropriate University resources.

This course will focus on the significance of race, class and gendered expectations on the experiences of people in families and the responses of agents and organizations to those families. As such you will be asked to think about race, class and gender as we explore the various topics in the area of family violence, and to demonstrate your understanding of the impact of these factors on both experience of family members and on reactions by institutions and agencies to families.

Accommodation: The Sociology Department and the Women’s Studies Program are committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical or documented learning disabilities. If any accommodation is necessary, please meet with me during the first week of the semester.

Academic Honesty: It is expected that students will do their own work and when quoting or paraphrasing others will cite their sources appropriately. In some instances in this class, I may give you the opportunity to work with other students on papers or projects and in that instance I will of course recognize that you are sharing your work. Any student who engages in plagiarism or other forms of cheating on their exams, papers or presentations will receive a grade of “O” for that activity. Please see the University of Nevada, Reno catalog for a complete description of the academic dishonesty policy.

Statement on Audio and Video Recording: "Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.”

Academic Success Services: Academic Success Services: Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433 or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

Evaluation:
You will be graded on the basis of four exams, ten quizzes and your class participation. Each exam is worth 100 points. All work is take-home and will be due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. The grade of any late work will be reduced by 10 points for each class day that it is late. Exam papers will be between 5-6 pages long. Possible points from exams: 400. I will give a short quiz at the beginning of class once a week (most weeks) to measure your reading progress. Each quiz is worth 10 points for a total of 100 points (you will be allowed to drop your lowest scores). Participation points will be given at the end of the semester allowing me flexibility in grading. Up to fifty points can be earned through active participation. Total possible points for the course: Written Material: 500, Potential Participation Points: 50: Total: 550.

The goal of the exams is to demonstrate students’ understandings of the readings and lectures and their ability to integrate, synthesize and apply the material. Papers will be graded on the basis of the extent to which the student is able to specifically incorporate the reading material in their response. You are expected to hand in papers and exams that are free of spelling and grammatical errors and should be able to write clear, expressive, coherent sentences, paragraphs and papers. You should also be able to develop nuanced and sophisticated arguments and to be able to think and write critically and in an integrative manner. If you anticipate any difficulties in this area, I strongly encourage you to contact a tutor before your first assignment is due.

You are expected to attend class. You may miss three class periods with no penalty, but subsequent absences will result in a one-half grade reduction in your final grade for each class missed. Participation is expected. Since I use the “plus/minus” system of evaluation, your participation will be used to determine your final grade in the class. Your ability to compare perspectives, apply them to your readings and critically assess their assumptions and methodologies will be evaluated. As credit in addition to the essays and quizzes. Participation does not refer to a ritualistic presence in the classroom, but rather, to an active, alert presence. Therefore, I will expect you to be able to be separated from your cell phones and computers for the entire class period.

**Grading is as follows:**
(Total Possible Points: 500)
- 95-100% =A
- 90-94% =A-
- 87-89%=B+
- 83-86%=B
- 80-82%=B-
- 77-79%=C+
- 73-76%=C
- 70-72%=C-
- 67-69%=D+
- 63-66%= D
The grade you earn symbolizes your performance on each assignment and ultimately, in this class, based on the standards and requirements of the assignments and in relation to the work of other students in this class. Final grades are assigned on a modified scale, in which I take into account the student’s participation in class. So, an 88% may become an A- rather than a B+ depending on other factors weighing in the student’s favor. I will not use the plus/minus system to a student’s detriment.

An A represents clearly superior work. Students who receive an A have demonstrated exceptional or outstanding performance. Student shows facility with the material and understands the nuanced and complexity of the material.

A B is good work—student has met all the course requirements in a competent way but without indication of more advanced theoretical understanding.

A C indicates that the student’s performance is average or adequate. The student may have errors and omissions as well as confusions on significant parts of the assignment.

A D represents inadequate work. The student has not fulfilled significant assignments or course requirements. Performance is insufficient although student has performed at a level beyond complete failure.

An F indicates that student has done inferior work, perhaps through omission or perhaps through not responding adequately to the question or assignment. In addition, an F will be assigned to students who have not dropped the class before the drop date.

Schedule *
Fall, 2014

*I reserve the right to make changes in the schedule as needed.

Part 1: The Family as Foundation

August 26: Introduction to Family Violence: The Class and the Materials

August 28: Contrasting Assumptions and Diverse Realities (CO 10 and 13)


Masculinities, Femininities and the Gendered Family: Heteronormativity and its impact on Family (CO 10)

September 2: Quiz


**September 4:**

**Conceptualizations of Violence: Voices from the Center and the Margins (CO 10)**

**September 9: Quiz**

Hines, Chapter 1. Issues in Definition: pp 1-13

**September 11:**
Hines, Chapter 1: pp. 14-29


**Socio-Cultural Contexts: Varied Realities in Varied Families (CO 10 and 13)**

**September 16: Quiz**

**September 18:**


**Racial –Ethnic Issues in Family Violence (CO 10)**

**September 23:**

**September 25: Quiz**
Predictors, Protections and Outcomes Battered Women and Family Violence. Hines et.al. pp. 4-7-422


Men who Batter and Family Violence: the individual, interaction and social structure (C0 13)

September 30: Quiz


October 2:
Hines et.al., Chapter 5: Maltreatment of Female Partners pp. 148-171.


Maltreatment of Male Partners

October 7: Quiz

Hines, et.al. Chapter 6: pp. 173-190

October 9:

Hines, et.al., pp. 191-208.

Dating Violence: the Impact of Education and Class (CO 10)

Oct 14: Quiz
Hines et.al., pp. 210-248

Oct. 16:
Hines et.al pp 248-258
New laws, policies and their consequences- Readings TBA

LGBTQI Abuse and Violence (CO 10)
Oct 21: Quiz
Hines et.al. pp. 259-269.

Oct. 23:
Hines et.al. pp. 270-290.

Child Abuse in Historical and Contemporary Context (CO 13)

October 28: Quiz
Hines, et.al., Chapter 2: pp. 31-43.


October 30:
Hines et.al., Chapter 2: pp. 43-60.


Child Neglect and Psychological Maltreatment: Critical Perspectives (CO 13)

Nov. 4: Quiz
Hines et.al Chapter 4: pp. 91-120

Nov. 6:


Nov. 11: Veteran’s Day—No Class

Nov. 13:

Child Sexual Abuse: Integrating Self and Society (CO 13)

Nov. 18: Quiz
Nov. 20:
Hines, et.al. Chapter 3: pp. 72-90


Nov. 25: Wrap-up: Child Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse, Child Neglect (Integration and Synthesis)

Nov. 26 and 27: Thanksgiving Holiday, No Class

Maltreatment of People with Disabilities (CO 10 and 13)
December 2:
Hines et.al. Chapter 9: pp. 318-328

Violence against Elders: the Impact of Marginalization (CO 10)
December 4: Quiz

Hines et.al. Chapter 9: pp. 291-318


Dec. 9:
Elder Abuse: Five Vignettes.


Final Meeting: Tuesday, December 16: 12:30-2:30