Human Aggression (PSYC 328)
Graduate Seminar
Fall Semester, 2002

Class meets: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:30, 347 Davie Hall
Professor: Bruce Bartholow (Office: Davie 328)
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-11:00am, Davie 328
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Required Texts

Recommended Text
  (We will read a number of chapters from this book, but I opted not to require you to purchase it. You still may wish to do so, but if not, photocopies of assigned chapters will be made available.) (A.k.a., Berk)

Additional Readings
In addition to the above texts, we will be reading a number of articles and chapters on specific topics in aggression. These will be assigned at least 1 week in advance. Due to the reserve reading desk recently moving to House Undergraduate Library, there is a major wait for articles put on reserve to be available. Furthermore, I have found the quality of reserve papers to be rather low when articles are scanned for download (i.e., e-reserves). Thus, master copies of the additional readings for this class will be kept in the office of the Social program secretary (Room 314 Davie Hall), and you will be responsible for making photocopies for yourselves. Or, in some cases, you may be able to find the journal articles in the Thibaut Room library (327 Davie Hall) and take them to be copied. Davis library is always another option.

Course Description & Goals
It is my belief (or at least my hope) that at the level of graduate education, the instructor and students all share the goal of learning more about given topics (human aggression in this case). As such, I have decided not to impose a rigid structure onto this class. Instead, I have come up with what I feel are the necessary features of the course, and within the general framework outlined below, there will be flexibility concerning how some aspects of these features are implemented. The primary purpose of instituting the necessary features is to help ensure that class time is well spent, that our discourse is stimulating, and that a relatively high level of knowledge acquisition takes place.

As I see it, the minimal goals of the course are: (1) That each student learn the basic psychological approach to understanding human aggression as currently represented in social psychology; (2) That each student explore in considerable detail one aspect of human aggression via a research project. Other goals include: (3) Fostering a theory-based understanding of current societal problems involving aggression and violence; (4) Opening the field of aggression to students who previously may not have been interested in the topic; (5) Creating a greater understanding of the challenges (as well as the excitements) of studying human aggression, particularly in the laboratory; and (5) Inspiring students to examine aspects of the aggression phenomenon in their own research at whatever level is of interest, be it individual, familial, cultural, or societal.
The Necessary Features

1. We will be reading and discussing some recent books on aggression (listed above), as well as a number of other chapters and articles.

2. Students will be expected to type outlines of the readings for each week. I see three excellent reasons for making outlines: (1) To help everyone keep up with the readings; (2) To help students discuss the week’s readings; and (3) To make it easier to review the material read previously. In addition to summarizing the readings, your outlines should contain questions that you would like to pose and discuss with the group. Below, I have outlined the kinds of issues you should consider when forming your discussion questions. During each class meeting, I will randomly call on one of you to “facilitate” group discussion of the reading, presumably based on your discussion questions. Finally, although I consider these outlines to be mandatory, I will not ask you to turn your outlines in to me, at least initially. However, if it becomes clear that some students are not completing these outlines, I will start asking you to turn them in each week for grading.

3. Some type of research project will be conducted. Depending on your preferences, this may take any of several forms. Here are some possibilities that make sense to me (in no particular order): (A) Each student does an individual research project, including lit review and theory development, proposed method, and data collection and analysis of at least a few pilot subjects; (B) Same as A, except that students work in groups of 2 or 3 on a joint project (in this case it will have to be clear that all involved contributed); (C) The class as a whole works jointly on one major project, including all of the elements of A but with complete data collection. In this case, it would probably be necessary to run a survey study of some type, a simple laboratory experiment, or an archival study (e.g., meta-analysis).

4. Both written and oral presentations of the research project will be given at the end of the semester.

I hope it is clear from the above features that there is still considerable latitude in how we proceed with the course. For instance, the issue of student evaluation (i.e., grading) still remains largely open, and I would like the students as a group to determine how this will happen. One option would be to have a midterm and final exam, in addition to the research project. This way, your grade for the course is not as heavily dependent upon your research project.

Discussion Issues to Consider

Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind when framing your questions for discussion in class:

- What theoretical issues are important here? Have theoretical questions been properly framed by the investigators?
- How can the issues being raised in the present reading be integrated with other readings or perspectives?
- Will this stimulate discussion? Will there be follow-up issues to discuss?
### Tentative Course Calendar

*(Some readings and topics are still to be arranged)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Class Meetings</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>August 20</td>
<td>Introduction to aggression</td>
<td>Geen Chapter 1&lt;br&gt;G &amp; D Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>Affective vs. instrumental aggression</td>
<td>G &amp; D chapter 3&lt;br&gt;Berk chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Bushman &amp; Anderson, 2001a</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>Major theories, I: Cognitive neo-association theory</td>
<td>Geen chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Berkowitz, 1989&lt;br&gt;Berk chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>Major Theories, II: Social information processing models of aggression</td>
<td>G &amp; D, chapter 4&lt;br&gt;Dodge &amp; Coie, 1987&lt;br&gt;Burks et al., 1999</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>&quot;Aggressive Personality&quot;: Development and consequences</td>
<td>Caprara et al., 1994&lt;br&gt;Caprara et al., 1996&lt;br&gt;Berk Chapter 5</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>Media violence and aggression: The harm in having a little fun</td>
<td>Bushman &amp; Anderson, 2001b&lt;br&gt;G &amp; D chapter 7&lt;br&gt;Geen chapter 6</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>October 22</td>
<td>Individual differences in aggression, II: Sex and cultural differences</td>
<td>Bettencourt &amp; Miller, 1996&lt;br&gt;Geen chapter 4</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>Biological &amp; Physiological approaches to the study of aggression</td>
<td>Berk chapter 12&lt;br&gt;Harmon-Jones &amp; Sigelman&lt;br&gt;Giancola, 1995&lt;br&gt;Wong, 2001</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Temperature and aggression</td>
<td>G &amp; D chapter 10&lt;br&gt;Cohn &amp; Rotton, 1997&lt;br&gt;Rotton &amp; Cohn, 2000</td>
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13 November 12  Linking drugs and aggression  G & D chapter 6  Giancola & Zeichner, 1997  Ito et al., 1996
14 November 19  Violence in families  Geen chapter 5  G & D chapter 8
15 November 25  How can aggression and violence be controlled/reduced?  Berk Chapter 10, 11  Huesmann & Reynolds, 2001
16 December 3  Presentations
17 December 10  Papers due?

Additional Readings

Week 2


Week 3


Week 4:


Week 5


Week 6


**Week 7**


**Week 8**


**Week 9**


**Week 10**


Aronson, E. (2000). *Nobody left to hate: Teaching compassion after Columbine*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman, Co. (Chapters 2 through 5 only)

**Week 11**


Week 12


Week 13


Week 14

TBD

Week 15