



Sociology 3340G (570)
Violence in Cultural Perspective
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: Young, Julie

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Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course examines socio-cultural analyses of state and structural violence through theoretical concepts and case studies. It also explores the social meaning of violence, what purposes it serves for whom, and how violence can be culturally constructed, rationalized and perpetuated through our values and institutions.

Prerequisite(s): [Sociology 2266A/B](#), [Anthropology 1025F/G](#) or [Anthropology 1027A/B](#), and third or fourth year standing in any module/program.

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: SOCIOLOG

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College at Western
Department of Sociology

Sociology 3340G, Section 570 (Winter 2026)

Violence in Cultural Perspective

1. ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Instructor: Dr. J. Young
E-mail: jyoungma@uwo.ca

***Prerequisites:** Sociology 2266A/B, Anthropology 1025F/G or Anthropology 1027A/B, and third or fourth year standing in any module/program.

***Anti-Requisites:** None

***Please note:** Students must ensure that their course selections are appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken. Consult an academic counselor to clarify if needed. If students do not have the prerequisites for a course (and no written special permission from the Dean to enroll in the course), then the University reserves the right to cancel their registration in the course. This decision may not be appealed. The normal financial and academic penalties will apply to a student who is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course examines socio-cultural analyses of state, structural, and interpersonal violence through theoretical concepts and case studies. The content focuses as well on the social meaning of violence, the purposes and interests served through different types of violence, and how violence can be culturally constructed, rationalized, and perpetuated through values and institutions. While we consider some of the evolutionary, social learning, and cultural bases of violence, the main emphasis will be on the sociological structures and cultural justifications that underlie and may at times promote violence.

3. KEY COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

4. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

The following book will be required reading, is available on-reserve at the King's library (free of charge).

Hatzfeld, Jean. 2005. *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

In addition, most of the required readings will be available on-line as “supplemental readings” and posted on the OWL Brightspace.

5. COURSE EVALUATION

Class Engagement & Active Participation (25%). Students will participate in weekly interactive class based activities, discussions and case analysis. As part of this contribution mark, they are responsible for providing summary information for *one of the assigned readings* for a specific week, to be distributed to each class participant. Students will sign up for the week in which they will cover the readings during the first seminar.

Test (20%). There will be two tests worth 10% each. A test review will be conducted in class.

Term Paper (30%). Students will each complete a major research paper on a selected topic of their choice that deals with some specific aspect of violence. Students may choose to write a traditional research paper, or they may develop an education resource or toolkit (on topics such as violence prevention, bystander intervention, or restorative practices) collaboratively with a community partner.

Community Workshop (25%). Students (working in groups) design a small workshop, awareness campaign, or educational session for peers or community members on a type of violence studied in class. Students are evaluated based on clarity of objectives, engagement strategies, theoretical grounding, and post-event reflection. For example, students may organize a peer workshop on gendered violence and bystander intervention techniques and deliver their workshop in their residence or at their former middle school.

Alternative Assignment: Content Analysis

If a student misses an evaluated component of the course, they may complete the alternative assignment. Students will select one case of media coverage related to a specific act of violence (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, hate crimes) and conduct a content analysis of seven to ten media articles or reports. The focus will be on identifying and categorizing instances of victim-blaming, examining language, framing, and imagery.

6. SESSION OUTLINE

SESSION OUTLINE (WINTER 2026): DATES & TOPICS

Week	Topic
Week 1 Jan.9	Understanding Violence: Concepts, Definitions, and Frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is violence? • Visible vs. invisible forms • Social construction and normalization of violence
Week 2- Jan. 16	Theories of Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolutionary and social learning perspectives • Sociological and cultural explanations • Power, inequality, and the social organization of harm
Week 3 Jan. 23	Structural and Institutional Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How social systems (poverty, racism, colonialism) produce harm • Violence embedded in institutions (schools, prisons, welfare systems)
Week 4 Jan. 30	State Violence and Legitimation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police, militarism, surveillance, and borders • National security, war, and the rhetoric of protection • Police Shootings
Week 5 Feb. 6	Test
Week 6 Feb. 13	Gendered and Sexual Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patriarchy and the control of bodies • Intimate partner violence • Gender, sexuality, and intersectionality in the experience of harm • “Honour” Killings
Feb. 20	Reading Week
Week 7 Feb. 27	Racialized and Colonial Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical and ongoing colonial violence • Genocide, enslavement, and displacement • Racialized policing and mass incarceration
Week 8 Mar. 6	Cultural Rationalizations of Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media, representation, and normalization • Moral panics, victim blaming, and “deserving” victims • Religion, nationalism, and the moral coding of harm
Week 9 Mar. 13	Test
Week 10 Mar. 20	Interpersonal and Everyday Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family, community, and peer violence • School shootings • The microdynamics of aggression and control • Emotional, psychological, and symbolic dimensions of harm
Week 11 Mar. 27	Community Workshop Day
Week 12 Apr. 3	Resistance, Healing, and the Possibility of Nonviolence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social movements challenging violence (feminist, decolonial, peace movements) • Truth and reconciliation processes • Restorative justice and transformative justice frameworks

Course Specific Policy on Academic Considerations:

Built-in Flexibility: Student Reflection Assignments and the Term Paper have built-in flexibility and students may take up to an additional two-day extension, without formal documentation.

Academic Integrity and Course Specific AI Policy:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Course policy on use of generative AI, including translation/grammar aids: Within this course, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT are permitted exclusively for: [e.g. information-gathering and preliminary research purposes; development of an essay outline]. If AI tools are used, students must acknowledge use and state how the tool was used. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.