

# **Violent Crime – Web Based**

## *Course Syllabus*

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### **Course Information**

Course Number	CRIM 6315
Course Title	Violent Crime (On-Line)
Term	Spring 2010
<b>Days &amp; Times</b>	<b>ONLINE COURSE – NO In-Class Meetings</b>

### **Professor's Contact Information**

Professor	Tomislav Kovandzic
Phone	(972) 883-6847
Email Address	tkovan@utdallas.edu ( <b>See Email Policy Prior to Submission! – use eLearning mail only!!!</b> )
Office Location	Green Hall - GR 2.116
Office Hours	Please email to set an appointment

### **Course Pre-requisites**

There are no formal prerequisites, although it would be helpful if students have already taken Research Design I (CRIM 5310) and Descriptive and Inferential Statistics (CRIM 5313).

All students must be (1) familiar with the use of eLearning (formerly WebCT), (2) have internet access, and (3) have basic computer skills. **Individuals not comfortable using a computer should not attempt to take this course!** If you do not have a fast AND reliable internet connection, you should plan to use UTD computer labs for all coursework. Late work will not be accepted for any reason, so make sure you complete assignments ahead of time if worried about your computer or connection.

### **Course Description**

The primary purpose of this course is to inform students of what scientific research has to say on a topic that is typically treated as if it were a purely ideological or political issue: the relationship between guns, violence, and gun control. The course provides a comprehensive criminological view of the topic rather than a political or legal one, and concentrates on research and evidence rather than opinions.

### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

Students will learn about evaluating evidence, the flaws in arguments for or against stricter gun laws, and the tricks used by advocates to persuade people to agree with their point of view. Most important, however, students should end up well-informed on the facts concerning one of the most heated issues of our times.

## Required Textbooks

Kleck, Gary. 1997. Targeting Guns: Firearms and their Control. NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Kleck, Gary, and Don B. Kates. 2001. Armed: New Perspectives on Gun Control. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Nisbet, Lee (ed.). 2001. The Gun Control Debate: You Decide. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Cooper, Harris. 2010. Research Synthesis and Meta-Analysis. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

### Abbreviations Used in Reading Assignments Below:

**T:** Targeting Guns

**A:** Armed

**G:** The Gun Control Debate

## Grading Policy

Mid-Term	(taken on February, 18)	25%
Final	(taken on May, 6)	25%
Discussion posts, 1-5	(see course schedule)	20%
Term paper reporting the results of the student's review of at least <u>10</u> empirical studies on any gun violence topic	(due April 29)	30%

## Grading Scale

98-100 = A+	88-89 = B+	78-79 = C+	68-69 = D+	<59 = F
93-97 = A	83-87 = B	73-77 = C	63-67 = D	
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-	

## Discussion Posts

You will be required to complete five discussion post assignments. Discussion assignments will count for 20% of your final grade. For discussion post assignments, you must post a response to a discussion question that **will be made public** to the rest of the class. You must post a minimum of 2 COMPLETE paragraphs (**250 word minimum**) per discussion question for each post to receive credit. You MAY NOT cut sentences from the textbook or from the internet!!

This constitutes plagiarism and even the most minor cases are required to be reported to UTD Judicial Affairs for investigation.

Discussion details will be posted on the eLearning page (you can access the page at [www.utdallas.edu](http://www.utdallas.edu) by clicking the eLearning link) at the start of the semester. Discussion posts that do not comply with the guidelines presented herein will be given no credit, no exceptions. Marginal responses will receive reduced or no credit. Responses that adequately meet all requirements and follow all guidelines will receive a strong score; only those exceeding expectations will receive the highest possible score (see scoring guidelines on eLearning).

**NOTE: ALL DISCUSSION POSTS WILL BE DUE ON A THURSDAY BY 11:59PM (see calendar for specific dates)**

Responses should be thoughtful and appropriate. If your response is unclear, illogical, or I suspect that little effort was put into completing it, you will NOT receive full credit for the response. Your responses will be monitored by me so be sure to follow course policy for submissions (see below – proper grammar, punctuation and complete sentences, etc.). You are welcome to write more if you choose and you should strive to use outside sources beyond the text (scholarly articles, **reliable** internet sources (e.g., government websites), current events and etc.) to substantiate your posts.

You can access the discussion question by clicking the discussions tab on the toolbar. After you have submitted your post, you **MUST respond to a minimum of TWO other students' discussion posts**. Posts to peers work must also be thoughtful and appropriate and **must be at least 100 words each**. A sentence or two is NOT good enough (see scoring criteria). Your discussion assignment grades are based on your post and your response to peers. Note that peer responses are due by **11:59 pm on the SUNDAY following the due date of the assignment**. **If you do not submit an initial post you cannot receive partial credit for responses to peers.**

It is your responsibility to meet all assignment deadlines noted on the course calendar. **NO EXCEPTIONS** will be made for late work. Please note that I will be tracking your access to the eLearning course page, so please avoid being dishonest about the time you spend online and the time you spend completing assignments; I'll know whether you're telling the truth! **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS!** Excuses such as "I lost internet service" or "eLearning was down!" will not help you. Other excuses that will NOT help you include, but are not limited to, being sick, winning super bowl tickets, forgetfulness, work issues, family issues, significant other issues, housing trouble, criminal justice entanglements, and/or computer trouble. Ample time is provided for you to complete assignments on time so please don't waste your time and your excuses on me! These rules will not be bent! All students will be treated equally and held to the same standards!

## Exams

Students are required to take 2 exams (mid-term and final). Together, they are worth 50% of your final grade. The final exam is NOT comprehensive. Exams will consist of essay questions. All exam material is covered in the course readings and lecture notes. There will be no exam reviews. Exams are taken ONLINE and are timed (2 hours). Exams are open book/notes, however, you are expected to work individually. If you have not read the material prior to the exam, you will probably do poorly! You will have a **6 hour window** to start each exam; once you begin the clock cannot be reset.

**The mid-term exam will be held on Thursday, March 4, 2010. Access starting at 4pm (you must start the exam no later than 10pm).**

**The final exam will be held on Thursday, May 6, 2010. Access starting at 4pm (you must start the exam no later than 10pm).**

The exam date/time is NOT negotiable. You should arrange your schedule so that you can complete the exams. If you have conflict, you should drop the course and take it during another semester.

**IMPORTANT: Make-up exams will absolutely NOT be considered unless there is documented proof of an extreme emergency and I am contacted BEFORE THE EXAM BY EMAIL.** Saying you are sick or are you are feeling sick IS NOT A VALID EXCUSE FOR A MAKEUP EXAM. Religious holidays will be fully accommodated, but students must contact me during the first week of classes to make arrangements for a makeup exam. The instructor reserves the right for all makeup examinations to be full essay and be administered on a date of my choosing. **If you cannot guarantee that you will be available to take the exams at the above time/dates, please drop this class and take another class that is better suited to your schedule.**

**NOTE: There will be some weeks where no assignments are due.**

## Term Paper

The term paper must review at least 10 empirical studies, i.e. studies that present new empirical evidence, as distinct from exclusively theoretical or conceptual articles or other literature reviews. At least 5 of the studies must have been published after 1997 (the year in which the primary course text was published). The student will fill out a form (provided by the instructor) summarizing each of at least 10 studies, and write a paper synthesizing this body of research. The requirements for this paper are described in a separate handout. The handout will be posted on the course homepage.

## Course Schedule

The schedule can be changed or altered at the instructors' discretion – it is the student's responsibility to keep track of any modifications to the schedule (check the course website on eLearning every day for potential course announcements).

Approximate Dates	Topics	Reading Assignment
Jan. 14	Why Gun Violence Matters; Brief Overview of Gun Violence Literature	T:1-8, 18-30 G:243-268, 274-295
Jan 21	The Politics of Gun Control; Prohibition as the Hidden Issue <b>Discussion Post 1 DUE by 11:59pm (replies to peer posts are ALWAYS due by 11:59pm on the following Sunday)</b>	A:107-172
Jan. 28	Fallacious Reasoning in Gun Control Argumentation	T:9-18, G:55-74
Feb. 4	News Media Bias in Covering the Gun Control Issue <b>Discussion Post 2 DUE by 11:59pm (replies to peer posts are ALWAYS due by 11:59pm on the following Sunday)</b>	A:173-212 G:95-121, 167-174
Feb. 11	Distinguishing Good Evidence from Bad Evidence; Misleading Practices in Summarizing Evidence	T:31-62, A:31-85
Feb. 18	Controls Focusing on Special Gun Types: "Assault Weapons," "Saturday Night Specials," etc.	T:105-140
Feb 25	Who Owns Guns and Why Do They Own Them?	T:63-103, G:29-37
Mar 4	<b>Mid-term Exam (access beginning at 4pm)</b>	
Mar 11	Effects of Guns on Violent Crime-Guns in the Hands of Victims; The Frequency of Defensive Gun Use; Crime Disruption Effects of DGU <b>Discussion Post 3 DUE by 11:59pm (replies to peer posts are ALWAYS due by 11:59pm on the following Sunday)</b>	A:213-239, 257-271 A:285-317 G:410-451
Mar 25	Deterrent Effects of Gun Ownership; Gun Carrying by Prospective Victims	A:318-334, T:191-214, G:340-358, 452-462

Apr. 1	Effects of Guns on Violent Crime-Guns in the Hands of Criminals	T:215-263
Apr. 8	Types of Gun Control Restrictions; <b>Discussion Post 4 DUE by 11:59pm (replies to peer posts are ALWAYS due by 11:59pm on the following Sunday)</b>	TBA
Apr. 15	Public Opinion on Gun Control	T:325-349
Apr. 22	Effectiveness of Gun Control	T:351-381
Apr. 29	What Should Be Done? <b>Discussion Post 5 DUE by 11:59pm (replies to peer posts are ALWAYS due by 11:59pm on the following Sunday)</b> <b>Term Paper Due</b>	T:383-396
May 6	<b>Final Exam (access beginning at 4pm)</b>	

### **Course Policies**

#### *Make-up Grades*

No make-up grades will be given unless DIRE circumstances arise (e.g., hospitalization, military deployment, and

#### *Extra Credit*

No extra credit will be offered for this course.

#### *Late Work*

Late assignments will not be accepted for any reason. Ample time will be given for students to complete discussion assignments early if time becomes an issue. If you have ANY doubt that you will be able to make the assignment deadline, you should submit your discussion posts early!

#### *Classroom Citizenship*

Since this class is web based (on-line), there is no regular in-class attendance. However, discussion posts will be due regularly, thus virtual attendance is a requirement but you will have the freedom to complete the work when it is convenient for you, provided that you meet the deadlines. Students should expect to spend as much time per week completing reading assignments as they would for a regular graduate class.

**DO NOT USE THE CHAT ROOM AND DISCUSSION BOARD FOR PERSONAL CHATTING.** All communications will be monitored by the professor. Any non-class related communications through WebCT will result in point deductions from grades. **REVIEW AND RESPOND TO MY COURSE EXPECTATIONS POST IN THE DISCUSSION FORUM IMMEDIATELY.**

As noted above, virtual class participation is a component of your grade and everyone is encouraged to engage the professor and fellow students in online discussions as to contribute to the learning environment. You will find a chat portal and a discussion forum for this activity on the WebCT class page. Thus, you must have access to a reliable computer with a good internet connection to participate. Your participation will be determined by the level and quality of your participation in completing assignments, discussions, and other class activities. However, I insist on respectfulness in the classroom (even the online classroom) for all participants. Disrespect to any class participant will not be tolerated. Any classroom participant behaving in such a manner will not be warned and will be reprimanded by a loss of points, at a minimum. Serious cases of inappropriate behavior will be directed to judicial affairs. Any student who experiences or witnesses any disrespect or academic dishonesty should report to the professor immediately.

The quality of the online learning environment is contingent on respect and dedication in the classroom. While you are fully encouraged to engage the issues to the best of your abilities, please do so politely and constructively. If you disagree with a classmate's argument/s, submit a proper and engaging rebuttal, not an attack. Debate is a healthy part of the learning experience—please do not hinder the learning environment by responding harshly or inappropriately to others.

### **eLearning Technical Support**

Students of this course are required to participate through eLearning. Thus, you must have access to a computer and the internet to complete assignments. If you experience any problems with your UTD account or with eLearning you should contact the UTD Helpdesk right away. UTD HELPDESK – 972-883-2911 or [assist@utdallas.edu](mailto:assist@utdallas.edu). Detailed instruction on the use of eLearning can be found at [www.utdallas.edu/ir/elearning/students.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/ir/elearning/students.htm) . You can also CHAT WITH UTD HELPDESK online by going to [webhelp.utdallas.edu](http://webhelp.utdallas.edu) If you experience any problems with your UTD account you may send an email to: [assist@utdallas.edu](mailto:assist@utdallas.edu) or call the UTD Computer Helpdesk at 972-883-2911.

### **Email Use Policy**

**USE ONLY WEBCT MAIL TO COMMUNICATE WITH ME OR THE TEACHING ASSISTANT!** If you have an emergency, you should email my UTD email using your UTD email account only! You should check eLearning for new messages and announcements every day. The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. **DO NOT USE ANY FORM OF EMAIL OTHER THAN YOUR OFFICIAL UT DALLAS**

**EMAIL ACCOUNT.** When emailing the professor, please include in the subject line of the message “CRIM 6315.” Also include your full student name in the body of the email. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

### **Field Trip Policies / Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities**

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website [http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm). Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.

### **Student Conduct & Discipline**

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD printed publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Series 50000, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

### **Academic Integrity**



The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. **PLEASE DO YOUR OWN WORK! If you are caught letting someone else do your work for you you will found in violation of UTD academic dishonesty policies. Only the registered student may participate in class work or assignments. This applies to every component of the course.**

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials, including music and software. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted works may infringe the copyright owner's rights and such infringement is subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as criminal penalties provided by federal law. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow the institution's copyright policy (Policy Memorandum 84-I.3-46). For more information about the fair use exemption, see <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>

### **Email Use**

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The

Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

### **Withdrawal from Class**

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

### **Student Grievance Procedures**

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

### **Disability Services**

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is

located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:  
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22  
PO Box 830688  
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688  
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)  
[disabilityservice@utdallas.edu](mailto:disabilityservice@utdallas.edu)

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. The Coordinator is available to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Services to notify them of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Disability Services can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

### **Religious Holy Days**

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the

legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.