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PSYX 348.01: Psychology of Family Violence

Julie M. Olomi

University of Montana, Missoula, julie.olomi@umontana.edu

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Psyx 348 – Psychology of Family Violence

Fall 2022

Course Location and Time

Social Sciences (SS) Building, Room 352
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00-12:20pm

Instructor Information

Instructor: Julie M. Olomi, Ph.D. (she/her)
Email: julie.olomi@umontana.edu
Office: Skaggs Bldg., Room 203 (Starting October 1st, it will be Room 238)
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:30pm

Required Text**

Miller-Perrin, C.L., Perrin, R.D. & Renzetti, C. M. (2020). Violence and maltreatment in intimate relationships. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

**Additional required and supplemental readings will be announced and made available via Moodle.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to increase students' understanding of psychology of family violence, or violence and maltreatment in intimate relationships (VMIR), as it occurs in our society. In doing so we will explore theory and research that seeks to explain its occurrence, definition, and consequences. We will also briefly explore interventions for each problem area. The course will be taught in a combination of lecture format and class discussion. By the end of this course, you will be able to think critically about:

- The historical context and social conceptualization of VMIR
- Different forms of child abuse, their risk factors, and consequences across the ecological model
- Different forms of intimate partner violence, risk factors, and consequences across the ecological model
- VMIR in minoritized populations, including measurement issues as well socio-historical contexts that contribute to risk and consequences

Teaching Philosophy

There are as many ways of teaching this class as there are instructors. Accordingly, I teach with a certain set of biases and assumptions that it is important to make clear. First, I am biased toward scientific and evidence-based explanations, those that are grounded in both theory and research, and I will focus primarily on these explanations throughout the course. Second, I have a bias in favor of processing the more controversial material through healthy class discussions. Therefore, throughout the course I will present material that may trigger certain personal opinions in each of you. I expect these discussions to be respectful, healthy, and open to everyone. I will facilitate your learning of the material in class, via email, and in office hours if needed. Finally, I believe that students learn best through active engagement with the material. This is reflected in the fact that I may supplement material from your text with film clips, case studies, anecdotes, and additional readings, and I request in-class discussion.

Course Requirements and Policies

1. **Exams (40 points each):** There will be two exams and which will be administered in-person. Two non-cumulative exams (multiple choice and short answer questions) will assess your knowledge and understanding of the course material. Each covers a course section (1. chapters 1-6; 2. chapters 7-10). Each exam is worth 40 points and assesses your understanding of the material presented in the lectures and the assigned readings. Please note that the exams will cover material from the assigned readings that is not discussed in class and material from lecture that you will not find in the text.

Tentative midterm (exam 1) dates are listed on the course schedule. Please note that the dates might change depending on the pace of the class. The date and time of the final examination (exam 2) is determined by the University Registrar's office. ***Neither the date nor the time (Monday, December 12th, 10:10a-12:10pm) of the final examination will change.***

Make-up exams: Make-up exams will be granted only if an absence is excused for one of the following reasons: 1) participation in a university-sanctioned athletic or formal academic event; 2) illness or COVID exposure; 3) death or illness in your family; 4) participation in cultural events or religious observances.

2. **Reflections:** There will be 9 reflections during the semester which are due on Sundays by 11:59pm. These reflections might be related to movies, articles, or other activities that **will be specified on Moodle**. Please refer to each week for **specific instructions**. Though the reflection questions or topic might vary, in general reflection papers should be relatively brief (approx. 400 words) and respond to the prompts in Moodle. Your top eight reflections will be counted towards your grade and the lowest grade will be dropped.
3. **Activity (20 points each):** References to and representations of violence and maltreatment in society are very common. Indeed, entertainment (movies, television, etc.) and popular media, the news, and social media brim with references to VMIR. Some of these references are based in science, while others are clearly not. During the semester, you will engage in two activities related to VMIR in your community.
 1. **Message in your Environment** (20 points): You will find media or messaging in your community that you think either perpetuates or reduces risk for dating violence. This can be a TV show, a song, music video, but also commercials, slogans/signs in sororities and fraternities, and social media trends. Once selected, you will be asked to write a paper (2-3 page double spaced): 1) Describing your media item of choice, 2) Describing how this media item might affect risk for dating violence and how this connects to context covered in class and in readings. An example is posted on Moodle.
 2. **Domestic Violence Awareness month** (20 points): October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. During this month, the campus and larger community usually hosts events and activities to raise awareness about domestic violence. You will be asked to engage in such an activity and write a reflection on 1) what activity you chose, 2) the purpose/goal of the activity, and 3) your thoughts and reactions. In the past, students have attended talks, webinars, parades, fundraising concerts, hosted screenings of documentaries, or hosted a group reading of a related book.

4. Expectations

You are expected to read all assignments **prior to class meetings**. I also expect you to be present for each class meeting and to be an active class participant. It is your responsibility to obtain notes and content covered in any class you miss. Your classmates and I will appreciate your discretion with respect to cell phone conversations, text messaging, and personal conversations. Finally, I correspond with students regularly via email. Please note that UM policy requires all e-mail correspondence to use official University email accounts (e.g., name.name@umontana.edu; name.name@umconnect.umt.edu). ***Please send all email correspondence from your University account.***

5. Academic integrity

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Specifically, cheating will result in a “0” for the assignment in question and may result in a failing course grade and dismissal from the University. Please enlist my help if you are having difficulty with the course content. Plagiarism is an example of academic dishonesty and will be addressed accordingly. If you have questions about plagiarism, please let me know. Finally, please review the [Student Conduct Code](#).

6. Disability modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Office for Disability Equity](#). If you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with the Office of Disability Equity, please contact them (Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243). I will work with you and Disability Services to provide appropriate accommodations.

7. Important dates

You may drop the course (with no “W”) or change your grading option via CyberBear through the 15th instructional day (September 19). You may drop the course or change grading options via Drop form through the 45th instructional day (October 31: Fee applies; instructor & advisor signatures required; a “W” will appear on transcript for drops). Beyond the 45th day, dropping courses and/or changing grading options require a Petition to Change Registration form (Fee applies; instructor, advisor and Dean of College signatures required; a “WP” [Withdraw Passing] or “WF” [Withdraw Failing] will appear on transcript). I will assign an ‘incomplete’ only when urgent circumstances arise. These circumstances will require appropriate documentation (e.g., letter from a physician, etc.). Please contact the [Registrar’s Office](#) to confirm details about registration and the dates above.

8. Grading

Grades are assigned using a 200-point scale. You earn points on exams, activities, and reaction papers.

1. Exams: Each of the 2 exams is worth 40 points. In total, exams account for 80 points (40% of course total).
2. Reflections: Nine reflections each worth 10 points are due on Sundays at 11:59pm (see Moodle for prompt and details) to be submitted on Moodle. Your lowest reflection score is dropped (40% of course total).
3. Activities: You will be assigned 2 activities during the semester, and which are each 20 points (20% of course total).

There will be no grade curves in this course. Point totals are always ‘rounded up’ in the student’s favor. Final grades will be assigned using the following scale:

Points	Letter Grade	Points	Letter Grade
187-200	A	153-159	C+
180-186	A-	140-152	C
173-179	B+	120-139	D
167-172	B	<120	F
160-166	B-		

9. Extra Credit

Earn up to a **maximum of 3% toward your final grade** through these two options (either one or a combination of both). **Deadline:** Extra credit will be accepted through the last day of regular class.

1. **Research Participation:** Participate in research in the Department of Psychology. Each 30 minutes of research participation is worth 0.5% (e.g., 0.5 hours = 0.5%; 1.0 hour = 1%, etc.).

→ To register, go to [SONA log-in](https://umontana.sona-systems.com) (https://umontana.sona-systems.com) and **request an account** using your **UM email address** (NOT your NetID or 790#). See to the [Department of Psychology's SONA information](http://hs.UMT.edu/psychology/undergraduates/sona.php) (http://hs.UMT.edu/psychology/undergraduates/sona.php) for instructions.

→ To sign up for studies, please go directly to the [SONA log-in](https://umontana.sona-systems.com) (https://umontana.sona-systems.com). To receive credit in this course, **select PSYX 330 as the course** when you sign up for a study.
2. **Article Summary:** Summarize an article reviewing research on a topic in VMIR. Each article summary is worth 1% of extra credit and will be graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Write a 1-2 typed page summary of an article **that must be pre-approved by the instructor**. **Detailed instructions for the Extra Credit Article Summary can be found on Moodle (under Extra Credit).**

Coronavirus Precautions

Masks: UM no longer requires masks in indoor spaces. Masks are only required inside Curry Health Center and in some medical/research laboratories on campus. This requirement will be clearly posted. Required or not, we respect those choosing to wear a mask to reduce spread of respiratory viruses.

If you have, think you have, or may have been exposed to COVID-19: Students who test positive for COVID-19 need to isolate for at least five days, which includes not attending in-person classes. During isolation, students should stay home or follow UM Housing guidance for isolation in place, and, if they must leave for food, medicines or other essentials, wear a high-quality mask.

→ *If you are feeling unwell or have had an exposure, please do not come to class.* If you're unwell and unable to attend lecture (in-person or remotely), please contact me via email so we can plan for you to stay up to date.

After five days students can leave isolation if they are symptom-free. If symptoms persist, isolation should continue until students are symptom-free for 24 hours (without use of medications to alleviate the symptoms)

Vaccines and COVID-19 testing: The University encourages COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, which are offered for both students and employees at the Health Services Pharmacy inside Curry Health Center. COVID-19 testing for students is available at Curry Health Center. Free at-home tests can be ordered online, or there may be tests available through the Health Services Pharmacy by calling 243-5171.

Sensitive Material and Vicarious Trauma

Throughout the course we will be discussing and viewing **sensitive material** that pertains to violence and maltreatment in intimate relationships. This includes content related to child maltreatment (physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect), to intimate partner violence, and sexual assault. Regardless of whether you have lived experiences of violence or abuse, this content may be difficult to hear or watch, and can sometimes lead to or increase distress, anxiety, feelings of helplessness, rage, or other reactions. While these reactions are common and entirely understandable, they can sometimes become *too* intense and begin to interfere with your personal and academic life. This is sometimes called **vicarious trauma** (also known as secondary traumatic stress or compassion fatigue). If you or a peer do experience such reactions, know that this is **normal**. In fact, I believe it is an important part of your academic and personal development to learn to recognize when you are experiencing these effects, and to learn ways to address them so that you are best equipped to continue doing this work in a way that is healthy for you. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you are having difficulties and if you need any help in connecting with resources. Having said all that, it is important to know that this course is **not designed to help or replace therapeutic work**, nor does it take a therapeutic approach to the material.

A note on disclosures: Sometimes students wish to share their own personal stories in this class. Before doing so, I urge you to think of the following:

- Is your experience related to the topics being discussed?
- Will sharing your story bring up emotions/feelings you are prepared to experience?
- Will sharing negatively impact the rest of your class experience? For example, will it make it difficult to continue participating or reading course content?
- What if no one responds to your story and we move on to another topic? Are you prepared to handle how the class might respond to your experience, especially if it is not how you expect/want?
- Will it bother you if this information is shared outside the class? While I ask everyone to respect each other's privacy, neither I nor you have control on what others might decide to share with people you do not know. Is that ok with you?

Safe space vs. Contested Space

We will be covering topics that can sometimes feel controversial, close to home, or otherwise incite strong reactions. When these topics are covered, we sometimes talk about creating safe spaces in which we can explore such conversations. Designing a safe space connotes the idea of an environment free of threat or harm. However, for those who experience them, social inequalities and oppressive practices cannot be put on a hold during class time, and may always be feeling at risk. In addition, what one person might consider safe another might find activating. As such, I do not think it is possible to create a safe space for all in a class designed to explore violence and maltreatment in intimate relationships. What I *do* think is possible is to create a "contested space" or a space in which you and I commit to intentionally discuss, or *contest*, respectfully. This means remaining respectful of each other and each others' opinions, even if they do not match our own or are controversial. In this space, I also ask that discussion be supported by the scientific information we are learning in class, not simply opinion, and that overly personal information should not be relayed in class discussions.

The bottom line: This is an open and affirming classroom. Each of you belongs here. Though we will not always agree, we will respect each other, no matter what. Conflict and differences in belief are facts of life. When we disagree, we will communicate our opinions and disagreements with mutual respect.

I am hopeful that will abide by these tenets of my teaching philosophy and classroom environment. Please let me know if you have concerns or questions.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Lecture Topic	Reading	Assignment due
Tuesday, August 30	Syllabus and introduction		
Thursday, September 1	Family Violence: Overview & History, Methods and Perspectives	- Chapter 1	Introductions due 9/4
Tuesday, September 6	Methods and Perspectives	- Chapter 2	
Thursday, September 8	Effects of Early Childhood Trauma	- Dr. Nadine Burke TED talk (video) - Neurobiology of Trauma (video)	Reflection 1 due 9/11
Tuesday, September 13	Child Physical Abuse	- Chapter 3 - Frechette et al. (2015)	
Thursday, September 15	Child Physical Abuse		Reflection 2 due 9/18
Tuesday, September 20	Child Sexual Abuse	- Chapter 4	
Thursday, September 22	Child Sexual Abuse		
Tuesday, September 27	Child Neglect	- Chapter 5 - Sheridan et al. (2012)	
Thursday, September 29	Child Neglect		Reflection 3 due 10/2
Tuesday, October 4	Child Psychological Abuse	- Chapter 6 - "Childhood Psychological Abuse as Harmful as Sexual or Physical Abuse" (APA Article)	
Thursday, October 6	Child Psychological Abuse		Reflection 4; Choose the media item for "Message in your environment" due 10/9
Tuesday, October 11	Exam Review		
Thursday, October 13	Exam 1		
Tuesday, October 18	Violence in Teen and Emerging Adult Relationships	- Chapter 7	
Thursday, October 20	Violence in Teen and Emerging Adult Relationships		Activity due: Messages in your Environment, 10/23
Tuesday, October 25	IPV and IPH: Focus on Survivors	- Chapter 8 - "Domestic Abuse is as Common as Rain" (Guardian article)	

Date	Lecture Topic	Reading	Assignment due
Thursday, October 27	IPV: Coercive control		Reflection 5; Domestic Violence Awareness Month activity due 10/30
Tuesday, November 1	IPV: Interventions		
Thursday, November 3	Parenting in the Context of Domestic Violence	- "State Laws can Punish Parents in Abusive Households" (Talk Poverty article)	Reflection 6 due 11/6
Tuesday, November 8	No Class: Election Day		
Thursday, November 10	Guest Lecture		Reflection 7 due 11/13
Tuesday, November 15	IPV: Persons Who Perpetrate	- Chapter 9 - McGinn et al. (2020)	
Thursday, November 17	IPV: Risk Assessments and BIP		Reflection 8 due 11/20
Tuesday, November 22	Marginalized Populations	- Chapter 10 - Trevor Project WebPage on LGBTQIA homelessness	
Thursday, November 24	No Class: Thanksgiving		
Tuesday, November 29	Marginalized Populations		
Thursday, December 1	Marginalized Populations	- "Native American women face an epidemic of violence. A legal loophole prevents prosecutions" (NBC article)	Reflection 9 due 12/4
Tuesday, December 6	Marginalized Populations		
Thursday, December 8	Exam Review		
Monday, December 12th, 10:10a-12:10p	Exam 2		