Syllabus

Violence and Policing

SOCI 3341 (CRN 15087) / ANTH 4370 (CRN 14680)

Old Main 205
10:30-11:50 TR
Fall 2022

Course Instructor

Instructor: Dr. Maria Cristina Morales, Ph.D. Sociology

Contact Information: mcmorales@utep.edu or Blackboard email

Office Hours: 12:00pm to 1:00 pm or by appointment

Office: Old Main 302 or zoom if you prefer

Teaching Assistant (TA)

TA: Kendra Farr, Masters Graduate Student, Sociology

Contact Information: kmfarr2@miners.utep.edu or Blackboard email

Office Hours: Wednesday and Thursday from 3:30-4:30PM or by appointment

Office: Old Main 309 or Zoom

Course Description

This course examines various forms of violence and state power in punishment and social control. We will explore patterns of police violence in the U.S., based not just on opinions but from a social scientific perspective. We will focus on structural violence in the criminal punishment systems and the various groups targeted by the prison industrial complex. Additionally, this course will place current perspectives on racially targeted policing and imprisonment in the U.S. in context by exploring social scientific materials. Lastly, we will examine the role of contemporary grassroots social movements in developing alternatives to some current policing practices.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Develop a critical understanding of violence in society.
2. Apply data to provide a picture on how inequality impacts susceptibility to societal surveillance and policing from local- to federal-levels.
3. Use theoretical perspectives to study trends in violence and policing to discuss how systems of inequality can be changed through human agency.

Course Materials


Subscription to the Washington Post
(https://subscribe.washingtonpost.com/checkout/?promo=o8_edu_acq) [$1 for 4 weeks] or the El Paso Times [$1 for 6 months]

Rent the following full films:

*Do Not Resist* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcZ1HvdPEEk] [Rent for $2.99. on Youtube or Amazon Prime]

*Central Park Five* [https://www.amazon.com/The-Central-Park-Five/dp/B08DD5QV6L/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2IR45T6MELLPO&keywords=central+park+five&qid=1661098688&s=instant-video&sprefix=central+park+five%2Cinstant-video%2C119&sr=1-1] [Rent $2.97 on Amazon Prime or check Netflix]

*Note:* other required readings will be uploaded to the Blackboard.

Course Technology

The content for this course is on Blackboard. The University of Texas at El Paso offers technical assistance at helpdesk@utep.edu. You may also use the Blackboard chat for help. Blackboard support is available 24/7 at [https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/)

Course Work

Course work will consist of reading, reading and video/film quizzes and assessments, applied learning assignments, photo-voice project, and two exams. All assignments and due dates are posted on the course schedule.

Class Participation Assignments

Class participation is key to your success in this course. Students are expected to finish the reading assignments before class and to come prepared to offer a critical assessment of the
readings. To enhance critical thinking by applying the concepts learned in class to student experiences on contemporary issues, students are required to keep up with current events as they related to the course material. Moreover, there will be several randomly assigned in-class assignments intended to apply and further the students’ understanding of the course material.

**Video /Film Assessments and Quizzes**

Research has highlighted the benefits of using films/videos for educational instruction. Films/videos help to retain information and understand complex concepts. I have assigned films/videos that captures the content for this course. After viewing the film/video, students will be required to take a video quiz or to answer critical thinking questions.

**Photo-voice Final Project**

Students will be assigned a topic during the semester to help them to further explore the course content. Students will interview one person. Prior to the interview students will ask the person to take up to five photographs related to the topic. Once the photographs are submitted the student will interview the person and ask them what each picture means to them. Students will then write a 3-4-page report plus photographs.

**Final Exam**

There will be a comprehensive final exam in this class. Students will be provided a review and we will review in class.

**Extra Credit**

I will bring to your attention opportunities to attend events on campus that relate to course topics. I can’t predict in advance how many of these events there will be or when they will occur. If you hear of an event that you think might be relevant, please bring it to our attention. To earn extra credit, you must attend the event and write a description (no more than one page) summarizing key points. There will be other opportunities for extra credit announced in class.

**Method of Evaluation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation assignments</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Assessments</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo-voice</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam I</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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**Expectations and Policies**

**What to Expect from the Instructor**

Sociology is my passion! As such, I want you all to love it as much as I do. Therefore, my goal is for you to learn and understand the material. More importantly, I want you to apply what you learn in this course to your communities. I am including learning modules on topics on violence and policing that are relevant today. I am here to help you reach all the learning goals. I also take very seriously issues about social inequality and students’ social mobility through education. This foundation has also made me an approachable and fair instructor.

**Participation**

To be successful in this course (and possibility all your courses) you need to be active learners. Active learners read the material at the beginning of the week before quizzes and discussions. While you read, you need to use your “sociological imaginations” to apply the material to other contexts, including your own societal surroundings. The assignments are in your course schedule and the weekly folders in the Blackboard. You also need to pay special attention to announcements that will provide important updates on the course (posted on Blackboard and emailed).

**Communication**

- It is best to email me through the blackboard. In part to my administrative position at the College of Liberal Arts, I get a lot of emails a day at mcmorales@utep.edu.
- Please allow me 48 hours for response to an e-mail Monday through Friday. Normally responses will be quicker than that, but due to my other obligations in the university it is not always possible.
• Calling via Zoom: If you would like to have a conversation in some format other than email or in person we can also Zoom.

• Make sure emails to the TA, your classmates, and myself are respectful. It is very easy to misinterpret the tone of the emails so make sure that you read it over before you send it. Remember, once you email it, you cannot take it back.

• I am available to answer any questions regarding the content, logistics of the course, or absences. If you are having technical difficulties with Blackboard please contact the UTEP help desk (see Tech Support section in this syllabus).

Attendance Policy, Late Assignments, and Emergencies
Attendance will not be taken but absences will obviously affect your class engagement grade. I will drop the two lowest class participation grades (note this excludes the photovoice assignment).

If you experience a medical emergency, family situation, or other serious event, please let me know as soon as you are able. If you have proper documentation, I will consider your request for excuse absence(s) and we will jointly develop a reasonable plan for extending assignment deadlines and/or receiving an incomplete, rather than a failing grade, for the course. If you test positive for COVID please stay home and notify me as soon as possible so we can arrange for you to hear the class lecture through zoom and to complete any in-class assignments.

Contesting Grades
I do not give grades, students need to earn them. Please see the instructor or the TA about concerns regarding grades. Grades can be viewed on the Blackboard. You have a week from the time the assignment is graded to contest a grade.

Library Information
Access the UTEP Library by visiting http://libraryweb.utep.edu/.

Disability Statement
If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu.

For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

Academic Dishonesty Statement
Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.
• *Cheating* may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports.
• *Plagiarism* occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents another person’s words or ideas as his or her own.
• *Collusion* involves unauthorized collaboration with another person or group to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. You can find more information in the UTEP *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, under Ch.1 Student Conduct and Discipline [https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html](https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html).

**Final Comments**
I am glad that you have chosen this course. Given the importance of violence and policing in today’s society, it is necessary that we learn about it academically. I hope you find that sociology and anthropology to be very useful in both your daily lives and careers. Please feel comfortable to give me any comments and suggestions about the course.