Kill Assessment: An Anthropology of Violence
Anth 227
TuTh 1:10-2:30
FISK 116

Professor: Derek Pardue, PhD (dpardue@wesleyan.edu)
Office location and hours: Anthropology Building, Rm. 25 (TuTh 12-1)

Course Description
Is violence best understood as a set of “random acts” marginal to society? Or, do societies need violence to make culture systematic and functional? We will address two major issues throughout this course. First, we will discuss different types of violence: physical, structural and symbolic violence. Second, we will become familiar with ways that social groups turn violence into an aesthetic object and an artistic project. To accomplish our task we will take both an ethnographic and theoretical approach so that we may better ground our understanding of violence in everyday experiences as well as develop a broader idea of what “violence” entails.

Grading
A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
Below 70 NC (No Credit)

*I round up scores, e.g. 89.5 is a 90 and thus an A*

Grade Breakdown
20% (4 quizzes, each worth 5%)
40% (3 essays, 1st: 10pts, 2nd 10 pts, 3rd 20 pts)
20% (10 Thought Essays, 2pts each)
15% In-class Exercises (Rotating group activities)
5% General Class participation

Quizzes: There will be four (4) scheduled quizzes throughout the semester. Each is worth five points of students' final grade for a total of 20 points. The format is the following: multiple choice and identification sections. These are short exercises of 10-15 minutes. They are not cumulative; they cover all reading and anything from class discussions (lectures slides, films, internet sources, etc.).

Essays: There are three scheduled essays required for this course. The format is: a set of questions revolving around 1-2 keywords that we have discussed and are central to the readings. For full credit, students need to do more than simply put group discussions and lectures in his or her own words. The question cluster will ask for students to apply a concept or risk a theoretical formulation. Thoughtful risk is good! See course schedule below for exact due dates.
Thought Essays: These are 1-page reaction papers based on the readings due for that particular day. Students must write 10 of these over the course of the semester. These essays are helpful for three major reasons: facilitate class discussion, engage students in the readings, and produce ideas and kernels of arguments to be later developed in the essays.

In-class Exercises: We will divide up into groups. During much of the semester, we will implement a rotating system of question posts, in-class mini-presentations, and response posts related to course readings. I will explain this in detail during the first week of classes.

**NO PLAGIARISM will be tolerated as per Wesleyan policies.** Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offense. For Wesleyan’s Honor Code and plagiarism policies see http://www.wesleyan.edu/acaf/policy/sc_plagiarism_complete.html

**If a student misses a quiz, s/he must make it up within a week of the quiz date in Instructor’s office hours. It is up to the student to communicate with the Instructor to schedule a makeup. Students are not permitted to make up more than 2 quizzes (barring extenuating circumstances). In any case, documentation is required.

**Students have one week after quiz/test is returned to discuss grade with TA and/or Instructor. For example, if Quiz #1 is returned on 2/18, the grade is FINAL on 2/25. Any further discussion about the quiz will be relegated to test review or particular interest in topic.

Attendance Policy: If you think you have a valid reason for missing class (emergency, health problem, etc.), please contact your class dean/other relevant Wesleyan official and have that person contact me. Excused absences are only granted when a Wesleyan official contacts me on your behalf (not when you send me an email). Basically, if you miss more than 2 classes without a valid excuse, you will begin to lose points on your final grade. The class is small enough that consistent absence will be obvious. In addition, in-class exercises and quizzes make up a significant portion of the grade and it will be virtually impossible to do well on these without attending class. You can do the math. If you don't, of course, I will.

A word on advising: Students are always encouraged to contact me. Since the material is complex and may require further explanations, all students have the right to make appointments and communicate through emails to discuss class issues.

Special accommodations for students with disabilities: Wesleyan has excellent resources and support for persons with learning or other disabilities. Please bring a letter of accommodations from Dean Sarah Lazare within the first two weeks of class. If your special need is other, please come see me during office hours and I will guide you appropriately. Please don’t hesitate to talk to me if I can be of assistance.
Athletes
If you are an athlete and have games away, come see me so I can mark the calendar and we can plan how to keep you on track in the course.

Required Texts

** Other readings include the following authors: Hannah Arendt, Pierre Guyotat, Naomi Klein, Raymond Williams, Thomas Hobbes, Frantz Fanon, Jacobo Timmerman, David Dow, Carolyn Forché, Michel Foucault, Ruth Gilmore, Annie Newitz, Sarah Vowell. These readings and other material will be posted on Moodle.

** Major course themes include: Philosophy of violence, death penalty, structural violence (e.g., racism, colonialism, prison-industrial complex), Disaster Capitalism, Child soldiers, Domestic violence, Symbolic violence, Genocide, State violence in Latin America, Narration of violence, Aesthetics of violence, Violence as a resource of fiction.

Course Schedule

January
23. Introduction to the course
28. More intro: let’s talk about the “V” word
30. Hobbes and Williams (pdf)

February
4. Fanon (pdf) and Arendt (url link)
6. Pardue, Intro and chapter 1 *Quiz #1 in class
11, 13, 18, 20. Read and discuss genocide in Guatemala viz. Sanford *Discuss Paper #1
25. Pardue, chapters 2 and 5
27. N.Klein (pdf) *Paper 1 due by class time

March
4. More Klein
6. Finish case studies from Klein *Quiz #2 in class

11, 13, 18, 20 – SPRING BREAK!!

25. Foucault; Gilmore (pdfs)
27. Dow (pdf) *Discuss Paper #2

April
1. Film in class
3. Pardue, Part 3 Essay #2 is due by class time
8. Pardue, Part 4; Timerman (pdf)
10. Dorfman “Death and the Maiden”
15. Finish Dorfman; Quiz #3 in class
17. Forché, Guyotat (pdfs)
22. Pardue, Part 5
24. Leyton and Newitz (pdfs)
29. Sarah Vowell (pdf) Quiz #4 in class

May
1. Saramago
6. Finish Saramago

**5/13 – Essay #3 due by 5PM. Send to Instructor via Moodle.**

Course Policies
Cell Phones, PDAs, and other communication devices: Please turn off all of these devices upon entering the classroom. Phones ringing, students involved in instant messaging, etc. disrupt the classroom environment and show disrespect to the professor and other students. If there is an emergency and you need to be accessible, please let the professor know and when contacted, please leave the classroom to take care of your business.

Scenarios: Listed below are some common scenarios that have occurred in the past and may occur at some point during the semester. Subsequently, one can find the outcome.

Missed quiz or test: These are scheduled; there are no surprise quizzes. Therefore, students must communicate with the instructor or TAs at least two days prior to the quiz date and provide a reasonable excuse for missing the quiz. If there are extenuating circumstances (see procedures under “Attendance Policy”), the student must communicate with instructor / TAs within a week after the quiz / test to schedule a make up quiz. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a zero grade for that quiz / test.

Grade Dispute: If you feel that your quiz or test was not graded fairly, consult me. Remember, the “grade” case is closed, once a week has passed from the date a quiz/test is returned to students.

Bunch of tests scheduled in the same week as “Kill Assessment”: One of the skills supposedly learned in college is time management. Students have all the information regarding course content and expectations. One must choose and prioritize accordingly. No special accommodations will be made simply because a student has a “big chemistry exam” on the same day as a test in this “trivial anthro whatever course.”

“I thought this course was about Genocide”: Course syllabi have a function. Read them before deciding to add/drop a course. This concern and other misunderstandings are the fault of both students and the instructor. We hope to avoid this scenario as much as possible.
Student is face-booking, browsing Neiman Marcus, chatting with mommy, and generally in twitterverse free fall: Student will lose a letter grade on next quiz or test.

**Bullet-Point Outline of “Camp” Rules**

Students are not customers. Teachers are not sales clerks. Students and teachers have deeper obligations to each other.

Here is what I expect from students:

- You will treat everyone in the class, including the professor, with the respect due to all human beings.
- You will give your full attention to the material, and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner.
- You will agree to do the work outlined in the syllabus on time.
- You will acknowledge that previous academic preparation (e.g., writing skills) will affect your performance in this course.
- You will acknowledge that your perception of effort, by itself, is not enough to justify a distinguished grade.
- You will not plagiarize or otherwise steal the work of others.
- You will not make excuses for your failure to do what you ought.
- You will accept the consequences -- good and bad -- of your actions.

Here is what students can expect from me:

- I will treat you with the respect due to all human beings.
- I will [try to] know your name and treat you as an individual.
- I will not discriminate against you on the basis of your identity or your well-informed viewpoints.
- I will manage the class in a professional manner.
- I will prepare carefully for every class.
- I will begin and end class on time.
- I will teach only in areas of my professional expertise. If I do not know something, I will say so.
- I will conduct scholarly research and publication with the aim of making myself a more informed teacher.
- I will pursue the maximum punishment for plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity.
- I will make myself available to you for advising.
- I will maintain confidentiality concerning your performance.
- I will be honest with you.
- Your grade will reflect the quality of your work and nothing else.
- I am interested in your feedback about the class but I am more interested in what you learned than how you feel.