

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **Histories of Violence**

Course Number and Section

HISTORY

1816F 550

Instructor Name(s): Geoff Read

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

What defines an action as violence? How have these definitions of violence in past societies changed over time? How do we interpret violent acts in the past without either condemning them or acting as passive observers? This course will explore these questions through explorations of political and social histories. Beginning with the broad debates in the histories of violence, we will then examine examples of violence from various historical periods, looking at everyday violence, duels, infanticide, paramilitary violence, warfare, assassination, and terrorism.

This first year course is designed to offer a foundation in the basics of historical analysis: how to read a scholarly article, how to recognize and analyze a primary source, how to compare historical events and themes across time and space, how to write a convincing argument, and how to recognize and appreciate the complexities, vulnerabilities and passions of people from the past.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

Learn the scholarship on histories of violence

Develop research skills using resources such as the library, archives, and digital repositories.

Read and analyze primary historical documents and learn to interpret them critically

Question and evaluate historiographical debates across a range of topics covered in the course

Articulate your own critical views, both in class discussion and in written work

Improve your writing, analytical, critical-thinking, and discussion skills

Textbooks and Course Materials:

All available online

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance and participation		20
Essay proposal	10/06/26	10
Essay	11/17/26	30
Mid-Term Exam	10/31/26	20
Exam		20

Friday, August 7, 2026

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In-course Costs \$000.00

For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.