



Mass Violence (SOC1 250-1)
Sociology Department
Golisano Hall, 201
M/T/TH/F 9:30am – 12:00pm
3 Credit Hours

Professor: Jennifer LaRose, Ph.D. (she, her, hers)

Office Location: Golisano Hall, Room 330

Office/Student Support Hours:

Monday/Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
12:15pm-1:15pm	9:00am-12:00pm	12:15pm-1:15pm

[Sign up for Office/Student Support Hours](#)

What is this course about?

While the public is captivated and horrified by mass violence, there is disagreement among academics and criminal justice practitioners about how best to define mass violence. This course begins by examining *definitional issues* and why these issues matter to our overall understanding of mass violence in the U.S. and abroad. During the course, we will also examine how news media has influenced the public’s understanding of mass violence and their causes in the U.S., contributed to many widespread myths about mass violence, and possibly contributed to the phenomenon of “fame-seeking” mass shooters. In this class, we will also focus on typologies of mass murderers, work toward an understanding of correlates of mass violence, and take a special look at the topic of school violence. As we conclude the semester, we will look at evidence and debates about prevention strategies including threat assessments, firearms legislation, and zero-tolerance policies.

Course Values

There are two key course values: **effort** and **engagement**. I ask that you put the work in to succeed in the course and know that success is not a letter grade. Rather, it is understanding and abilities and leaving the class one step closer to your goals inside and outside of the classroom.

Effort is attending class, doing assignments, reading the textbook, etc. Effort means *not* giving in to frustration or boredom and continuing to work toward your goals. But engagement is also important. Engagement means being actively present in class and reading to use the information, not just memorize it. Engagement is asking questions and thinking critically. Take the time to read the material and engage with it in class discussions or activities.

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, students should be able to:

- Critique definitions of mass violence
- Compare and contrast research-based realities to common misconceptions about mass shootings
- Compare and contrast explanations and correlates of mass shootings
- Evaluate evidence supporting explanations of mass shootings
- Analyze and evaluate the possible effectiveness of policy approaches to reducing mass violence such as leakage, firearm regulations and restrictions, regulation of media violence, and mental health care considering research on correlates of mass shootings
- Propose viable strategies to reduce mass violence considering evidence from research
- Evaluate the role of the media in the creation of myths about mass violence and “fame-seeking” shooters

Required Text

There are several required academic articles, and videos. These required resources are all listed within the course schedule. All listed materials are required unless specifically designated as optional. Articles and book chapters assigned outside the course textbook are posted on the course website.

Not all the assigned readings will be discussed in class; however, all assigned readings may be covered on quizzes, exams, or other assessments.

Communication

Communication outside of class will be conducted through email, D2L, or my office hours. Office hours are an essential resource for students (i.e., clarification, questions, review, etc.). If you are having any difficulties throughout J-term, please see me. I can best address your questions and concerns during my office hours. **I am here to help you!** If my office hours are inconvenient, we can schedule another time to meet. Email is the best and fastest way to reach me.

Email Etiquette

When emailing me, please always include the course title (SOC1-250) along with a relevant keyword in the subject line. For example, your subject line might look like this: “SOC1-250: Absence”. Your email should use professional language, tone, and style. Please take the time to proofread your email. Keep in mind that email is not the same as texting. **Do not write your entire message in the subject line.**

Before emailing me, reading through the syllabus again might provide an answer to your inquiry. Looking through our course page on D2L may also resolve your question. For example, if you are unsure of where to find a reading, be sure to look through our course content first. In other words, you should make at least an initial effort to address your question.

Questions about grades, substantive feedback, and comments on assignments will be answered

during office hours rather than email. You are more than welcome to ask those questions via email, but I will likely respond by asking you to set up a meeting to talk through them either in-person or virtually. Allow for at least 24 hours for me to respond to your message during the workweek. Please do not expect immediate responses after 5pm, during holidays, and on the weekends. If the email does not adhere to these standards, I reserve the right to not respond.

Grading

Attendance (25% total)

Students will be exposed to the required course material by attending the regularly scheduled class. Students are responsible for the topics covered not only in the course readings but also during course lectures and class discussions. Organized and accurate note taking of lectures and discussions is essential to comprehending the course material and for your success in this course. Students are expected to participate in class discussions and may be called upon to address specific questions or interpret passages from the texts. In order to adhere to these expectations, attendance in this course is **mandatory**.

There is no specific number of 'legal' absences allowed. Students are expected to attend all class meetings, during which attendance will be taken. Without being present in class, it is impossible to seriously engage with course materials. Excused absences are college-sponsored events, documented illnesses, a death in the family, and other emergencies. If you must miss a class for another reason, please contact me prior. You are responsible for completing missed work, and for staying up to date with the readings. In a condensed course, more than one unexcused absence can seriously endanger your successful completion of the class.

Class Participation (25% total)

At the beginning of the semester, each of you starts out with 100% on participation and professionalism points (20% of your grade). You will keep these points if you participate in class and conduct yourself professionally throughout the semester. You can **lose** points if you:

- Show up to class late or leave class early
- Submit non-original work as your own (this includes ChatGPT and other AI sources)
- Disrespect others (e.g., sleeping, not paying attention to people who are speaking, showing disrespect to me or your colleagues, etc.)
- Miss deadlines or show up to class unprepared
- *****Ask any instructor a question that can be answered by the syllabus*****
- Engage in other similar unprofessional behavior

In-Class Activities (20% total)

Throughout the course, I will be asking you to complete various in-class exercises and review activities. These exercises are designed to help you process the material and achieve deeper thinking and understanding about a topic. These exercises can only be completed in class during the assigned work time. Exercises may include quizzes (5-10 questions), one-minute papers, discussion questions, review activities, group work, critical thinking assignments, and other activities. They will be graded for completeness and general quality. Maximum points will be granted for complete assignments that demonstrate care, thoughtfulness, and professionalism while 1 or less point will be given for incomplete or poorly executed

exercises. If you are not in class and miss an assignment or activity, you will receive a zero. If you know that you will miss a class for legitimate reasons, please speak with me before the lecture, so you may not be penalized and may be given permission to make up this assignment. These grades are qualitative, holistic evaluations of the work. Do not expect extensive feedback. In-class assignments will be done randomly. The date when the quiz takes place will be announced in class prior to the quiz. Each assignment will be accumulated in a total of 10% of a course grade.

Newspaper Article (15% total)

Students will be required to write a newspaper article depicting a mass shooting either of their choice or one that they create. This article should be 1 ½ - 2 pages, double-spaced and will be due on January 12. More information will be provided in class and via D2L.

Proposal (15% total)

Students will be required to write a proposal describing a study examining mass violence. This proposal should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced and written using either APA or ASA citation style. The proposal will be due January 26. More information will be provided in class and via D2L.

Grades:

25%	Attendance
25%	In-Class Activities
20%	Class Participation
15%	Newspaper Article
15%	Proposal
100%	Total

Grading Scale:

A: 92.5-97.49% (4)	C-: 69.5-72.49% (1.7)
A-: 89.5-92.49% (3.7)	D+: 67.5-69.49% (1.3)
B+: 87.5-89.49% (3.3)	D: 62.5-67.49% (1)
B: 82.5-87.49% (3)	D-: 59.5-62.49% (0.7)
B-: 79.5-82.49% (2.7)	F: 59% or below (0)
C+: 77.5-79.49% (2.3)	
C: 72.5-77.49% (2)	

Attendance

Per Hartwick College’s Missed Class Policy, students who must miss class will provide each instructor with an agreement letter prior to the end of the first week of the semester notifying them that they may occasionally have to miss class for an event or competition and will work with the faculty member to complete any missed assignments. In the event that an activity is not known prior to the drop/add period the student will notify the instructor as soon as they are aware of the conflict. In all cases and for all activities, students will present the faculty member with a hard copy of a letter detailing the activity, dates of the activity, and acknowledgement of the class assignments that will be missed and

date for submission of any course work. Students are expected to notify their instructors in whose courses they will be missing academic work – preferably two weeks before each absence from class – due to extra-curricular or co-curricular participation. When applicable, the letter also will be signed by appropriate college personnel coordinating the event and will be accompanied by a schedule of conflicting times and will include anticipated departure times. Finally, be prompt and on time for the start of each course. Tardiness is disruptive for your classmates and for me. **Students may be considered tardy if they arrive more than five minutes late for class, and tardy students may be counted absent for the day.**

Although attendance in this course is mandatory, I do understand that life happens and emergencies occur. In the event that you find yourself in an emergency situation (i.e. severe medical illness, death in the family), you should contact me as soon as possible and submit documentation of your emergency. If you find yourself in an emergency situation, you may also find it helpful to contact the staff at the Office of Student Experience (<https://www.hartwick.edu/campus-life/student-affairs/>) and/or the Perella Health Center (<https://www.hartwick.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/health-center/>).

Academic Honesty

Honesty and integrity are integral components of the academic process. Students are expected to be honest and ethical at all times in their pursuit of academic goals. In particular, you must uphold the academic integrity policy found in the Student Handbook (<https://www.hartwick.edu/campus-life/student-affairs/code-of-conduct/student-handbook/>) which means you must refrain from all forms of dishonest academic behavior (e.g., cheating, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, double-submissions). Lapses of academic integrity will be dealt with according to the policies set forth in the student handbook.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabricating or falsifying information or sources, improper collaboration, submitting the same paper for different classes without permission, and plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when writers **deliberately** or **unintentionally** use another person's language, ideas, or materials and present them as their own without properly acknowledging and citing the source. This includes but is not limited to turning in all or part of an essay written by someone other than yourself (a friend, an internet source, etc.), claiming it as your own, and including information or ideas from research material without citing the source. Plagiarism in this course results in one or more of the following consequences: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and/or disciplinary action taken by the College. To avoid plagiarism, cite sources carefully, thoroughly, and meticulously; when in doubt, cite. It is expected that students write their papers and provide full and accurate citations for any specific ideas or language—words, phrases, sentences—that they take from outside sources, including the internet. Please refer to the Academic Honesty Policy, which can be found at <https://www.hartwick.edu/academics/student-services/academic-affairs/academic-policies/>.

Also, writing assistance is available through the Writing Center. The services offered are an excellent resource for anyone who is interested in improving and growing as a writer. Consultants are able to offer individual assistance and support for any stage of the writing process. This assistance is free and available to all students! The Writing Center currently offers

Zoom, in-person, and email consultations. For more information and guidelines for signing up for a consultation, please refer to the Writing Center site (<https://www.hartwick.edu/academics/student-services/writing-center/>). Please try to avoid making an appointment immediately on or before the due date for assignments. Even if you are waiting for feedback, it is your responsibility to submit your assignments on time.

ChatGPT & AI Software

As partners in learning, it is important to all of us that any assignment submission is a pure reflection of your work and understanding. The introduction of artificial intelligence options (such as ChatGPT or other similar tools/software that generate suggested text) to complete academic work jeopardizes my ability to evaluate your understanding of our course content and robs you of the ability to master the subject matter. Thus, the use of these tools and software is not allowed in this class for any part of a graded assignment, including generation of ideas, writing of text, or rewriting your own work. Suspicions of use of artificial intelligence aids will be considered a violation of the academic honest and integrity standards of the College.

Academic Accommodations

Hartwick College is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students, and welcomes students with disabilities into all the College's educational programs. The AccessAbility Services Office is responsible for the determination of appropriate modifications for students who encounter barriers due to a disability. If a student with a disability wishes to request academic accommodations, they should contact Lara Sanford, Director of AccessAbility Services and Academic Inclusivity, at sanfordl@hartwick.edu or AccessAbilityServices@hartwick.edu. To serve you best, requests should be made as early as possible. Please let me know if you have questions or need assistance. **I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its design. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so that we can determine if there is a design adjustment that can be made or if accommodations might be needed to overcome the limitations of the design.** I am always happy to consider creative solutions provided they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity.

Title IX/ Sexual Misconduct

Hartwick College is committed to equal opportunity and providing a safe community free from all forms of sexual misconduct including sexual/gender-based harassment, discrimination, dating or domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and sexual assault. If you wish to make an official report to the College or have questions about the College's policy and procedures regarding sexual misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Michael Arno, at arnom@hartwick.edu or (607) 431-4293. Online reporting and policy information is available at <https://www.hartwick.edu/about-us/employment/human-resources/title-ix/>.

If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact one of the following resources: Perrella Wellness Center, Health (607) 431-4120, or Counseling – (607) 431-4120; or Opportunities for Otsego's Violence Intervention Program – (607) 432-4855.

All other employees, including faculty, are responsible employees at Hartwick College and are

required to report any incident of sexual misconduct that is personally reported to them to the Title IX Coordinator so that support and resources can be provided for all parties.

Campus Mental Health Support Services

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. The Counseling Center is available to help with these issues and may be reached by calling (607) 431-4420 or emailing counselingcenter@hartwick.edu. Counseling services are **free of charge** and confidential. Heart, a peer counseling service, is also available if you are more comfortable talking with a fellow student who has been trained to offer information and support in a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere. To reach a Heart Peer Counselor, call (607) 431-5050 or email heart@hartwick.edu.

COVID-19 Policy and Instructional Modality

Any COVID-19 updates will be provided on the College website (<https://www.hartwick.edu/about-us/covid-19-updates/>). Instructors will communicate with students about any specific adjustments that are being made to their courses, such as modality of instruction, expectations for participation, and any changes to assigned work; students should check their Hartwick email accounts frequently for information from their instructors.

Note: This course utilizes an in-person modality. No classes will be held on zoom unless there are special circumstances and/or further notice from the CDCP.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event that the college closes as a result of inclement weather, please simply continue to keep up with the course readings as outlined in the course schedule and take a look at the lecture slides that I will post to our D2L page.

Electronic Devices

The use of cell phones is **not permitted in class**. Please put your phone on silent so it does not distract your fellow students or instructor. The use of **computers** is **permitted** for appropriate purposes; texting, emailing, and surfing the web do not count as appropriate uses during class time. If computer usage becomes disruptive or distracting for other students, you will be asked to put the device away. Headphones are not permitted in the classroom without explicit approval from the instructor. Repeated disruptions may result in being marked as absent. Additionally, you may not audio or video record class sessions without the instructor's permission.

Academic Success

The primary ingredients for your academic success are attending class, managing your time efficiently, taking good notes, and developing your critical thinking and communication abilities. Hartwick College has a number of excellent resources that can assist you in developing these skills. The Student Success Center offers guidance on what learning strategies are best suited to your talents, tutoring, and workshops on a variety of topics. The Office of Career Development can assist you in choosing a profession that best suits your talents, and help you develop a career plan to ensure success when you graduate from Hartwick College.

Religious Holidays

I accommodate students who are adherents of a religious tradition and wish to fulfill obligations of that religious tradition. Students are expected to notify their instructors of their intent to fulfill the obligations of their religious tradition as soon as possible. For the sake of this policy, religious holidays are defined as periods of time in which either: activities required by normal class participation are prohibited by a religious tradition, or a special worship obligation is required by a religious tradition. I will do everything I can to accommodate you.

Name and Pronoun Accommodations

If you use a name and/or pronoun other than what is listed in the course roll, please email me with the name and/or pronoun that you would like me to use.

Disclaimer

As instructor, I reserve the right to edit, revise and repost any aspect of the syllabus as needed. In the event that this syllabus is modified, I will alert you via email, D2L, and class announcement.

Tentative Course Calendar:

Week	Date	Day	Topic	Reading(s)/Assignments
1	Jan. 2	T	No Class	Review syllabus
	Jan. 4	Th	Course Overview	Booty et al. (2020)
	Jan. 5	F	No Class – Instructor Sick	Syllabus quiz due (11:59pm)
2	Jan. 8	M	No Class – Instructor Sick	
	Jan. 9	T	Mass Violence Discussion	
	Jan. 11	Th	Mass Violence	
	Jan. 12	F	Media & Mass Violence: Columbine	

Final Note: A syllabus is a form of a contract designed to protect both the student and the professor so all parties are informed of the rules. The schedule and syllabus, however, are subject to change with due notice from the instructor. Updates will be announced in class and on D2L or through email.