

**CCJ 4938 Gun Violence and Crime**  
*College of Criminology and Criminal Justice*  
*Florida State University*  
*Spring 2023 Semester*  
*WMS 0123*

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM*

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm or by appointment

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm or by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course introduces undergraduate students to the gun violence debate in the United States. The course is broken down into three sections, including an overview of the prevalence of gun violence and gun ownership in the United States; the correlates of distinct types of gun violence, including suicide, homicide, and mass shootings; and the history and efficacy of common gun laws in the United States.

### **Course Objectives**

Over the course of the semester, students will be able to identify the:

- Correlates of distinct types of gun violence
- Patterns, trends, and prevalence of gun violence
- Limitations of the research literature
- History of gun control and the Second Amendment
- Efficacy of specific gun control laws

**Trigger Warning: This course discusses content that may be distressing and/or traumatic to some students, including: suicide; homicide; homicide-suicide; domestic violence; gang violence; mass shootings; and school shootings. As the course focuses on gun violence, trigger warnings will not be provided for each individual class. Students are encouraged to view the course schedule in advance to identify any potentially concerning topics and meet with me individually to discuss the situation. Attendance is not graded, and students are permitted to leave or step out of the classroom at any time without academic penalty. All students are responsible for the course material, however, and should make arrangements to attend office hours and/or get notes from other students when missing class.**

## Course Grading

Student progress will be evaluated with two in-class exams, a cumulative final exam, reading check quizzes, and one written assignment.

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Final: 25%

Reading Check Quizzes: 15%

Assignment: 20%

93-100	A
90-92.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
73-76.9	C
70-72.9	C-
67-69.9	D+
63-66.9	D
60-62.9	D-

### *Midterm and Final Exams*

Exams will be held in person in class, with students filling in their answers on Scantron. No online or Canvas option is available. Students who do not write their name as directed on the Scantron will receive a zero, without exception. The final exam is cumulative, but will focus most heavily on the final third of the material, which is not covered on either midterm exam.

Students will be permitted to make up exams only when he or she: (1) has an officially recognized absence; and (2) provides official documentation of the absence. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. If the exam is missed due to a prescheduled issue (e.g., athletic game, religious observance), the student must contact me at least one week prior to the exam. **Absences due to work/employment and other scheduling conflicts are not excused.** If the exam is missed due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., sudden illness or family emergency), the student **must contact me within 24 hours of the missed exam.** Time and format of the make-up exam will be decided at my discretion. Please be aware that **make-up exams will contain different questions that may or may not be more challenging than the original exam given in class, including essay questions. Make-up exams will not be curved. Students that do not adhere to these guidelines will receive a zero for the missed exam, without exception.**

### *Assignment*

Students will be required to complete one short writing assignment of 5-7 double-spaced pages. Grading rubrics will be provided with the assignment. Assignments must be submitted via Canvas at the start of class on the day they are due (not at 11:59 pm!). Plagiarism and the use of

artificial intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT and others) are strictly prohibited, and all references or sources must be properly cited. **Students who plagiarize or utilize AI writing software will receive a zero for the assignment, without exception.**

Late submissions for the assignment (not due to an excused absence) will be accepted up to three days after the due date, with a penalty of 10% per day. **No submissions will be accepted more than three days past the due date without an excused absence.** Students with an excused absence will not be penalized for late submissions, but must coordinate a new due date with me. Absences will only be excused if they cover the entire period students had to work on the assignment. Students are strongly encouraged to seek help from case management services (contact info below) to provide documentation for any issues.

### *Reading Check Quizzes*

Students must complete a brief quiz on the material (specific dates are listed in the tentative calendar below). These quizzes are designed to help students practice the material and prepare for the exams, and so working together with other students or asking for help is encouraged (copying assignments is not allowed, however). Reading check quizzes are open book/open note, and students are encouraged to double check the material to ensure they know the correct answers. There is no time limit on reading check quizzes and students may attempt the quiz as many times as desired. Reading check quizzes must be submitted at the start of class on the day they are due (not at 11:59 pm!). Late submissions for reading check quizzes (not due to an excused absence) will be accepted up to three days after the due date, with a penalty of 10% per day.

### *Grading Policies*

Absolutely no extra credit will be given or accepted under any circumstances. Exam grades will only be curved if the student average falls below a C. Final grades will not be rounded.

## **Course Policies**

### *Structure*

This is an in-person course (not an online or hybrid/FLEX course). Students are expected to attend lectures and take exams in person. Lectures will not be recorded or streamed via Zoom.

### *Controversial Topics*

Gun violence is a controversial area of research in the United States, and students will invariably have strong and diverse opinions regarding gun control. This course is designed to provide an unbiased overview of the nuances of the gun control debate based on the extant research literature. At times, students on both sides of the political aisle will find their opinions challenged by the course content, which may be frustrating. **Students are always encouraged to ask questions and express their opinions, but exams, quizzes, and assignments will be graded based on mastery of course material, not personal opinions regarding the content.** Students must be respectful and courteous to each other during class discussions, regardless of whether they have opposing viewpoints on a controversial topic. Students who verbally attack or deride others when expressing their opinions will be asked to leave the classroom.

### *Attendance*

Attendance is mandatory, but will not be graded. While you will not be directly penalized for missing class, your grade will inevitably suffer and no accommodations will be offered to students who do not regularly attend without excused absences.

### *COVID-19 Policies*

If students: (1) are in close contact with someone who has tested positive; (2) test positive; (3) are currently experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; and/or (4) are required to quarantine per dorm policy, please do not come to class and contact Kyle Knapp regarding your situation.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please be sure to report your positive test to SAFER.

1. Send a copy of your positive test result to [uhs-medicalrecords@fsu.edu](mailto:uhs-medicalrecords@fsu.edu).
2. SAFER will be in contact and call you from 850-644-5555.
3. Resources are available at [uhs.fsu.edu](http://uhs.fsu.edu) and [stayhealthyfsu.edu/safer](http://stayhealthyfsu.edu/safer).

### *Syllabus Change Policy*

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. The course calendar listed below is tentative, and due dates and/or exams may be subject to change.

### *Communication*

Students are expected to check Canvas as well as their email on a regular basis. Important information such as assignments, class cancellations, and changes in course material will be relayed via Canvas announcements. Students should expect that an email response to questions can take up to 48 hours, and that some questions must be addressed directly.

### *Canvas*

You can access the main FSU Canvas site at <https://canvas.fsu.edu/>. You are responsible for checking this site regularly as course information will be added to the site. Canvas training courses and tutorials are offered for free through the University at <https://support.canvas.fsu.edu/kb/section/175/>.

## **University Policies and Resources**

### *Academic Honor Policy*

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." All students enrolled in this course must adhere to Florida State University's academic honor policy. Those of you who are unfamiliar with this policy are expected to read it online at: <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>. Violations of the academic honesty policy will not be tolerated, and will be reported to university officials. I take this policy very seriously and will make every effort to ensure it is strictly followed.

### *University Attendance Policy*

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

### *Confidential Campus Resources*

Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

Case Management Services  
University Center A, Suite 4128  
(850) 644-9555  
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/cms>

Victim Advocate Program  
University Center A, Rm. 4100  
(850) 644-7161  
Available 24/7/365  
Office Hours: M-F 8-5  
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>

University Counseling Center  
Askew Student Life Center, 2nd floor  
942 Learning Way  
(850) 644-8255  
<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>

University Health Services  
Health and Wellness Center  
(850) 644-6230  
<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>

### *Americans with Disabilities Act*

Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course. To receive academic accommodations, a student: (1) must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS); (2) must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and, (3) should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide

classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For the latest version of this statement and more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
oas@fsu.edu  
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas>

### *Academic Success*

Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Department of Student Support and Transitions to learn more.

### *Free Tutoring from FSU*

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity. While I encourage you to utilize these resources, I cannot guarantee there will be a free tutor available at any given time.

### *Final Exam Policies*

Students are expected to take the final exam in person at the scheduled time during finals week. Final exams will only be rescheduled for some other time during finals week when justified by illness, official documented accommodations on record with the Student Disability Resource Center, conflicting examinations, three or more examinations within a twenty-four hour period, or certain emergencies. Arrangements should be made prior to the scheduled exam. If a student misses the scheduled final examination and does not have approval in advance for a rescheduled exam within the final exam week, no make-up examination will be given. Students seeking to reschedule the final exam must obtain written permission from me as well as the dean of the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice prior to the exam. More information on University policies regarding final exams can be found at:

[https://registrar.fsu.edu/regISTRATION\\_guide/spring/exam\\_schedule/](https://registrar.fsu.edu/regISTRATION_guide/spring/exam_schedule/).

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

All readings and assignments are due at the **start** of class on the date listed, not at 11:59 PM. Schedule subject to change; please check announcements on Canvas for updates.

DATE	TOPIC	READ	DUE
1/9/23	Course Overview		
1/11/23	Trends: Gun Violence	Chapter 3, pp. 34-45, 53-59	Pre-Survey; Syllabus Quiz
1/13/23	Trends: Gun Violence		
1/16/23	<b>No Class (MLK)</b>		
1/18/23	Trends: Gun Ownership	Chapter 1	Quiz 1
1/20/23	How to Buy A Gun		
1/23/23	Theories of Guns and Crime	Chapter 4, pp. 59-64	Quiz 2
1/25/23	Research Challenges		
1/27/23	Gun Markets and Trafficking	Chapter 5, pp. 93-105	
1/30/23	Politics and Gun Control	Chapters 10-11	Quiz 3
2/1/23	Politics and Gun Control		
2/3/23	<b>No Class</b>		
2/6/23	Review Session		
2/8/23	<b>Exam 1</b>		
2/10/23	Suicide	Barber and Miller, 2014	
2/13/23	<b>No Class</b>		
2/15/23	<b>No Class</b>		Safety Training Quiz
2/17/23	Suicide		
2/20/23	Homicide	Sorenson and Schut, 2018	Quiz 4
2/22/23	Homicide		
2/24/23	Mass Shootings	Fox and Levin, 2022	
2/27/23	Mass Shootings		
3/1/23	School Shootings	Fox and Fridel, 2018	Quiz 5
3/3/23	School Shootings		
3/6/23	Campus Carry		
3/8/23	Mental Illness	Chapter 4, pp. 80-86	
3/10/23	Social Learning	Chapter 4, pp. 70-80	Quiz 6; Assignment
3/13/23	<b>Spring Break</b>		
3/15/23	<b>Spring Break</b>		
3/17/23	<b>Spring Break</b>		
3/20/23	Defensive Gun Use	Chapter 2	
3/22/23	Defensive Gun Use		
3/24/23	Review Session		
3/27/23	<b>Exam 2</b>		
3/29/23	Second Amendment	Spitzer 2021 Chapter 2	
3/31/23	Second Amendment		Quiz 7
4/3/23	Second Amendment		
4/5/23	Federal Legislation	Spitzer 2021 Chapter 5	Quiz 8
4/7/23	Federal Legislation		

4/10/23	Concealed Carry	Donohue et al., 2018	
4/12/23	Concealed Carry		
4/14/23	Assault Weapons	Koper, 2013	Quiz 9
4/17/23	Red Flag Laws		
4/19/23	Universal Background Checks	Wintemute, 2019	
4/21/23	<b>No Class</b>		
4/24/23	Ghost, Toy, and Smart Guns		
4/26/23	Moving Forward	Chapter 12	Quiz 10
4/28/23	Final Review		Post-Survey
5/2/23	<b>Final Exam (Cumulative)</b>	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	