

**Gender Violence:  
Anthropological Perspectives  
Anthropology 3328/Women's and Gender Studies 3328/Human Rights  
Dr. Nia Parson  
Associate Professor  
Department of Anthropology  
MayTerm 2016  
Weekdays, May 12-26, 2016  
10am-12pm & 1pm-3pm  
Location: TBD/Check Access**

**Professor Nia Parson**

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**Office Hours:** Upon request

This course is eligible for credit towards the **Minor in Women's and Gender Studies**.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Gendered violence, in various forms, shapes individual and collective experiences, material realities and psychological states. Power is always central. Culture is often blamed. This course examines gendered violence against women and its personal and inter-personal effects, as well as interventions on intimate, local, and global scales. We will explore how cultural patterns, gendered expectations of femininity and masculinity, economic arrangements, and other facets of social life are implicated in gender-based violence. The course also examines some of the global and local-level responses to gender-based violence, which have shifted the landscape of gender-based violence. These include women's movements, United Nations frameworks, and national laws. Central issues throughout the semester include an examination of the various forms of gender-based violence against women, the power relationships involved, and the effects of various forms of gendered violence on bodies and minds. We will also think about how we can understand the perpetrators of gendered violence. We will examine how global frameworks around gender violence are mobilized in local contexts and by local groups and individuals, the role of the state and non-state actors in confronting gender violence within intimate relationships. The course also addresses how anthropologists represent violence and its destructive effects on individuals and societies. We will discuss some of the crucial ethical considerations around what it means to bear witness to gender violence. We will also explore how "experience-near" ethnography can contribute to our understandings of gendered violence and its effects.

**PROFESSOR BIOGRAPHY**

Professor Parson, a full-time faculty member in the Department of Anthropology, developed and has taught this course multiple times, and students have reviewed the course highly. She has conducted research and published on intimate partner violence in Chile, where she lived for two years, and among Latin American immigrants in Dallas and New Jersey. In addition to other texts, students will read Professor Parson's book, *Traumatic States: Gendered Violence, Suffering and Care in Chile* and will have the opportunity to engage with her in discussions of her firsthand experience with anthropological knowledge production.

## SOME KEY BENEFITS OF TAKING THIS CLASS

- Fulfills Pillar/Proficiencies
- Discuss and debate crucial current issues in a small seminar setting, not often possible in a regular semester course.
- Learn how psychological trauma is cultural.
- Learn first-hand about on-going, Dallas-based, local efforts to solve gender based violence in intimate relationships.
- Be inspired by the many interventions into partner violence against women throughout the world.
- Make a brief film about gender violence on college campuses.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Merry, Sally Engle. 2009. *Gender Violence: A Cultural Perspective*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Parson, Nia. 2013. *Traumatic States*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Critical Reflection Papers (40%)

You will write in-class response papers each day at the beginning of class. Here, you will have the chance to thoughtfully reflect on the material for the day. This will help you prepare to actively discuss the materials with your classmates and Dr. Parson.

### Class Participation (30%)

**Regular contributions to the conversation in class are required** because this is not a lecture course. I am running the class as a seminar, where your discussion of the issues raised in the readings is crucial. **If you have trouble speaking up in class**, please discuss this directly with Dr. Parson, either during office hours or after class. Attendance is crucial and **more than 1 3-hour period of unexcused absence could result in a failing grade for the course.**

### Video Project Presentation (30%)

You will all work on a project throughout the 2 weeks of this course. I will work with you to carve out one area of an overarching class project that I am leading on gender violence and sexual assault on college campuses. The final outcome will be an approximately 5-10 minute video that you make to present to the class, and with one of your peer groups at SMU in mind as the potential audience. You will need to apply what you are learning in the course to your video, and the project is meant to be fun and engaging. You may choose to work alone or in groups of no more than 3 people. If you choose to work in a group, please carefully document each person's role in the project and turn in that documentation at the end of the course. I will provide some class time for you to meet and work on this project. I will also provide a detailed outline of the expectations for the video.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

May 12

### INTRODUCTIONS:

### WHAT CAUSES VIOLENCE? IS IT BIOLOGY? IS IT CULTURE?

## **What causes violence? Exploring the intersections of anthropology and neuroscience**

Explore what gives rise to human violence across cultures in terms of the neuroscientific theories on the underpinnings of violence.

- **Why study violence?** Nova: *Neuroscience and Violence: After Newtown* (excerpt)  
<http://www.pbs.org/video/2320074486/>
- *The Brain*, David Eagleman, Episodes 2, 3, 5
- FILM: *Power and Control*, by Peter Cohn

### **May 13:**

#### **Gender Violence, Culture and Human Rights: Key Issues and Debates**

##### **Is gender central to understanding violence?**

Establish shared understanding of gender/sex and culture as we use these terms in anthropology. Beginning to explore some of the patterns that give rise to violence for men and women differently.

- FILM: *Passionate Politics*
- Merry
  - Ch. 1: Introduction
  - Ch. 4 Gender Violence as a Human Rights Violation
- Recommended Reading (not required): 2006 *UN In-depth study on all forms of violence against women*

### **Monday, May 16:**

- Abu-Lughod, Lila 2002 Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others. *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790. (Find it through SMU library catalog).
- Merry, Ch. 6: Violent "Cultural" Practices in the Family
- *Dishonored*, by Sigrun Norderval and Gard A. Andreassen (IDD 5486)

### **Tuesday, May 17:**

#### **SEXUAL ASSAULT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**

Invited speakers

Reading TBA

### **Wednesday, May 18:**

#### **MASCULINITIES AND VIOLENCE**

- In-class Film: *Tough Guise, 2*
- FILM: *Macho*, by Lucinda Broadbent (IDD 06052)
- Reading TBA

#### **Thursday, May 19:**

#### **MIGRATION AND INTERRELATED FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

- Film: *La Bestia*
  - Merry, Ch. 5 Poverty, Racism, and Migration
  - Adelman, Madelaine 2004 “He Has Me Tied with the Blessed and Damned Papers”: Undocumented-Immigrant Battered Women in Phoenix, Arizona *Human Organization* 63(2): 162-172
  - Bourdieu, Pierre and Wacquant, Loïc. 1992. “Symbolic Violence” From *An Invitation to Reflective Sociology*, pp. 167-8, 170-3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- **Film: *Señorita Extraviada*, IVS 08399**

Recommended: Villalón, R. (2010). *Violence Against Latina Immigrants: Citizenship, Inequality, and Community* New York: NYU Press. (Chapter 2, 4)

#### **Friday, May 20:**

#### **BORDERS, ARMED CONFLICT AND INTERRELATED VIOLENCE**

- Merry, Ch. 7 Women and Armed Conflict
- Film: *Rape in the Congo*

#### **Monday, May 23**

#### **LEGAL INTERVENTIONS**

- FILM: *Sisters in Law* 2005
- Merry, Ch. 3 Punishment, Safety, and Reform: Interventions in Domestic Violence

#### **Tuesday, May 24**

#### **INTERVENTIONS**

- Parson, Ch. 1-3

#### **Wednesday, May 25**

#### **INTERVENTIONS**

- Parson Ch. 4-7

#### **Thursday, May 26**

STUDENTS’ FINAL PRESENTATIONS

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Analyze different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 2)
- Evaluate critically the research outcomes and theoretical applications in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 2)
- Describe how the social construction of gender across cultures is fundamental to many experiences of violence.
- Write a well-crafted explanation of how violence impacts subjectivity.
- Give particular examples from ethnographic materials we read in the course of how national and global legal structures are involved in intimate, gendered violence.
- Recognize and point out issues of gendered violence in current news articles.
- Express informed ideas about how to counter gendered violence in various spheres.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (PILLARS, PROFICIENCIES & EXPERIENCES)**

### **Pillar: Individuals, Institutions and Cultures (Level 2)**

To understand complex social systems, graduates of SMU will explore contemporary efforts to document and analyze the interaction of individuals, cultures, and institutions that shape economic, political, and social experiences. To this end, students take two courses from the Institutions and Cultures Pillar.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to identify the types of interactions and influences that arise between or among individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 1)
2. Students will be able to summarize basic empirical phenomena in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 1)
3. Students will be able to analyze different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 2)
4. Students will be able to evaluate critically the research outcomes and theoretical applications in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences. (Level 2)

### **Information Literacy**

Students must develop and demonstrate information literacy. In many first year writing courses, as well as in Nature of Scholarship and numerous upper-level classes, students will encounter the challenges of effectively retrieving and applying pertinent information from exponentially increasing sources, not all of which are reliable. In addition to learning how to evaluate the accuracy and relevance of sources, students must understand how this material relates to the wider universe of potential information on a topic, and they must also learn to use this information ethically. To ensure the development of information literacy, students will take two courses designated as “I.”

#### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to select and use the appropriate research methods and search tools for needed information.
2. Students will be able to evaluate sources for quality of information for a given information need.

### **Oral Communication**

Students will encounter courses or participate in activities that develop oral communication skills, such as effectively arguing a position, presenting spontaneous ideas, presenting reports and projects, and performing presentations and speeches fluently.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to select and use appropriate forms of evidence in a public presentation.

2. Students will be able to design verbal messages to suit particular audiences and purposes.
3. Students will be able to use visual cues (such as presentation software, staging, props, costumes, makeup, and gesture) to enhance a public presentation.

### **Human Diversity**

The Human Diversity proficiency requirement challenges students to explore in a reflective way basic issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, or societies in the developing world. This requirement may be satisfied by taking courses or participating in a global experience, community engagement experience, or personal or group on- or off-campus project which brings together aspects of human diversity in a creative and meaningful way.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. With respect to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, or societies in the developing world, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Absences/Missed Assignments:** Absences are excused for a debilitating illness or death in the family, and religious holidays. Notify Professor Parson in case of extenuating circumstances that force you to be absent. *Written documentation* (i.e., by healthcare provider or funeral director) must be presented to the Professor upon your return in order to make up any missed work or in-class quiz. If you fail to notify me and fail to provide the necessary documentation, you will not be allowed to make up the work.

Students should review notes, handouts, and assignment instructions with the Professor and/or a classmate for days missed, as you will be held responsible for this material.

**Disabilities, Accommodation, and Religious Observance:** Southern Methodist University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you need academic accommodations for a disability, you must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4563) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodation. Then you should schedule an appointment with the Professor to make appropriate arrangements. If you feel you have a disability but elect not to verify the disability under SMU policies, I will not be able to provide you with special accommodations (including extensions or extra exam time). If you have a conflict with the course schedule for religious reasons, please discuss it with the Professor within the first 2 weeks of classes.

### **Ethical Actions**

*You must follow the SMU Honor Code at all times.* You must sign each of your assignments with a statement that says you have upheld the Honor Code. See below for Honor Code.

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism, cheating, inappropriate consultation of peers or their work, any other form of academic misconduct, and failing to report evidence of others' misconduct are all Honor Code violations. Penalties are outlined in the Honor Code and may include anything from a zero for the assignment to dismissal from school. Students are expected to prepare work independently, cite any work (quotes or ideas) that is not their own, submit original work (i.e., not already submitted for any other class), and to neither give nor receive assistance in examinations. If you are uncertain about whether an activity or piece of work compromises your academic integrity, you should speak to the Professor before submitting it.

## *THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HONOR COUNCIL OF SMU*

**PREAMBLE AND DEFINITIONS** We, the students of Southern Methodist University, with the approval of the Provost and the Dean of Student Life, establish the Honor Council to uphold the standards of academic integrity set forth in the Honor Code. Acts punishable under the code include, but are not limited to the following:

**ACADEMIC SABOTAGE** Intentionally taking any action which negatively affects the academic work of another student.

**CHEATING** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

**FABRICATION** Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

**FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY** Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of the Honor Code.

**PLAGIARISM** Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

The general principles for all honest writing can be summarized briefly. Acknowledge indebtedness:

1. Whenever you quote another person's actual words.
2. Whenever you use another person's idea, opinion, or theory, even if it is completely paraphrased in your own words.
3. Whenever you borrow facts, statistics, or other illustrative material - unless the information is common knowledge. Plagiarism also encompasses the notions of citing quotations and materials from secondary sources that were not directly consulted in the preparation of the student's work, and copying the organizational and argumentation structure of a work without acknowledging its author.