

CLASS SESSIONS

Asynchronous, pre-recorded lecture: **one hour per week**, viewed before the synchronous period
Synchronous period engaging together: **Wednesdays, 3:30pm – 5:30pm (Eastern Time)**
Classroom for in-person sessions: HSC 301

INSTRUCTOR

Primary Instructor:

Ted Alcorn, MHS, MA

Additional Instructor:

Charles Branas, PhD

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Ariana Gobaud, MS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

More U.S. residents have been killed with guns since 1968 than died in all the wars since the country's founding. Addressing this crisis means solving tenacious public health problems in the realms of science and of politics. In this course we will review the epidemiology of gun violence and the empirical foundations of efforts to address it through policy, study design, programmatic interventions, and environmental/physical design. We will consider obstacles to the rigorous study of gun violence as well as the innovative approaches researchers have adopted to overcome them, whether in the fields of epidemiology, medicine, criminology, or economics. And we will place all of this in the political and legal context that shapes our collective actions. Through lectures and discussion, students will become familiar with the main factors connected with firearm injury, the study of gun violence, the policy actors that have influenced the U.S. response to date, and the underlying beliefs and behaviors that define the U.S. relationship with guns. By reviewing both new and canonical research throughout the course, students will learn how diverse study designs are well-suited to shed light on different aspects of this subject.

ADAPTATION FOR HYBRID LEARNING

In light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, this course will combine remote and in-person approaches. Each week will be divided into an hour-long pre-recorded lecture, which students can view asynchronously on their own time, and up to two hours of synchronous discussion of the lecture and readings.

Depending on the guest, some synchronous discussions will be in-person and others will be conducted online via Zoom. This is noted in the syllabus although subject to change.

PREREQUISITES

Completion of the MPH Core or permission of instructor

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Describe the epidemiology of gun violence in the U.S. including etiologies of domestic violence, community gun violence, suicide, mass shootings, and so-called “justifiable” homicides.
- Analyze the connections between gun culture (beliefs, behaviors), the epidemiology of firearm injuries, and interest groups’ goals and strategies.
- Describe leading approaches for reducing gun violence, the role different stakeholders play in their successful implementation, and the strength of evidence supporting them.
- Assess campaigns to enact gun violence prevention laws or implement non-legislative gun violence prevention programs.
- Critique studies of gun violence and of measures to prevent it, cognizant of obstacles that circumscribe the data available and approaches that are feasible.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING POLICY

Student grades will be based on:

- Reading responses and engagement 30%
- Group data exercise..... 20%
- Final paper..... 50%

Reading responses and engagement: By noon *the day before our synchronous period together*, students must prepare a brief, informal response to that week’s readings and post it to Canvas. These responses can be as little as 150 words and *no more than 400 words* and can adopt any format: drawing connections between readings, critiquing them, or articulating questions. They will not be graded on content or prose, but may be referenced during class. Students may skip doing one reading response of their choosing without penalty. In the synchronous period together, students are expected to listen actively and offer their viewpoints. Disengagement will result in a reduction from the overall grade, whereas students who prepare reading responses and make active contributions in class showing mastery of concepts and methods will receive full points for engagement. A detailed rubric detailing the expectations around course citizenship and engagement will be distributed during the first discussion-period. If you have concerns, please contact an instructor early in the semester.

Group data exercise: Working in groups of 3-4, students will obtain and analyze epidemiological data related to gun violence morbidity and mortality from CDC’s Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) or Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER), which are portals to national data on gun-related fatalities. Students will receive a problem-set by the 4th week of class, and will then identify, acquire, and analyze data appropriate for answering the questions, producing analyses and visualizations of their findings. The finished product should be a brief written document with an explanation of the analyses pursued, documentation of the analyses themselves, and results yielded (with figures visualized). The final product is due by the 7th week of class. Assignments will be graded on thoughtfulness of analysis, accurate interpretation of data, organization and clarity of writing and visualizations, and attention to detail (including accurate spelling and grammar).

Final paper: Students will write a 2,000- to 3,000-word paper on an evidence-based means of preventing gun violence that we have not covered in-depth in class, describing how the intervention is meant to work, the scope of where and when it has been implemented, the evidence of its

effectiveness (referencing at least three peer-reviewed evaluations), and their own critical analysis of the *politics* of the intervention (who does it appeal to? who objects to it?) Topics could include transformative mentoring and conditional cash transfers such as those incorporated in Advanced Peace, place-based interventions such as improving outdoor lighting, gun buybacks, California's proactive removal of firearms from prohibited people, new prohibitions on gun ownership such as for alcohol-related offenses, training police officers in de-escalation, introducing new forms of emergency response, improving clearance rates for homicides, or educational programs that promote safe storage of firearms. The paper should cite sources (citations will not count towards word-count). Students must submit a <100-word statement of topic by the 9th week of class and the final paper by the 13th week of class. Assignments will be graded on clarity of writing, accurate and thoughtful employment of supporting evidence, relevance to content covered during the course, and quality of argument. Students will briefly present their findings to their classmates on the final day of class.

Grading

- A+ Reserved for highly exceptional achievement.
- A Excellent. Outstanding achievement.
- A- Excellent work, close to outstanding.
- B+ Very good. Solid achievement expected of most graduate students.
- B Good. Acceptable achievement.
- B- Acceptable achievement, but below what is generally expected of graduate students.
- C+ Fair achievement, above minimally acceptable level.
- C Fair achievement, but only minimally acceptable.
- C- Very low performance.
- F Failure.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to complete all readings, to view asynchronous lecture materials, and to participate in the synchronous period together.

A majority of a student's grade will be determined by their writing assignments, and those will be held to a high standard. They will be graded on clarity of writing, accurate and thoughtful employment of supporting evidence, relevance to content covered during the course, and degree to which they satisfy their specific form.

Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day late.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is organized in three sections. First it introduces the science of gun violence, to establish the scope of the topic from a public health perspective, challenges that epidemiologists will face in assessing it empirically, and the intersection of behaviors that heighten risk of injury but also codify cultural identities. Second, because "gun violence" is not one but a group of related problems all involving guns, the course reviews the epidemiology of major causes of firearm related injury and distinct empirical methods that have been applied to the study of each. Third, the course reviews strategies for addressing gun violence including the evidence supporting them and major outstanding questions for epidemiologists to tackle.

CUIMC/MSPH RESOURCES

There are potential topics in this class that may be troubling for some students. If you find yourself struggling with a topic, please feel free to reach out to the Instructors, the TA, and/or the following list of resources:

MSPH Office of Student Affairs

Marlyn Delva, Dean of Students
Eric Ratner, Director of Student Affairs
(emr2211)
Sarah Tooley, Associate Director of Student Support (st3146)
Office Location: ARB 1014
[msph-osa@columbia.edu](mailto:m sph-osa@columbia.edu)
212-342-3128

Phone Number: (212) 305-3400
Hours: Monday - Thursday: 9:30 am - 5:30 pm
Address: 50 Haven Avenue, Bard Hall, Suite 102
Please visit the [website](#).

Student Health Services

Phone Number: (212) 305-3400
Hours: Monday & Tuesday: 8am-7pm, Wednesday & Thursday: 8am-4pm, and Friday: 9am-4pm
Address: 60 Haven Avenue, Tower 1, Lobby Level, Suite B234
Please visit the [Medical Services webpage](#).

Mental Health Services

Phone Number: (212) 305-3400
Hours: by appointment
Address: 60 Haven Avenue, Tower 1, First Floor, Suite 1D

Emergencies

If you or a friend have an immediate concern about suicide, call 212-305-3400 and request to speak with the on call clinician. You may also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or walk yourself or friend to the nearest Emergency Room.
Please visit the [website](#).

Center for Student Wellness

Phone Number: (212) 305-3400
Hours: Monday - Wednesday: 10am to 7pm, Thursday: 10am to 6pm, and Friday: 10am to 5pm
Address: 50 Haven Avenue, Bard Hall, Suite 107 & Rm 101
Please visit the [website](#).

Addiction Information & Management Strategies

Sexual Violence Response

Phone Number: (212) 854-4357 for 24/7/365 support
CUMC Location: 60 Haven Avenue, 206 Bard Hall, New York, NY 10032
Please visit the [website](#).

NY, NY 10027
Phone Number: (212) 854-1493
Fax Number: (212) 854-5899
Email: chaplain@columbia.edu
Please visit the [website](#).

Office of the University Chaplain

Jewelnel Davis
University Chaplain and Associate Provost
Address: W710 Lerner Hall
Mailing Address: 2980 Broadway, MC 2008,

Ombuds Office

Medical Center
Address: 154 Haven Avenue, Room 412
Phone Number: (212) 304-7026
Please visit the [website](#)

MAILMAN SCHOOL POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Students and faculty have a shared commitment to the School's mission, values and oath. mailman.columbia.edu/about/mission-history

Academic Integrity

Students are required to adhere to the Mailman School Honor Code in the student handbook. mailman-handbook.com/2015/node/165

Disability Access

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students who have, or think they may have a disability are invited to contact ODS for a confidential discussion at 212.854.2388 (V) 212.854.2378 (TTY), or by email at disability@columbia.edu. If you have already registered with ODS, please speak to your instructor to ensure that s/he has been notified of your recommended accommodations by Lillian Morales (lm31@columbia.edu), the School's liaison to the Office of Disability Services.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please see the lecture section of Canvas to download the readings and lecture slides.

Session 1 – The science of gun violence: Asking better questions [ON CAMPUS]

9/15/21 Reducing gun violence in the U.S. depends on developing new evidence and provoking new actions, and public health practitioners must learn how to ask better questions to advance both.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the epidemiology of firearm injury in the U.S.

Readings:

Kahan, Dan M. And Donald Braman. (2003). "More Statistics, Less Persuasion: A Cultural Theory of Gun-Risk Perceptions." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* v151 n4: 1291-1327.

Cook PJ and J Ludwig. (2003) “Fact-Free Gun Policy?” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* v151 n4: 1329-1340.

View this 9-minute video about basic study designs: <https://pct.libguides.com/nhs/ebm/levels-of-evidence>

Optional readings:

Branas CC, Reeping PM, Rudolph KE. (2020) Beyond Gun Laws – Innovative Interventions to Reduce Gun Violence in the United States. *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Everytown for Gun Safety. “Firearm Technology and Vocabulary.” Available at: <https://every.tw/2H8HSy8>

Follman, Mark et al. (Cost analyses by Ted Miller, PIRE). “The True Cost of Gun Violence in America.” *Mother Jones*. April 15, 2015. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2HjCMzO>

Grinshteyn, Erin and David Hemenway. “Violent Death Rates: The US Compared with Other High-income OECD Countries, 2010.” *American Journal of Medicine* 129, no. 3 (March 2016): 266-273.

U.S. Department of Justice. “The Nation’s Two Measures of Homicide.” July 2014. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2IU0Miq>.

Session 2 – The science of gun violence: measuring “gun culture” with surveys and ethnographic research [REMOTE]

9/22/21 Gun violence and gun politics in the U.S. are preceded by a prevalent and durable culture of gun ownership and use.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe patterns in firearm ownership, behaviors, and beliefs across demography and geography and over time, highlighting measurement error and gaps in research
2. Examine synergistic connections between gun behaviors possession, cultural identity, and political beliefs
3. Consider the ways in which surveys and qualitative research inform firearm-related research.

Guest Participant: Jennifer Carlson, associate professor of sociology and Government & Public Policy at the University of Arizona

Assignments: Interview a gun-owner

Readings:

Jennifer Carlson, *Citizen Protectors* (2015) [Chapter 3, p. 58-84].

Boine, C., Siegel, M., Ross, C. et al. What is gun culture? Cultural variations and trends across the United States. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 7, 21 (2020).

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0520-6>

Shapira, Harel, and Samantha J. Simon. “Learning to Need a Gun.” *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2018, pp. 1–20., doi:10.1007/s11133-018-9374-2.

Optional readings:

Azrael, Deborah, Lisa Hepburn, David Hemenway, and Matthew Miller. 2017. “The Stock and Flow of U.S. Firearms: Results from the 2015 National Firearms Survey.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 3(5): 38–57.

Pew Research Center. June 2017. “America’s Complex Relationship with Guns.” Available at: <https://pewrsr.ch/2xfG4h7>

Shapira, Harel, et al. “Trends and Patterns of Concealed Handgun License Applications: A Multistate Analysis.” *Social Currents*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2017, pp. 3–14., doi:10.1177/2329496517725334.

Smith, Tom, Faith Laken and Son Jaesok. “Gun ownership in the United States: Measurement Issues and Trends.” January 2014. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2H4c3qn>

Branas, Charles C., Michael L. Nance, Michael R. Elliott, Therese S. Richmond, and C. William Schwab. "Urban–rural shifts in intentional firearm death: Different causes, same results." *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 10 (2004): 1750-1755.

Session 3 – Violence in focus: mass shootings [REMOTE]

9/29/21 Mass shootings account for just 1% to 2% of total gun homicides but play a disproportionate role in the public’s understanding of gun violence and the policy responses to it.

Learning Objectives:

1. Compare different definitions of ‘mass shootings’, the societal responses to them (panic-buying, contagion), and consider the meaning these events have for policymakers.
2. Acquire and analyze CDC data on violent deaths.

Guest Participant: [Jeffrey Swanson, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, Duke University](#)

Readings:

Swanson JW. Introduction: Violence and Mental Illness. *Harv Rev Psychiatry*. 2021 Jan-Feb 01;29(1):1-5. doi: 10.1097/HRP.0000000000000281. PMID: 33417371.

Metzl, J. M., & MacLeish, K. T. (2015). Mental illness, mass shootings, and the politics of American firearms. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(2), 240–249. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302242>

Optional readings:

Reeping P.M., Cerdá M, Kalesan B, Wiebe D.J., Galea S, Branas C.C. State Gun Laws, Gun Ownership, and Mass Shootings in the US: Cross-sectional Time Series. *BMJ - British Medical Journal* 364: 1542-8, 2019.

Lankford, A. and Tomek, S. (2018), Mass Killings in the United States from 2006 to 2013: Social Contagion or Random Clusters? *Suicide Life Threat Behav*, 48: 459-467. doi:[10.1111/sltb.12366](https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12366)

Film: Kim Snyder, *Newtown*, 2016. [Available for rental on Amazon/iTunes/Netflix; a screener can be provided on request.]

McGinty, Emma E., Daniel W. Webster, and Colleen L. Barry. 2013. “Effects of News Media Messages about Mass Shootings on Attitudes toward Persons with Serious Mental Illness and Public Support for Gun Control Policies.” *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 170 (5): 494–501.

Klarevas, Louis. *Rampage Nation: Securing America from Mass Shootings*. 2016 Prometheus Books.

Beland, Louis-Philippe, Dongwoo Kim. 2016. “The Effect of High School Shootings on Schools and Student Performance.” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.

Wallace, Lacey N. “Responding to violence with guns: mass shootings and gun acquisition.” *The Social Science Journal* (2015) (52): 156-67.

Koper, Christopher S. “Updated Assessment of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban: Impacts on Gun Markets and Gun Violence, 1994-2003.” July 2004. Report to the National Institutes of Justice. Available at: <https://bit.ly/1IKVCjZ>

Session 4 – Violence in focus: Gun violence in cities – risk and guns [ON CAMPUS]

10/6/21 Cities bear a disproportionate burden of gun violence — together the 25 largest cities in the U.S. account for one in five of the nation’s gun homicides — and reflect deep racial disparities.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the etiology of gun violence in cities, and consider how durable patterns of violence are shaped by institutional racism.
2. Assess what is currently understood about the function of urban gun markets, and the contribution of network analysis to gun violence-related research.

Guest Participant: [Desmond Patton, associate professor of social work at Columbia University and founding director of SAFELab](#)

Group Problem Set Distributed.

Readings:

Patton DU, Lane J, Leonard P, Macbeth J, Smith Lee JR. Gang violence on the digital street: Case study of a South Side Chicago gang member’s Twitter communication. *New Media & Society*. 2017;19(7):1000-1018. doi:10.1177/1461444815625949

Cook, Phillip, Susan T. Parker, Harold Pollack. “Sources of guns to dangerous people: what we learn by asking them,” *Preventative Medicine*. 79: 28-36.

Sampson, Robert J., and William Julius Wilson. 1995. “Toward a Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality.” In *Crime and Inequality*, edited by J. Hagan and R. D. Peterson. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Optional readings:

Hureau, David and Anthony Braga. "The Trade in Tools: The Market for Illicit Guns in High-Risk Networks" *Criminology* (August 2018): 510-45.

Braga, Anthony A., Andrew V. Papachristos, and David M. Hureau. 2009. “The Concentration and Stability of Gun Violence at Micro Places in Boston, 1980–2008.” *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 26 (1). Springer US: 33–53.

Cook, Philip, Jens Ludwig, Sudhir Venkatesh, and Anthony Braga. 2005. “Underground Gun Markets.” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, November. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. doi:10.3386/w11737.

Cassandra K. Crifasi, Shani A. L. Buggs, Marisa D. Booty, Daniel W. Webster, and Susan G. Sherman. “Baltimore's Underground Gun Market: Availability of and Access to Guns.?” *Violence and Gender*. Jun 2020.78-83.
<http://doi.org/10.1089/vio.2019.0054>

Roberto, E., Braga, A.A. & Papachristos, A.V. “Closer to Guns: The Role of Street Gangs in Facilitating Access to Illegal Firearms ” *J Urban Health* (2018) 95: 372. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-018-0259-1>

Everytown for Gun Safety, *Strategies for Reducing Gun Violence in American Cities* (2016).

Session 5 – Violence in focus: domestic violence with guns [ON CAMPUS]

10/13/21 More than half of women murdered in the United States are killed by intimate partners or family members — and more than half of intimate partner homicides of women are committed with guns.

Learning Objectives:

1. Examine the epidemiology of firearm violence by intimate partners or family members and the interplay with mass shootings and murder-suicides
2. Discuss how case-control study designs inform the study of risk factors for relatively rare outcomes like domestic violence gun homicide
3. Introduce state and federal legal framework for restricting access to guns by high-risk groups.

Guest Participant: Jeanine Launay, Deputy Chief of Domestic Violence Unit, Manhattan District Attorney’s Office

Readings:

Campbell, Jacquelyn C., Daniel Webster, Jane Koziol-McLain, Carolyn Block, Doris Campbell, Mary Ann Curry, Faye Gary, et al. 2003. “Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study.” *American Journal of Public Health* 93 (7): 1089–97.

Wintemute GJ, Frattaroli S, Wright MA, Claire BE, Vittes KA, Webster DW. Firearms and the incidence of arrest among respondents to domestic violence restraining orders. *Injury Epidemiology*. 2015;2(1):14. doi:10.1186/s40621-015-0047-2.

Everytown for Gun Safety. 2015. “Domestic Abuse Protective Orders and Firearm Access in Rhode Island.” Available at: <https://every.tw/2y8cKz1>

Optional readings:

Sorenson, Susan and Rebecca Schut. 2016. "Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence - A Systematic Review of the Literature." *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 1-12.

Wintemute GJ, Frattaroli S, Claire BE, Vittes KA, Webster DW. Identifying Armed Respondents to Domestic Violence Restraining Orders and Recovering Their Firearms: Process Evaluation of an Initiative in California. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2014;104(2):e113-e118. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2013.301484.

Vittes, Katherine A., and Susan B. Sorenson. 2008. "Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Abusers: Handgun Purchases and Restraining Orders." *American Journal of Public Health* 98 (5): 828–31.

SMU Dedman School of Law. Spring 2017. "Taking Aim at Family Violence: A Report on the Dallas County Gun Surrender Program."

Session 6 – Violence in focus: gun suicide and unintentional injury [REMOTE]

10/20/21 The majority of gun deaths in the US are not homicides but suicides and many of them are committed by legal possessors, necessitating unique measures to reduce them — as well as rarer but equally tragic unintentional gun injuries.

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the epidemiology of gun suicide deaths and the role lethal means play in suicide fatality.
2. Weigh the evidence around legislative and non-legislative measures for addressing them (including point of sale interventions, safe storage requirements, gun violence restraining orders, and lethal means counseling).
3. Describe the epidemiology of unintentional firearm injuries.

Guest Participant: [Catherine Barber, senior researcher, Harvard's Injury Control Research Center](#)

Readings:

Barber C, Berrigan JW, Sobelson Henn M, Myers K, Staley M, Azrael D, Miller M, Hemenway D. Linking Public Safety And Public Health Data For Firearm Suicide Prevention In Utah. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2019 Oct;38(10):1695-1701. doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00618. PMID: 31589528.

Miller M, Salhi C, Barber C, Azrael D, Beatriz E, Berrigan J, Brandspigel S, Betz ME, Runyan C. Changes in Firearm and Medication Storage Practices in Homes of Youths at Risk for Suicide: Results of the SAFETY Study, a Clustered, Emergency Department-Based, Multisite, Stepped-Wedge Trial. *Ann Emerg Med*. 2020 Aug;76(2):194-205. doi: 10.1016/j.annemergmed.2020.02.007. Epub 2020 Apr 16. PMID: 32307124.

Studdert D, et al. "Handgun ownership and suicide in California." *N Engl J Med* 2020; 382:2220-2229 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMsa1916744

Optional readings:

Barber, Catherine W., and Matthew J. Miller. 2014. "Reducing a Suicidal Person's Access to Lethal Means of Suicide." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 47 (3). Elsevier: S264–72.

Kellerman AL, Rivara FP, Somes G, et al. Suicide in the Home in Relation to Gun Ownership. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 1992; 327(7):467-472

Jeffrey W. Swanson, Michael A. Norko, Hsiu-Ju Lin, Kelly Alanis-Hirsch, Linda K. Frisman, Madelon V. Baranoski, Michele M. Easter, Allison G. Robertson, Marvin S. Swartz & Richard J. Bonnie, Implementation and Effectiveness of Connecticut's Risk-Based Gun Removal Law: Does it Prevent Suicides?, 80 *Law and Contemporary Problems* 179-208 (2017). Available at: <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol80/iss2/8>

Swanson, J.W. The color of risk protection orders: gun violence, gun laws, and racial justice. *Inj. Epidemiol.* 7, 46 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-020-00272-z>

Johnson, Renee M., Catherine Barber, Deborah Azrael, David E. Clark, and David Hemenway. 2010. "Who Are the Owners of Firearms Used in Adolescent Suicides?" *Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior* 40 (6): 609–11.

Vriniotis, Mary, Catherine Barber, Elaine Frank, Ralph Demicco, and New Hampshire Firearm Safety Coalition. 2015. "A Suicide Prevention Campaign for Firearm Dealers in New Hampshire." *Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior* 45 (2): 157–63.

Runyan, Carol W., Amy Becker, Sara Brandspigel, Catherine Barber, Aimee Trudeau, and Douglas Novins. 2016. "Lethal Means Counseling for Parents of Youth Seeking Emergency Care for Suicidality." *The Western Journal of Emergency Medicine* 17 (1): 8–14.

Wintemute GJ, MD; Carrie A. Parham, MSc, et al. "Mortality Among Recent Purchasers of Handguns" *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 341, No. 21, November 18, 1999, pp. 1583-1589.

Branas C.C., Richmond T.S., Ten Have T.R., Wiebe D.J. Acute alcohol consumption, alcohol outlets, and gun suicide. *Substance Use & Misuse* 46(13): 1592-1603, 2011.

Session 7 – Violence in focus: Public carry, justifiable homicides, and Stand Your Ground laws [REMOTE]

10/27/20 The predominant reason Americans give for owning firearms has shifted from hunting and sportsmanship to self-defense. Beliefs about defensive gun use, and laws that tailor the justice system to it, have major implications for gun violence and the politics of preventing it.

Learning Objectives:

1. Review epidemiological research on defensive gun use and its limitations
2. Appreciate the rhetorical role of this research in gun politics, the expansion of ‘Stand Your Ground’ laws, and their impact on justifiable homicides by civilians

Guest Participant: [Harel Shapira, associate professor of sociology, UT Austin](#)

Assignment: Group data exercise due

Readings:

Humphreys, David K., Antonio Gasparrini, and Douglas J. Wiebe. n.d. “Evaluating the Impact of Florida’s ‘Stand Your Ground’ Self-Defense Law on Homicide and Suicide by Firearm.” *JAMA Internal Medicine* 2016, 6811.

Ackerman, Nicole, Goodman, Melody S., Gilbert, Keon, Arroyo-Johnson, Cassandra, and Pagano, Marcello (2015). Race, Law, and Health: Examination of ‘Stand Your Ground’ and Defendant Convictions in Florida. *Social Science & Medicine*, 142: 194–201.

Branas, C.C., Richmond, T.S., Culhane, D.P., Ten Have, T.R. and Wiebe, D.J., 2009. Investigating the link between gun possession and gun assault. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(11), pp.2034-2040.

Optional readings:

Donohue, John, et al. “Right-to-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data, the LASSO, and a State-Level Synthetic Controls Analysis.” 2017, doi:10.3386/w23510.

Hemenway, D., D. Azrael, and M. Miller. 2000. “Gun Use in the United States: Results from Two National Surveys.” *Injury Prevention: Journal of the International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention* 6 (4): 263–67.

Film: Abigail Disney, Kathleen Hughes, *The Armor of Light*, 2015. [Available for rental on Amazon/iTunes/Netflix; a screener can be provided on request.]

Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *Shoot First: 'Stand Your Ground' laws and their effect on violent crime and the criminal justice system* (2013).

Hemenway, D., 1997. The myth of millions of annual self-defense gun uses: a case study of survey overestimates of rare events. *Chance*, 10(3), pp.6-10.

Session 8 – Evidence into action: how public health research shapes and is shaped by gun politics [ON CAMPUS]

11/3/21 Generating new knowledge is never apolitical, so impactful public health scientists must understand how their work is likely to be employed.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify major “gun rights” and gun violence prevention groups and how they shape understanding of the issue by the public and policymakers.
2. Examine how interest groups have influenced how gun violence research is conducted and history and jurisprudence are interpreted.

Guest Participant: [Matt Lacombe](#), assistant professor of political science, Barnard College

Readings:

Goss K. *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America* (2006). [Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-72]

Lacombe, Matthew. “The Political Weaponization of Gun Owners: The National Rifle Association’s Cultivation, Dissemination, and Use of a Group Social Identity.” *The Journal of Politics* 2019.

Alcorn T. Trends in Research Publications About Gun Violence in the United States, 1960 to 2014. *JAMA Intern Medicine* 2017;177(1):124–126.

Optional readings:

Goss, K. 2019. “Whatever Happened to the ‘Missing Movement’? Gun Control Politics Over Two Decades of Change?” In *Gun Studies*, edited by J Carlson, K Goss, H Shapira, 136-50. New York, NY: Routledge.

Branas C, Wiebe D, Schwab C, Richmond T. Getting past the “F” word in federally funded public health research. *Injury Prevention*. 2005;11(3):191.

Patterson, Kelly D. and Matthew M. Singer. 2006. "Targeting Success: The Enduring Power of the NRA." In *Interest Group Politics*, edited by Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, 37-64. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Metcalf, Dick. "Target: Me." *Politico*. Jan. 14, 2014. Available at: <https://politi.co/2Kd9f9q>

Siegel, Reva B., "Dead or Alive: Originalism as Popular Constitutionalism in Heller" (2008). Faculty Scholarship Series. 1133. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2LSy6Tx>

Han, Hahrie. "Want Gun Control? Learn from the N.R.A." *New York Times*, Oct. 4 2017, available at: <https://nyti.ms/2y1uOJB>

Richard Harris, "If You Love Your Guns," *The New Yorker*, April 20, 1968.

Michael Waldman, *The Second Amendment, A Biography* (2014).

Everytown for Gun Safety, *Access Denied*, 2013. Available at: everytownresearch.org/reports/access-denied

Session 9 – Evidence into action: laws to keep guns out of “dangerous” hands

11/10/21 Legislative change is prominent among efforts to address gun violence. This session will consider its possibilities and limitations.

Guest Participant: [Adam Skaggs, Chief Counsel and Policy Director, Giffords](#)

Learning Objectives:

1. Summarize the present risk-factor-based paradigm of U.S. gun laws.
2. Assess the existing criminal background check system and its shortcomings (abusive boyfriends, unlicensed sales).
3. Explain how time-series study designs and cohort studies have been employed to evaluate significant legislative interventions.

Readings:

Ludwig J, Cook PJ. Homicide and Suicide Rates Associated with Implementation of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. *JAMA*. 2000;284(5):585–591. doi:10.1001/jama.284.5.585

Rose G (Department of Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT, UK). Sick individuals and sick populations. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 1985;14: 32–38.

Readings by group for in-class analysis and presentation:

- **Group 1:** Webster, Crifasi Vernick. n.d. “Effects of the Repeal of Missouri’s Handgun Purchaser Licensing Law on Homicides.” (See [response by CPRC](#))
- **Group 2:** Crifasi et al "Effects of changes in permit-to-purchase handgun laws in Connecticut and Missouri on suicide rates"
- **Group 3:** Rudolph, Kara E et al. “Association Between Connecticut's Permit-to-Purchase Handgun Law and Homicides” *American journal of public health* vol. 105,8 (2015): e49-54. (See [response by CPRC](#))
- **Group 4:** Collins, T., Greenberg, R., Siegel, M. et al. “State Firearm Laws and Interstate Transfer of Guns in the USA, 2006–2016.” *J Urban Health* (2018) 95: 322. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-018-0251-9>
- **Group 5:** Crifasi, C.K., Merrill-Francis, M., McCourt, A. et al. Association between Firearm Laws and Homicide in Urban Counties. *J Urban Health* 95, 383–390 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-018-0273-3>
- **Group 6:** Castillo-Carniglia, Kagawa, Webster et al. “Comprehensive background check policy and firearm background checks in three US states.” *BMJ*, 2017. (See [response by Alcorn](#))
- **Group 7:** Kagawa, Castillo-Carniglia, Vernick et al. “Repeal of Comprehensive Background Check Policies and Firearm Homicide and Suicide.” *Epidemiology* (2018).

Assignments: Submit topic for final paper

Optional readings:

Morrall AR et al. (2017) *The Science of Gun Policy A Critical Synthesis of Research Evidence on the Effects of Gun Policies in the United States*. The Rand Corporation. Available at:

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2088.html.

Cook, Philip J., and Harold A. Pollack. 2017. “Reducing Access to Guns by Violent Offenders.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 3(5): 1–36.

Webster, Daniel W., and Garen J. Wintemute. 2015. "Effects of Policies Designed to Keep Firearms from High-Risk Individuals." *Annual Review of Public Health* 36 (March): 21–37.

Braga, Anthony A. and David M. Hureau. "Strong gun laws are not enough: The need for improved enforcement of secondhand gun transfer laws in Massachusetts." *Preventative Medicine* 79: 37-42,

Session 10 – Police and policed: law enforcement responses to gun violence

11/17/21 In the U.S., the preeminent (and best-funded) response to gun violence is policing, and law enforcement often view addressing gun violence as their top priority. In this session we will examine the evidence of the positive impact police can have on violence, and the harm their reaction to it can cause.

Guest Participant: [Former New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton](#)

Learning Objectives:

1. Examine the role that law enforcement play in solving gun crimes, preventing violence through proactive techniques, and gun-focused investigations and interventions.
2. Review the harms that the criminal justice system can cause, the epidemiology of law-enforcement involved shootings, and the relationship between police-community trust and violence prevention.

Readings:

George Kelling and James Q. Wilson. "Broken Windows," *The Atlantic*. March 1982. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465>

George Kelling and William Bratton. "Why We Need Broken Windows Policing." *City Journal*. Winter 2015. Available at: <https://www.city-journal.org/html/why-we-need-broken-windows-policing-13696.html>

David Kennedy. "State Violence, Legitimacy, and the Path to True Public Safety." *The Niskanen Center*. Available at: <https://www.niskanencenter.org/state-violence-legitimacy-and-the-path-to-true-public-safety/>

Goulka, J., del Pozo, B., & Beletsky, L. (2021). From public safety to public health: Re-envisioning the goals and methods of policing: This article is related directly to the 6th International Law Enforcement & Public Health (LEPH) Virtual Conference in March 2021. *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 6(1), 22-27.

Optional readings:

Jill Leovy, *Ghettoside: A True Story of a Murder in America*, 2015. [Part 1, p. 3-96].

Brunson, RK, Wade, BA. “Oh hell no, we don't talk to police”: Insights on the lack of cooperation in police investigations of urban gun violence. *Criminol Public Policy*. 2019; 18: 623– 648. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12448>

Kyle Peyton, Michael Sierra-Arévalo, David G. Rand. “A field experiment on community policing and police legitimacy.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Oct 2019, 116 (40) 19894-19898; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1910157116

Alcorn T. “Who Should the Police Answer To?” July 2019. *The Atlantic*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2z2VM2B>

Alcorn, T. “The bumpy road to police abolition.” June 22, 2020. *The Appeal*. <https://theappeal.org/the-bumpy-road-to-police-abolition/>

Wertz, J., Azrael, D., Berrigan, J. et al. A Typology of Civilians Shot and Killed by US Police: a Latent Class Analysis of Firearm Legal Intervention Homicide in the 2014–2015 National Violent Death Reporting System. *J Urban Health* 97, 317–328 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-020-00430-0>

Del Pozo, Brandon. “I’m a Police Chief. We Need to Change How Officers View Their Guns.” Nov. 13, 2019, *The New York Times*. <https://nyti.ms/35P01g5>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. *Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/24928>.

Sherman L, Shaw J, Rogan D. The Kansas City Gun Experiment. National Institute of Justice Research in Brief. 1995. http://www.popcenter.org/problems/drive_by_shooting/PDFs/Sherman_etal_KansasCity_1995.pdf

Cook, Philip J. Anthony Braga. 2001. “Comprehensive Firearms Tracing: Strategic and Investigative Uses of New Data on Firearms Markets.” *Arizona Law Review*.

Session 11 – Evidence into action: Behavioral interventions to reduce gun violence in cities [ON CAMPUS]

12/1/21 Among the most evidence-based interventions for reducing gun violence are those seeking to directly reshape the norms of those at highest-risk of victimization and perpetration.

Guest Participant: [Iesha Sekou, director, Street Corner Resources](#)

Learning Objectives:

1. Compare interventions to reduce urban gun violence through shifts in social norms—including focused deterrence, violence interruption, and cognitive-behavioral therapy— highlighting challenges to implementing and replicating them.
2. Explain how quasi-experimental and natural experiments are used in gun violence research.

Readings:

Beckett, Lois. “How the Gun Control Debate Ignores Black Lives.” *ProPublica*. Nov. 24, 2015. Available at: <https://bit.ly/1lg51Dh>

Corsaro, N., Engel, R.. 2015. “Most Challenging of Contexts: Assessing the Impact of Focused Deterrence on Serious Violence in New Orleans.” *Criminology & Public Policy* 14:471–505.

Butts, Jeffrey A., Caterina Gouvis Roman, Lindsay Bostwick, and Jeremy R. Porter. 2015. “Cure Violence: A Public Health Model to Reduce Gun Violence.” *Annual Review of Public Health* 36 (March): 39–53.

Optional readings:

David Kennedy, *Don't Shoot: One Man, a Street Fellowship, and the End of Violence in Inner-City America* (2012).

Heller, Sara B., Anuj K. Shah, Jonathan Guryan, Jens Ludwig, Sendhil Mullainathan, Harold A. Pollack. 2017. "Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132 (1): 1-54.

Sharkey, Patrick, et al. “Community and the Crime Decline: The Causal Effect of Local Nonprofits on Violent Crime.” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 82, no. 6, 2017, pp. 1214–1240., doi:10.1177/0003122417736289.

Film: Steve James, *The Interrupters*, 2011. Available online at: <https://to.pbs.org/2EvelAT>

Braga, A., Weisburd, D. The effects of “pulling levers” focused deterrence strategies on crime. *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 2012:6 DOI: 10.4073/csr.2012.6

Sampson, R. *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. (2011).

Session 12 – Evidence into action: Place-based interventions and gun violence [ON CAMPUS]

12/8/21 Just as changes in the places, space, and environment have proven crucial in reducing motor vehicle accidents and addressing infectious disease, a growing body of research suggests place-based interventions have a leading role in preventing gun violence.

Guest Participant: [Keith Green, director of LandCare, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society](#)

Assignments: Take a 15-minute walk in your local park and note three things that you would change to improve health and safety for people there

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand and summarize research and programs on place-based change and gun violence
2. Understand how randomized control trials can be used to study gun violence.

Readings:

Green K. Transforming City Neighborhoods | TED Talk.

https://www.ted.com/talks/keith_green_transforming_city_neighborhoods

Branas, C.C., South, E., Kondo, M.C., Hohl, B.C., Bourgois, P., Wiebe, D.J. and MacDonald, J.M., 2018. Citywide cluster randomized trial to restore blighted vacant land and its effects on violence, crime, and fear. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(12), pp.2946-2951.

Garvin, E., Branas, C., Keddem, S., Sellman, J. and Cannuscio, C., 2013. More than just an eyesore: local insights and solutions on vacant land and urban health. *Journal of Urban Health*, 90(3), pp.412-426.

Optional readings:

Bogar S., Beyer K.M. Green Space, Violence, and Crime: A Systematic Review. Trauma Violence Abuse. March 2015

Heinze, Justin E., Allison Krusky-Morey, Kevin J. Vagi, Thomas M. Reischl, Susan Franzen, Natalie K. Pruett, Rebecca M. Cunningham, and Marc A. Zimmerman. "Busy Streets Theory: The Effects of Community-engaged Greening on Violence." *American journal of community psychology* 62, no. 1-2 (2018): 101-109.

Branas, C.C., Jacoby, S. and Andreyeva, E., 2017. Firearm violence as a disease—“hot people” or “hot spots”? *JAMA internal medicine*, 177(3), pp.333-334.

Branas, C. C., Kondo, M. C., Murphy, S. M., South, E. C., Polsky, D., & MacDonald, J. M. (2016). Urban blight remediation as a cost-beneficial solution to firearm violence. *American Journal of Public Health, 106*(12), 2158-2164.

Session 13 – New frontiers of gun violence prevention

12/15/21 We will devote this session to listening to student presentations, and then will wrap up with a group discussion of what we take from the course as a whole.

Assignments: Submit final paper