

# COMM 693J: Bullying

**Professors:** Alan K. Goodboy & Matthew M. Martin

**Email:** agoodboy@mail.wvu.edu

**Office:** 108 Armstrong Hall

**Office Telephone:** (304) 293-3905

**Office Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 1:30-2:30  
or by appointment

“I want everybody to be happier. I would love for the world to be happier. I think it’s our one thing that we all share. We focus so much on our differences, and that is creating, I think, a lot of chaos and negativity and bullying in the world. And I think if everybody focused on what we all have in common – which is – we want to be happy...”

-Ellen DeGeneres-

## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES MISSION STATEMENT:**

Rooted in the social science perspective, the Department of Communication Studies is committed to preparing our students to be competent communicators at theoretical and applied levels. Our faculty is dedicated to developing students’ critical thinking, reasoning, and decision-making skills with the intent of empowering students to construct and deliver context-specific messages in their relational, vocational, and community endeavors.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Bullying is a multidisciplinary subject and of international interest. By its very definition, however, the act of bullying is undeniably communication. Realizing that bullying research is not limited to communication studies journals that publish data from American samples, our course does take an interdisciplinary and international approach to the study of bullying. By doing so, the breadth and scope of the bullying literature is covered and the most recent and relevant findings can be discussed.

*Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:*

1. Provide a uniform definition of bullying and distinguish between the features of bullying and other forms aggression;
2. Summarize the physical, psychological, and emotional consequences of bullying;
3. Synthesize the major findings in bullying literature across contexts (e.g., workplace, school, sport, etc.);
4. Offer empirically-based and practical advice for victims and perpetrators of bullying.
5. Design and report an original research study that contributes to the bullying literature.

## REQUIRED READINGS

All photocopied readings for the entire course are provided to you at the beginning of the semester. It is your responsibility to keep these readings organized and read the assigned readings each week. You should bring the assigned readings to class every week. These readings are from current journals and edited handbooks. Generally, we focus on the most recent empirical research (i.e., 2010 to current) in this course. We prefer to stay up to date on this topic, although we recognize the important programmatic research on bullying (e.g., Olweus) in the early 90s.

## COURSE POLICIES:

1. **Attendance.** Attendance is mandatory in graduate school. To be considered in attendance for class, you must arrive on time for class and remain for the full session. Missing a class will result in lowered final grade. If you miss a class, you are responsible for any of the information or assignments on that day.
2. **Formatting.** All assignments must adhere to APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition guidelines and formatting unless noted otherwise.
3. **Late Work.** Late work will not be accepted past a due date or after I have collected it. Work handed in late will receive a 20% grade reduction.
4. **Academic Integrity.** The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at:

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>.

Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me *before* the assignment is due to discuss the matter. Any instances of suspected academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or cheating will result in a grade of zero for the assignment and may result in a grade of F for the course.

5. **Inclement Weather.** In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact me as soon as possible. Similarly, if I am unable to reach our class location, I will notify you of any cancellation or change as soon as possible (by 7:00am) using MIX to prevent you from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, I will make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any assignments.

**6. Inclusivity Statement.** The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

**7. Grading.** The grading scale is the standard 90-100% = A, 80-89.99% = B, 70-79.99% = C, 60-69.99% = D, and 0-59.99% = F.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Weekly Assignments.

Weekly assignments include position papers, abstracts, project presentations, and any other activities. In total, there are 10 weekly assignments to complete.

\*A position paper argues a stance that is stated in the first paragraph and is supported by evidence and applicable research from your assigned reading for the week. Each paper should be 1 full page (not including the title page or reference section). You will write 6 position papers.

\*Abstracts provide a summary of a published article and follow a predetermined format. Abstracts range from 1 to 2 pages and are single spaced. You will write 4 abstracts and will briefly present your abstracts in class.

#### Abstracts include the following sections:

**Part 1: Citation.** Find a published article on the topic for the week and provide the citation of the article in accordance with APA style.

**Part 2: Purpose.** In about two sentences, state the purpose of the research and explain why the research was conducted.

**Part 3: RQ(s)/H(s)/Both.** List the research questions and/or hypotheses in the study. You should copy these verbatim in the order that they appear in the article.

**Part 4: Method.** Summarize the method section by including (a) the participants in the study, (b) the type of sampling/participant selection, (c) participant criteria for inclusion, (d) procedures, and (e) the names of the measures used in the study, including the citation of the instrument – (name, year).

**Part 5: Results.** Directly report the findings to answer part 3. You can copy this section verbatim, but make sure to use the language used in the article. There is no need to report the statistics behind the findings.

**Part 6: Implications.** In 2 to 3 sentences, state the implications of these results. You should indicate how these findings are important and what the “take away” is for bullying scholars.

**Part 7: Critique.** In 1 to 2 sentences, provide a critique of this article explaining the main limitation of this research or how the research could be improved.

\*You will present your abstract in class for several minutes. You will discuss the findings of your abstract to the class and so we can learn from you. During your presentation, focus mostly on the findings and results of each study in a brief format. Please bring 12 printed copies of your abstract to class (10 for your peers, 1 for Dr. Goodboy, 1 for Dr. Martin).

**Weekly assignments are worth 50% of your final grade.**

## **2. Major Project.**

### Ph.D. Students

You will conduct and write a manuscript length quantitative or qualitative study on bullying. This includes a literature review, data collection and entry, analysis of data, etc. You *must* incorporate either your primary area or secondary area into this study. You will present this paper at a convention (NCA or ECA preferably) and should prepare this paper for publication. There will not be formal deadlines for each part of the manuscript, but I suggest you get started early with an idea and work on this paper throughout the semester. Your data should be collected and entered by March 31 so it can be analyzed on our scheduled project workday. You should discuss your idea by me before you get started on the literature review. The final paper will be submitted on April 28.

### M.A. Students

You will contribute to a group project (in groups of 4) directed by Dr. Martin or Dr. Goodboy. You will independently write a complete literature review on 1 variable associated with bullying, help with data collection and entry, and other contributions to the project. The group project data should be collected and entered by March 31 so it can be analyzed on our scheduled project workday. I will individually grade your literature review portion of the manuscript on your variable only, which will be submitted on April 21. The remaining group work will be a collective effort and your grade will be dependent upon your group work too. Failure to complete any of the assigned group tasks will result in a lowered letter grade.

**The major project is worth 50% of your final grade.**

## Course Schedule and Assignments

### **January 13 – Introduction to Course, Syllabus, Bully Documentary**

### **January 20 – Bullying Definitions, Features, and Outcomes**

**Due:** Position Paper #1 on Bully Documentary

**Read (in the order listed):**

Olweus, D. (2012). Understanding and researching bullying: Some critical issues. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 9-33). New York: Routledge.

Vaillancourt, T., Hymel, S., McDougall, P. (2011). Why does being bullied hurt so much? Insights from neuroscience. In D. L. Espelage & S. M. Swearer (Eds.), *Bullying in North American schools* (pp. 23-33). New York: Erlbaum.

Cowie, H. (2013). The immediate and long term effects of bullying. In I. Rivers & N. Duncan (Eds.), *Bullying: Experiences and discourses of sexuality and gender* (pp. 10-18). London: Routledge.

### **January 27 – Developmental Origins of Aggression**

**Due:** Position Paper #2 on Readings

**Read:**

Hartup, W. W. (2005). The development of aggression: Where do we stand? In R. E. Tremblay, W. W. Hartup, & J. Archer (Eds.), *Developmental origins of aggression* (pp. 3-22). New York: Guilford Press.

Farrington, D. P. (2007). Origins of violent behavior over the life span. In D. J. Flannery, A. T. Vazsonyi, & I. D. Waldman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of violent behavior and aggression* (pp. 19-48). Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

### **February 3 – Bullying in Preschool and Elementary School**

**Due:** Position Paper #3 on Readings

**Read:**

Hanish, L. D., Hill, A., Gosney, S., Fabes, R.A., & Martin, C. L. (2011). Girls, boys, and

bullying in preschool: The role of gender in the development of bullying. In D. L. Espelage & S. M. Swearer (Eds.), *Bullying in North American schools* (pp. 132-146). New York: Erlbaum.

Alsaker, F. D., & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, E. (2012). Social behavior and peer relationships of victims, bully-victims, and bullies in kindergarten. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 87-99). New York: Routledge.

### **February 10 – Bullying in Middle School and High School**

**Due:** Abstract 1 on School Bullying

**Read:**

Smith, P. K. (2012). Bullying in primary and secondary schools: Psychological and organizational comparisons. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 137-150). New York: Routledge.

Perkins, H. W., Perkins, J. M., & Craig, D. W. (2014). No safe haven: Locations of harassment and bullying victimization in middle schools. *Journal of School Health, 84*, 810-818.

### **February 17 - Workplace Bullying**

**Due:** Abstract 2 on Workplace Bullying

**Read:**

Lutgen-Sandvik, P., Namie, G., & Namie, R. (2009). Workplace bullying: Causes, consequences, and corrections. In P. Lutgen-Sandvik & B. D. Sypher (Eds.), *Destructive organizational communication: Processes, consequences, & constructive ways of organizing*. New York: Routledge.

Tracy, S. J., Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & Alberts, J. K. (2006). Nightmares, demons, and slaves: Exploring the painful metaphors of workplace bullying. *Management Communication Quarterly, 20*, 148-185. doi:10.1177/0893318906291980

### **February 24 – Cyberbullying**

**Due:** Abstract 3 on Cyberbullying

**Read:**

Smith, P. K., & Slonje, R. (2012). Cyberbullying: The nature and extent of a new kind of

bullying, in and out of school. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 249-262). New York: Routledge.

Tokunaga, R. S. (2010). Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26, 277-287. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2009.11.014

### **March 3 – Homophobic Bullying**

**Due:** Abstract 4 on Sexual Prejudice

**Read:**

Poteat, V. P., Mereish, E. H., DiGiovanni, C. D., & Scheer, J. R. (2013). Homophobic bullying. In I. Rivers & N. Duncan (Eds.), *Bullying: Experiences and discourses of sexuality and gender* (pp. 75-90). London: Routledge.

McCormack, M. (2013). Mapping the boundaries of homophobic language in bullying. In I. Rivers & N. Duncan (Eds.), *Bullying: Experiences and discourses of sexuality and gender* (pp. 91-104). London: Routledge.

### **March 10 – Racist and Ethnic Bullying**

**Due:** Position Paper #4 on Readings

**Read:**

Graham, S., Taylor, A. Z., & Ho, A. Y. (2011). Race and ethnicity in peer relations research. In K. H. Rubin, W. M., Bukowski, & B. Laursen (Eds.), *Handbook of peer interactions, relationships, and groups* (pp. 394-413). New York: The Guilford Press.

Scherr, T. G., & Larson, J. (2012). Bullying dynamics associated with race, ethnicity, and immigration status. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 223-234). New York: Routledge.

### **March 17 - Family Relationships and Bullying**

**Due:** Position Paper #5 on Readings

**Read:**

Nickerson, A. B., Mele, D., & Osborne-Oliver, K. M. (2012). Parent-child relationships and bullying. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 187-197). New York: Routledge.

Duncan, R. D. (2011). Family relationships of bullies and victims. In D. L. Espelage & S. M. Swearer (Eds.), *Bullying in North American schools* (pp. 191-204). New York: Erlbaum.

**March 24-** No Class: Spring Recess

**March 31 – Project Work Day**

**Due:** Data Collected for Major Project

**April 7 – Bullying in Sport**

**Due:** Position Paper #6 on Readings

**Read:**

D'Escury, A. L. C., & Dundink, A. C. M. (2012). Bullying beyond school: Examining the role of sports. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 235-248). New York: Routledge.

Steinfeldt, J. A., Vaughan, E. L., LaFollette, J. R., & Steinfeldt, M. C. (2012). Bullying among adolescent football players: Role of masculinity and moral atmosphere. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 13*, 340-353. doi:10.1037/a0026645

**April 14 – Bullying and Bystanders**

**Read:**

Aboud, F. E., & Joong, A. (2008). Intergroup name-calling and conditions for creating assertive bystanders. In S. R. Levy & M. Killen (Eds.), *Intergroup attitudes and relations in childhood through adulthood* (pp. 249-260). New York: Oxford University Press.

Cappadocia, M. C., Pepler, D., Cummings, J. G., & Craig, W. (2012). Individual motivations and characteristics associated with bystander intervention during bullying episodes among children and youth. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 27*, 201-216. doi:10.1177/0829573512450567

Fischer, P., Krueger, J., Greitemeyer, T., Vogrincic, C., Kastenmüller, A., Frey, D., ...Kainbacher, M. (2011). The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. *Psychological Bulletin, 137*, 517-537. doi:10.1037/a0023304

**April 21 – Prevention and Intervention**

**Read:**

Rigby, K. (2012). What schools may do to reduce bullying. In S. R. Jimerson, A. B., Nickerson,



M. J. Mayer, & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety* (pp. 397-408). New York: Routledge.

Jimerson, S. R., & Huai, N. (2012). International perspectives on bullying prevention and intervention. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 571-592). New York: Routledge.

### **April 28 – Project Presentations**

**Due:** Major Project