

The International MA Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation

The Gershon H. Gordon
Faculty of Social Sciences
Tel Aviv University

Dangerous Group Dynamics

Thursdays from 10:00-11:30am

Naftali 004

Spring 2024: Course number 10444058

Instructor: Dr. Alana Siegel

Email: DrAlanaSiegel@gmail.com

Office hours: By appointment over Zoom

Class dates

March 7, 14, 21, 28

April 4, 11, 18

May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

June 6, 13, 20

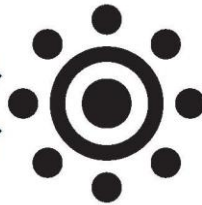
This class will examine how ordinary civilians come to spontaneously or actively participate in and perpetuate anything from a negative group dynamic to mass trauma. Each class will also review interventions that can be used to prevent the emergence of a dangerous group dynamic. This class can be of use in studying the dynamics of as well as for working with groups of people.

Course requirements

Class participation (10%): It is expected that all students will complete assigned readings and be active participants in class discussions.

Literature summaries (15% of final course grade): Students will be asked to summarize one to two articles a week on a topic of their choosing. Each summary will be 1 paragraph in length. These articles will be used in the final paper.

Final take home exam (75%): Essay, see instructions below.



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Literature summaries (20% of final course grade)

Over the course of the semester, please summarize 20 articles of your choosing on your topic. At maximum 10 of these articles can come from news sources. Each summary will be 1 paragraph in length. These articles can be used in the final paper.

At the top of the page please write your citation in APA format, and below the paragraph summary. These paragraphs are due at 4pm before class each week. Literature summaries are graded pass/fail.

The articles can be from:

- Academic journals (journal must have an impact factor. *No theses, blog posts or dissertations allowed.*)
- Governmental organizations (Buckingham Palace, White House, etc.)
- Leading newspapers (WSJ, NYTimes, JPost, Al Jazeera, etc.)
- Think tanks (Brookings Institute, Council on Foreign Relations, etc.)
- International organizations (Red Cross, United Nations, etc.)
- Data Sources (Census, Pew Research Center, etc.)



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Final take home exam (75%)

Please select a case study of a dangerous group dynamic. Please use in-class readings, class lectures and your own independent research to analyze the case. Use at **minimum 10 terms or theories reviewed in class** (and **underline and bold** each term you use).

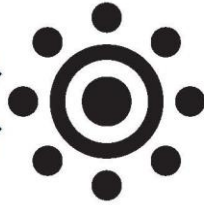
There should be **a minimum of 30 citations** in your bibliography. You may use all the articles that you have been outlining all semester.

Each of the 4 questions below is worth 25 points. Please divide your paper into the four questions, and head each section with: Question 1, Question 2, Question 3, Question 4. In questions 3 and 4, with each of the three interventions and three lessons, please label them a, b, and c.

Every point made must be cited. Points will be deducted for sentences without proper citations.

Please discuss in your paper:

- 1) What happened in your case? Who, what, where, when, how, and also provide statistics, if possible.
- 2) What factors contributed to the emergence of a dangerous group dynamic?
- 3) What interventions were literally used or could have theoretically been used in this case? Please list at minimum 3 interventions.
- 4) What lessons can be learned from this case and how can these lessons be applied to other individuals/ groups/ organizations/ events? Please give at minimum 3 suggestions.



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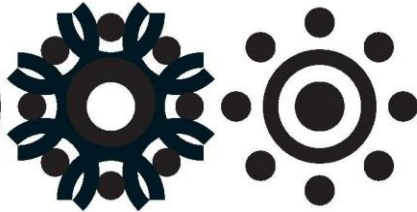
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PLEASE NOTE: Essay must be between 2,700-3,000 words (bibliography not included). No abstract is needed. All sources and points must be cited, and in APA format. Diversify your citations... No single source should be cited more than 4 times (points will be deducted for a reference used more than four times).

See here for examples of how to cite: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

FINAL EXAM DUE DATE: **July 13, 2024**, by 11:59pm in Israel.

Please email your final exams in a **word document (or share it as a Google Doc)** to Dr. Siegel at DrAlanaSiegel@gmail.com



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How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing

Please read: Waller, J. (2007). *Becoming evil: How ordinary people commit genocide and mass killing*. New York: Oxford Press. 298 pages. *SECOND EDITION*

It is requested to read the entire book, but **it is mandatory to read pages 171-298 in *Becoming Evil***.

There are hard copies of the book in the library, it can be ordered on Amazon, or it can be read electronically here: <http://library.lol/main/73404AA5BC7EB5181B8D30522152D26F>

Obedience to Authority and the Diffusion of Responsibility

What is the role of Obedience to Authority and the Diffusion of Responsibility in the emergence of a group dynamic?

Classes will look at case studies including:

1. Milgrim's Obedience to Authority experiments
2. Zimbardo's Prison Experiment at Stanford University
3. Latané and Darley's analysis of The Bystander Effect
4. Janis' Groupthink Theory

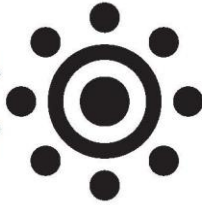
Please read:

Janis, I. (1971). *Groupthink*. Psychology Today Magazine. Retrieved from:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20100401033524/http://apps.olin.wustl.edu/faculty/macdonald/GroupThink.pdf>

Darley, J. & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8, 377-383.

Optional:

Milgram, S. (1974). *Obedience to authority*. New York: Harper and Row.



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Group Formation

How are groups formed?

This class will review leading experts and key theories including:

- 1) Kurt Lewin's research on Group Dynamics
- 2) Stages of group formation

Please read:

Forsyth, D. R. (2014). *Group dynamics* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. Chapter 1:

<https://scholarship.richmond.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.co.il/&httpsredir=1&article=1004&context=bookshelf>

Social and Emotional Contagion

What is the role of contagion in perpetuating dangerous group dynamics?

We will examine case studies including:

1. Social Contagion Theory and drug epidemics
2. The Asch Conformity experiments
3. Emotional contagion

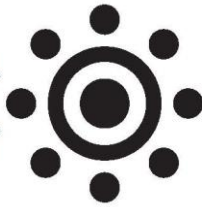
Please read:

Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3, 193-209. <https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura/Bandura1999PSPR.pdf>

Barsade, S., Coutifaris, C., Pillemer, J. (2018). Emotional contagion in organizational life. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 38, 137-151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2018.11.005>.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Opioid overdose: Understanding the epidemic*. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>

Katz, J. & Sanger-Katz, M. (November 29, 2018). The Numbers Are So Staggering. Overdose Deaths Set a Record Last Year. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/29/upshot/fentanyl-drug-overdose-deaths.html>



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The Crowd Goes Wild

How do crowds of innocent civilians become dangerous?

Case studies will include:

1. Le Bon's theory of crowds
2. Stampedes at The Hillsborough soccer stadium and pilgrims on the Hajj

Please read:

Almukhtar, S. & Watkins, D. (2016, September 6). How one of the deadliest Hajj accidents unfolded. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from:

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/09/06/world/middleeast/2015-hajj-stampede.html?_r=0

Gustave Le Bon's 1896 classic: *The crowd: A study of the popular mind*.

<https://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/lebon/Crowds.pdf>

Hsieh, Y., Ngai, K., Burkle, F., and Hsu, E. (2009). Epidemiological characteristics of human stampedes. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 3(4), 217-223.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41041071_Epidemiological_Characteristics_of_Human_Stampedes

Bullying

How do groups come to bully?

We will look at case studies including:

1. Cyber bullying: The case study of Monica Lewinsky
2. In-person bullying
3. Virtuous Violence Theory

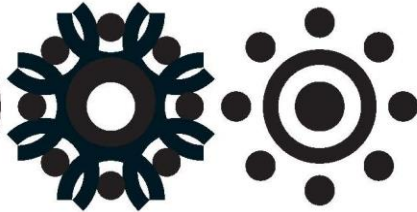
Please read:

Lam, D. O. B., & Liu, A. W. H. (2007). The path through bullying - A process model from the inside story of bullies in Hong Kong secondary schools. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 24(1), 53-75. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-006-0058-5>.

Ronson, J. (2015, February 15). How one stupid tweet ruined Justine Sacco's life. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/02/15/magazine/how-one-stupid-tweet-ruined-justine-saccos-life.html>

Swearer, S. & Hymel, S. (2015). Understanding the psychology of bullying: Moving toward a social-ecological diathesis-stress model. *American Psychologist*, 70(4), 344-353.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038929>.



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Violent In-Groups: The Role of Social Identity Theory

How do small groups of peers become actively violent?

Case studies include:

- 1) Riots or pogroms
- 2) Gang rape in peacetime or wartime

Please read:

Cohen, D. K. (2013). Explaining rape during civil war: Cross-national evidence (1980-2009). *American Political Science Review*, 107(3), 461–477.
https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/wcfia/files/cohen_appr_2013.pdf

Fiske, A. & Rai, T. (2015). *Virtuous Violence*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. “Initiation Rites”, pages 180-184.

Hennigan, K. & Spanovic, M. (2012). Gang dynamics through the lens of social identity theory. As seen in Chapter 8 of Esbensen, F. & Maxson, C. (eds). *Youth Gangs in International Perspective*.

Intergroup Relations and Conflicts: The Role of Social Identity Theory, continued

How does group loyalty and social identity contribute to conflict?

Classes will look at case studies including:

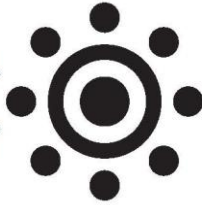
- 1) Sherif’s Realistic Conflict Theory in the Robber’s Cave Experiment
- 2) The Troubles in Northern Ireland
- 3) The Tutsi and Hutu conflict in Rwanda

Please read:

Cairns, E. & Darby, J. (1998). The conflict in Northern Ireland: Causes, consequences, and controls. *American Psychologist*, 53(7), 754-760.

Eidelson, R. J., & Eidelson, J. I. (2003). Dangerous ideas: Five beliefs that propel groups toward conflict. *American Psychologist*, 58(3), 182–192. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.58.3.182>.

Optional: Ashmore, R., Jussim, L., Wilder, D. (2001). Social identity, intergroup conflict, and conflict reduction. New York: Oxford University Press.



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Torture and Abuse

How are acts of torture and abuse a manifestation of problematic group dynamics?

We will examine case studies including:

- 1) Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse
- 2) The Catholic Church's child abuse scandal

Please read:

Goodstein, L. (2003, January 12). Decades of damage: Trail of pain in Church crisis leads to nearly every diocese. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/12/us/decades-of-damage-trail-of-pain-in-church-crisis-leads-to-nearly-every-diocese.html>

Optional:

Zimbardo, P. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect: How good people turn evil*. New York: Random House.

Radicalization and Terrorism

What is the role of the group in the emergence of radicalization and terrorism activities?

We will examine:

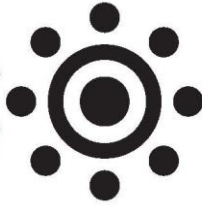
- 1) How do individuals radicalize and what is the role of the group in the process?
- 2) Terrorist groups
- 3) Online groups as a tool for extremism

Please read:

Kruglanski, A., Jasko, K., Webber, D., Chernikova, M., & Molinario, E. (2018). The making of violent extremists. *Review of General Psychology*, 22(1), 107–120.

McCauley, C., & Moskalenko, S. (2008). Mechanisms of political radicalization: Pathways toward terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20, 415–433.

Pape, R. (2005). *Dying to win: The strategic logic of suicide terrorism*. New York: Random House.



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Dangerous Government Regimes

How can a government become a dangerous group?

1. The first of the class will focus on leadership, charisma, and dictatorships
2. In the second half of the class, please come prepared to discuss your case with your group. Please come ready to answer the 4 questions for the final assignment.

Please read:

Forsyth, D. R. (2014). *Group dynamics* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. Chapter 9.

Please watch:

Authoritarian breakdown -- how dictators fall | Dr. Natasha Ezrow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ECTcaSXeII>

Optional:

Kiernan, B. (2007). *Blood and soil: A world history of genocide and extermination from Sparta to Darfur*. New Haven: Yale University Press. p.p. 540-554: Cambodia.