

**SOC 413 – Juvenile Delinquency  
Spring Semester, 2007**

**Group Research Project / School Shootings**

Throughout the semester, we will have a series of “research days:” 5 class periods occurring approximately once every two weeks. Each student will be assigned to a group of approximately 3 students, and each group will be assigned a school shooting as a case study.

**Goals of Assignment**

- Develop research/information literacy skills.
- Serve as a focus of study within the larger study within juvenile delinquency, and therefore to facilitate learning about delinquency in general.
- Familiarize students with research processes and applications in the study of crime/delinquency.

Stage 1: Completion of Working Bibliography – Due 2/08

Stage 2: Annotated Bibliography and Project Organization – Due 2/22

Stage 3: Characterization of Shootings – Due 3/08

Stage 4: Characterization of Perpetrators – Due 3/27

Stage 5: Characterization of Victims – Due 4/12

Final Project Due: 4/26

**Grading:**

In all, this project will count for 30% of your semester grade. The assignment for each preliminary stage will count for 5% of the total grade, and the final project will count for 5% of the semester grade.

## **SOC 413 Research Project Further Directions, Details, and Guidance**

- Stage 1 – Due 2/08 (Bibliography)
  - Stage 1 will include the following component
    - Exhaustive bibliography using APA bibliographic format, including:
      - Resources about school shootings in general
        - Books
        - Articles (academic and popular)
        - News Media Coverage
        - Government Reports
        - Internet Sites
      - Resources about your assigned school shooting
        - Books
        - Articles (academic and popular)
        - News Media Coverage
        - Government Reports
        - Internet Sites
  
- Stage 2 – Due 2/22 (Annotated Bibliography and Project Organization)
  - Stage 2 will include the following components:
    - Annotated Bibliography, including the following for each source:
      - Brief description of content of source (i.e., 1-3 sentences)
      - Brief evaluation of the credibility of the source (i.e., 1-sentence)
    - Formulate a plan of action for the completion of remainder project, including
      - List of necessary tasks
      - Division of Labor
      - Timeline
  
- Stage 3 – Due 3/08 (Report on the Incident)
  - Stage 3 will offer two types of reports of the incident:
    - A narrative of the incident, including references
    - A bullet-point list of the following details about the incident, including references:
      - Date
      - Time of day
      - Location of incident (where in school?)
      - Perpetrator at time of attack (only your assigned perp)
        - Number arrested
        - Demographics:
          - Race
          - Age
          - Grade

- Suspected co-conspirators?
- Verified co-conspirators?
- Under influence of alcohol or illegal drugs?
- Apparent motivation (explore the following)
  - Resolve interpersonal dispute
  - Self-defense
  - Revenge
  - Live up to script of code (e.g., masculinity)
  - Copycat?
- Weapons (examine the following)
  - Used in attack (list)
  - In hands of perp at time of attack
- How attack ended
- How perpetrators apprehended
- Any other relevant details about the attack?
  
- Stage 4 - Due 3/27 (Report on the Perpetrator and His Background)
  - Stage 3 will offer two types of reports of the incident:
    - A narrative about the perpetrator's background, including references
    - A bullet-point list of details of the following details about the perpetrator's background, including references:
      - Prior offense history (examine the following)
        - Known by police?
        - List prior offenses
        - List prior arrests
        - Was the offender ever seriously victimized?
      - School record of offender
        - Academic achievement
          - good or bad student
          - grades?
        - Subject of disciplinary action at school?
        - Any changes in performance in school prior to offense?
      - Mental illness of offender
        - Ever formally diagnosed prior to event?
        - Formal diagnosis after event?
        - Suicide attempt during incident?
        - Any previous suicide attempts or threats?
        - Suicide attempt after incident?
        - Any psychological counseling prior to incident?
        - Any mood changes near time of incident?
      - Offender's family background
        - Family structure (2 parents vs. divorce, etc.)
        - Any history of family violence?
        - History of abuse/neglect?

- Changes in family relationship close to incident?
- Status of perp in school/community
  - Social standing in community (e.g., outcast vs. popular?)
  - Member of youth gang?
  - Interest in violent media? (films, music, games?)
  - Involvement in gun culture?
  - Victim of bullying?
  - Did perp bully others?
  - Any recent changes in peer relationships?
  - Any recent peer rejections? (e.g., girlfriend dumped him/friends rejected him?)
- Stage 5 - Due 4/12 – (Continuing report on the details of the case)
  - A narrative about the further details of the event, including references
  - Bullet-point list of further details about the event, including references:
    - Victims (for each victim)
      - Number killed
      - Number wounded
      - Victim status (e.g., teachers, students, principal)
      - Relationship to perp (e.g., girlfriend, rival, none)
      - Targeted by offender or shot at random?
      - Any other noteworthy details about the victims?
    - Preparatory actions of the perpetrators
      - Evidence of planning?
      - Source of weapons?
      - Did perpetrator issue threats?
      - Any warnings given to adults?
      - Reason for particular day and place of attack?
      - Was the attack a reaction to immediate events?
      - Did anyone take preventive action in responding to threat?
      - Did anyone take proactive steps to mitigate possible attack?
    - Community setting
      - Type of community (urban, rural, suburban)
      - Community economic status (prospering/decaying?)
    - School setting
      - Type of school?
        - high school vs middle school?
        - size of school
        - noted peer groups and social climate
      - Religious affiliation?

- Final Report – Due 4/26
  - Final report offers a single report that includes a synthesis and extension of the previous sections of the report.
    - Integrate the following, including references:
      - The details of the incident
      - The details about the perpetrator
      - Further details about the case
      - Bullet-point list of data are included as an appendix
    - In addition (within the report) the group will address the following question:
      - What were the proximate causes of this incident? Be sure to integrate your particular case study and the semester material relevant to the discussion juvenile delinquency and school shootings.
  - Alternately, groups may present orally or by poster session at the “Undergraduate Research Forum ‘07” - See Professor for details.

**SOC 413 Research Project**  
**Stage #2 Example of Annotation and Credibility**

**Examples of Annotation**

Burgess, A. (2006). Pathological Teasing and Bullying Turned Deadly: Shooters and Suicide. *Victims & Offenders*, 1(1), 1-13.

Abstract: Bullying, a form of interpersonal violence, has emerged in the 21st century as an important public health issue. However, teasing and bullying can turn deadly. A deeply troubled youth, after years of chronic bullying, may decide he has no alternative but suicide. Alternatively, the troubled youth may be attracted to the violent hero presented in the media that demonstrates his power via weapons as in the cases of *school shootings*. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

Credibility: 4 – Highly credible article from a peer reviewed journal written by a professional researcher.

**Credibility Ratings:**

4. **HIGHLY CREDIBLE:** Highly credible source of information about subject. Often applies to peer-reviewed articles, books published by academic presses, and well-established commercial presses. Also includes web publications by well-established, reliable sources and those written by established experts.
3. **CREDIBLE:** Source is credible, but some details might not be completely correct. Often applies to journalistic accounts and those produced by less-rigorous writers. For example, a journalist might not have time to verify all facts prior to submission. Also may include authors who are generally (not specifically) experts in the field they are writing about.
2. **QUESTIONABLE:** Source of questionable credibility about subject. Often applies to outdated sources, web sites posted by some organizations, biased sources (including political, activist, and religious presses). Also may include pieces written by authors who are not established experts in the field they are writing about.
1. **NON-CREDIBLE:** Source should not be considered credible at all. Often applies to web pages posted by individuals, or those that may easily be changed. Often these appear in outlets where there is little or no formal assurance of quality, and may quickly appear and disappear.