**I. Course Dates/Hours and Classroom**

January 23, 2019-May 1, 2019 (14 class sessions)

Robinson Hall Room B208 (Fairfax); Wednesday, 7:20pm-10:00pm

**II. Instructor and Contact Information**

Raymond G. Rowley, Supervisory Special Agent, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (retired); B.S., George Mason University; M.A., George Washington University; M.S., National Defense University.

Phone: (301) 787-1249; e-mail: [rrowley@gmu.edu](mailto:rrowley@gmu.edu); [raymond.rowley56@gmail.com](mailto:raymond.rowley56@gmail.com)

**III. Office Hours**

Available by appointment or one-half hour before class.

**IV. Course Description**

This course will examine our nation’s historical gun culture and address the role that firearms play in American society. We will analyze the roles that laws and regulations, law enforcement, special interest groups, politics and the media play in shaping public policy and ultimately how we address the competing concerns of reducing firearms-related violent crime and protecting the constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.

Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. Deadlines are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar’s Website: registrar.gmu.edu.

Last Day to Add: January 29, 2019

Last Day to Drop with 100% tuition refund: February 5, 2019

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for non-academic reasons.

Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

**V. Program Goals**

Upon completion of this course students shall have obtained a basic understanding of firearms laws and regulations and how they impact the availability and use of firearms; the legal firearms industry and commercial firearms supply chain and how firearms are diverted from lawful commerce for criminal purposes. Students will explore existing firearms policy and programs; examine the role of law enforcement agencies in reducing firearms-related violent crime; look at firearms-related violent crime trends and discuss how law enforcement agencies use data and other investigative and technical tools to respond to ever changing criminal behavior. Students will explore the history of firearms and the types of firearms in circulation today; and discuss firearms technical issues in an effort to dispel misinformation that frequently appears in print and electronic media. Students will explore the founding father's original intent regarding the second amendment, and relevant Supreme Court decisions. We will discuss whether more guns contribute to more or less violent crime and explore how politics; the media and special interest groups influence the government's ability and willingness to pass firearms legislation and enforce firearms laws and regulations.

Students will learn that many of the issues that occupy our attention are not new and have been the subject of contentious debate throughout much of our history.

**VI. Course Text**

(Recommended) Guns in America: A Reader; New York University Press; Copyright 1999; ISBN 0-8147—1878-7.

**VII. Teaching Strategies**

Teaching strategies include lecture; guest speakers; facilitated class discussion; video presentations and in-class student presentations.

**VIII. Attendance and Classroom Policies**

Students are reminded that regular class attendance and active participation is essential to learning and is a grading component of this course. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful to the instructor, guest speakers and other students; this includes being tolerant of diverse opinions. Cell phones and other items that may cause distractions in class should be turned off during class sessions.

**IX. Disability Statement**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**X. Honor Code**

The George Mason University Honor Code requires all members of the community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, stealing and other forms of such behavior are prohibited.

All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

See honorcode.gmu.edu for more detailed information.

**XI. Grading**

Mid Term Examination 30%

Final Examination 30%

Class Project 20%

Class Attendance/Participation 20%

At the end of the course, each student will be assigned a final grade as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Quality Points** | **Point Range** | **Interpretation** |
| A | 4.0 | 93-100 | Excellent |
| A- | 3.67 | 90-92 |  |
| B+ | 3.33 | 87-89 |  |
| B | 3.0 | 83-86 | Above average |
| B- | 2.67 | 80-82 |  |
| C+ | 2.33 | 73-79 |  |
| C | 2.0 | 70-72 | Average |
| C- | 1.67 | 65-69 |  |
| D | 1.0 | 60-64 | Below average |
| F | 0.0 | Below 60 | Failure |
|  |  |  |  |

An essential component of the course is a group research project. Working in small groups students will select a topic related to one of the many course lessons. Students will present their findings during a 20-minute group presentation. Students will be graded on the thoroughness of their research and persuasiveness of any arguments made as well as the quality of their presentation.

**XII. Class Schedule**

**January 23, 2019 (1)**

Student and Instructor Introductions; Course Requirements; Syllabus Review.

American Gun Culture: A look at America’s gun culture and historical underpinnings; factors that have led to the proliferation of guns.

Guns in America: A Film

READING: Guns in America: A Reader, Chapter 2

America as a Gun Culture by Richard Hofstadter, <http://www.americanheritage.com/content/america-gun-culture>

**January 30, 2019 (2)**

The 2nd Amendment and an analysis of its origin; federalism and recent Supreme Court decisions (Heller and McDonald)

READING: District of Columbia v Heller

McDonald v Chicago

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/07-290.ZO.html>

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/08-1521.ZO.html>

The High Court Struck Down DC’s Gun Ban Eight Years Ago, But the Fight Continues:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/the-high-court-struck-down-dcs-gun-ban-eight-years-ago-but-the-fight-continues/2016/09/13/070e6786-7054-11e6-8365-b19e428a975e_story.html>

**February 6, 2019 (3)**

The evolution of U.S. gun laws; an examination of key provisions of the Gun Control Act and the National Firearms Act; the critical role of State legislation.

READING: Guns in America: A Reader, Chapter 6

**February 13, 2019 (4)**

A Look Back: A brief history of early firearms development.

The Story of the Gun: A Film

**February 20, 2019 (5)**

When is a machinegun not a machinegun? Firearms functioning, classification, terminology and technical issues. An examination of some of today’s most popular firearms.

Guest Presentation

**February 27, 2019 (6)**

Guns in Commerce: A system for the lawful manufacture, importation and distribution of firearms; regulating the firearms industry; procedures for buying guns in America; educating licensed gun dealers and the public in an effort to prevent the unlawful diversion of firearms.

**March 6, 2019 (7)**

Firearms diversion and trafficking: How criminals obtain firearms; enforcement programs and techniques; the role of law enforcement; technological investigative tools.

Guest Presentation

READING: ATF mission statement and history at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov)

Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review, National Research Council of the National Academies, <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10881&page=221>, Chapter 4

Inside the Bureau of Way Too Many Guns, <http://www.gq.com/story/inside-federal-bureau-of-way-too-many-guns>

Report Highlights How Guns Flow Into New York From States With Weaker Laws, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/25/nyregion/report-highlights-how-guns-flow-into-new-york-from-states-with-weaker-laws.html?_r=0>

Target on Trafficking, New York Crime Gun Analysis, <https://targettrafficking.ag.ny.gov/>

**Spring Break (March 11-17, 2019)**

**March 20, 2019-Mid Term Examination (8)**

**March 27, 2019 (9)**

Firearms-related violence: An examination of statistics; mass shootings; the persons who criminally use firearms; a discussion of possible causes of gun crime.

READING: Guns in America: A Reader, Chapters 24 and 25

Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review, National Research Council of the National Academies, <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10881&page=53>, Chapter 3.

**April 3, 2019 (10)**

Gun Free Zones and the Right to Carry; do more guns result in more or less violent crime? non-gun factors that may contribute gun-related crime; should gun buyers/owners undergo mandatory training?

READING: Guns in America, A Reader: Chapters 26-28

Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review, National Research Council of the National Academies, <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10881&page=102>, Chapters 5 and 6.

Sheriff Training University Faculty to Carry Guns on Campus, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/florida-sheriff-training-faculty-carry-firearms-campus-44244332>

**April 10, 2019 (11)**

The shaping of public opinion and policy: The role of advocacy groups, law enforcement associations, news and opinion media and the entertainment industry.

Guest presentation

READING: Review the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence legislative priorities, mission statement and organizational history at [www.bradycampaign.org](http://www.bradycampaign.org)

READING: Review the National Rifle Association legislative priorities, history and mission statement at <https://home.nra.org/>

Guns in America: A Reader, Chapters 11-20

A Gun Free Society, A Washington Post Editorial, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-gun-free-society/2015/10/04/6da29040-69c4-11e5-9ef3-fde182507eac_story.html?utm_term=.8d5eab5c8e1f>

Why Millennials are Skeptical About Gun Control, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/sep/20/why-millennials-are-skeptical-of-gun-control/>

Editorial: Yes to Legal Guns, A Washington Times Editorial, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/dec/31/editorial-yes-to-legal-guns/>

A**ril 17, 2019 (12)**

Student presentations

**April 24, 2019 (13)**

Student presentations

**May 1, 2019 (14)**

The way forward; the search for solutions to firearms crime and injury; the need for a comprehensive approach; balancing competing interests in a country with an estimated 300 million firearms.

READING: Guns in America: A Reader, Chapters 38, 39 and 43

Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review, National Research Council of the National Academies, <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10881&page=221>, Chapter 8 and 9

The Case for Gun Policy Reforms in America, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, October 2012, <http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-gun-policy-and-research/publications/WhitePaper020514_CaseforGunPolicyReforms.pdf>

Final Exam Review

**Final Examination May 8-15, 2019**

**Team Research Project**

An essential component of the course is a team research project. Working in small groups students will select a topic from the list below (or a topic approved by the professor). Students will present their findings during a 20-minute group presentation. Students will be graded on the thoroughness of their research and persuasiveness of any arguments made as well as the quality of their presentation.

* Stop, Question and Frisk: Effective strategy to reduce violent gun crime or civil rights violation?
* Do more guns make us safer?
* The case for greater gun control.
* Gun crime and mental health.
* Barriers to greater gun control.
* The case for assault weapons and high capacity magazine bans.
* Is the gun the problem?
* The case for greater concealed carry.
* A strategy for making our communities safe from gun crime.
* What would the founding fathers think?
* Does gun registration work?
* Red Flag Laws: Effective gun violence reduction strategy or civil rights violation?
* Causes and solutions to Chicago’s gun violence problem.
* Bias in the media: Is gun crime reported accurately?
* Causes and solutions to school gun violence.
* Should we arm teachers?
* Are we serious about reducing gun violence?
* The case for raising the age to purchase and possess guns.
* The case for a national concealed carry law.
* Closing the gun show loophole: Will it make us safer?
* Do we need a national gun training law?
* Why do mass shootings occur?
* Should gun owners be licensed?
* Are police killings racially biased?
* Is the entertainment industry teaching us to kill?
* The case for a one-gun-a-month purchase law.
* Do gang intervention and training programs help reduce gun crime?
* Gun violence as a public health issue.

A resource that you may want to consult to assist you with preparing your power point presentations is <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/writing-a-powerpoint-presentation>