

Syllabus

Frank Edwards and Tanjina Akter, Fall 2025

Meetings: CLJ 579B, Wed. 12-12:45PM

Assignments: Student will complete a weekly reading reaction essay, to be submitted by 11AM each Wednesday before class. In these essays (1-2 pages), the student should summarize main arguments from the weekly reading and identify core questions that they would like to discuss with the instructor.

Core Reading List for Independent Study

Topic: Survivor-Defined Justice After Gun Violence

The research on the racialized distribution of state violence, especially his work on police-involved deaths, child protective services, and family monitoring, is expanded upon and complemented by this project. This independent project investigates what happens to individuals left behind: survivors of gun violence who must negotiate justice, grief, and healing in the aftermath of the violence. This research explores how the welfare and criminal justice systems frequently cause more suffering while also expressing worry about their inability to provide safety or accountability. My research looks into how survivors, particularly those from overpoliced and underprivileged communities, perceive justice outside the courts and seek healing through advocacy, memorialization, and community-based solutions. In this approach, the research broadens the analytical lens on state violence to include the emotional, social, and political consequences experienced by those most affected by it.

A key article bridging these perspectives is "The Health and Human Rights of Survivors of Gun Violence: Charting a Research and Policy Agenda" (Fox & Frattaroli, 2013), which contends that survivors face institutional abandonment and advocates for justice models based on survivor needs and public health.

Week 1: Conceptual Foundations — What is Justice After Violence?

Goal: Explore how different frameworks define justice, especially for survivors of interpersonal and structural violence.

Read:

- Mia Mingus, "Transformative Justice: A Brief Description" (*online blog post/talk*)

- Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (Ch. 1–3: “A Forgotten History,” “Terror,” “Disconnection”)

Weeks 2-4: Systems, Carcerality, and Structural Violence——

Goal: Analyze how institutional systems (legal, carceral, racial, economic) shape survivors' access to justice—and where those systems fall short.

Readings:

- Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*
- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag* (Introduction + Ch. 1)
- Leigh Goodmark, *Decriminalizing Domestic Violence* (Intro + Ch. 3 or 4)

Weeks 5-8: Survivor Voices, Grief, and Advocacy——

Goal: Center survivor experiences—grief, advocacy, healing—to understand justice as a lived and evolving concept.

Readings:

- Selections from *Everytown for Gun Safety* or *Mothers of the Movement* (e.g., testimony, interviews)
- William Feigelman et al., *Devastating Loss*
- Reflections from the Field on Victim/Survivor Advocacy - Summary Report from an Advocates Roundtable convened by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice
- **Lived experiences of people impacted by gun violence”**
PLOS ONE (2024)
A qualitative study capturing how survivors experience grief, trauma, and define justice.
- **“The mental health consequences of interpersonal gun violence”**
Preventive Medicine Reports (2024)
A review of psychological consequences such as PTSD and depression among survivors.
- The health and human rights of survivors of gun violence: charting a research and policy agenda. Health and human rights,

- **PLOS ONE (2024).**
Lived experiences of people impacted by gun violence.

Weeks 9-10: Community Violence and Structural Inequality —

- **“A scoping review of qualitative studies on community firearm violence”**
Journal of Community Health (2025)
Summarizes survivor and community-level responses to firearm violence and structural disinvestment.
- **“The health and human rights of survivors of gun violence: Charting a research & policy agenda”**
Health and Human Rights Journal
Advocates for survivor-centered policy grounded in public health and human rights frameworks.

Weeks 11-13: Prevention and Community-Based Responses ———

Goal: Investigate public health and community-driven strategies for interrupting cycles of violence.

Readings:

- Deborah Prothrow-Stith & Howard Spivak, *Murder Is No Accident*
- Gary Slutkin, “Violence is a Contagious Disease” (TED Talk + Cure Violence reports)
- David Kennedy, *Don’t Shoot*
- **“Do Cure Violence Programs Reduce Gun Violence?”**
Working Paper (2024)
A quantitative evaluation of community-based interventions that reduce shootings through public health models.
- **“Survivor-Centered Transformative Justice: Designing Alongside DV Stakeholders”**
Preprint (2023)

Weeks 14-15: Restorative and Transformative Approaches——

- **The impact of a restorative justice program on crime victims**
UIW Dissertation Study (2021)
- **Summary Report from an Advocates Roundtable convened by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice**