How does violence play a role in society? Does violence have a productive purpose, or should it be eliminated altogether? Why are there so many portrayals of organized violence in literature and philosophy? Moreover, how is violence related to the concept of "sacrifice," an ideology that often occurs in discourse about religion, war, sports, politics and other important institutions? Are violence and sacrifice integral to human behavior? To culture? To gender roles? In this course we will examine portrayals of violence in plays, movies, short stories, and religious texts along with theories of sacrifice and violence from the perspectives of anthropology, sociology, theology, history, ritual criticism, literary criticism, and gender analysis.

Requirements
Class Participation: 20%. This class will not work if you do not come prepared by having read the material, having thought about it, and being ready to discuss it at length. As you read, make note of the following: What was the main point/overall concern of this work? What are some of the main events or points in the text? What is one thing you liked about it? One thing that you did not? What questions do you have about it? Please bring a copy of the text to class with you so that we can examine it in detail together. Missing more than two classes will affect your grade.

Midterm Writing Assignment (5-7 pages): 30%.

Final Paper (10-15 pages): 50% on either one of the works from the semester, or an overarching theme from the semester, or a comparison of works. This will be due in multiple stages: first, a thesis claim and outline, second, a rough draft to be discussed in class and then a final draft.

Readings
Euripides, “Iphigenia at Aulis” and “Iphigenia at Taurus”
Euripides, “Medea”
Mia Bloom, Bombshell: Women and Terrorism
Adriana Cavarero, Horrorism
Talal Asad, On Suicide Bombing
The Bible
The Quran
Jeffrey Carter ed., Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader
Nancy Jay, ‘Throughout Your Generations Forever’: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity
Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery”
Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, “Why Do We Call the Holocaust ‘The Holocaust?’: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Labels”
Strenski, “Sacrifice, Gift, and the Social Logic of Suicide Bombers”
Lawrence Stager, “Child Sacrifice at Carthage: Religious Rite or Population Control?”
Moshe Halbertal, On Sacrifice
René Girard, Violence and the Sacred
Franklin D. Roosevelt, “A Call for Sacrifice”
Council of Trent, "Doctrine on the Sacrifice of the Mass", "Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass"
J. Z. Smith, “The Bare Facts of Ritual;” “The Domestication of Sacrifice”
Catherine Bell, Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice
Toni Morrison, Beloved

**Course Schedule:**
The course is scheduled to cover three main topics: stories of human sacrifice, animal sacrifice as ritual, and sacrifice as ideology

**T. 1/20**
Introduction to the Course; Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery”

**R. 1/22**
René Girard, selection from Violence and the Sacred

**VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN**

**T. 1/27**
Euripides, “Iphigenia at Aulis”

**R. 1/29**
The Story of Jephthah’s Daughter (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: Judges 11-12)

**T. 2/3**
Euripides, “Iphigenia at Taurus”

**R. 2/5**
The Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22) in the Bible, in Islam and Christianity: Qur’an Sura 37; Galatians 4; Council of Trent, “Doctrine on the Sacrifice of the Mass”

**T. 2/10**
Nancy Jay, “Sacrifice as Remedy for Having Been Born of a Woman”

**R. 2/12**
Euripides, “Medea” (BB)

**T. 2/17**
Carthaginian Sacrifice: Lawrence Stager, “Child Sacrifice at Carthage: Religious Rite or Population Control?” (BB)

**R. 2/19**
Selection from Katha Pollitt, Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights
ANIMAL SACRIFICE/ANIMAL SLAUGHTER

T. 3/3

R. 3/5
Origins of Sacrifice: Jonathan Z. Smith, “The Domestication of Sacrifice;” Walter Burkert, selection from *Homo Necans*; Story of Passover in Exodus 1-2; 7-14

T. 3/10
Carol J. Adams, Selection from *The Sexual Politics of Meat*

R. 3/12
Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, continued

T. 3/17
NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

R. 3/19
NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

VIOLENCE, SACRIFICE AND RHETORIC

T. 3/24
Marcel Mauss, “The Gift”

R. 3/26
Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, “Why Do We Call the Holocaust ‘The Holocaust’?: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Labels;” Franklin D. Roosevelt, “A Call for Sacrifice”

T. 3/31
Ivan Strenski, “Sacrifice, Gift, and the Social Logic of Suicide Bombers”

R. 4/2

T. 4/7
Halbertal, *On Sacrifice*, Part II

*Rhetoric Claim and Outline Due*

R. 4/9
Halbertal, *On Sacrifice*, Part II, continued
T. 4/14 Talal Asad, *On Suicide Bombing*

R. 4/16 Asad, *On Suicide Bombing*

T. 4/21 Mia Bloom, selection from *Bombshell Bombers*
  Chapter 5 “The Future Bombers” and Chapter 8, “The Four R’s Plus One”
  Available through the UNH library as an ebook here:

R. 4/23 Adriana Cavarrero, *Horrorism*

T. 4/28 Cavarrero, *Horrorism*

R. 4/30 Cavarrero, *Horrorism*

*Paper draft due*

T. 5/5 Discussion and presentation of papers

R. 5/7 Discussion and presentation of papers

*FINAL PAPER DUE BY THE END OF EXAM PERIOD*