

SOCIAL PROBLEMS (SOC 103)

Spring 2009

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS 11:00-12:20pm

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ACADEMIC THEME FOR 2008-09: PARADOX OF AFFLUENCE

Course Overview: Introduction to a wide variety of social problems and the phenomena that create these problems, as well as an exploration of some of the possible solutions to such problems.

Course Objective: Students will be able to define, describe, and apply fundamental sociological concepts and investigatory methods to a variety of social problems.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:

1. **Class participation= 20%.** This grade depends on your presence in class and **in-class assignments** that you complete. You learn best if you take an active part in your education! This is an interactive class. I do not merely stand up in front of class and lecture. You will be required to participate in discussions, games and exercises. **If you miss an in-class assignment, you may not make it up unless you have an excused absence.** Please take note that **the in-class assignments are not all announced beforehand**, nor are they all on the syllabus.
2. **System-blame vs. Person-blame Paper= 20%** You must write a paper approximately 6 pages long about a social problem. This paper will require research and analysis. Guidelines are on Blackboard.
3. **Service Learning Paper or Class Presentation= 30%** You must do a minimum of eight hours of community service and write a sociological paper about your experience, or you can do a class presentation on a social problem in another country (by yourself or with a small group). Guidelines for both are on Blackboard.
4. **Exams= 30%.** There will be three exams this semester. These exams will be short answers and essays based on topics covered in lectures, discussions, films and articles. In addition, **there may be some pop quizzes.**
5. **Extra Credit=** an additional half letter grade on your final grade for every three campus activities you attend. You must write a one-page essay describing and analyzing the activity using at least three sociological concepts. I will accept extra credit essays until the last day of class.

IMPORTANT MISCELLANEOUS:

1. This syllabus is to act as a rough guide for the semester; it is not set in stone. The dates may shift a bit, or I may change some of the articles we read or the assignments we do. Each group of students moves at a different pace and gets fascinated by certain topics. I want to honor this particular group's dynamic. **If you are the type of student that gets frustrated by syllabus changes, please do not take this class.** Having fun with this class requires flexibility!
2. There will be some **guest speakers** in class this semester. Often, they need to change their schedules around, so be forewarned that the dates of their appearances may change. I will alert you of any guest speaker changes when they arise.
3. **If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting class notes, articles, and any assignments I give during class from a fellow student.** I will not re-teach a class to you!
4. **Excused absences:** Only a signed doctor's note (for you, your child or an elderly or disabled person for whom you are responsible) or proof of family emergency or religious commitment will be acceptable. **Those are the only reasons you may reschedule an exam or turn in an assignment late. Otherwise, I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK. It is unfair to other students who have worked hard to complete assignments on time. If you have a valid reason to turn in an assignment late or take an exam at a different time, you MUST TALK TO ME BEFORE THE DUE DATE.**

Attendance

In addition to knowing your attendance practices from in-class assignments that you complete, I will also take attendance every class period. As you know, attendance figures prominently in your final class grade.

Course Evaluation

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>		<u>Quality Points</u>
A	94-	100	4.0
A-	90-	93	3.7
B+	87-	89	3.3
B	83-	86	3.0
B-	80-	82	2.7
C+	77-	79	2.3
C	73-	76	2.0
C-	70-	72	1.7
D+	67-	69	1.3
D	63-	66	1.0
D-	60-62		0.7
F			0.0

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is essential to a useful education. Failure to act with academic integrity severely limits a person's ability to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Furthermore, academic dishonesty erodes the legitimacy of every degree awarded by the College. In this class and in the course of your academic career, present only your own best work; **clearly document the sources of the material you use from others**; and act at all times with honor. **If you ever present someone else's work as your own** (This comes in the form of cheating on assignments or exams and/or plagiarizing when writing essays and papers.), you will **automatically fail** that particular assignment.

Disabilities Statement

In addition to contacting me, if you have a disability which may affect your work in this course, please contact Chris Scarborough (892-5751) if you have a learning disability or ADD. Please contact Judy Hilburger (892-5744) or Matt Liscum (383-5240) if you have a physical, visual, hearing, or psychiatric disability.

Cellular Phones and Beepers

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center **only if they are turned off or turned to a silent mode**. Vibrating mode is not allowed, as it can sometimes be heard! **Under no circumstances are you to answer your phone or text message in class. If I see you answering your phone or text messaging, I will take your phone til the end of class.**

When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

Email Communication

Email to my TRCC account—not through Blackboard!

When and if you ever send me an email, you must send it from an email account that looks legitimate. I will not open emails from accounts such as hotbabe@yahoo.com or pimpmaster@hotmail.com or any other email address that reads suspiciously like a pornography address. I highly suggest that you get an email account for school communication that includes your name or some other respectable words.

REQUIRED TEXT: Eitzen & Zinn, Social Problems, 11th ed.; and Marx, The Communist Manifesto (I will give you all additional readings that you need for class.)

CLASS SCHEDULE

1/22 & 1/27: Sociological Approach to Social Problems: class introduction; in-class assignments: system blame vs. person blame; explanation of the role of power; reading due: chapter 1

1/29 & 2/3: A Conflict Approach to Social Problems, and Wealth and Power: readings due: chapter 2, and The Communist Manifesto

2/5: World Pop. and Global Inequality: reading due: chapter 3; film: *Global Village or Global Pillage*

2/10: guest speaker: Bill Wernau of Heifer International

2/12: Threats to the Environment: readings due: chapter 4, *White Man's Burden*

2/17: Problems of Place: reading due: chapter 6

2/19: Rob Walsh to talk about papers

2/24 & 2/26: EXAM #1

3/3: Demographic Changes: reading due: chapter 5; immigration debate

3/5 & 3/10: Poverty: readings due: chapter 7; *Making Ends Meet*; *Ever Higher Society*, *Ever Harder to Ascend*; TANF, budget game, create welfare legislation

3/12: Racial & Ethnic Inequality: reading due: chapter 8; in-class exercise on White Privilege; film: *The Angry Eye*

3/17 & 3/19: NO CLASSES...Happy Spring Break!

3/24: Gender Inequality: reading due: chapter 9; discussion on family violence

3/26: Sexual Orientation and Disability; reading due: chapters 10 & 11

3/31: Crime & Justice reading due: chapter 12; Capital Punishment debate

4/2: Drugs: readings due: chapter 13, *Drug Use De-criminalized*; in-class: respond to opinion piece

4/7: guest speaker: Tom Ullmann, Public Defender of New Haven

4/9 & 4/14: EXAM #2

4/16: work on class presentations; discuss system-blame vs. person-blame papers

4/21: National Security in the 21st Century: readings due: chapter 18; *Is Torture Ever Justified?*

4/23, 4/28: Genocide and refugee crises; in-class assignment on decisions refugees must make; film: *Hotel Rwanda*

4/30 & 5/5: CLASS PRESENTATIONS; Service Learning Papers due

5/7: CLASS WRAP-UP: readings due: *The Young Can't Wait* and chapter 19

5/12 & 5/14: EXAM #3

NOTE: System-blame vs. Person-blame papers due on my desk or in my mailbox by 9am on 5/15.