

SOC 2890
Social Problems - Honors
Dr. Lisa New Freeland
Fall 2012

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Office Hours: MW 2-3pm
WF 11am-12pm
& by appt.

Course Description

This course will introduce you to current social problems and is designed so that each student may have a clear understanding of the social problems of the world, differing perspectives of the issues, the context of each, and possible individual and collective responses. Classroom time will be divided among a variety of activities, readings, writing, films, and simulation games. For a full experience in this class each student should complete assigned readings, attend regularly, and participate fully. As we come to this class from differing backgrounds and perspectives, respectful listening and speaking practices MUST be maintained. It is my hope that this class will provide an understanding of social problems, the individual and collective impact of the problems, and the reward of societal involvement in both effort and outcome. If you live in our society, you are involved. You must, however, make a choice as to whether you will be part of the problem or part of the solution.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide each student with the tools necessary to:

1. Define current and future social problems,
2. Identify elements within each problem,
3. Understand each problem using a sociological perspective,
4. Determine ways to investigate and analyze social problems, and
5. Produce possible responses, both individual and collective, to address the problems.

Texts:

Macionis, John J. 2005. Social Problems, second edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. NY, NY: Penguin Press.

<u>Evaluation</u>	%
Student indicators	30
Media Paper	30
Book review	30
Socratic final	10

A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=<60%

Format

Experiential learning will be the cornerstone of this course. We will have an opening simulation exercise to introduce each topic followed by a debriefing. That remaining class period and the following week will continue discussion of the topic with instructor presentations, videos, class discussions, and student indicators. I am not disseminating topics and readings now, as I want the class to use simulations prior to reading for optimal experiential effect.

Assignments

Student Indicators:

Each student is responsible for bringing a social indicator to class on Wednesday during the second week of topic coverage. The indicator should be a demonstration of the social principle(s) from the topic content. Current issues, content analysis, documentaries, and a variety of other indicators can be used. You should have a brief summary of the indicator and analysis of how it demonstrates concepts from the topic. Your indicator could be a power point of images, a single cartoon, a television show ANYTHING demonstrating the topic content. It should be accompanied by a typed double-spaced paper no longer than two pages. Appropriate references to vocabulary and concepts from your chapters should be used and ALL outside sources should be cited and referenced. Seven indicators will be due over the course of the semester. The more detailed, creative, and/or thorough indicators will score highest.

Media Paper:

The midterm assignment for the class is a media paper in which students analyze a popular media book, television show, or film of choice. A complete analysis of the media presentation will include a central theme for analysis and supporting details from the choice of media. Papers should be typed double spaced and no longer than seven pages. Again appropriate vocabulary, concept use, detailed analysis, and creativity will increase scores.

Analytical Book Review:

The assigned primary text for the course will be used as a case study to examine the concepts from the semester. An analytical book review will be similar to the media paper in the use of vocabulary, critical thinking analysis, and will be held to the same technical standards of the media paper. The paper should include links to each of the six content areas covered throughout the course.

Final exam:

A comprehensive oral exam during the regularly scheduled exam time covering will serve as your final. I will pose specific questions to the class and grade your responses. The time will be organized as a Socratic dialogue.

Class Policies

Attendance is expected at each class meeting. Material provided will extend beyond the information in the text. You are responsible for all material, announcements, and decisions made in class regardless of your attendance. Find a buddy, make a friend, form a group.

Your participation is expected at each class meeting. I will be prepared for a period of education and thought provoking discussion. Each student should be prepared both with readings and frame of mind. The emphasis in this course is on education rather than evaluation.

Academic dishonesty in any form (including cheating and plagiarism) will not be tolerated.

Please review department and university guidelines on this subject. Consequences of academic dishonesty range from a zero on the assignment to university expulsion.

Consequences will be decided according to the severity of the offense. Every incident is reported to the Department of Judicial Affairs regardless of severity.

Papers and homework assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class period via WebCT. No assignments will be accepted late for any reason. I will take assignments early.

Excused absences due to school sponsored activities are handled according to university policy.

You should notify me in advance.

Accommodations are made for students with special needs per the guidelines of the Office of Disability Services. Please provide your documentation and see me to make arrangements.

To ensure that the classroom environment is conducive to learning, the following *behaviors are prohibited* in sociology and anthropology classes: Eating, sleeping, reading unrelated materials, exiting and reentering during class, tardiness, discussions not assigned by the professor, and littering.

If you have *questions*, need further explanations, or require additional help with the material, please see me as soon as possible. As with most college courses, this material builds upon itself. Waiting for help puts you at an immediate disadvantage for future content.

Disabilities Statement

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) if they wish to discuss any necessary academic accommodations.

Medical Emergencies Statement

For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone and call 911. All faculty offices have telephones and during normal business hours (8-12 and 1-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor and room number of the emergency to the 911 operator. If possible, someone should go to the central entrance of Blair Hall to direct EMS personnel to the medical emergency scene. If the medical emergency is on the second or third floor, someone else should hold the elevator on the first floor for EMS use.

Tornado Statement

In case of a tornado warning, proceed to the center of the hallway on the first floor, near the posted severe weather signs. Under no circumstances should you attempt to leave the building.

Building Fire Statement

In case of fire, activate the fire alarm and exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building and cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north and south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closest exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north and south ends of the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Group assembly areas for all classes in Blair are either on the patio area between Blair and Old Main or on the southeast corner of the North Quad. As you exit the building, continue moving well away from the exits so that you do not impede the egress of other students or the work of fire officials. Move a safe distance away from the building.