

Social Problems (SOC 2750G-007; Blair Hall, Room 1165)  
Fall 2012

**Instructor:** Dr. Craig M. Eckert (please don't call me, "Mr. Eckert." That makes me feel old. Dr. E is fine.)

**Office hours:** My office is in Blair Hall, Room 3170. I am the Chair of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology. You can make an appointment with Angie Rhoads, our great Office Administrator, if you need to see me. My office hours are Monday from 3 to 4 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

**Office phone:** 217-581-3123 (please do not be calling me for anything but the most important things.)

**Goals/Objectives of the Course:** This course is a basic general education class. For many of you, this will be the only sociology class you take during your college career. This course should provide the following:

- A basic understanding of important, pressing social problems.
- A basic understanding of the way in which sociologists study/research social problems.
- A basic understanding of the ways in which sociologists conceptualize social problems.
- Most importantly, a basic understanding of **structural, systemic** approaches to social problems. This will be at odds with the way most of you understand human behavior (from an *individualistic* perspective). Sadly, many of you will never quite "get" the systemic approach – really, the sociological approach, to the study of social problems, even after spending 15 weeks in a sociology class.

**Book:** Macionis, *Social Problems* (4<sup>th</sup> edition)

Mechanics of the Class (the "dos" and "don'ts")

1. **Attendance** – It is very important that you attend class. You earn **1 point** for every class you attend. I do try to take attendance every class period. I can unequivocally share this with you after 33 years in higher education: Students who attend class do, on average, a full letter grade higher than those who don't. If you miss class, you are responsible for any work you miss. If you miss class for a university excused reason (illness, athletic team travel, etc.), you should make sure I know that. I will not give you the point, but I will make note of an excused absence in case you are on the proverbial "borderline" with respect to final grades.
2. **Quizzes** – To make sure that you are coming to class, and to encourage you to stay abreast of the assigned material, I will give quizzes on assigned material. *All quizzes count in the determination of your final grade.*
3. **Exams** – There will be THREE exams given during the semester. *All the exams count in the determination of your final grade.* The final exam (given during the University's Exam Schedule) is NOT cumulative. I will always give at least ONE WEEK notice before a scheduled exam.
4. **Make-up work** – ALL make up work will be administered on the final Friday of the semester (December 7<sup>th</sup>) at 4 p.m. (Room to be determined). This is a pain for both me and you. Thus, if I were you, I would do EVERYTHING in my power to show up for the quizzes and exams as scheduled. I do NOT waiver from this policy. To reiterate: ALL MAKE-UP WORK IS ADMINISTERED ON THE FINAL FRIDAY OF THE SEMESTER, DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>.
5. **Final Grade** – Your final grade will as follows: 90% or more of the total points possible for the class = A; 79-89% = B; 69-79% = C; 58-69% = D; and less than 58% = F.

6. **WebCT** – This will be where you can find the results of your work in the class. Obviously, I will go over questions from quizzes that many students miss and you can expect them to show up again on subsequent exams.
7. **Lateness** – I expect you to be in class on time. IF you make a habit of arriving late, I will speak with you about that and expect such behavior to stop. IF you arrive late, NEVER walk in front of me when I am speaking. It is rude and inconsiderate. Find a place to sit and get there quietly without interrupting the class. Once in class, the following applies:
  - a. ***Make sure your cell phone is off.*** If I catch you texting during class, I will single you out. IF something is that important that you need to be texting, you should NOT be in class. IF this becomes a problem, I will have you make an appointment to come and discuss this issue with me.
  - b. Don't be getting up and moving around the room when I am lecturing (Truly, I can't believe that I having to address this on a university syllabus). I will almost always give a 5 minute break during each class period. This gives you time to "go potty," check your voice mail/text messages, stretch, etc.
  - c. If you are using a laptop, don't be surfing the 'net, etc. IF I find out you are doing so, you will NOT be allowed to use your laptop in class from that time on.
  - d. You are NOT allowed to be recording me without my expressed permission.
  - e. Once class starts, don't be talking when I am. It's rude and inconsiderate. I will pay attention to you when you are talking and I expect the same from you.
  - f. Always give me at least 10 minutes to be "late" for class. Because I am a department Chair, it is always possible that I am coming from a meeting at another part of campus and am running feverishly to get to our class. IF I am going to be missing class, I ALWAYS send an e-mail prior to class so that people who commute do not make the trip to Charleston.
  - g. *IF you need to e-mail me, don't write to me like it's a text message. Use standard written English. Show me, by the way you write, that you are intelligent and should be at a University. If you don't follow this, I can virtually assure you that I will NOT respond to your e-mail.*

Topics for FIRST EXAM:

Macionis – Chapter 1 – "Sociology: Studying Social Problems"  
Chapter 15 – "Population and Global Inequality"  
Chapter 17 – "War and Terrorism"

Topics for SECOND EXAM:

Macionis – Chapter 2 – "Poverty and Wealth"  
Chapter 3 – "Racial and Ethnic Inequality" (including lecture{s} on Sports & Race)

Topics for THIRD EXAM:

Macionis – Chapter 10 - "Economy and Politics"  
Chapter 13 – "Education"  
Chapter 7 – "Sexuality" (time permitting)

NOTE: I reserve the right to add/delete chapters as the semester unfolds.