

Professor: Dr. William E. Lovekamp

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or by appt.

All majors in sociology must take SOC 4900, the capstone course for sociology majors. This course is designed to help you recognize all that you have learned in the discipline, put those pieces together and best establish how to use the knowledge and tools after graduation. The content of the course will be centered on current issues in today's modern world meeting the catalog description "Analysis of selected current social problems...restricted to majors in Sociology and Social Science" and you will use the knowledge and skills gained in your previous departmental courses to examine these issues sociologically.

Course Description & Objectives:

This course is designed to provide each student with the opportunity to show mastery of each departmental learning objective as it relates to a current social issue. Students should:

1. Demonstrate sociological consciousness/imagination, recognizing the link between individual experiences/issues and larger social forces,
2. Demonstrate a sociological perspective promoting multicultural understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of diversity,
3. Demonstrate the ability to think critically,
4. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theories and application,
5. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of skills necessary for conducting sociological research, and
6. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of skills necessary for statistical applications and literacy.

Required Texts:

Best, Joel. 2012. *Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, And Activists*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cohn, Jonathon. 2007. *Sick*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. NY: Penguin Press.

Additional readings provided on D2L.

Course Expectations:

Seminar format - This course is designed as a seminar centered on lectures, reading & extensive class discussion. You are expected to come to class prepared to participate in the discussion & it is very important that you keep up with your readings. If you come to class unprepared to participate, you will be asked to leave.

Collegiality - You are expected to respect the viewpoints expressed by others. If you disagree with what someone has said, you are encouraged to express your disagreement but are expected to do so in a civil, respectful, & polite manner. Failure to comply will result in course dismissal.

Attendance/Participation - You are expected to attend class daily and participate fully.

Attendance will be recorded daily. If you miss more than **three classes**, you will automatically fail the course. You will obviously miss critical information if you have excessive absences and this will be reflected in your exam and homework grades. Also, walking into class late is disrespectful to both your professor & your colleagues & will not be tolerated.

Readings - I write each lecture with the expectation that you have completed the assigned readings for the day. We will use class time to discuss & build on the readings. Reading is required to participate in class and for successful completion of this course.

Cell Phones/Texting/Technology - **NOT ALLOWED! Turn off or silence all cell phones** before entering class & **DO NOT use them for texting** during class. If I see someone texting, the entire class will have a pop quiz. You also **may NOT use laptops or tape recorders** in class.

Plagiarism/Cheating - Plagiarism is the use, without adequate attribution, of another person's words or thoughts as if they were your own. **You will automatically fail the course if you submit any work that shows any evidence of plagiarism or cheating** & documentation will be filed with the Office of Student Standards as a violation of the student code of conduct.

Communication - I am always available to meet with you to discuss grades, lecture, exams or other the course matters. Please make use of my posted office hours, call my office phone, or use email to schedule appointments. If you use email, please be professional and follow standard email guidelines. 1) Put the course # in the subject line (SOC 4900), 2) include greeting (Dr. or Professor Lovekamp), 3) use standard English, write in complete sentences, avoid abbreviations and text slang (TTYL, LOL, 4)) and end with a signature (your full name).

Assignment submissions: All assignments are due via D2L and in ASA style citation/reference standards, and should demonstrate appropriate content, writing style, voice, vocabulary, and organization of a college course in sociology at the advanced senior level. You should provide a full reference for **all sources** used.

Course Requirements:

There are several different assignments you are required to complete for this course. All assignments are submitted through the dropbox feature on D2L unless otherwise noted. Also, if you fail to submit a homework/paper assignment by the due date and time, you will have **24 hours** to submit the work late **with a grade reduction of 20% or two letter grades**. Exams cannot be submitted late. Assignment descriptions follow.

1. Defining Sociology Paper

You are required to read the "Introduction" to *Great Jobs for Sociology Majors* by Stephen Lambert (available on D2L) on the value of a sociology degree, select an article from a print media source that is in some way related to your preferred job/career after graduation, and write a paper summarizing 5 points below (a-g). **(2-3 pages) 15 pts (5%)**

- First, read the assigned introduction by Stephen Lambert.
- Next, find an article in a print (online or ink) media source that addresses employment in your future field in *some* way.
- Write a paper of no more than three pages and no less than two pages of text (excluding titles and references) typed, double spaced, one inch margins, readable 10-12 point font.
- Your paper should make direct links from the article to the type of employment you seek and then to the discussion by Lambert. You should address:
 - a) how Lambert defines sociology,
 - b) what is missing from or what would you add to his definition of sociology,
 - c) how the framework of the job can be understood in the framework of society and/or groups,
 - d) how the job can appropriately use the body of knowledge from the discipline of sociology in everyday employment,
 - e) how the sociological imagination can better equip an employee in this field,

- f) how you can imagine yourself in this type of employment using the interest and passion for the discipline that you have garnered in your fulfillment of classes in the major, and
- g) any specific skills set or tools from your major classes that you believe to be transferable to this type of employment.
- You should provide full ASA references for any and all sources you used in the discussion with a minimum of your article and the Lambert article.

2. *Damned Lies and Statistics in the News Writing Assignment*

After our course coverage of *Damned Lies and Statistics*, you will select an article in print media source that includes statistics. As you know, statistics are routinely used to frame and define different social problems. However, statistics are often misleading or incorrect. You will assess the use of statistics in everyday consumption of media. **(2-3 pages) 15 pts (5%)**

- Find an article in a print (online or ink) media source that addresses a *component* of a social problem either internationally or domestically and provides enough statistics for you to evaluate using the concepts from Best.
- Write a paper of no more than three pages and no less than two pages of text (excluding titles and references) typed, double spaced, one inch margins, readable 10-12 point font.
- Your paper should:
 - a) Briefly summarize the key points of the article using the basic rhetorical recipe
 - a. Grounds
 - i. typifying example,
 - ii. name of the problem,
 - iii. statistics cited and used,
 - iv. additional grounds...
 - b. Warrants
 - c. Conclusions
 - b) Discuss who the claimsmakers are and what claims are being made using these statistics, were the statistics an accurate representation the social issue or problem or was it a mutant statistic,
 - c) Evaluate the statistics provided in the article using key concepts such as sampling and measurement problems,
 - d) Who is the intended audience and why.
- You should provide full ASA references for any sources you used in the discussion with a minimum of your article and the Best text.

3. *Research Paper Proposal*

You are required to write a research paper in which you address a specific social problem of your choice. You have a tremendous amount of latitude in selecting a social problem to research and write about. There is an almost endless list of social problems you may write about but ultimately you should select, research, and write about a social problem that is of interest to you - this will make the whole process more enjoyable. This is where you have the opportunity to shine and show off your sociological muscles! This is where you will demonstrate to me what you have really learned during your time here and in sociology. The four components are a proposal, annotated bibliography, paper, and poster presentation. **(1 page) 15 pts (5%)**

- Select a specific social problem that you are interested in researching and writing about. Your paper can be about a local, national, or global social problem - but pick a social problem that is of interest to you. I suggest that you narrow your focus to a specific topic though.

- Write a paper of at least one page of text (excluding titles and references) typed, double spaced, one inch margins, readable 10-12 point font.
- Your paper should:
 - a. Identify and explain the social problem that will be the focus of your research paper.
 - b. The research question or questions that you seek to answer.
- You should provide full ASA references for any sources you used in the discussion with a minimum of two sources.
- If you do not submit and have a proposal approved, you will not be able to turn any subsequent research paper assignments.

4. *Research Paper Annotated Bibliography*

You have previously discussed annotated bibliographies in research methods and other classes. You will now use those skills to complete an annotated bibliography in the area of a specific current social problem. An annotation is basically a brief summary or explanation so an annotated bibliography is a bibliography (references page) that includes a brief, evaluative summary of each of the sources cited. **30 points (10%)**

- You are expected to provide a complete citation (ASA formatted) for a minimum of 10 sources with 6 from within the discipline (half must be from peer reviewed journals) that address your particular issue.
- Following each citation, provide a one paragraph annotation that describes why the source is relevant to your social problem, making reference to applications of research method, data description, and findings.
- Your annotated bibliography should be and citations and annotations should be single spaced, with one inch margins and readable 10-12 point font.

5. *Research Paper*

You have learned the essentials of methodology, secondary data and statistical analysis, theoretical understandings and the essentials of stratification. You will use those skills to complete your research paper. **(13 page maximum) 90 points (30%)**

- Write a paper of a minimum of ten pages of text (excluding titles and references) typed, double spaced, one inch margins, readable 10-12 point font.
- Your paper should:
 - a) present a complete definition and discussion of a particular social problem as discussed in Best,
 - b) discuss the claimsmaking process including the stages of the social problems process and the basic rhetorical recipe (and other relevant details from Best and discussed in class),
 - c) include an overview of available supporting research and statistics related to this social problem with appropriate evaluative context as discussed in Best,
 - d) include a sociological theory that explains the phenomenon, context, and related path/cycle/influences of the problem,
 - e) solutions proposed by claimsmakers with a critical evaluation (include characteristics of the audience, type of issue, counterclaims or narratives, etc.) as discussed in Best,
 - f) and discuss the role of sociologists in the life of this social problem.
- You should provide full ASA references for any sources you used in the paper with a minimum of ten scholarly articles and the Best text.

6. *Research Poster Presentation*

You will produce a poster and answer questions posed by your peers, me and other departmental faculty on your social problem selected for your research paper. **15 points (5%)**

- You are required to provide a summary of your paper, including elements a, b, c, d, and e above, on your poster.
- You will evaluate your classmates' presentations on content (listed elements a-e above) and delivery (organization, clarity, aid, delivery). Those evaluations will comprise a portion of the assigned grade.

7. Take Home Exams from Current Issues Texts

After reading and discussing two texts (*Gang Leader for a Day* and sections of *Sick*), you will complete a take home exam. These two exams require you to reflect on and write about the learning objectives, a comprehensive sociological understanding of the issue, connections to the discipline of sociology and relevant course content. **40% (60 points or 20% for each exam)**

Grading Scheme

Defining Soc	5%	15 pts.	
Lies and Stats	5%	15 pts.	A=(100-90%) 300-270
Proposal	5%	15 pts.	B= (89-80%) 269-240
Ann Bib	10%	30 pts.	C= (79-70%) 239-210
Paper	30%	90 pts.	D= (69-60%) 209-180
Presentation	5%	15 pts.	F= (0-59%) 179 or below
Exam 1	20%	60 pts.	
Exam 2	20%	60 pts.	
TOTAL		300 pts.	

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 Emergency Statement For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone & call 911. All faculty offices have telephones & during normal business hours (8-12 & 1-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor & 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 & exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building & cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north & south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closest exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north & 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 & 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.

	LECTURE & READINGS	ACTIVITIES & HOMEWORK
W1 - 8/24	Syllabus, Expectations, Sociology, Social Problems and Curriculum	
W2 - 8/31	Claimsmaking (Best Social Problems 1 and 2)	Defining Sociology Paper Due
W3 - 9/7	Statistics and Stat-Spotting, discussion of <i>Lies and Statistics</i> (Intro-Ch.3)	
W4 - 9/14	Discussion of <i>Lies and Statistics</i> (Ch. 4-6)	
W5 - 9/21	Social Problems and Crime, research papers	Damned Lies and Statistics Paper Due
W6 9/28	Begin <i>Gang Leader</i> (Prologue, Ch. 1-2)	Research Paper Proposal Due
W7 - 10/5	Continue discussion of <i>Gang Leader</i> (Ch. 3-5)	
W8 - 10/12	Continue discussion of <i>Gang Leader</i> (Ch. 6-8)	Gang Leader Exam
W9 - 10/19	Social Problems and Healthcare, research papers	Annotated Bibliography Due
W10 - 10/26	Begin discussion of <i>Sick</i> (intro –Ch.1)	
W11 - 11/2	Continue discussion of <i>Sick</i> (Ch.2-3)	
W12 - 11/9	Finish discussion of <i>Sick</i> and Health care (Ch.4-6)	Sick Exam
W13 - 11/16	Revisit Social Problems Process, Research papers	
W14 - 11/30	Social Problems and Sociology	Research Papers Due
W15 - 12/7	Research Poster Presentations	Poster Presentations

9/2/16 deadline to drop a course w/ no grade; 11/4/16 deadline to withdraw from course w/ W.

Thanksgiving Break November 21-25

****This syllabus serves as a contract between the student & instructor. The student is responsible for all information contained within this syllabus. Any changes the professor makes will be announced in class.**