

CRITICAL PROBLEMS IN MODERN SOCIETY

Department of Sociology
Case Western Reserve University
Spring 2010

COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number: SOCI 113
Credits: 3 Hours
Lecture Times: T, Th 8:30-9:45 am
Lecture Room: Mather Memorial 125
Prerequisites: None

Instructor: Jackie Arendt
Office Hours: by appt. only
Phone: 440-668-7136
E-mail: jaa36@case.edu

REQUIRED TEXT:

Macionis, John J. (2010) *Social Problems*. Fourth edition.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

This course will offer an analysis of contemporary American social problems such as race, poverty, drugs, sex, violence, crime and delinquency. Sociological approach used to understand underlying factors and history of problems and to evaluate individual and societal solutions.

OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES:

Upon satisfactory completion of SOCI 113-Critical Problems in Modern Society, the student should be able to perform the following outcomes and supporting objectives:

- Describe the advantages and limitations of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of social problems.
- Demonstrate link between personal problems or troubles and public issues.
- Describe the limitations of research and data in the field.
- Identify micro, macro, and mid-level social issues.
- Discuss why attempts at social control have been insufficient.
- Describe the historical and contemporary forms and functions of social problems.
- Discuss the role of diversity in the identification and approach to social problems.
- Analyze the social, ethical, and moral issues related to social problems, social control, and social engineering.
- Discuss manifest and latent consequences of various attempts to resolve specific social problems in society.
- Write critical analysis of at least one social problem and societal attempts to resolve the problem.

COURSE CONTENT:

- History of social problems and their study
- Cross-cultural perspective
- Micro and macro issues and their analysis
- Problems of intragroup and intergroup relationships
- Competition, conflict, finite resources vs. cooperation and equality
- Mechanisms of social control and their efficacy
- Theoretical explanations for social problems and their resolution
- Social policies, programs, and dilemmas

INSTRUCTOR'S EXPECTATIONS:

Enrollment Policy: Students whose names do not appear on the class roster will not be permitted to participate (take exams or receive credit) without first showing proof of registration.

Attendance: Regular class attendance is required. Attendance will be taken **randomly** throughout the semester. If you are going to miss class on a scheduled exam day or the day an assignment is due, you **MUST** notify the instructor **BEFORE** class begins. If you do not, you forfeit all rights to argue for late acceptance, and you will receive a zero for that assignment or exam.

IN ADDITION: I expect everyone to arrive and be ready for class by the start of class. It is very distracting to other students as well as to the instructor for students to be arriving late. Also, I will not allow random coming and going during class. Once you are in the class, you may not leave until class is over. If you have a valid reason for needing to leave (ex. doctor's appt.), please explain to me prior to class that you will need to leave early.

Bottom line: If your behavior would be unacceptable at work or during a work meeting, it is also unacceptable during any college class. If you cannot behave appropriately, you should reconsider taking this course.

Cell Phones: Do not bring them to class, or turn them off while class is in session. Text messaging during any class is unacceptable as well as distracting, and it will not be tolerated. If you insist on answering calls, text messages, or other forms of communication while in class, you may be subject to removal from the class at the Professor's discretion.

If you are caught text messaging during class, I will confiscate your phone for the remainder of the class.

Email Communication: As college students, I expect that any communication with me through email will be done in a professional and respectful manner. I will not respond to emails that exhibit any of the informal chat patterns displayed in text

messages and on the internet including, but not limited to, the use and misuse of proper grammar and sentence structure, punctuation and capitalization, emoticons, and acronyms (ex. BTW, IMHO). **In the subject line of your email please insert the course number/name.**

Student Conduct: It is expected that you will comply with the Student Conduct and Academic Honor Code in this course. No disrespect of fellow students or the instructor will be tolerated, including talking during class unless as participation. If behavior inconsistent with the Student Conduct and academic Honor Code (including threats, cheating, plagiarism, and disrespect) is observed, you will be dismissed from the class at the Instructor's discretion. Refer to the University Handbook for further information.

Students with Disabilities or Special Needs: Please contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange the necessary accommodations.

Extra Credit: Opportunities to receive extra credit may or may not be given out during the semester. This will be decided at the instructor's discretion. Furthermore, no extra credit will be given to individual students without the entire class having the same opportunity.

Plagiarism: As college students, you are expected to turn in work that is your own, and to give credit to sources that you use. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: submission of an assignment as the student's original work that is entirely or partly the work of another person; failure to use appropriate referencing of published/unpublished works or print/non-print materials; and unauthorized copying of an assignment in computer programming or the unauthorized examination/viewing of the computer, specifically during examinations. Plagiarism is very serious and all matters involving suspected cases of plagiarism will be automatically referred to the Dean's Office.

Withdrawal: Refer to college schedule for this semester for last date to withdraw from class with a "W". Please see Professor Arendt before withdrawing from class. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

EXAMS: There will be three (3) exams worth 100 points each as designated on the syllabus. Unless with a documented absence, **THERE WILL BE NO PERMISSION TO MAKE UP ANY EXAMS.**

If you must miss an exam because of extreme and unavoidable circumstances, you must notify me *PRIOR* to the beginning of the exam in order to be considered for a make-up exam. Showing up the week after the exam or emailing me the next day with your excuse is unacceptable, and will result in a zero for that exam. If you do not show up for the final, you will receive an automatic F for the class. Refer to the attendance policy for additional information.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENTS: There will be several additional assignments throughout the semester that will involve additional readings, in-class activities, and/or homework. Point value will be determined per assignment. These assignments will not be announced; therefore it is in your best interest to attend all classes. **NO MAKEUPS WILL BE ALLOWED.** (200 points total)

CRITICAL THINKING: There will be one critical thinking assignment worth 100 points. Further instructions for this assignment will be given out in class at a later date. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Disclaimer: If the instructor makes ANY exceptions, she reserves the right to automatically dock the assignment one letter grade for being late. Refer to the attendance policy for additional information. ***Late and incomplete assignments are subject to automatic grade reductions.***

Grading Scale

Exams:	300 points total
In Class Assignments:	200 points total
Critical thinking:	<u>100 points</u>
Total Points Possible:	600 points

Grades will be assigned as follows:

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below 60%	F

If at any time during the semester you are concerned with your grade, please do not hesitate to approach me with that concern. I will be able to help you better in the beginning and middle of the semester, whereas there will be little I can do for you at the end of the semester.

SCHEDULE

*** THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES AS NECESSARY TO THE SYLLABUS***

- Week 1 (1/12 & 1/14):** Introduction to Course;
Chapter 1-Sociology: Studying Social Problems
- Week 2 (1/19 & 1/21):** Chapter 2-Poverty & Wealth; Chapter 3-Racial & Ethnic Inequality
- Week 3 (1/26 & 1/28):** Chapter 3-finish; Chapter 4-Gender Inequality
- Week 4 (2/02 & 2/04):** Chapter 5-Aging & Inequality; Review for Exam
- Week 5 (2/09 & 2/11):** EXAM 1 (Ch. 1-5); Chapter 6-Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice
- Week 6 (2/16 & 2/18):** Chapter 6-finish; Chapter 7-Sexuality
- Week 7 (2/23 & 2/25):** Chapter 7-finish; Chapter 8-Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Week 8 (3/02 & 3/04):** Chapter 8-finish; Chapter 9-Physical and Mental Health
- Week 9 (3/09 & 3/11):** **NO CLASSES-SPRING BREAK!**
- Week 10 (3/16 & 3/18):** Chapter 9-finish; Review for exam; EXAM 2 (Ch.6-9)
- Week 11 (3/23 & 3/25):** Chapter 10-Economy and Politics
- Week 12 (3/30 & 4/01):** Chapter 11-Work and the Workplace
- Week 13 (4/06 & 4/08):** Chapter 12-Family Life
- Week 14 (4/13 & 4/15):** Chapter 13-Education; CRITICAL PAPER DUE (4/15)
- Week 15 (4/20 & 4/22):** Chapter 14-Urban Life
- FINAL EXAM (May 6):** EXAM 3 (Ch. 10-14) 8:30AM