

**Problems in Contemporary Society  
SOC 452  
The Critical Social Study of the  
World that We Live In**

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## **SYLLABUS**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will discuss the important role that sociology has in explaining the issues surrounding the functioning of contemporary society. This course will also discuss the history and extent of social problems and their repercussions. The fundamental and causal nature of these issues will be uncovered by drawing on the combined knowledge of the past, present and future.

This course will also examine practical examples of social theories that apply to real social problems that evoke positive and negative emotions. The difference between a problem and a benefit is often unclear. I will help you cut through the fog and see what mysteries there may be.

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Henslin, James M., Social Problems, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, (Prentice-Hall, 2003)

### **Recommended Readings**

Nancy Kleniewski, Cities, Change, and Conflict – A Political Economy of Urban Life, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Wadsworth, 2002)

Wayne Wooden, Randy Blazak, Renegade Kids, Suburban Outlaws – From Youth Culture to Delinquency, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Wadsworth, 2002)

## **Course Content**

This course will lay the foundation for understanding the dynamics of social theory. The content of this course is basically three-fold. First, the course will help the student become familiar with social theory. Second, this course will help the student learn how to apply social theory to contemporary issues from around the world. Finally, this course will sharpen critical thinking skills and awaken or quicken creative abilities.

## **Course Requirements**

Students will be responsible for the entire contents of each text, handout contents, and for lecture material presented by the instructor. There will be midterm and final examinations. These examinations will be eclectic in nature (essay, multiple choice, true or false).

Also, students will be responsible for a research project. The research project consists of an oral presentation, and a writing assignment, which is the equivalent of a 10-15 page research paper. Presentations should be approximately 5 minutes for questions. A schedule for presentations will be prepared during the first month of class.

You should consider this project a research exercise. All students are expected to turn in an outline, summary, and bibliography when they deliver their presentations. The research presentation will be discussed in greater detail during the first few days of class.

## **Instructions for Written Assignment**

1. Use good quality 8-1/2 x 11-in. white bond paper.
2. Top, bottom, right, and left margins should be 1 in. or 1-1/2 in. No page should contain more than 25 lines of text.
3. The entire manuscript must be double-spaced.
4. Pages are numbered in sequence in the upper-right hand corner. Title page counts as page 1, although you do not number this page.
5. Indent the first line of each paragraph 5 spaces.
6. Title Page  
Center the title page in uppercase and lowercase letters (e.g., *Suicide Rates in Urban Populations*).
7. Headings  
Center and capitalize initial letters of all words except articles (*the, a, an*), short conjunctions (*and, but, or, etc.*). If you use a second level of heading, make it flush left, underlined, and use above capitalization rule.
8. Footnotes and References  
Chose any style, but be consistent, e.g., APA (American Psychological Association) or MLA (Modern Language Association).
9. **PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD!** You will be given a lower grade if you do not correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. Check the bookstore or library for a basic grammar reference book.
10. Double space after periods. Commas and periods are always placed inside quotation marks. (*He said, "That theory is still true today." "That theory is still true today," he said.*).

## **Plagiarism**

1. Plagiarism is using someone else's words as your own.
2. Summarize and paraphrase using your own words.
3. Use quotation marks when quoting directly from the source or changing only a few words.
4. Your paper will be compared to the article being reviewed to make sure you have used your own words and not merely copied sentences or portions of sentences.
5. Using the same footnotes in your paper as your original source is a dead giveaway of plagiarism.
6. A plagiarized paper is not accepted.

## **Measurable Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete Contemporary Social Problems will be able to:

- a.) Identify, define, and understand major terminology used in the study of social life.
- b.) Understand the concepts and debate the issues involved in the world we live in.
- c.) Analyze sociological phenomena in a theoretical context.
- d.) Place contemporary social issues into a respective theoretical classification.
- e.) Navigate the related works of Social theorists and make real world applications.
- f.) Think analytical and solve dynamic problems by adopting a theoretical mindset.

## **Grades**

Final grades will be assigned according to the following percentage distributions.

Midterm Exam	40 percent
Final Exam	40 percent
Paper	15 percent
Attendance/Participation	5 percent

## **Attendance**

Regular and on-time attendance is expected. I do recognize that many students have work or family responsibilities, which can sometimes interfere with class attendance. All students must therefore identify a classmate who will provide them with lecture notes and materials from the missed class sessions. While missing a class is understandable, failure to obtain notes is not.

## **Reading Schedule**

All reading assignments will be assigned during class.

**Please check any prejudice and/or bias at the door.**

**Thank You**