

SOC 102: Contemporary Social Problems

Imperial Valley College

Fall 2014

Instructor: Daniel Garcia, M.A.

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Office: Room 809

Office hours: contact instructor to set up appointment

Class Meeting: MW 8:35 - 10:00 AM

Location: Room 413

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Contemporary social problems reveal themselves in all facets of modern life; from global capitalism to heteronormativity to income inequality, contemporary society is the product of the forces that shape our world on a macro and micro level. This course examines contemporary social problems and the process by which competing groups make claims to define phenomena as social problems. In this course, students will use their critical thinking skills to address and understand approaches to social problems. We will examine how and why social problems are defined as such and how our reflexivity and participation in the construction of issues materialize as contemporary social problems. This course emphasizes understanding these problems on the societal level, the group level, from the standpoint of the individual. Students will employ a critical sociological understanding of the social problems from a social justice perspective. Topics to be discussed include racism, environmental justice, cultural hegemony, and immigration.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define a social problem and be familiar with the key components of the definition.
2. Identify health care as a social problem and explain what constitutes adequate health care in society.
3. Analyze the extent of mental illness in America and the nature of mental illness as a social problem.
4. Analyze alcohol use and abuse in the United States, as well as other patterns of drug use.
5. Recognize the types of crime and criminals in addition to the conditions and causes of crime.
6. Describe the extent of poverty in American society and identify the relationship.
7. Identify the origins of prejudice and discrimination and the consequences of each.
8. Describe the significance of world population growth and immigration that stress the environment.
9. Describe the changing family structure in America and the effects on society.

10. Analyze the success and failures of the American educational system and compare it to other countries

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon course completion, the successful student will have acquired new skills, knowledge, and or attitudes as demonstrated by being able to:

- Define and apply the basic concepts of sociology including culture, status, roles, norms, institutions, social class, race, gender. (ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5)
- Distinguish different major sociological theoretical perspectives that explain social behavior. (ILO2, ILO4, ILO5)
- Read, summarize and evaluate peer-reviewed empirical studies. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4)
- Demonstrate the ability to make oral presentations that are organized, rely on evidence and engage the audience. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO4)

TEXTBOOKS & OTHER RESOURCES

William **Kornblum**, *Contemporary Social Problems* 14th Edition, ISBN 0205832326.

Peter **Eichstaedt**, *The Dangerous Divide: Peril and Promise on the US-Mexico Border*, ISBN 1613748361

Assigned articles are posted on Blackboard.

GRADING, INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS, & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation/Discussion 15%	(150 points)
Memos 1 page {10} 50%	(500 Points)
Term Paper, 8 pages 35%	<u>(350 Points)</u>
	(1000 Points Total)

Grading Scale:

900-1000	A
800-899	B
700-799	C
600-699	D
599 and Below	F

This course is designed as discussion-based and writing intensive. Active student participation is imperative. Late work is not accepted.

Participation (15%)

Participation in class discussion is a necessary and vital component to class success. Students are required to participate in meaningful discussion. Participation also includes maintaining up to date with the readings.

Memos (50%)

A total of ten 1-page memos are required by each student throughout the semester. Memos are submitted by email. Memos are critical reflections of the readings and are not a simple repetition of the material; rather they are designed as a critique and reflection. Students choose 10 class meetings to submit a memo the night before at 9 PM on Blackboard (i.e., if you choose to write a memo for a Wednesday class meeting, you post that memo on Tuesday evening). Memos are written in 11 point calibri font, single-spaced, 1 inch margins, and do not add a space after paragraphs. Be prepared to discuss your memo in class. Once memos are returned to students, they may be revised for a higher grade but must be resubmitted within one week along with the original memo.

Term Paper (35%)

One 8 page term paper will be submitted at the end of the semester. Students will choose a topic that piqued their interest and write the term paper on that subject OR students may write on the topic of a subject that wasn't covered extensively in class but they feel is an urgent contemporary social problem (e.g. capital punishment, reproductive rights, gentrification, etc.). The term paper is to be written in 11 point calibri font, double-spaced, do not add a space after paragraphs. Students will cite a minimum of 8 peer-reviewed articles or books not on the assigned reading list to corroborate their positions. We will review the specifics of the term paper as the semester progresses.

ATTENDANCE

A student who fails to attend the first meeting of a class or does not complete the first mandatory activity of an online class will be dropped by the instructor as of the first official meeting of that class. Should readmission be desired, the student's status will be the same as that of any other student who desires to add a class. It is the student's responsibility to drop or officially withdraw from the class. See General Catalog for details.

Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students. A student whose continuous, unexcused absences exceed the number of hours the class is scheduled to meet per week may be dropped. For online courses, students who fail to complete required activities for two consecutive weeks may be considered to have excessive absences and may be dropped.

Absences attributed to the representation of the college at officially approved events (conferences, contests, and field trips) will be counted as 'excused' absences.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Electronic Devices: Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class.

Disruptive Students: Students who disrupt or interfere with a class may be sent out of the room and told to meet with the Campus Disciplinary Officer before returning to continue with coursework. Disciplinary procedures will be followed as outlined in the General Catalog.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Plagiarism is taking and presenting as one's own the writings or ideas of others, without citing the source. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking exams and preparing written materials. If you do not understand how to 'cite a source' correctly, you must ask for help.

Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question.

Anyone caught cheating will receive a zero (0) on the exam or assignment, and the instructor may report the incident to the Campus Disciplinary Officer, who may place related documentation in a file. Repeated acts of cheating may result in an F in the course and/or disciplinary action. Please refer to the General School Catalog for more information on academic dishonesty or other misconduct. Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) plagiarism; (b) copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment; (c) communicating test information with another person during an examination; (d) allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment; (e) using a commercial term paper service.

ADDITIONAL HELP

Blackboard support center:

<http://bbcrm.edusupportcenter.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8543>

Learning Labs: There are several 'labs' on campus to assist you through the use of computers, tutors, or a combination. Please consult your college map for the Math Lab, Reading & Writing Lab, and Study Skills Center (library). Please speak to the instructor about labs unique to your specific program.

Library Services: There is more to our library than just books. You have access to tutors in the Study Skills Center, study rooms for small groups, and online access to a wealth of resources.

DISABLED STUDENT SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. The DSP&S office is located in Building 2100, telephone 760-355-6313, if you feel you need to be evaluated for educational accommodations.

STUDENT COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICES

Students have counseling and health services available, provided by the pre-paid Student Health Fee. We now also have a fulltime mental health counselor. For information see: <http://www.imperial.edu/students/student-health-center/>. The IVC Student Health Center is located in the Health Science building in Room 2109, telephone 760-355-6310.

STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the right to experience a positive learning environment and due process. For further information regarding student rights and responsibilities, please refer to the IVC General Catalog available online at: http://www.imperial.edu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4516&Itemid=762

INFORMATION LITERACY

Imperial Valley College is dedicated to helping students skillfully discover, evaluate, and use information from all sources. Students can access tutorials at <http://www.imperial.edu/courses-and-programs/divisions/arts-and-letters/library-department/info-lit-tutorials/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

<i>DATE</i>	<i>THEME</i>	<i>READING/ASSIGNMENT</i>
8/18/14	Intro	Syllabus
UNIT 1: PERSPECTIVES & MACRO FORCES		
8/20/14	Perspectives	Kornblum Chpt 1 Blumer "Social Problems as Collective Behavior" Becker "Whose Side Are We On?"
8/25/14	Capitalism	Kornblum Chpt 12 Swedburg "Economic Sociology of Capitalism" Boltanski & Chiapello "The New Spirit of Capitalism"
8/27/14	Globalization	Guillen "Is Globalization Civilizing, Destructive, or Feeble?" Meyer "Globalization: Sources and Effects on National States and Societies" Wood "Caribbean Cruise Tourism: Globalization at Sea"

9/1/14	HOLIDAY	
9/3/14	Capitalism in Crisis	Skocpol "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis" In Class: Capitalism: A Love Story
9/8/14	Poverty	Kornblum Chpt 6 Harros-White "Poverty & Capitalism"
9/10/14	Income Inequality	Corak "Income inequality, equality of opportunity, and intergenerational mobility" In Class: Inequality For All
9/15/14	Imperialism & Hegemony	Lenin "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism" Chapters 7 & 9 Bieler & Morton "A Critical Theory Route to Hegemony"
9/17/14	Cultural Imperialism & Cultural Hegemony	Dunch "Beyond Cultural Imperialism" Wagleitner "Empire of Fun"
9/22/14	The Media	Kellner "Media Propaganda and the War Spectacle In Iraq" In Class: Propaganda and Manipulation
UNIT 2: ANALYZING PREJUDICES & DISCRIMINATION		
9/24/14	Racism	Kornblum Chpt 7 Jones "Levels of Racism" Bonilla-Silva "I'm Not a Racist But..."
9/29/14	White Supremacy	Gillborn "Rethinking White Supremacy" Leonardo "Color of Supremacy"
10/1/14	Gender & Sexuality	Kornblum Chpt 8
10/6/14	Heteronormativity & Male Hegemony	Pascoe "Dude You're a Fag" Burn "Heterosexual's use of Fag & Queer: a contributor to heterosexism"
10/8/14	Changing Family Structure	Kornblum Chpt 10 Cherlin "American Marriage" In Class- Cherlin Lecture
10/13/14	Environmental Degradation	Kornblum pages 458-467 In Class: Garbage Island
10/15/14	Environmental Inequalities	Saha & Mohai "Historical Context and Hazardous Waste Siting" Mohai & Saha "Racial Inequality in the Distribution of Hazardous Waste"

10/20/14	Environmental Justice	Cutter "Waste, Class, and Environmental Justice" Bullard "Environmental Justice: It's more than just Waste Facility Siting"
10/22/14	Environmental Justice on the Border	Garcia "Environmental Knowledge, Perception, and Resistance along a Toxic River" In Class: Guest Speaker- Mr. Luis Olmedo, Comite Civico Del Valle
10/27/14	Health & Healthcare	Kornblum Chpt 2 Lasser "Access to Care..." In Class: Sicko
10/29/14	Cont'd	Adler & Newman "Socioeconomic Disparities in Health"
11/3/14	Education	Kornblum Chpt 11
11/5/14	Mental Illness	Kornblum Chpt 3 In Class: Sick
UNIT 3: POLICING THE BORDER & BEYOND		
11/10/14	Border Issues & Immigration	Kornblum Chpt 13 Eichstaedt Chpt 1-2
11/12/14	Cont'd	Eichstaedt Chpt 3-5
11/17/14	Cont'd	Eichsaedt Chpt 6-8
11/19/14	Cont'd	Eichstaedt Chpt 9-End
12/1/14	War & Terror	Kornblum Chpt 15
12/3/14	Crime & Criminal Justice	Kornblum Chpt 5
12/8/14	Privacy rights	Gellman "NSA broke privacy rules thousands of times" Calabrese "NSA isn't only agency destroying your rights"
12/10/14	Drugs	Kornblum Chpt 4

N.B. The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus at any time. The most current syllabus will always be posted on Blackboard.