

Sociology 102: Contemporary Social Problems

Ms. Laura Semmes, M.A.

Fall Semester, 2015

Course time: MW 8:00 a.m.-9:25 a.m.

Location: 402

Semester units: 3.0

CRN: 10642

Office hours: MW 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.; TTH 11:05 a.m.-12:05 p.m.

Office: 807F

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Required text: Kornblum, William & Julian, Joseph, Social Problems, 2012. 14th Edition. Pearson

“Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both” – C. Wright Mills

Course description:

This course is designed to introduce you the main sociological theories and perspectives regarding various social problems facing the world today. This course examines various social problems from both a scientific viewpoint regarding why we have social problems and also from an applied viewpoint regarding how social problems affect humans in society. Topics include physical and mental health, alcohol and drug problems, crime, violence, poverty, racism, prejudice and discrimination, sex roles and inequality, the changing family, education problems, and work and economy problems.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are:

- 1) To critically think about and gain knowledge of the main theories and concepts of each of the various social problems that affect the world today
- 2) To leave this course with a basic understanding of how contemporary social problems affect our daily lives

Student Learning Outcomes

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

Course Format

This course will use a combination of lectures, class discussion, assigned readings, videos, an assigned project, and performance on quizzes and exams. Tests and quizzes are done on Scantron forms. Lecture notes can be found on Blackboard under the resources tab. If you need any assistance with this, please ask me **anytime**. I will also put study guides on Blackboard a week before the test is scheduled.

Tentative Course Schedule

If you know you are going to be absent for an exam, notify the professor **a week** before to make arrangements. This must be done before the test day. If you miss the exam day without making arrangements, there will be no make-ups. There will be no make-ups for quizzes, as only two out of three will count (the highest two scores out of three). The following is the tentative schedule for this class; however it is subject to change.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
8/17	Introductions, Syllabus review	Chapter 1
8/19-8/24	Social Problems	Chapter 1
8/26-8/31	Problems of Health and Health Care	Chapter 2
September 7 Labor Day No Class!!		
9/2-9/9	Problems of Mental Illness	Chapter 3
	Quiz 1 9/2 (Ch. 1-2)	
9/14	Review	
9/16	Exam #1 (Ch. 1-3)	
9/21-9/23	Alcohol and Other Drugs	Chapter 4
9/28-9/30	Crime and Violence	Chapter 5
10/5-10/7	Poverty amid Affluence and Review	Chapter 6
	Quiz 2 10/5 (Ch. 4-5)	
10/12	Review	
10/14	Exam # 2 (Ch. 4-6)	
10/19-10/21	Racism, Prejudice and Discrimination	Chapter 7
	<i>~Group Projects~</i>	
10/26-10/28	Gender and Sexuality	Chapter 8

~Group Projects~

11/2-11/4 Changing Family Chapter 10

~Group Projects~

Quiz 3 11/2 (Ch. 7-8)

11/9 Exam #3

Nov. 11 Veterans Day No Class!!!

11/16-11/18 Problems of Education Chapter 11

Nov. 23-Nov. 27 Thanksgiving Break No Class!!!

11/30-12/2 Problems of Work and the Economy Chapter 12

12/7 **Final Exam**

Grading System

A: 90-100%	4 Exams @ 100 pts.	400 pts.
B: 80-89%	2 Quizzes @ 10 pts.	20 pts.
C: 70-79%	Participation:	50 pts.
D: 60-69%	Group Project:	50 pts.
F: 59% and lower		

Total: 520 pts.

Participation

Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students enrolled. Instructors are expected to take a student's attendance record into account in computing grades. Any student who misses the first class will be dropped. Students may be dropped at instructor's discretion if they miss more than a week of class hours continuously. Please make arrangements with the instructor or a fellow student to keep up with all assignments in case you cannot attend a class session for any reason.

Participation is part of your grade, and you must be in class to participate. There will also be in-class activities that will be counted as part of your participation grade. These cannot be made up. **Please check your e-mail regularly** so you are informed of any changes to the class, for example if the instructor will be unable to make it to class that day. This will help you stay informed about the status of the class.

Please note that participation means being fully engaged in class discussion. This means you are listening attentively, involving yourself in class activities and discussion, and most importantly,

not disrupting your fellow students. Disruptions include (but are not limited to) talking to others during lecture, taking your cell phone out and talking/texting, applying makeup, etc... Participation points WILL BE taken away from you each time you disrupt class in any way. So...**please turn off cell phones or put them on vibrate before coming to class!** I will not tolerate texting or any use of phones in class. It is a distraction to the learning process for everyone.

Academic dishonesty

Imperial Valley College's regulations regarding cheating and plagiarism are clear:

“If cheating or plagiarism is discovered, a student may be dropped from the course with a grade of ‘F’.”

This guideline will be strictly adhered to out of respect for those students who put in the effort and do the work for themselves. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated.

Special Accommodations

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor and the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible.

DSP&S Room 2117

Health Sciences Building

(760) 355-6312

SOCIOLOGY PROJECT AND PRESENTATION

Understanding social problems in a variety of societies and communities is integral to this course. It is especially important to understand the origin and depth of social problems in our own communities as well. As part of your research project, you should show both smaller scale and larger scale existence of the social problem you choose (its existence here in the Imperial Valley and its location in wider society). Please submit the following assignment **24 hours before your scheduled presentation date:**

Document a selected social problem here in the Imperial Valley with photography, video or audio recorded interviews. The documentation should be a 20 minute video or photographic power-point presentation illustrating aspects of your research of the social problem. Each person in your group should speak 3-5 minutes about some aspect of your project. Where does the problem originate? What are some possible solutions? How is your chosen social problem related to other social problems? **Select which theoretical perspective will help to explain the documented inequality.**

EXAMPLES

1. Health (Obesity, chronic disease, allergies, etc...)
2. Environmental (water pollution, air pollution, biodiversity, etc...)
3. Poverty (homelessness, housing, unemployment, etc...)
4. Alcohol/drug abuse (DUI, violence, divorce, etc...)
5. Teen pregnancy (costs, education, etc...)
6. Crime (violent crime, property crime, hate crimes, etc...)
7. Immigration (demographics, undocumented immigrants, population growth, etc...)

The assignment is worth 50 points

Presentations are evaluated on content and knowledge of information, meeting the 20 minute time requirement, submitting the assignment to the instructor on time, appropriate application of a theory, all group members' participation and communication with each other, eye contact and tone. All students in the class should be prepared to evaluate each group's presentation to help assist in grading.