

Spring/ Summer 2020
SOC 1020: Social Problems
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Sydney Arens, M.A.

Office: Faculty Administration Building (FAB), Room 2264

Office hours: Tuesday/ Thursday 11:30-1:00, or by appointment

Due to Covid-19, all office hours will be facilitated online via email, BigBlueButton, or Microsoft Teams

Email: sydneyarens@wayne.edu

Please email me directly and do not message me on Canvas. I usually respond within 48 hours.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce the discipline of sociology and to contribute to the understanding of social problems that exist in our society. Sociology allows us to understand the world around us by using what sociologists call the *sociological imagination*. *Our sociological imagination* allows us to understand how social forces uniquely impact individuals' lives, including our own. Throughout the semester, we will be reading and discussing the following topics*: economic inequality; racial and ethnic inequality; gender inequality; sexuality inequality; crime, violence, and criminal justice; physical and mental health; social media; and urban life. Through this online learning opportunity, you will learn valuable critical thinking and reading comprehension skills that will allow you to be not only successful in this course, but also in your future higher education courses.

**Content warning: some of the course topics may be sensitive for some students.*

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, you will be able to:

1. *Understand what sociologists mean by "social problems."*
2. *Describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and to give examples of these differences.*
3. *Describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts understanding of social problems.*
4. *Apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to your own life.*
5. *Identify and critically think about social problems and proposed solutions through a sociological lens.*
6. *Construct complex ideas and to "connect the dots" of concepts by critically thinking about our personal social lives and the lives of others.*
7. *Understand the consequences of proposed solutions to social problems, historically and contemporarily.*

Required Materials

Social Problems by John J. Macionis

*eText ISBN: **9780135247174, 0135247179**

Available for purchase on the WSU Bookstore's website

Link to purchase the book on the publisher's website:

<https://www.vitalsource.com/products/social-problems-john-j-macionis-v9780135247174?term=9780135247174>

*Due to Covid-19, **please purchase the eText**. Please do not try to order this physical book online.

Supplemental Material

Additional reading materials, videos, and other content relevant to our weekly topics will be posted on Canvas under the *Modules* tab.

Course Requirements & Expectations

Weekly Discussions

& Responses	30%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Final Paper	30%
Total	100%

Weekly Discussions & Responses-30%

Course engagement is important, even for an online course. You will all be assigned discussion groups (Group 1 or Group 2). These discussions groups will allow you to interact with your fellow classmates. Using the *Discussions* tab on Canvas, you will be expected to answer question prompts pertaining to the relevant course material weekly by Wednesday at 11:59 PM (Please see the course schedule below for specific dates). Then, you will respond to 2 classmates' answers by Friday at 11:59 PM. Discussion posts grades will be added together to create a total weekly score and posted to the gradebook. Please post thoughtful responses that add to your classmates' posts. Initial posts and responses will be graded on how well you demonstrate an understanding of the material. *Your lowest scored discussion post total weekly score will be dropped from the gradebook.* I expect that your original answers will be a minimum of 250 words per question and be well-thought-out. Responses to others' answers should be at least 150 words. Responses should be well constructed and add to the discussion. Please avoid using the following phrases in your responses: "I agree" or "I disagree."

Class Recordings: Students need prior written permission from the instructor before recording or photographing any portion of this class. If permission is granted, the audio/ video/ screen capture is to be used only for the student's personal instructional use. ***Such recordings are not intended for a wider public audience, such as postings to the internet or sharing with others.*** Students registered with Student Disabilities Services (SDS) who wish to record class materials must present their specific accommodation to the instructor, who will subsequently comply with

the request unless there is some specific reason why s/he cannot, such as discussion of confidential or protected information.” ***Saving and sharing course content and or screencaps of our course discussions or course content are NOT permitted.***

Exam I- 25% & Exam II-20% (40% total)

There will be two online exams given during this course (Please see the course schedule below for specific dates). You will find these exams in the *Quizzes* tab on our Canvas page. Both of the exams are multiple-choice and open book/ open note. Exams will open on up Wednesday and will be completed by Friday at 11:59 PM. *Make-up exams will only be permitted upon individual circumstances.*

A Note on Technology

Due to the nature of this online course, technological issues may arise. While I do understand this, please plan for these issues by giving yourself enough time to complete assignments before the due dates. (Make sure to start your exams well before the due time. Exams will close promptly at 11:59 PM and will not be reopened) Our on-campus technology support C&IT department is wonderful! They have helped me with a variety of issues in the past. Please contact them if you have any technological issues. They are available Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. for phone calls at 313-577-4357. Or, by email at helpdesk@wayne.edu. **Unless you have a support ticket that shows that you contacted support in enough time to complete the exam, extensions will not be given for technical problems.**

Final Paper-30%

There will be one final paper due at the end of the semester. Details will be released after the first exam. You will have plenty of time (over a month) to complete this assignment.

Grades

Your final grade will be calculated on your overall point totals, as follows:

- A: 94 and above
- A-: 90-93
- B+: 87-89 B:
84-86
- B-: 80- 83
- C+: 77-79
- C: 74-76
- C-: 70-73
- D+: 67-69
- D: 64-66
- D-: 60-63
- F: below 60

Final grades are **FINAL**. Please do not ask for me to make exceptions at the end of the semester to boost your grades. This course is designed for students to learn the concepts through a

manageable amount of coursework. To be successful in this course, you must stay on track with the course content and submit well-thought-out assignments in a timely manner.

Course Rules

1. Even though this course is online, you will be interacting with your peers who share similar goals. Be respectful, understanding, and attentive. I promise to do the same.
2. Social problems can seem politicized. Please acknowledge the difference between opinions vs. factual evidence. Sociologists use empirical evidence, just like other scientists, to understand how society functions. Please respect that this course is not based on opinions, but factual and empirical evidence.
3. Course discussions will only be successful with your help. Be sure to submit discussions and responses in a timely manner. I value everyone's life experiences and diversity. Your experiences and opinions will contribute to the overall online classroom community and environment.
4. Always ask for help if you need it.
5. I assume since you signed up for this course, you have some interest in the course material. Please be a learner and be open to new concepts or ideas.
6. We all know that online communication can often be misinterpreted. Please check for spelling/ grammar errors in your discussion posts/ responses/ emails before hitting submit.
7. I have carefully curated the materials for this course. I cannot and will not respond to random "facts" and information that students find online. If you have material that you feel is relevant and you wish to share with your classmates, please share it with me first.
8. If you feel like any of your peers or I have violated any of these rules, please contact me. I promise to be proactive.
9. Rules can be added to this list throughout the semester.

My Responsibilities as an Instructor

- Be respectful of my students and their ideas
- Always be prepared
- Encourage students to be successful in this course
- Express excitement for all of the topics we will cover
- Respectfully discuss differing viewpoints
- Be fair and reasonable. I understand many of you are taking many classes and or working during this time. I have attempted to make the coursework manageable for everyone.
- Give more than adequate feedback on your performance in the class

Your Responsibilities as a Student

- Be respectful, inclusive, and understanding. We will be discussing sensitive topics during the semester. Everyone is welcome to share personal experiences when relevant. Please show respect for your peers' personal experiences and opinions.
- Submit assignments in a timely manner.

- It is your responsibility to check Canvas/ email regularly. Turn on your settings in your Canvas account to make sure you receive email notifications for our course. **This syllabus is subject to change.** It is your responsibility to check for any course updates.
- You can communicate with me virtually. You can always email me, or we can set up individual Zoom meetings.
- *Academic dishonesty*: “Academic misconduct is any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or undermine the education process. Examples of academic misconduct include:
 - Plagiarism: To take and use another's words or ideas as your own without appropriate referencing or citation.
 - Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use or intentionally providing unauthorized materials, information or assistance in any academic exercise. This includes copying from another student's test paper, allowing another student to copy from your test, using unauthorized material during an exam and submitting a term paper for a current class that has been submitted in a past class without appropriate permission.
 - Fabrication: Intentional or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation, such as knowingly attributing citations to the wrong source or listing a fake reference in the paper or bibliography.
 - Other: Selling, buying or stealing all or part of a test or term paper, unauthorized use of resources, enlisting in the assistance of a substitute when taking exams, destroying another's work, threatening or exploiting students or instructors, or any other violation of course rules as contained in the course syllabus or other written information. Such activity may result in failure of a specific assignment, an entire course, or, if flagrant, dismissal from Wayne State University.
<https://doso.wayne.edu/conduct/academic-misconduct>”

My policy on academic dishonesty: I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty.

If I suspect academic dishonesty, you will receive, at minimum, a 0% on that assignment. However, I am required to report all suspected academic dishonesty to university administration. If you any questions concerning plagiarism or the academic dishonesty policy, please contact me.

University Resources

** Due to the pandemic, these university resources are only available online. Please check each resources’ websites to see how to utilize their services.

Corona Virus (COVID-19) Updates Website

To stay on top of the pandemic and promote the health and wellbeing of the students and faculty, WSU has created a website to keep us updated. Check this website frequently. Website:

<https://wayne.edu/coronavirus>

Student Disability Services (SDS)

If needed, please contact SDS to coordinate your accommodations. Then, contact me so we can privately discuss your accommodations. Please do this by the second week of class.

Phone: 313-577- 1851 Website: <https://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

Writing Resources

Being a critical thinker and good writer will not only allow you to be successful in this course, but in all of your WSU coursework. You can email me with any questions concerning your writing. I also recommend to using WSU's Writing Center. Website:

<http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/>

Emergency Preparedness

If you are on campus and are in need of emergency assistance, please contact WSU police.

Phone: (313)-577-2222

Counseling and Psychological Services

“(CAPS) can help you with your mental health needs, while also fully doing our part with social distancing. CAPS offers *telemental health* services to currently registered WSU students using the Microsoft Teams app. *To work remotely with a CAPS counselor, just download the Teams app to a computer and/or smartphone and then call (313) 577-3398. We are available Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm to provide you with an Initial Consultation.*”

Important Dates for Spring/Summer Semester:

Classes begin: May 4th

Late registration: May 4th-May 17th

Last day to drop with tuition cancellation: May 17th

Holiday, university closed: May 25th

Instructor approval required to withdraw: May 18th-July 12th

Holiday, university closed: July 3rd

Last day to request withdraw July 12th

Classes end: July 24th

Course Schedule

WEEK OF	TOPIC	TO DO/ DUE DATES
5/4	Sociology: Studying Social Problems	Read the syllabus Chapter 1 First discussion & Response due 5/8 at 11:59 PM

5/11	Economic Inequality	Chapter 2 Initial discussion due 5/13 at 11:59 PM Response due 5/15 at 11:59 PM
5/18	Racial and Ethnic Inequality	Chapter 3 Initial discussion due 5/20 at 11:59 PM Response due 5/22 at 11:59 PM
5/25	Gender Inequality	Chapter 4 Initial discussion due 5/27 at 11:59 PM

		Response due 5/29 at 11:59 PM
6/1	Sexuality Inequality	Chapter 5 Initial discussion due 6/3 at 11:59 PM Response due 6/5 at 11:59 PM
6/8 EXAM #1 (Material from 5/4-6/5)	Opens on 6/10 at 10:00 AM Due on 6/12 at 11:59 PM	
6/15	Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice	Chapter 7 Initial discussion due 6/17 at 11:59 PM Response due 6/19 at 11:59 PM

6/22	Physical and Mental Health	Chapter 9 Initial discussion due 6/24 at 11:59 PM Response due 6/26 at 11:59 PM
6/29	Social Media	Chapter 10 Initial discussion due 7/1 at 11:59 PM Response due 7/3 at 11:59 PM
7/6	Urban Life	Chapter 15 Initial discussion due 7/8 at 11:59 PM Response due 7/10 at 11:59 PM
7/13	Making a Difference/ Workshop Final Papers	Optional readings will be posted to Canvas Initial discussion due 7/15 at 11:59 PM NO RESPONSE REQUIRED
		Final Papers due 7/17 at 11:59 PM
7/20 EXAM #2 (Material from 6/87/10)	Opens on 7/22 at 10:00 AM Due on 7/24 at 11:59 PM	

This course schedule is subject to change. Please check Canvas for course updates.

Assignment Due Dates

Weekly discussion posts and replies*

Exam #1 6/12 at 11:59 PM

Final Paper 7/17 at 11:59 PM

Exam #2 7/24 at 11:59 PM

*Due Wed/Fri at 11:59 PM, Check the course schedule for specific dates