

## **Soc 2020: Social Problems (Winter 2017)**

Course # 21069/Sec 008: 334 State Hall: M & W - 2:30-3:45pm

**Instructor:** Salam Aboulhassan

**Office Location:** 2244 Faculty Administration Building (FAB)

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays: After class-5pm, or by appointment, beginning January 18<sup>th</sup>

**Email:** [salam.aboulhassan@wayne.edu](mailto:salam.aboulhassan@wayne.edu)

\*Check your email regularly for class announcements, cancellations or any other relevant information. I can also meet after class for a few minutes to answer quick questions. Best way to reach me is by email. I typically reply very quickly, but allow 24 hours for a response. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need help or have any questions.

**Required Reading:** *Social Problems (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) John Macionis ISBN 978-0133909593*

**Other Readings:** There may be instances where articles are selected for facilitated discussions. They will be posted on blackboard. You must read the articles prior to coming to class.

### **Course Description**

This class introduces you to a variety of contemporary social problems. Topics include issues related to poverty, race/ethnicity, gender inequality, crime, education, and war, among other social issues. In addition to defining and establishing the prevalence of each problem, the course also explores their causes and consequences. We also consider possible interventions that could alleviate each problem.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Understand how sociologists define and study social problems.
2. Be familiar with the prevalence of social problems and the competing explanations of these problems that are based on individual and social explanations.
3. Understand the consequences and proposed solutions of social problems.
4. Critically think about your community and your role within it when accounting for the prevalence of social problems and potential solutions.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are allowed 4 absences during the semester. There is no grade for attendance, but absences over 4 will reduce your grade by 5% for every absence after 4. This is not negotiable. You have the ability to bump up your grade if you are on the margins and if I feel like you attend class and participate. You do not need to contact me if you are unable to attend class. I also do not need any type of documentation for the 4 absences. The only time I need documentation is if you missed an exam day or a day an assignment is due. That being said, if you use all four absences, and are absent on the fifth day, a doctor's note is unnecessary. You will still receive a reduced grade. The four absences are there to help you in cases of emergencies or sicknesses and

not merely to sleep in. Documentation is needed if personal situations prevent you from coming to class consecutively, and you know you need more than 4 days. Use them wisely. It is your responsibility to get class notes from other students or seek clarification from me about what you missed and to check blackboard and your email for all major announcements and schedule changes.

### **Course Expectations**

*Be respectful.* All rules of courtesy and respect are in effect during class. Refrain from talking to others and disruptive behaviors while we are engaged in lecture or class discussion. Please try to arrive to class on time. Arriving to class for the last 20 minutes multiple times is unacceptable. I will not repeat lectures and will not give out copies of my lecture notes. Treat others as you would like to be treated. I reserve the right to mark down grades if students are consistently disruptive.

*Cell Phones, Pagers, iPhones, iPads, iTouches, etc.* I do not expect you to completely disengage from your electronic devices, but all phones, pagers, and other devices should ideally be turned off (or turned to a silent ringer option) before you enter the classroom and before the class period begins. Leave class if you must communicate with someone. I do not want to see continuous texting while sitting in class. Students should also refrain from texting, facebooking, tweeting, or surfing the web during class time. If you are using a laptop during class time, please use it for note-taking purposes only. Please respect your classmates who are trying to learn course material. I reserve the right to lower students' participation and attendance grades if students are disruptive in class because they are online during class time.

*Responsibility for All Material Covered During Class:* Lectures will only cover some of the required reading. You are responsible for reading all weekly required readings before coming to class. I encourage dialogue and questions. Showing up to class is not enough. Your participation grade is based on engaging in class discussions and contributing your thoughts on the weekly readings. Get help when you need it.

### **Changes to the syllabus**

I reserve the right to make adjustments to this syllabus throughout the semester. Changes will be addressed in class and announcements will also be made on blackboard. It is your responsibility to check blackboard for all announcements if you are not in class.

### **Grading**

2 Class Exams – 50 pts each	100 points
Group Project	100 points
Final Exam – Cumulative	100 points
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>300 points</b>

### **Grading Scale**

100-93 A	86.99-83 B	76.99-73 C	66.99-63 D
92.99-90 A-	82.99-80 B-	72.99-70 C-	62.99-60 D-
89.99-87 B+	79.99-77 C+	69.99-67 D+	59.99-0 F

*Concerns about the Course:* If you have any concerns about the course (grade-related or otherwise), you should speak to me immediately and directly about your concerns. However, class time will NOT be used to discuss your course concerns. The concerns you have about the course should be discussed PRIVATELY with the instructor, as they are *your* concerns and not your classmates'.

### **Important Dates**

January 23, 2017 – Last day to drop with full tuition reimbursement  
 February 5, 2016 – Last day to drop without instructor permission  
 March 26, 2016 – Last day to withdrawal with instructor permission  
 March 13-18 – No Classes – Spring Break.  
 April 24- Last Day of Classes – Final Exam

\*It is your responsibility to complete necessary paperwork to withdrawal from course and double check dates. Failure to complete coursework/exams/attend classes will result in a failing grade.

### **Exams**

There will be two exams, each worth 50 points. Combined, they make up about 33% of your grade. Each exam will consist of multiple choice questions, true false questions and one short essay question. The final will be cumulative and will cover all the chapters we cover throughout the semester. This is worth 100 points.

Make up exams are rarely given. If in an extreme circumstance you are unable to attend class to take the exam, you must provide documentation supporting your claim that you cannot attend class. You must contact me prior or immediately after the exam to obtain permission to reschedule an exam. All makeup exams must be completed within one week of exam date in my office. It is your responsibility to contact me to make necessary arrangements.

### **Group Project:**

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, I will pass out a signup sheet in which you will pick a chapter of interest to you. You will work in groups to create a presentation that you will present in class you're your group during the last week of class. This will actually help you prepare for the final exam. Grading will be broken up into three different parts. 50 points will be based on the presentation itself. 25 points will be a reflective, critical essay that you will do on your own (750 words). And the other 25 points will be based on critical evaluations from your other group members. You will grade the effort of your other team members to be evaluated by myself and I will decide on the final point grade. Information will be handed out in class and will be posted on blackboard. Calendar will also be available on blackboard which will let you know what we are covering every week.

## **Incompletes**

Incompletes will be granted only in unusual circumstances (illness, hospitalization etc.) Please schedule an appointment with me immediately if you have any issues that prevent you from completing the course. University policy will be followed when considering incompletes.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment. If it happens again, student will fail course. Students caught cheating will automatically fail the exam. If it happens again, student will fail the course.

University policy surrounding plagiarism, fabrication and cheating: Dean of Student's Office website at (<http://doso.wayne.edu/academic-integrity.html>).

## **Education Accessibility Services**

Any student with a documented disability or a condition that compromises their ability to complete the course requirements or attend class should notify me as soon as possible. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your needs. You can contact EAS at (313)577-1851 to discuss accommodations in private. They are located at the David Adamany Undergraduate Library in Room 1600. You can also visit their website at <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>.

## **Writing Center**

*Problems with Writing?* The grade for written assignments will depend partially on student's ability to write a coherent, well-organized, and grammatically sound written product. If students have concerns about their writing abilities, they should visit Wayne State University's Writing Center in the Undergraduate Library (313-577-2544). There is also a page of writing resources posted on the sociology department's website that might help you: <http://clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/Sociology/WritingResources>

## **FERPA**

“The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law designated to protect the privacy of a student's education records and academic work. The law applies to all schools and universities which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education and is applicable to students at WSU. All files, records, and academic work completed within this course are considered educational records and are protected under FERPA. It is your right as a student in this course to expect that any materials you submit in this course as well as your name and other identifying information will not be viewable by guests or other individuals permitted access to the course. The exception will be made only when you have given explicit, written, signed consent. Verbal consent or email is insufficient.