

SOC 2020: Social Problems

Section 009

CRN: 13719

Room 1137 OLD MAIN

11:45am – 2:30pm

Fall 2016

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Hours: by appointment

This course deals with a broad array of social problems, where they come from, how we define them, and the degree to which programs and policies are designed to alleviate them. In addition, we will discuss how, at times, the solution to one set of problems may well create another set of problems. Students are expected to do all the course reading in preparation for class discussion, come on time, and participate in the class. This course has core lectures and Discussion Boards available on Blackboard, as well as the two course exams. This is not a difficult course, unless you fall behind. Course expectations are straightforward and it is easy to do well.

Goals and objectives for the course: To understand the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality, such that you will be able to: (a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and to give examples of these differences; (b) describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts understanding of social reality; and (c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to her/his own life. This semester you will be introduced to basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations, so you will be able to define, give examples, and demonstrate the relevance of culture; social change; socialization; stratification; social structure; institutions; and differentiations by race/ethnicity, gender, age, and class. Finally, you should be able to see how culture and social structure operate to: (a) show how institutions interlink in their effects on each other and on individuals; (b) demonstrate how social change factors such as population or urbanization affect social structures and individuals; (c) demonstrate how culture and social structure vary across time and place and the effect is of such variations; and (d) identify examples of specific policy implications using reasoning about social-structural effects. Finally, you will be able to describe: (1) the significance of variations by race, class, gender, and age; and (2) will know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups.

Consultation: The best way to communicate your questions about the course outside of class is via email. Please note that I reply to email within 24 hours and most often sooner. If you do not get a response from me, perhaps your email did not arrive, so please resend your question.

TEXT/ONLINE COMPONENT: Macionis, *Social Problems -- Access Card Package 6/E*. ISBN: 978-0-13-390959-3

- Access code card available in the campus bookstore (see instructions at the end of information on generating a print version)
- In order to register you will need the course link- directions and the course link needed are provided at the end of this syllabus. Once you've purchased your access code or with 2 weeks' temp access until code is purchased, you may register.

REVEL: You will have weekly quizzes on REVEL. It is an online learning tool, where you'll be completing your reading assignments. See below for more details.

- For help with any technical issues that might occur with REVEL, go to <http://247pearsoned.custhelp.com/>

Since the study of sociology is a growing, ever changing, discipline, this instructor reserves the right to assign additional reading material throughout the semester. In all matters of disagreement, this syllabus is the final arbiter. It is up to the student to make sure they have the most recent version of this syllabus—which will always be on Blackboard.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

Blackboard: This course will be organized via Blackboard, which can be accessed at (<http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard/>). You are required to learn how to use Blackboard; there are good tutorials on the website. This syllabus, all lectures and any subsequent readings will be posted there. Blackboard provides a Discussion Board area we will use, as well as an on-line grade book which will permit you to monitor your own progress in the course. I am not able to help with technical issues related to your access to Blackboard. You **MUST** contact the C&IT Help Desk to figure out what is wrong, and how to get access to the course. Any appeal regarding missed assignments because of technical issues should be accompanied by your communication from C&IT that they were resolving your issue.

Communication: All course information will be broadcast via the Internet, posted through Blackboard. Each of you have been assigned an email account by WSU, and if you decide to use a different email address be sure you figure out how to forward any email on your own. I will post any notices, revisions of this syllabus, and other information on or through Blackboard. Blackboard uses your WSU account and I cannot change that. Not checking or not getting your WSU email is no excuse for missing assignments or other information relevant to this course. Do not ask me to use an alternative address to communicate with you.

Lectures: For each topic indicated in the schedule below I will post a lecture, to appear 8AM on Sunday prior to the date indicated in the schedule at the bottom of this syllabus that will discuss the main points of this topic, relate it back to the readings, and add any additional material I deem necessary. These lectures are supplemental to the reading, provide additional perspectives, and are integral part of the course material. Class time will be devoted to discussing all of this.

Preliminary Discussion Period: Starting Tuesday, September 6th at 5PM until 11PM Saturday, September 10th, there will be a non-graded Discussion Board available; here you introduce yourselves, let us know something about what you are studying, or anything else you wish to share (see my introductory comments for suggestions). In addition, in this post you are to clearly state that **you have read the syllabus and understand all of the course's requirements.**

Weekly Blackboard Discussion: You will be expected to make *at least* two separate comments in the discussion area for each lecture (you are welcome to make as many comments as you want, and from past experience many students end up engaging in lots of interactions through the discussion boards). **The first comment** must be your response to each of the week's lectures and readings. In your subsequent posts, you should revise/augment your initial comments, or you could initiate new threads, ask general questions, or respond to comments by other students. I will monitor the discussions, making comments as I feel appropriate, and in general look to see that a proper level of communication is established for the course. The discussion rules determining how you get your points are as follows:

- If you only post twice during the discussion period, they **MUST** be on **SEPARATE** days;
- Your post should be at least 3 sentences long, and "I agree" is not a sentence;
- You can post as often as you like—I even encourage it—but you will only be able to receive a maximum of 10 points per week (5 points for each of the two valid post).

The weekly Discussion Board opens 8AM on Sunday and closes 5PM Friday, after which I will post your grade based on the number of posts. Requests to post after the board closes will not be accepted. You should go back and check that your post was published appropriately, it is up to you to find out why if it did not (I have no control—all inquiries should go to C&IT). During the first week of class there will be an introductory no-credit period for posting (see below).

Challenging Grades: On occasion, exam answers will contradict material in the text (poor copy editing often results in different or competing statements in two separate places in the course textbook). As a rule, I adjust everyone at the end of the semester to deal with those instances when you are marked incorrect and but the answer you provided can be found somewhere else in the text. You do not need to contact me unless this happens to you often.

Disability: If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services' mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University. Provide me with your determination as soon as possible so I can make arrangements on exams.

Decorum: You are expected to comply with all University regulations and requirements concerning proper behavior in class, plagiarism and any form of cheating. In an online course,

that extends to the way you communicate in the discussion boards. If you do not comply with norms of respectful communication you may be blocked from participation for a specified period. Excessive abuse may result in dismissal from the class, and should you violate those norms, you can be sanctioned and otherwise punished pursuant to the University policy in place. I will not tolerate “flames” or other forms of personal attacks for views posted by classmates. Name calling or dismissive comments are considered offensive. In the first instance of such a post I will send you a private warning, and ask you to follow-up with a conciliatory comment. After the warning, I will impose a 5-percentage point penalty for each transgression. Persistent abusive posts are unacceptable and can lead to a student’s removal from the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussions: During the week we will have one or two topics for discussion (outlined below). Along with the assigned chapters in Macionis, I will post a lecture and additional material on Blackboard that relate to the topic at hand. You are expected to read and then post at least two comments per lecture. Think of these comments as augmenting in-class participation. This permits students who might otherwise not speak in class to express their views or opinions. You will be graded for the week, with 5 points awarded for each of the first two posts made in a timely manner. All points will be awarded each **Friday after closing at 5pm**.

Be sure to check back and see if your comments posted. It is impossible, after the fact, to figure out what happened or accept “missing” posts on the discussion board. You may need to consult with the Help Desk to figure out why you cannot post on the Discussion Board. In all, there are 10 class lectures and reading assignments about which you will have to comment. That means 20 comments (2 per lecture topic) during this course to get full credit. **Points** are awarded for simply posting, not on the content of your post. Your final grade will include the percentage of points scored out of the total possible 100 points (5 points x 2/week x 10 weeks).

Presentation: We will discuss this further when we meet for the first time, but each week after the first exam groups of 2 or 3 will make an in-class presentation on some aspect of how to be engaged in solving our social problems. We will discuss how you can get involved with community groups (as a volunteer, intern or other arrangements we will go over in class), and the presentations will be about what you have done or could do to make a difference.

Quizzes: You will also be expected to complete the multiple-choice quizzes at the end of each of the chapters assigned within REVEL. The quiz must be taken by 5pm on Friday during the week the readings are available (deadlines are posted on REVEL). The total points allotted for each quiz can vary by chapter. Your REVEL quiz score contribution to your final grade will be based on the percentage of your correct out of total responses for all quizzes combined. You are responsible for checking that each quiz score updates within your Performance tab in REVEL once you receive confirmation that you have completed the quiz. If you encounter problems, please email me and I will send it along to our Pearson Representative. If necessary, she will forward it to Pearson Tech Support.

Examinations: You will have two on-line examinations during the semester (Oct 11 and Dec 6), available during our scheduled class time (but where you take the exam is up to you, so long as it

is on a secure connection—ideally in the library or at home, but not on your iPad or smart phone). Your contribution to your final grade will be calculated based on the percent correct for each exam. The questions on the first exam covers all the material assigned to that point; the second one covers the full semester, more heavily weighted with questions from the latter part of the course. Examinations date are on the schedule below.

The exams cannot be rescheduled, but I will reset them during the exam period if you encounter technical problems. Please note—if I have to reset the exam, all answers already provided will be voided by Blackboard. All those having exams reset should check their email to learn that it has been done, and the exam will be available again the **next day** (Oct 12 and Dec 7) only, again during our scheduled class time. It is **your responsibility** to take these assessments when they are scheduled; there can be **NO** waiver, extension, or rescheduling for any exam.

Exams and quizzes will be graded immediately and the grade, answers provided and correct answers will appear on Blackboard’s Grade Center after the assessment period ends. ***If no grade appears, you should contact me immediately*** since there may have been a technical problem.

I reserve the right to make changes in the course or this syllabus, if needed, as the semester progresses! Please pay attention to email messages containing any course modifications.

COURSE GRADE

Your grade for the course will be a composite of your percentage performance on the five main portions of this course: Discussion Board, Quizzes, and 2 Examinations and In-class presentation. For each you will receive an overall percentage score, as noted above (percent for writing, percent for total correct answers on all quizzes combined, and percent correct for each of the exams taken individually). Your final course percentage on which the grade is based will be calculated as a weighted total:

Discussion Board (DB)	10%
Quiz total (Q) percentage	15%
Exam One (E1) percentage	25%
Exam Two (E2) percentage	35%
In-Class Presentation (IP)	15%

$$\text{Total Percent} = (0.10 \times \text{DB}) + (0.15 \times \text{Q}) + (0.25 \times \text{E1}) + (0.35 \times \text{E2}) + (0.15 \times \text{IP})$$

Your final grade will be calculated on the percentage range, as listed below:

<u>Total Percent</u>	<u>Grade</u>		<u>Total Percent</u>	<u>Grade</u>
94 – 100	A		74 – 76	C+
90 – 93	A-		70 – 73	C
86 – 89	B+		66 – 70	C-
81 – 85	B		50 – 65	D
77 – 80	B-		Less than 50	F

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this course or its requirements. Below is the course schedule of topics and exams. Discussion Boards will be graded for lectures numbered 1 – 10 below. Quiz and exam dates are posted on the course schedule below. The best way to contact me during the semester is by email. Any message not getting a response should be resent (I can't control technology). Calling my office number will get you to the Department, where you can leave a message (but I may not get it for a few days—email is always better).

You can drop this course with no tuition owed by September 14th. After that date, be mindful that the last day to withdraw from the course is Nov 13th, and if you wish to withdraw later you will have to appeal to the Registrar. I have no control over that process.

Finally, no, I do not grade on a curve, and no, there is no extra credit opportunities to improve your grade over the semester. To do well all you have to do is maintain the work as outlined.

IMPORTANT DATES

Sept 6:	First day of class
Sept 14:	Last day to withdraw with full tuition refund
Sept 28:	Last day to withdraw and not appear on your transcript
Oct 11:	First exam
Nov 13:	Last day to withdraw from the course with a “W” grade
Nov 24:	Thanksgiving
Dec 6:	Last day of class, Second Exam

DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS COURSE OR THE INFORMATION IN THIS SYLLABUS

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) GENERALLY, NOTE THAT I WILL NOT ANSWER REPEATED EMAIL QUESTIONS IF THE ANSWERS TO THEM CAN BE FOUND IN THIS SYLLABUS**
- 2) THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT IN THIS COURSE. YOU ARE EXPECTED TO TRY HARD, SO THAT ALONE IS NOT A BASIS FOR ASKING ME TO IMPROVE YOUR FINAL GRADE.**

BREAKTHROUGH
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Getting Started for Macionis' *Social Problems*

TO GET STARTED, YOU WILL NEED THREE THINGS:

- **A LINK TO YOUR REVEL COURSE.** <https://console.pearson.com/enrollment/5kopqj>
- **AN EMAIL ADDRESS.** You will need to use your school's email address.
- **AN ACCESS CODE.** When you purchase the course textbook from the bookstore you will receive an access code for the publisher's REVEL web site, and possibly a shrink wrapped copy of the textbook if that is what your instructor decided upon. **You also have the option to choose a 14-day temporary access.**

REGISTERING FOR YOUR REVEL COURSE (IF YOU'D RATHER A VIDEO WALK YOU THROUGH, PLEASE SEE BOTTOM OF PAGE)

Step 1: Once you have the LINK TO YOUR REVEL COURSE, please click on it, or type it into your browser.

STEP 2: Type in your username and password then Click on: "Sign in with your Pearson Account" if you already have a Pearson Account or Create a new account if needed. If you are unsure, you may choose that option.

STEP 3: After you sign in, you will see your course appear in your REVEL account. Please click on your instructor's course and choose "Go to my course".

STEP 4: If you purchased an access code in your bookstore, please click: ENTER ACCESS CODE OR you can choose the option for temporary access for 14 days. You will have an option to purchase a print version for \$19.99 should you wish a hard copy.

USER FRIENDLY VIDEOS & SUPPORT FOR REVEL

HOW TO REGISTER:

[HTTP://WWW.PEARSONHIGHERED.COM/REVEL/STUDENTS/REGISTRATION/INDEX.HTML](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/students/registration/index.html)

FEATURES OF REVEL:

[HTTP://WWW.PEARSONHIGHERED.COM/REVEL/STUDENTS/FEATURES/INDEX.HTML](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/students/features/index.html)

GET SUPPORT HERE:

[HTTP://WWW.PEARSONHIGHERED.COM/REVEL/STUDENTS/SUPPORT/INDEX.HTML](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/students/support/index.html)

FALL 2016 COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>LECTURE TOPIC</i>	<i>READING</i>
Sept 6	INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE Mandatory Non-credit Discussion Board	
Sept 13	1. Studying Social Problems	Chapter 1
Sept 20	2. Social Inequality and poverty	Chapter 2
Sept 27	3. Racial and ethnic inequality	Chapter 3
Oct 4	4. Gender inequality and sexuality	Chapters 4 and 7
OCT 11 → FIRST EXAM ←		
Oct 18	5. Aging and health	Chapters 5 and 9
Oct 25	6. Economy and politics	Chapter 10
Nov 1	7. Work and the workplace	Chapter 11
Nov 8	8. Family life and education	Chapters 12 and 13
Nov 15	9. Urban society	Chapter 14
Nov 22-28	Thanksgiving Break	
Nov 29	10. Global inequality; the environment	Chapter 15 and 16
Dec 6 → SECOND EXAM ←		