

## **SOCIAL PROBLEMS - Fall 2014**

Soc 2020 section 005

M/W 1:25 - 2:50

Classroom: 224 State Hall

### **Instructor: Amanda Levitt**

Department of Sociology

Office: 2262 FAB

Email: Amanda.Levitt@wayne.edu

Office Hours: Mondays after class, Tuesdays from 2:30-4:30 or by appointment

### **Office hours**

I am available during my office hours, by appointment or by email throughout the semester. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you feel you need assistance or want to connect with me outside of class. I reply to emails within 24 hours or sooner.

### **Course Description**

This course takes consideration of major contemporary social problems, which reveal structural strains, value conflicts, deviations and changes in society. It provides a critical analysis of socio-cultural factors that create social problems and examines perspectives on and possible solutions to societal problems.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- 1) Analyze the social world through the discipline of sociology and have an understanding of some of the key debates/problems in the nature of social life
- 2) Place your own lives/biographies in a sociological perspective
- 3) Understand some of the central challenges facing our society and the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and be able to evaluate them
- 4) Think more critically about your own role as a citizen and understand proposed ways to alleviate the major social problems facing society today

### **Course Expectations**

Arrive on time and do not leave until class is over. Turn off your cell phone (or set to silent) and do not use during class. Treat others respectfully. Please refrain from talking to one another during class or engaging in any other distracting behavior. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Any and all violations of these course expectations and actions that are not considerate of others can result in negative participation points and up to removal from the class. Complete all readings before class and be prepared to discuss them. Get help when you need it. Provide feedback.

### **Required Text and Materials**

*Social Problems (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*

By John Macionis

ISBN 978-0-205-88139-0

Highly recommended to read one of the following:

The New York Times – [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

The Detroit News - [www.detroitnews.com](http://www.detroitnews.com)

The Guardian - [www.theguardian.com/us](http://www.theguardian.com/us)

Al Jazeera America - [america.aljazeera.com](http://america.aljazeera.com)

### **Grading**

Your course grade is broken down by attendance, exams, quizzes, and written assignments.

Attendance	5%
Quizzes	5%
Midterm Paper	10%
Final Paper	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%

Total: 100%

### **Grading Scale**

		100-93	A	90-92	A-
89-87	B+	86-83	B	82-80	B-
79-77	C+	76-73	C	72-70	C-
69-67	D+	66-63	D	62-60	D-
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### **Quizzes**

During the course there will be 10 in class quizzes that will cover what has been discussed during a previous class period. Your two lowest grades will be dropped. They will allow you to be better prepared for the exams.

### **Writing Assignments**

The writing assignments for this course will build off each other starting with the midterm paper. The first paper of the course will set the foundation for the final paper that is due the last week of class. **All papers are required on the due date in class.** Format – Double spaced 12 point Times New Roman font and 1 inch margins. Keep your citation formatting consistent throughout your paper. Reference the Purdue Owl (ADDRESS) or visit the writing center to get help with formatting citations. **Late assignments will be docked 10% each day they are late.**

*Midterm Paper* – This assignment will be in three parts to get you prepared for the final paper. Using the format above just break each section apart and turn in one document.

1. In 1 to 2 pages write your biography. Things to include – Where you grew up, where you live now, your family makeup, describe your childhood – teens – now, etc. You are

required to include the demographics of the city you grew up in including population, median household income, racial makeup, and percent living in poverty. This will be explained in class and all the data can be found using the United State Census American Fact Finder - <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

2. State a social problem in your community that you want to further research. Summarize in 3 to 4 sentences why you want to explore this social problem.
3. Find 3 citations that relates to your social problem and write a 2-3 sentence summary of why the study is vital to your understanding of the issue. Format this section as you would a reference page with the complete citation followed by the summary underneath.

*Final Paper* – This assignment will be a research paper about a social problem in your community that you want to explore. Using the midterm paper as a guide you will write a paper that is 5 to 7 pages in length with 5 to 7 citations. I expect 5 full pages and about 1 citation per page. *Use block quotes sparingly. My general rule is one block quote for every four pages of text.*

***The final paper will be turned in during the last class period and will be submitted through blackboard using Safe Assign. (Instructions will be given in class)***

### **Exams**

There will be three exams this semester. Each will consist of 50 multiple choice questions and an extra credit essay question. The exams will use the same format of the quizzes that you will take throughout the semester. A study guide will be provided in the class period before the exam and we will review the material. **Please bring a scantron form to take the exam.**

*Make up exams are extremely and will be taken in my office during office hours. You must get permission and make arrangements for your make up test with me prior to or immediately after the exam. Permission to take a makeup exam will be granted only under the most extenuating circumstances. If you miss due to illness or injury a note from your doctor (a parent or another adult confirming your absence) is required. All make up exams must be conducted within one week of the regular exam date. It is your responsibility to schedule.*

### **Attendance Policy**

Lectures will only cover *some* of the reading material that is assigned not all making it imperative that you read your assigned readings. Class is an interactive experience; thus, attendance and participation are both crucial and required as part of your grade. To earn full credit you must contribute to class discussions by reading, preparing and speaking in class. Showing up will not be enough.

Students can have 4 unexcused absences before their attendance grade will be negatively impacted. Please contact me if you are going to miss class.

### **Course Readings**

You are required to read the chapter we will be covering before coming to class. This will better prepare you for class and allow you to better participate in class discussions.

### **Email**

Please check your email on a regular basis. Outside of class email is the best way to communicate with one another. I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time as needed as the class progresses. Any changes will be emailed out to the class list serve as well as announced in class. Required materials for the class will be made available via email as well.

**If your Wayne State email is not your main email account make sure that you have your settings updated to forward your emails. It is your responsibility to regularly check your email.**

**I will not answer emails from any email address other than a Wayne State account.**

If you have problems with your email account send an email to the C&IT Help Desk at [helpdesk@wayne.edu](mailto:helpdesk@wayne.edu) or call (313) 577-4778.

The Computing & Information Technology Help Desk website:  
<http://www.computing.wayne.edu/helpdesk/>

### **Incompletes**

As noted in the Undergraduate Bulletin, “An Incomplete is given (to a student) when they have not completed all of the course work as planned for the term and when there is, in the judgment of the instructor, a reasonable probability that the student can complete the course successfully without again attending regular class sessions. The responsibility for completing all course work rests entirely with the student. The mark of ‘I’ will be changed to a grade only when the student completes the course work as arranged with the instructor....” The mark of ‘I’ which is not converted to a letter grade within one calendar year from the time it was received will be considered Failure under the new rules.

An Incomplete will be granted only in unusual circumstances, for example, serious illness or hospitalization. The plan for removing the incomplete will be stated in writing and this document will be signed by both the student and the instructor.

### **Withdrawals**

Students who find they are not doing well in the course should withdraw from the course. It is the student's responsibility to initiate action for a formal withdrawal. Students who do not officially withdraw but stop attending class and/or do not take scheduled exams will receive a failing grade.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

Last day to drop with full tuition reimbursement – September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014  
Last day to drop without instructor permission – September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
Last day to drop the course - November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014

### **Academic Integrity**

It is paramount that we each remain committed to academic excellence. Please visit the Dean of Student's Office website to review the policy and protocol around plagiarism, fabrication, cheating and other: <http://doso.wayne.edu/academic-integrity.html>

### **Education Accessibility Services**

Any student with a documented disability or a condition that compromises their ability to satisfactorily complete the course requirements or attend class regularly should notify me as soon as possible. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate your needs. Please contact EAS at (313) 577-1851 to discuss appropriate accommodations in a confidential setting. The office is located in Room 1600 of the David Adamany Undergraduate Library. All services are by appointment only please visit the website: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

### **Writing Center**

Offers one-on-one writing assistance in the University Writing Center, room 2310 of the Undergraduate Library. English Department tutors are available to assist you with your paper, from beginning to end, from the first draft to the final copy. Please visit the website to schedule appointment online or for further information: <http://clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/writing> You can also call them at (313) 577-2544.

### **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"

## COURSE OUTLINE

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READING</b>
8/27	Introduction to the course	
9/3	Studying social problems	Chapter 1
9/8 & 9/10	Poverty and Wealth	Chapter 2
9/15 & 9/17	Race and ethnic inequality	Chapter 3
9/22 & 9/24	Gender inequality and sexuality	Chapters 4 & 7
9/29	Review for first exam in class	
10/1	<b>FIRST EXAM – In class. Bring Scantron.</b>	
10/6 & 10/8	Crime, Violence and Criminal Justice	Chapter 6
10/13 & 10/15	Agging and inequality, physical and mental health	Chapters 5 & 9
10/20 & 10/22	Economy and politics – Midterm paper due 10/22 in class	Chapter 10
10/27 & 10/29	Work and the workplace	Chapter 11
11/3	Review for second exam in class	
11/5	<b>SECOND EXAM – In class. Bring Scantron.</b>	
11/10 & 11/12	Family life and education	Chapters 12&13
11/17 & 11/19	Urban society	Chapter 14
11/24 & 12/1	Global inequality	Chapter 15&16
12/3	Semester wrap up – Help with final paper – Writing day	
12/8	Final paper due in class	
12/10	<b>THIRD EXAM – In class. Bring Scantron.</b>	

	<b>The third exam will be from 1:20-3:50 on December 10<sup>th</sup>.</b>	