

## **SOCIAL PROBLEMS - Summer 2016**

Soc 2020 section 001

M/W 10:30 - 1:20

Classroom: 215 State Hall

### **Instructor: Amanda Levitt**

Department of Sociology

Office: 2262 FAB

Email: Amanda.Levitt@wayne.edu

Office Hours: By appointment.

### **Contact Information**

I am available by appointment or email throughout the semester. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you feel you need assistance outside of class. I usually reply to emails within 24 hours but give at least 48 hours for a response. This means if you email me the day an assignment is due you should **NOT** expect a response the same day.

### **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 – Continuity and Change*

This is a free online text that is available via this link:

[https://saylordotorg.github.io/text\\_social-problems-continuity-and-change/](https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/)

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 a plagiarism assignment, attendance, give essays, and a final project.

Plagiarism Assign.	10%
Attendance	15%
Reflection Essays	25%
Final Project	50%

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-	60-0	E

### **Attendance Policy**

Lectures will only cover *some* of the reading material that is assigned making it imperative that you keep on top of assigned material and attend class in order to fully understand the material we will be discussing. Class is an interactive experience. Attendance and participation are both crucial to doing well in the course. 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 2 unexcused absences before their attendance grade will be negatively impacted. Please contact me if you are going to miss class.

### **Plagiarism Assignment – Due 7/11/16**

Students must complete the plagiarism test on Indiana University’s website and bring in the certificate showing they passed the test on the due date. Don’t wait until the last minute to

complete this assignment. It may seem easy but unless you have an in depth understanding of plagiarism you will need to read the material on the website, take the practice exam and then complete the certification. You may need to take the certification more than once to pass.

<https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html>

### **Reflection Essays**

During the semester students must submit five 500 to 700 word essays that reflect on the weeks reading material and class discussion. Essays will be due Sunday at 11:59pm after the weeks material has been discussed. **Late essays will not be accepted without an emergency.**

For each essay students should engage in the material discussed in class by reflecting on their own perspective of the material and how they view the topic of the week. Students are not required to cite other material but instead should attempt to argue their own perspective.

Essays will be turned in online via blackboard under the assignments tab.

Format – Double spaced 12 point Times New Roman font and 1 inch margins. In the top left corner should be – Name, course with section number and the chapter with topic the essay will be addressing.

### **Final Project**

This is a two-part assignment that includes a final research paper and a presentation that connects the research in the paper to the main themes within the course material. Students should choose a social problem that they are interested in exploring further, write a research paper that meets the requirements outlined below and create a 10-15 minute presentation.

#### *Research Paper*

You will write a paper that is 3 to 5 pages in length with 4 to 7 sources. 4 of the sources must come from scholarly articles, preferably sociological journals. I expect 3 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.*

Format – Double spaced 12 point Times New Roman font and 1 inch margins. Citations must use APA format and make sure to keep your citation formatting consistent throughout your paper. Reference the Purdue Owl (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>) or visit the writing center to get help with formatting citations. Bibme.org is a good resource to use when making a reference page.

The final paper will be turned in during the class period when your presentation is given and will be submitted through blackboard using Safe Assign. (Instructions will be given in class)

#### *Presentation*

Using the research paper topic and sources, build a presentation that connects the social problem you've chosen to the social processes and structural issues we discussed in class. Throughout the semester we will be discussing different social problems by deconstructing how society and the institutions within it create constraints on the lives on individuals due to their social location, identity and cultural backgrounds.

Presentations should be 10-15 minutes in length and be presented using whatever style you prefer. There is no requirement to use PowerPoint but it can be used to give a visual component to the presentation and outline. You should summarize the social problem you covered in your research paper, cite the main theoretical findings of the research you collected for the paper and then connect it to the course.

### **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.

Additional reading material will be available on blackboard. You are expected to read each item prior to coming to class.

### **Email**

Please check your email on a regular basis. Outside of class, email is the best way to communicate with one another. 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. I will also not answer questions that do not have a subject, a salutation, a signature or is written like a text message.**

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 – July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Last day to drop without instructor permission – July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Last day to drop the course with instructor permission – August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

### **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>

**Students who are caught plagiarizing will first fail the assignment, then fail the course if it happens again and finally be reported to the University if it happens a third time.**

### **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”

I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time as needed as the class progresses.

## COURSE OUTLINE

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>CHAPTER</b>
6/29	Introduction to the course - Studying Social Problems	Chapter 1
7/6	Poverty and Wealth	Chapter 2
7/8	Race and Ethnic Inequality – <b>This is a Friday!</b>	Chapter 3
7/11	Gender inequality	Chapters 4
7/13	Sexuality – <b>Plagiarism Assignment Due</b>	Chapter 7
7/18	Crime, Violence and Criminal Justice	Chapter 6
7/20	Aging and inequality - Physical and Mental Health	Chapters 5 & 9
7/25	Economy and Politics	Chapter 10
7/27	Work and the Workplace	Chapter 11
8/1	Education	Chapters 13
8/3	Urban Society	Chapter 14
8/8	War and Terrorism	Chapter 17
8/10	<b>FLEX WEEK</b>	
8/15	<b>Final Project Presentations and Paper Due</b>	