

**SOC 2020: Social Problems
Course Syllabus**

Class time: Tues. & Thurs., 11:30am-12:45pm
Class location: Education (EDUC), Room 204

Instructor: Patricia Morton, Ph.D.

Office: Faculty Administration Building (FAB), Room 3250

Office hours: Tues. 1-2pm; Thurs. 10:15-11:15 am; additional hours by appointment

Email: patricia.morton@wayne.edu

I usually respond within 1-2 business days. Please do not email me through blackboard.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to social problems. An empirical overview of problematic conditions (e.g., poverty, violence, crime, inequalities related to racism, sexism, and ageism, and imperfections in the major social institutions of family, education, and criminal justice) in the U.S. and other societies will be presented, along with some discussion of major theoretical paradigms that may be applied to the study of social problems within the field of sociology. The course will also look at potential solutions to such problems from a sociological perspective.

Course Objectives

- To demonstrate the nature and characteristics of a number of social problems.
- To see how social problems are manifest in our everyday lives.
- To highlight the role of how politics shape social problems.
- To understand various sociological perspectives and methods used to investigate social problems – i.e., use your sociological imagination to understand social problems.
- To promote critical thinking regarding a wide variety of social problems.
- To identify potential solutions to these social issues.

Required Materials

Title: *Social Problems*, 6th ed.

Author: John J. Macionis

ISBN-10: 0-13-390959-X

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-390959-3

Copyright year: 2015

Publisher: Pearson

Blackboard: There will be additional materials, including readings and assignments, posted on Blackboard throughout the semester. Please check Blackboard regularly to access these materials.

Website: <http://blackboard.wayne.edu>

Attendance

Wayne State University (WSU) requires instructors to report student attendance for the first two weeks of class. If attendance is not confirmed, the registrar will drop the student from the class. Please refer to WSU's Go to Class! website for more information:

<http://reg.wayne.edu/gotoclass.php>

Due to this policy and the fact that students who attend class do significantly better in the course than students who do not attend, there will be a daily sign-in sheet for attendance. The sheet will be passed around at the beginning of class and it is your responsibility to make sure you sign it. Students will be allowed two unexcused absences. After that, each additional unexcused absence will result in losing 5 attendance point (out of 100). Also, there will be graded in-class activities that require your attendance and course assignments will be collected in class on their due date (unless stated otherwise). Finally, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and work together on assignments. Thus, attendance is highly recommended.

Make-up Policy

In general, late work is not accepted. If you plan on missing a class the day an assignment is due, you must arrange a time to turn in the assignment to me before class begins on the due date to receive full credit. There are no make-ups for exams or in-class assignments except for medical/familial emergencies; WSU excused absences (e.g., religious observances; University-related sports travel); and academic engagements (e.g., conference presentations). In the latter cases, you will need to inform me of the excused absence at least a week in advance to arrange for you to make-up work and submit any assignments per the policy mentioned above (i.e., before class due date).

Classroom Conduct

I expect everyone, including myself, to respect everyone, actively listen to each other during class discussions, and facilitate an environment conducive for inclusion, equity, and learning. To maximize the learning capabilities of all students, please do not hesitate to ask me questions at any time during lecture to clarify or restate any material that I may not have sufficiently explained. Your participation is always welcomed, and I encourage students to share any relevant information. I also ask that distracting behavior, such as texting, web surfing, and talking to fellow students about material unrelated to the course, be avoided during class. Therefore, cell phone use is not allowed, and cell phones should be kept off or on silent. Laptops may be used for academic purposes only that relate to the course, but are discouraged as they tend to be more distracting to the student using them and those around him or her.

Respect

Throughout the course of this class, you will be challenged to think critically about your viewpoints and those of others. While discussion may produce topics or viewpoints you might not necessarily agree with, respectful and cordial behavior is expected from all students. Disrespectful behavior towards any group or individual will not be tolerated. Any student who does not abide by this policy may be asked to leave class, and further violations will be dealt with in accordance with WSU policies. I also ask that any sensitive information shared during

our class time stays within our classroom's walls. As a final note, I will also adhere to these guidelines.

Academic Dishonesty

I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. Any academic dishonesty will result in a zero for related coursework, and may be reported to the dean and/or lead to failing the course. Academic dishonesty is not limited to, but includes plagiarism, copying another student's answers, using unapproved notes during an examination, and communication with other students during an examination. For further information, please refer to the WSU handbook and Undergraduate Bulletin:

https://www.wsc.edu/info/20028/student_handbook/69/selected_academic_policies/2
<http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/ubk-output/index.html>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need first register with Student Disability Services to coordinate your accommodations. Next, qualified students should contact me as soon as possible to privately discuss your accommodations. To avoid any delays or hindrances, please contact me before the third week of classes.

Student Disability Services

Location: David Adamany Undergraduate Library, Room 1600

Phone: 313-577- 1851

Website: <https://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

Writing Resources

Critical thinking and writing is an important component of this course. Students are encouraged to email me or visit my office hours with concerns. WSU also offers resources for writing through their WRT Zone, including WSU's Writing Center:

<http://clas.wayne.edu/WRITING/>
<http://www.clas.wayne.edu/Sociology/Writing-Resources>

Emergency Preparedness

In the event that an emergency arises, please familiarize yourself with the University's emergency procedures. For details, please refer to WSU's Emergency and Safety Procedures:

<https://police.wayne.edu/procedures.php>

Drop/Withdraw

Sept. 13, Wed.: Last day to drop course with 100% tuition cancellation

Sept. 27, Wed.: Last day to drop course with no grade reported (no refund)

Nov. 12, Sun.: Last day to request withdraw with approval (current grade reported)

Note: I will not sign off on a withdraw for a student who committed academic dishonestly, such as cheating and/or plagiarism.

Grades

Final grade will be determined by the following:

Attendance	10%
Class participation	20%
Reflection essays	20%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Final project	20%

Grading scale:

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 with a decimal point of 0.5 or above will be rounded up (e.g., 89.5, will be rounded up to a 90). Any final grades with a decimal point below 0.5, will be rounded down.

If your grade has been entered into Blackboard incorrectly, please let me know ASAP. If you have a question about the grade you received, students must contact me within **1 week** of the grade being issued.

Early Academic Assessment (EAA) requires me to enter your grade during week seven of the semester. You will receive an email notification if the grade entered is a C or lower. I will not enter your grade if you have a C or better. You can track your grades on Blackboard.

Description of Graded Work

Attendance

Please see attendance policy above.

Class Participation

Participation will be assessed by your contribution to class discussions and in-class actives. Regarding class discussions, please make well-thought and appropriate comments related to the course material; quality is better than quantity. In-class activities (ICA) will be administered throughout the semester to exercise our critical thinking skills and apply what we learn in class.

Students cannot make-up a missed ICA. To allow for last minute emergencies, the lowest ICA will be dropped.

Reflection Essays

Each student will submit three reflection essays throughout the semester to apply their critical thinking to what we learn and discuss in class. Reflection essays can cover any topic discussed in the course prior to the due date, but students can only write about each topic once. Essays can cover your personal thoughts, experiences, and reactions to the topics covers; strengths and/or limitations of the course readings, class discussion, and material; questions raised; etc. I will provide more information regarding instructions and grading rubric throughout the semester, but, in general, each essay should be approximately 400-700 words, double-spaced, and typed using a common font (e.g., Times New Roman). Remember, quality is better than quantity.

Essays that have been plagiarized will be graded as zero and may lead to failing the course. If you use another's ideas, please provide a correct citation (and use quotes if using another's direct words).

Exams

There will be two in-class exams – a mid-term and a final. Although I am not a fan of sheer memorization, it is important that students are familiar with and understand concepts and terms related to social problems. Building a basic knowledge of social problems will provide students with a foundation that will enrich discussions regarding social problems in and outside of the class as well as prepare students for their final project.

Final Project

The final project is a group project that applies what you have learned in class. At the end of the semester, each group will give a presentation on a social problem that has been approved by me, the instructor. There will be mini-assignments related to the final project throughout the semester to help students develop their final project as well as class time allotted to working on this project. I will provide more details, including due dates of mini-assignments and grading rubric, after we discuss the project in class.

Schedule*

Date	Topic	Assignments/Exams**
Week 1 Aug. 30	Introduction	
Week 2 Sept. 4	Ch. 1 Studying Social Problems	
Week 3 Sept. 11	Ch. 2 Poverty and Wealth	
Week 4 Sept. 18	Ch. 3 Racial and Ethnic Inequality	Reflection Essay 1 due
Week 5 Sept. 25	Ch. 4 Gender Inequality Ch. 7 Sexuality	Submit Final Project Topic: Decided by group
Week 6 Oct. 2	Ch. 5 Aging and Inequality Ch. 9 Physical and Mental Health	
Week 7 Oct. 9	MEET WITH GROUP DURING CLASS TIME	No formal class this week. Meet with groups during class time to work on final project.
Week 8 Oct. 16	Ch. 6 Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice Ch. 8 Alcohol and Other Drugs	Reflection Essay 2 due
Week 9 Oct. 23	Ch. 10 Economy and Politics	<u>Mid-term Exam</u>
Week 10 Oct. 30	Ch. 11 Work and the Workplace Ch. 12 Family Life	
Week 11 Nov. 6	Ch. 13 Education	
Week 12 Nov. 13	Ch. 14 Urban Life	Reflection Essay 3 due
Week 13 Nov. 20	Ch. 15 Population and Global Inequality	Thurs. Nov. 23—No Class
Week 14 Nov. 27	Ch. 16 Technology and the Environment (time permitting) Ch. 17 War and Terrorism	
Week 15 Dec. 4	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS	<u>Final project due</u> : Present final project on scheduled day
Dec. 13- Dec. 19	Finals; TBD	<u>Final Exam</u>

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change at the instructor's discretion and pace of the class. Please check **Blackboard** for changes made to course.

**Due dates for mini-assignments regarding the final project will be announced throughout the semester.