SOC 2020: Social Problems, Section 009

Fall 2015
Tuesday/Thursday 10:40 – 12:20pm
Wayne State University
0218 State Hall

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Haskin
Email: dv7064@wayne.edu
Office: 2269 FAB
Office Hours: TTH 9:30am-10:30am; 12:30pm-1:15pm; By appointment
Phone: 313.577.2930 (leave message)

Course Description. In this course, we will learn about major contemporary social problems that reveal structural strains, value conflicts, deviations and changes in society. We will also analyze socio-cultural factors creating problems and of possible solutions.

Required Text/Additional Readings


Additional readings are available on Blackboard

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

The Basic Learning Outcomes for SOC 2020 include, but are not limited to:

• Analyze social problems through the discipline of sociology and have an understanding of some of the key debates/problems in the nature of social life
• Articulate some of the central challenges facing our society and the world in the 21st century and be able to evaluate them
• Engage more critically in discussions about your own role as a citizen and propose ways to alleviate the major social problems facing society today
General Course Expectations

• Abide by Wayne State University’s Student Code of Conduct: http://doso.wayne.edu/assets/codeofconduct.pdf
• Attend all class meetings and actively participate in class.
• Be responsible for what you have missed should you be absent from class.
• Read and complete all required assignments prior to coming to class.
• Ask questions right away if you do not understand an assignment!
• Get additional help from the The David Adamany Undergraduate Library Writing Center if necessary.
• Respect everyone in the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to, respectful means of communication, not disrupting class by using phones or other technology in ways that is not related to class, and quiet consumption of food & beverages.
• Do not procrastinate! This goes both for assignments and in contacting me with questions or concerns.

Contact Information. The best way to contact me is via email: dv7064@wayne.edu. You can also leave a message in the office at your own risk (chances are I will not get it in a timely manner). I will respond to email within 24 hours. If you do not get a response from me within 24 hours, assume that I did not receive your email and send it again.

Communication. All course information will be broadcast via Internet, posted on Blackboard. Each of you has been assigned an email account by Wayne State University and if you decide to use a different account, it is up to you to forward your WSU email to that alternative account. I will post any revisions to the syllabus, articles of interest, and other information on Blackboard. Choosing not to check your email, or Blackboard is not an excuse for missing assignments or other information relevant to this course. You can learn about Blackboard at: http://computing.wayne.edu/blackboard/.

Email etiquette. All students have a WSU email account so if you decide to use a different account you need to forward the WSU email to that alternative account, or minimally ensure my emails are forwarded. DO NOT EMAIL AS IF YOU WERE SENDING A TEXT MESSAGE. I expect emails to be professional, including spelling and grammar. Students must indicate their name and what course they are enrolled in so that I know who is sending the email. Do not address me as “Ms.” or “Mrs.” – these are titles for teachers in K thru 12. Use either “doctor” or “professor.” I will not engage in discussions of substance via email, particularly regarding grades and class issues. It is too easy for emails to be taken out of context and the “tone” and meaning received may not be what the sender intended.
**Missed Classes.** The student is responsible for all announcements made during class, as well as all readings, all of the information from lectures, and all films/video clips we may view in class. Major announcements will be posted to Blackboard. It is the student’s responsibility to get class notes from another student and to seek clarification about the nature of the missed material from me.

**Late Work Policy.** Late work is not accepted unless you have a **VERIFIABLE** excuse e.g. a note from your physician documenting your illness, including a date of return, and we work something out **prior to** your absence.

**Concerns about the course and grades.** 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’. If you have questions about your grade, plan to come to office hours or set up an appointment. It’s the students’ responsibility to keep all graded assignments until completing the course. If you believe you have been graded unfairly, you should check with me to see if it was a simple oversight. If not and you still believe you have been graded unfairly, you must submit a written explanation of why you believe the grade should be re-evaluated. Be very specific by providing evidence from course readings, along with your original graded assignment. However, a written statement of what you believe is an unfair grade does not automatically mean a grade change. If you are able to show you were graded unfairly then I will gladly change your grade, but keep in mind the grade can stay the same or go down as a result of the second review. If you are still not satisfied you must go through proper channels in the Department of Sociology. A third party reviews the assignment. Again, based on the third party review, the grade(s) may go up, remain the same, or decrease.

**Incomplete/Withdrawal Policy.** I do not give Incompletes unless there is a **VERIFIABLE** case of medical or other qualifying emergency. Information on Wayne State policies can be found at [http://reg.wayne.edu/students/information.php - dropping](http://reg.wayne.edu/students/information.php). The withdrawal system at WSU is student-initiated, so if you are hoping to withdraw from the course you must do so yourself via pipeline. Students who do not formally withdraw from the course but stop attending and do not complete the course requirements will receive a failing grade in the course. Note that **September 16, 2015** is the last day to drop a class with tuition cancellation and **November 15, 2015** is the last day to withdraw from a class.

**Cell Phones, Pagers, iPhones, iPads, iTouches, etc.** All phones, pages, and other electronic devices should be turned off (or turned to a silent ringer option) before you enter the classroom and before the class period begins. 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, and sit in the front row of the classroom. **I reserve the right to lower students’ participation and attendance grades if they are online or on their devices during class time.**

**Academic Dishonesty:** Assignments must be clearly distinguishable from those of other students or sources. Plagiarism is considered cheating; any quoted material must be placed in quotation marks with proper references to the author included. If you think you might be plagiarizing, then you probably ARE! Copying entire paragraphs from sources is not appropriate even if citations are provided. Evidence of cheating or plagiarizing will result in automatic failure of the test/assignment and possibly the course. Please see the student code of conduct for more information on WSU's policies regarding student conduct [http://doso.wayne.edu/assets/codeofconduct.pdf](http://doso.wayne.edu/assets/codeofconduct.pdf)

**Extra Credit.** I do not give extra credit, extra assignments, or other extra opportunities for improving grades. Moreover, I do not negotiate grades, except when you believe there is an explicit error in the grading procedures. No grades will be determined by a curve. Students earn grades; they are not given.

**Advisement and Office Hours.** I am always willing to discuss the results of an assignment, as well as readings or lectures that you may be struggling with to understand. It is your responsibility as a student to come to my office hours if you have any questions, concerns, or comments relating to the class and your work in that class! Therefore, it is always your responsibility as a student to ask if you are concerned about your grade. **Do not wait until the last week or so of the semester to try to do something about a failing grade.** At that point it is just too late. You should always ask whenever you have a question about how you are doing in the class instead of ignoring the situation. Again, if you are having any difficulties, I strongly recommend you discuss those immediately with me.

**Syllabus.** This syllabus is your guide for the semester. The schedule is fairly set and little if anything will change. However, I reserve the right to modify the program if it is necessary. If you have any questions about when an assignment is due, what the reading is, what the course policies are, or how your grade is calculated and what percentages each assignment is worth, you should consult this document. **I will not use valuable class time to repeatedly explain the details that are already outlined in the course syllabus.** Thus, if you do not understand something that is written on the syllabus, you should send me an email or stop by my office. This same policy follows for all assignments. You will always receive all assignments written in detail and I do not intend on using class time to review these and address questions where the answers are found in the written assignment.

**Changes to the Syllabus.** I reserve the right to make adjustments to this syllabus throughout the semester. Please pay close attention to all announcements in class and on blackboard.
Academic Accommodation. If you need an academic accommodation because of a disability, please advise me and make an appointment as soon as possible to verify the disability and arrange for accommodation. Student Success Services.

Course Requirements

Your grade for the semester will come from Participation, Ten (10) In Class Writing Exercises, and Three (3) Exams.

- Participation: 10%
- In Class Writing Exercises (10): 25%
- Exam 1: 15%
- Exam 2: 15%
- Final Exam: 35%

Participation. This is a self-graded assessment in which YOU decide your rating. At the end of each class, you will be asked to turn in a square of paper with your name on it, and a self rating ranging from 1-4 on your level of participation that day. Of course, there are parameters. Here they are:

1: I was present in class but did not talk
2: I spoke in class but did not read the material
3: I spoke in class once and read before class
4: I spoke in class more than once and read before class

Students are responsible for making sure that I have received their slips of paper. This is part of all students’ grades. You will quickly catch on that it is not enough to simply attend class. We will dedicate time to collaborative team learning activities and discussion of lecture material. All students must be adequately prepared for each class session.

In Class Writing Exercises. Will be administered 13 times throughout the semester. These exercises will brief in nature and will be designed to tell me whether you have read for class and are prepared to contribute to class discussions. These writing exercises cannot be retaken or made up at a later date. If you are not present in class when a writing exercise is administered, you will receive a zero. Of the 13 writing exercises that are administered, your top 10 scores will be counted toward your final score.

Exams. You will have three (3) exams in this course. These exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank questions. All exams will be administered
through Blackboard, and must be completed within the posted timeframe. No exceptions. Note: there are no make-ups for missing an exam unless you notify me prior to the exam and have a VERIFIABLE medical excuse. In the event that such an emergency occurs, you must provide sufficient evidence (a note from your Doctor). Make-up exams will be closed book essay format, and must be made up during my office hours as soon as the student is released from a doctor’s medical care. See schedule for assessment dates.

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To calculate your final grade, plug your grades in the following formula:

Final Grade = (Participation %*.10) + (In Class Writing Exercises %*.25) + (Exam 1%*.15) + (Exam 2%*.15) + (Final Exam%*.35)

For example, if you received:
Participation: 90%
In Class Writing Assignments 88%
Exam 1 92%
Exam 2 88%
Final Exam 75%

Your final grade would be: (90*.10) + (88*.25) + (92*.15) + (88*.15) + (75*.35) = 9+13.8+13.2+26.25+22= 84.25% (B)

| 93-100% A | 87-89.9% B+ | 77-79.9% C+ | 67-69.9% D+ |
| 90-92.9% A- | 83-86.9% B | 73-76.9% C | 63-66.9% D |
| 80-82.9% B- | 70-72.9% C- | 60-62.9% D- | Below 60% F |
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

SEPTEMBER 3:
• SYLLABUS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE
• Form Collaborative Learning Teams

SEPTEMBER 8 & 10
• MACIONIS, CHAPTER 1: STUDYING SOCIAL PROBLEMS
• Mills, C Wright.  The Promise

SEPTEMBER 15 & 17:
• MACIONIS, CHAPTER 2: POVERTY AND WEALTH
• Abramovitz, Mimi.  Welfare Reform in the United States: Gender, Race and Class Matter

SEPTEMBER 22 & 24:
• MACIONIS CHAPTER 3: RACE AND ETHNIC INEQUALITY
• Brandt, AM.  Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

SEPTEMBER 29 & OCTOBER 1:
• MACIONIS CHAPTER 4: GENDER INEQUALITY
• Merskin, Debra.  Reviving Lolita? A Media Literacy Examination of Sexual Portrayals of Girls in Fashion Advertising

OCTOBER 6:
• REVIEW FOR EXAM 1 IN CLASS

OCTOBER 8:
• EXAM 1 – AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD OCTOBER 8TH 9AM TO 11:59PM. This exam includes all course material covered to date.

OCTOBER 13 & 16:
• MACIONIS CHAPTER 6: CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

OCTOBER 20 & 22:
• MACIONIS CHAPTER 7: SEXUALITY
• Boswell and Spade.  Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture: Why Are Some Fraternities More Dangerous Places for Women?

1 We will do in class group work throughout the semester. Also, your team will be your go-to source for things you may have missed if you are absent.
OCTOBER 27 & 29:
- MACIONIS CHAPTER 10: ECONOMY AND POLITICS

NOVEMBER 3 & 5:
- MACIONIS CHAPTER 11: WORK AND WORKPLACE
  - Ritzer, George. McDonaldization of Society

NOVEMBER 10
- REVIEW FOR EXAM 1 IN CLASS

NOVEMBER 12:
- EXAM 2 – AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD NOVEMBER 12TH 9AM TO 11:59PM. This exam includes all course material covered between October 13th and November 10TH.

NOVEMBER 17 & 19:
- MACIONIS CHAPTER 12: FAMILIES
  - Bell, Ann. “It’s Way out of my League” Low-income Women’s Experiences of Medicalized Infertility

NOVEMBER 24 & 26: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

DECEMBER 1 & 3:
- MACIONIS CHAPTER 13: EDUCATION
  - Jackson, Margo, et. al. Constructively Challenging Diverse Inner-City Youth’s Beliefs About Educational and Career Barriers and Supports

DECEMBER 8:
- MACIONIS CHAPTER 15: POPULATION AND GLOBAL INEQUALITY
  - Reading: TBA.

DECEMBER 10:
- REVIEW FOR EXAM 3 IN CLASS

DECEMBER 16:
- EXAM 3 – AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD DECEMBER 16th 9AM TO 11:59PM. This exam includes all course material covered between November 17th and December 10th.