

SOC 2020: Social Problems

On-Line
Winter 2015
Section 006
CRN: 25518

Instructor: Prof. Heidi Gottfried
Email: heidi.gottfried@wayne.edu

Office hours: Since this is an on-line class and many of you are not near or on campus, office hours are by appointment only. Also, please note that I reply to email within 24 hours and mostly sooner, and that this is the very best way to contact me with any questions. Consider if you did not get a response from me that the email did not arrive and resend. You can call as well, but this is not the most reliable form of communication.

Required Reading: The required textbook and supplement for this class is:

Social Problems, John Macionis 5th Edition

All chapters that are listed in your course syllabus refer to the 5th edition of the Macionis text. Books will be available at Marwill Bookstore (www.marwilbookstore.com). Earlier editions are available and if you decide to use an earlier (and cheaper) used edition it is your responsibility to make sure chapter numbers and contents are comparable—all expectations and tests are based on the contents of the assigned chapters in the schedule below.

Since the study of sociology is a growing, ever changing, discipline, the instructor reserves the right to assign additional reading material throughout the semester.

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 means the 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.

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 address be sure you figure out how to forward any email. I will post study guides, notices, revisions on 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. I cannot use an alternative address to communicate with you.

Lectures: For each week's topic as indicated in the schedule below I will post a lecture by 8 AM Monday morning that will discuss the main points of this section, relate it back to the readings,

and add any additional material I deem necessary. Consider these lectures as supplemental to the reading, augmenting arguments or providing additional perspectives, and as an integral part of the course material. Exams and quizzes may be based on material found in the text, in my lectures, and in my online comments.

Discussion: You will be expected to make at least two separate comments in the discussion area each week. These can be initiating new threads, asking general questions, or responding to comments by other students. I will monitor the discussions, making comments as I feel appropriate, and in general looking to see that a level of communication is established for the course. Each post must be a minimum of three sentences. The first comment should address themes raised in the text or lectures, and the second should be a reaction to other student's comments. This will hopefully foster dialogue in a virtual space even if we do not meet face-to-face. One last issue: **the Discussion Board for each week is open during posting period (Monday at 8:00 am), then closed at the end of the week (Saturday at 8:00pm).** Requests for late posts will not be accepted.

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: (a) the significance of variations by race, class, gender, and age; and (b) will know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups.

This course provides an overview of social problems, and students will be expected to gain competency in this substantive area. Quizzes, discussions and tests will assess the student's basic knowledge of the field.

Challenging Grades: If you believe that you have been graded unfairly you must address your concerns in writing. You should provide specific points...for example if you believe that a multiple choice question was graded incorrectly, you must provide evidence from the course book(s) to document your statement. If you are able to show that you are correct, then your grade will be changed. Be advised that challenged grades can result in either an increase, decrease or no change in one's grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussions: Every week we will have a topic of discussion (outlined below). Along with the applicable chapters in Macionis (and occasionally an article that I might recommend or require as part of the assignment) I will post a lecture. You are then required to post at least two comments (length about 250 words, but no less than 100). Think of these comments as in lieu of in-class participation.

The postings reacting to the lecture and readings should be made as noted below. You will be graded for the week as follows:

- 1 point each for just **posting** a minimal comment on Blackboard. In its simplest form that might be a statement that you agree or disagree with the premise of the week's topic.
- 1 point each for **engaging** in that week's discussion, including reacting to your classmates and if possible identifying links to other sources to enhance or support your position.
- 0 points for the week if there are no posts or if the posts are too short or terse.

Points will be awarded after the week's Discussion Board closes: a maximum of 2 total points can be earned each week.

NOTE: Some of the topics in the course may generate strong opinions and sharp differences among class members. One can disagree with others, or take an unpopular position, with no risk of offending so long as the tone is proper and respectful.

You are expected to submit 26 comments (2 per week for 13 weeks) during this course (and note that submitting 4 comments in a given week will not count for missed comments in an earlier week). **This gives a total of 26 possible points.**

Quizzes: There will be two short quizzes during the semester. These quizzes altogether represent **a total of 20 points possible** (10 points for each quiz), and will be given online as indicated on the schedule that follows below. The quizzes cover material from the text and lectures. Each quiz will be available on **Blackboard on any given Friday, appearing at 8:00AM and must be taken by 8PM on Sunday (see schedule below)**. As a rule they cannot be made up unless you have made some prior arrangement with me explaining why you could not take the quiz (or if you have a technical problem).

All quizzes and exams will be given on Blackboard, with a start time and a limited duration. You will be able to start the quiz at your convenience, but once you start you must finish; you cannot suspend and return to the quiz at a later date. You will have to finish in the time allotted; I will generally give you 30 minutes to answer 10 multiple choice questions

Examinations: You will have two exams this semester (see schedule for dates). The **first exam is worth 23 points** towards your grade and the **second exam is worth 31 points** towards your final grade. The questions on the first exam covers material assigned according to the schedule;

the second exam will include questions on the course material from the second half. The examinations are scheduled below. I will email you to announce the first exam, but you will find them on the syllabus on the assigned dates. The second exam is during the last week of class. Like the quizzes, you will be instructed on how much time you are allotted for each exam, and once begun you cannot suspend and return to the exam. Both exams will be available for three days to permit you to take them at a convenient time. These cannot be rescheduled, but I will reset them during the exam period if you encounter technical problems

Final note...the exams and quizzes, once taken, will be graded immediately and the grade will appear on Blackboard—which you can see on-line. If, after 24 hours, no grade appears you should contact me immediately in case there was a technical problem taking the assessment and recording your test. If so, we will discuss alternative arrangements (probably a retake).

VERY IMPORTANT: While there are several ways of accessing Blackboard (for example, through Pipeline), when you take a quiz or exam **YOU MUST** log in directly on Blackboard at <http://www.blackboard.wayne.edu> or you may have a problem. Logging in via Pipeline can cause you to be logged off due to inactivity **EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE STILL WORKING IN BLACKBOARD.** The result will be that all your responses will be lost and you will have to retake the full quiz or exam. There is no way for me to retrieve or otherwise save your answers if you get disconnected this way—so please, log in directly on Blackboard.

COURSE GRADE

Taken together, your grade for the course will be a function of 26 points available for participating online, 20 points from quizzes and 54 points from the two examinations. **Your final grade will be based on a total of 100 points possible for the course, as follows:**

<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Grade</u>		<u>Points Earned</u>	<u>Grade</u>
100-93	A		78-76	C+
92-89	A-		75-72	C
88-86	B+		71-69	C-
85-82	B		68-59	D
81-79	B-		Less than 58	F

Finally, to anticipate your question, no I do not curve the final course grades.

Withdrawal from Class:

You can drop this course with no tuition owed if done so by Sept. 10. After that date, be mindful that the last day to withdraw from the course is Nov. 9, and any effort to withdraw after that date will require an appeal to the Registrar. To cut down on the numbers of students who withdraw quickly from courses without thinking about the consequences, Wayne State is implementing a new withdrawal program. Students withdrawing from courses will have to meet with a general

adviser in the Welcome Center before being allowed to withdraw from any course. This is supposed to ensure that students understand both the academic and financial consequences of their decisions.

Student Disability Services

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) 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 meet with you privately during my office hours 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.

Please be aware that a delay in getting SDS accommodation letters for the current semester may hinder the availability or facilitation of those accommodations in a timely manner. Therefore, it is in your best interest to get your accommodation letters as early in the semester as possible.

SDS News:

Effective Fall semester 2010 Student Disability Services will be implementing a revised alternative testing form when a student schedules classroom exams/quizzes administration at SDS. As before the student and instructor each have a portion to complete. Exams are to be mailed to a new password protected email address: sdsexams2010@wayne.edu.

COURSE OUTLINE

<i>MEETING</i>	<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>READING</i>
Jan. 12-17	INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE	
Jan. 19-24	Studying social problems	Chapter 1
Jan. 26-31	Poverty and Wealth	Chapter 2
	First Quiz Available on-line from 8:00 am on Jan. 30 to 8:00 pm on Feb. 1	Chapters 1&2
Feb. 2-7	Race and ethnic inequality	Chapter 3
Feb. 9-14	Gender inequality and sexuality	Chapters 4 and 7
Feb. 16-21	Ageing and inequality, physical and mental health	Chapters 5 and 9
	FIRST EXAM Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7 & 9 The exam is available on-line from 8am on Feb. 20 to 8:00 pm on Feb. 22	
Feb. 23-28	Economy and politics	Chapter 10
March 2-7	Work and the workplace	Chapter 11
	Second Quiz, Available from 8:00 am on March 6 to 8:00 pm on March 8	Chapters 10&11
March 9-14	Family life and education	Chapters 12
March 23-28	Education	Chapter 13
March 30-April 4	Urban society	Chapter 14
April 6-11	Population and Global inequality Local and global change and reaction	Chapters 15
April 13-18	Technology and Environment	Chapter 16
April 20-25	War and Terrorism	Chapter 17
	SECOND EXAM The exam is available 8 am on April 25 to 8:00pm on Monday April 27	Chapters 12-17

Discussion Board

<i>WEEK</i>	<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
Jan. 12-17	INTRODUCE Yourself	
Jan. 19-24	Studying social problems	1
Jan. 26-31	Social inequality and poverty	2
Feb. 2-7	Race and ethnic inequality	3
Feb. 9-14	Gender inequality and sexuality	4
Feb. 16-21	Aging and health	5
Feb. 23-28	Economy and politics	6
March 2-7	Work and the workplace	7
March 9-14	Family life	8
March 23-28	Education	9
March 30-April 4	Urban society	10
April 6-11	Population and Global inequality	11
April 13-18	Technology and Environment	12
April 20-25	War and Terrorism	13