

SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED STATES

SOC 102 SEC M002
Summer 2009
MTWTh 4-5:45pm
Hall of Languages Room 115

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. -Margaret Mead

Course Introduction

This course on social problems will challenge you to think creatively about solutions to some of our more intractable social problems. This course will help you to critically analyze both “objective” information and subjective interpretations by evaluating how different communities come to label a problem a “social” one. Further this course will introduce you to sociological approaches to the study of social problems with the goal of understanding and framing human social behavior.

Students are responsible for understanding and carefully following the syllabus.

Required Text (available at the SU Bookstore):

Joel M. Charon And Lee Garth Vigilant. 2009. Social Problems: Readings With Four Questions. Third Edition. Ca: Wadsworth.

Assignments

Attendance and Participation: Final grades will be lowered for students who miss more than three classes. Participation grade is based on in class discussion and online blackboard discussion. I will occasional post online conversation starters, but online discussion will primarily be the responsibility of the students.

Quizzes will be given several times throughout the term. They will be based on the assigned reading for the day and cover the main ideas presented by the author.

Exams will be in class and include multiple choice and/or essay components. Exams will also be cumulative.

Discussion Leaders: Students will present in pairs and will choose a topic and day in which to present. Students may use discussion questions, multi-media tools and in class activities to stimulate classroom discussion.

Analytic Reaction Paper: Students will turn in a 3-4 page reaction paper during the term. The paper will be based around and an expansion of the questions asked at the end of each reading. Students are allowed to choose whatever reading they wish. Papers are due the day that the reading is discussed. If this is not possible, please speak with me immediately. All reaction papers are due by June 24th. NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED.

Grading

Attendance and participation 10%
In class reading quizzes 10%
Exam 1 – 20%
Exam 2 – 20%
In class discussion leader (in groups) 20%
Analytic Reaction Paper 20%

Notes and Policy:

- 1) The professor reserves the right to change the syllabus and assignments. Changes may be made to accommodate the specific needs of the class.
 - 2) High standards of academic integrity are valued and required by both the university and myself.
 - a. **Plagiarism, intended or unintended, will not be tolerated.** A student caught plagiarizing will face serious consequences.
 - b. When producing written assignments and the final research paper, citations, proper use of quotation marks and paraphrasing, along with a bibliography are requisite. For guidance see me or go to the Writing Center at <http://wrt.syr.edu/wc/wcintro.html> or visit HBC 101.
 - c. Online sources must be cited properly and use carefully. See me if you have questions.
 - 3) **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For more information, see Office of Disability Services, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>
 - 4) Feel free to email me. Please allow 24 hours for a response. I will notify students if there will be a longer delay in email activity (due to travel, illness, etc.).
 - 5) Readings listed for each day of class in the course schedule are to have been read **prior** to coming to that day's class. This is a reading intensive course; you will want to keep up with the readings to do well.
 - 6) Student athletes need to submit permission forms signed by a coach in advance to be excused from class and are responsible for making up missing assignments and readings.
 - 7) Classroom conduct: This course is heavily reliant on discussion, which includes difficult dialogue at times. **This is an inclusive and safe classroom.** All discussion points, opinions, and questions are valued; as such students are expected to treat one another and the professor thoughtfully and with respect.
 - 8) Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off before coming to class. **Please do not text message or work on your laptops during class!**
 - 9) Let's have a great semester!
- "...We consider social problems to be (1) societal induced conditions that cause psychic and material suffering for any segment of the population, and (2) acts and conditions that*

violate the norms and values of society.” D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn. 1997. Social Problems. Ally and Bacon.

Course Schedule

May 18 -Course Intro, Syllabus, etc

May 19 -“An Introduction to the Study of Social Problems.” Joel Charon (pg 3)

May 20 - “What’s wrong with the American Dream?” Jennifer L. Hochchild (pg. 37)

May 21- “Inheritance and Privilege” Thomas Shapiro (pg. 61).

May 25 – no class

May 26 - “Flat Broke with Children” Sharon Hays (pg. 262).

May - 27 “From Institutional to Jobless Ghettos.” William Julius Wilson (pg. 185)

May 28 - “Globalization and the Race to the Bottom Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello’s (pg. 127).

June 1 - “Facing Up to Race” Michael K. Brown et al (pg. 205).

“Fences and Neighbors: Segregation in 21st Century America” Farley and Squires (pg. 219).

June 2 - “Laissez-Faire Racism.” Lawrence D. Bobo and Ryan A. Smith (pg. 163)

June 3 - “International Migration and the Future of the United States” Douglas Massey (pg. 197).

June 4 Exam 1

June 8 -“Thinking About Crime” Michael Tonry (pg. 358).

“White Collar Crime” Stephen M. Rosoff et al (pg. 320).

June 9 The Three Fatal Flaws in the War on Drugs” Eva Bertram et al (pg. 332).

June 10 - “Social Policy in Health Care: Europe and the United States” James W. Russell (pg. 490).

June 11 - “The Shame of the Nation” Jonathan Kozol (Pg. 460).

June 15 “From Outsider to Citizen” Steven Seidman (pg. 297).

“Homosexuality and American Citizenship” Michael Bronski (pg. 291).

June 16 - – Selling Women Short” Louise Marie Roth (pg. 276).

June 17 - Incidence and Cause of Spouse Abuse” Bergmann and Helburn (pg 383)

June 18 - Divorce In Perspective” Stephanie Coontz (P371)

June 22 - What’s Wrong with Child Care in America” Barbara Bergmann and Suzanne Helburn (pg. 396).

June 23 - “The Corporation as Invisible Government.” Charles A. Reich (pg. 501)

June 24 - “Ecology for Money” Michael Prenti (pg. 570).

“A Very Special Moment” Bill McKibben (pg. 573)

(Last day to turn in Analytic Reaction papers)

June 25 – Exam 2