

Social Problems, Fall 2007
SYG 2010, Section 02
T & R, 9:30-10:45 a.m., HCB, Room 102

Last updated on 8/28/07

Instructor: Dr. Annette Schwabe

Office: 425 Bellamy Building

Office Hours: W: 10:00-noon & Th: 3:30-4:30
or by appointment

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Phone: 644-4456 (my office)
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Note: You may leave printed materials for me in the Department of Sociology office, 5th floor Bellamy.

Teaching Assistants (TAs):

- Joe Quinn, 509 Bellamy. Office hours: 8 - 9 a.m., M-W and by appointment.
- Byron Miller, 509 Bellamy. Office hours: W: 11-1 p.m. & Th: 3:30-4:30 p.m. & by appt.

Both TAs may be contacted via our e-mail link in Blackboard or via the Sociology department.

INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

Welcome to this course on Social Problems. What are social problems? Who defines them and how? How do particular social problems affect various social groups? What are some solutions to various social problems?

This course is designed to provide you with sociological tools to be able to answer some of these questions.

We'll use sociological theory, methods and research findings to identify and analyze the causes of social problems. Our survey of social problems will include four broad areas:

1. Major sociological theories used to explain and understand social problems;
2. Problems related to social inequality (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, class and institutional inequality);
3. Problems involving deviance, conformity and well-being;
4. Problems of social institutions and global population.

For each of these areas, specific objectives are to:

- Understand why some social issues become defined as social problems and others do not;
- Use critical thinking to evaluate information about social problems;
- Compare, contrast and apply sociological concepts and theories to explain particular social problems and to identify possible solutions.

TEXTBOOK & READINGS

Henslin, James M. 2006. *SOCIAL PROBLEMS: A Down to Earth Approach*, 8th Edition. A. B. Longman Press. ISBN-10: 0205508049; ISBN-13: 9780205508044. On order at Bill's and FSU bookstore.

Additional readings will be posted on the Blackboard course website in advance of the weeks during which they will be assigned.

COURSE CONTENT AND OUTLINE

Part I: Introduction to Social Problems

WEEK 1.

T, Aug. 28 Introductions, course review, "Cultural Quiz."

R, Aug. 30 Sociological perspective, definitions, What is a social problem?

Assignment 1. is DUE by 5 p.m. on TUESDAY, Sept. 4th via Blackboard.

❖ **Readings:**

- Henslin text, Chapter 1: The Sociology of Social Problems.
- Best, Joel. Introduction to *Images of Issues*. "Typification of Social Problems" (posted on Blackboard)
- Best, Joel. *Missing Numbers* in "More Damned Lies..." (posted on Bb).

WEEK 2

T, Sept. 4 Sociological Theories, Research Methods

R, Sept. 6 Theories & Research Methods (cont'd).

❖ **Readings:** Henslin text, Chapter 2.

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WEEK 3

T, Sept. 11 *In-class exercise* and exam review.

R, Sept. 13 **EXAM I**

Assignment 2 (discussion): first post due by 5:00 on Saturday, 9/15/07;

Second post due by Wednesday, 9/19 at 5:00

Part II: Social Problems Related to Social Norm Violations

T, Sept. 18 Alcohol and other drugs

R, Sept. 20 Alcohol and other drugs ...continued

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 4: Alcohol and Other Drugs.

Video: "Grass."

T, Sept. 25 Violence (including hazing & sibling violence)

R, Sept. 27 Guest speaker (TBA)

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 5: Violence in Society: Rape & Murder.

NYT article on sibling violence (Bb)

Video: Tough Guise

T, Oct. 2- Crime and Criminal Justice

R, Oct. 4 *In-class exercise* and Exam II review

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 6: Crime & criminal justice.

Other: Clips on crime (SouthPark and Jon Stewart)

T, Oct. 9 **EXAM II**

R, Oct. 11 Economy, Power Elite and Who Rules?

Part III: Problems of Social Inequality

T, Oct. 16 Case studies: The Ford Pinto and other examples

R, Oct. 18 Poverty

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 7: Economic problems, wealth and poverty.

Reading: Domhoff, G.W. *Who Rules America?* (posted on Bb)

Video: *A Question of Fairness*

T, Oct. 23 Poverty & *In-class exercise*

R, Oct. 25 Race/ethnic inequality

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 8: Race and ethnic problems.

Video: Chapelle clip, 20/20 clip.

T, Oct. 30 Race/ethnic inequality

R, Nov. 1 Gender inequality –**To do: Complete "conversation" survey on line**

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 9: Problems related to gender.

"Pay Gap Between Men and Women..." *Chronicle of Higher Ed.* & "Feminism... Benefits"

Video: "Blue Eyed."

T, Nov. 6 Gender (cont'd)

R, Nov. 8 **EXAM III**

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I might give a 10 point pop quiz once or twice during the course. Please have your reading done by the scheduled date in order to do as well as possible on the quizzes.

Unless we get behind in covering topics, exams will be held in class on the dates specified in the syllabus.

I will administer make-up exams ONLY for emergencies or for extenuating circumstances. In order to get credit for the exam, you may need to take a different form of the exam (possibly with essay questions) AND give me a valid written excuse that I can keep for my records. If you know you will not be able to attend class on one of these dates, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with me to take the exam before the date scheduled.

DO NOT SCHEDULE trips, flights, interviews, medical appointments, or any other events on exam dates. You will not be excused from the final exam if you have decided to leave town before or on the scheduled date. Please see Florida State University's policy on final exams, which instructors and students are mandated to follow (on FSU Registrar's website).

Assignments.

Students will complete four assignments, (briefly listed below). I will discuss the details of assignments in class well before they are due and will post them on the Blackboard website for this course.

Assignment 1: Online bio & Honor Policy questions (10 points possible).

Assignment 2: Discussion board on our course Bb site (15 points possible).

Assignment 3: Film Reaction Paper (35 points possible).

Assignment 4: Solutions to Social Problems (30 points possible).

- I reserve the right to deduct 3 points the first day that an assignment is late, 3 more points on the second day after the due date and after 3 days I will give you a zero for that assignment.

In-class exercises.

I have scheduled three in-class exercises. Each exercise will be worth 5 points. You will hand in your work at the end of each of these classes and we will grade them as quickly as possible.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

- You will not receive letter grades for exams or assignments; I will add your points for all exams and assignments to derive your final grade for the course.
- Grades assigned will be based on a class curve, so that grades are distributed, roughly, according to class performance. In order to estimate how you're doing along the way I will post grade distributions and "approximate letter grade equivalents" for each score on an exam or total scores, to the date of posting. Note that anything at or below 50% of points possible will earn an "F" regardless of the class curve.

Extra Credit: I will not give any extra credit in this course. If you attend regularly, keep up with readings, study for exams and complete assignments on time, you will not need to do extra credit.

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Policy of the Florida State University, including the statement on Values and Moral Standards published in The Florida State University General Bulletin. The Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of these expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process. Please see the following website for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Policy: <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>

Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor's discretion.

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CLASSROOM COURTESY

Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. This means no talking (unless asked by the professor), reading magazines or newspapers, or answering cell phones in class. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about children or other family members, keep it on vibrate.

E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

In every e-note you send me or the course teaching assistants, please include your *first and last name, the course and the section number or date/time of our class*. If you do not include this critical information, I will likely reply to your note with an automated or blank reply since I might not know who "abc1234.fsu.edu" is or what course they're referring to! This is especially the case this semester, since I teach about 500 students.

Before asking questions about basic course information, please check the course Bb site and the syllabus. In most cases, you will get the information you need much more quickly looking at what I've provided instead of e-mailing me or the TAs.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

If you are allowed to take exams at the center rather than in class, please have me sign the sheet about a week before each exam. It might help to remind me to send the exam over no fewer than 2 days prior to the exam date. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center, 108 Student Services Bldg., Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167, (850)644-9566 (voice), (850)644-8504 (TDD)
E-mail: SDRC@admin.fsu.edu
Website: <http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Students will be allowed to miss class due to observance of religious holidays but they are still responsible for all materials assigned outside and covered in class on the day(s) missed. You must talk with your instructor in advance of missing a class for religious holiday observance reasons.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following and only the following absences are eligible to be excused: Religious holidays, as specified in FSU policy; absences due to representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events; verified emergencies and/or medical illness. Medical illness refers to conditions that are serious in nature and require treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Documentation is required for an absence to be excused.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Missing work or uncompleted assignments are insufficient reasons for a grade of Incomplete. An Incomplete grade will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an "I" must be passing the course.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY: This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.