



**Florida State University**  
SYG 2010-03 **Social Problems**  
T Th 2:00 – 3:15pm  
HCB 103  
Fall 2007

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## **SYLLABUS**

Welcome to SYG2010 (Social Problems is a 3 credit-hour course). I extend this initial greeting to all of our twice-a-week meetings in the semester (28 total) during which we will learn about the problematic social conditions people live in. Hopefully, our working together will make us realize more that we are both product and makers of the social world we live in. This syllabus describes the expectations, responsibilities, and content of the course. Retain it in your SYG 2010 folder and bring it to class. We will consult it as often as it is necessary to clarify, restate or change the above parameters of the course.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course entails a sociological approach to a diverse number of contemporary social problems. Issues of study include conditions deemed critical in social institutions i.e., education, the family, the economy, and polity as well as perceived problematic behaviors such as crime, violence, sex-related practices, and use and abuse of both legal and illegal substances among others.

### **COURSE OUTCOMES AND GOALS**

At the end of the course you will be able to:

1. Identify, define, and illustrate basic concepts, theories, research techniques and findings to analyze and discuss social problems.
2. Compare and contrast the different theories and methods used to examine and explain varied social problems.
3. Critically examine your social environment in terms of the connections between social problems and the structural factors of gender, race, age, and class
4. Acquire an increased awareness of the inequalities affecting human groups and their choices.
5. Write and think critically via class discussions, written assignments, and exams about the concepts, theories, and research techniques in the field.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

- 1) Kornblum, William and Joseph Julian, 2006. **Social Problems**. (12<sup>th</sup>. Edition) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. This textbook is identified as K and J in the Course Outline.
- 2) Tiemann, Kathleen A. Editor. 2003. **Crossroads. Readings in Social Problems**. A Custom Publication. Pearson Custom Pub. This textbook is identified as C in the Course Outline.

These texts are available at Bill's and FSU Bookstore

- 3) Additional readings for specific topics ( described in the Course Outline) will be posted on Bb

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Reading Assignments:** Students are expected to have active and constructive class participation. **Hence, assigned readings should be read prior to and during the corresponding class dates depicted in the Course Outline below.** Of course, additional readings are required before the midterm. The complexity of the reading materials is appropriate for college freshmen. Thus, if at first you do not understand them, you must read them as many times as it is necessary to accomplish understanding. In order to know whether you fully grasp the concepts and arguments presented in the readings I suggest to: 1) Write down summaries of the material read, 2) make questions out of the information presented, and 3) specify the particular issues that remain unclear. At any rate, whatever study method you use that brings you understanding of the readings is the best to follow. Make a habit of consulting a college-level dictionary and the glossary in the textbook to acquire familiarity with scientific terms and expand your vocabulary i.e. do not use Wikipedia).

**Class Participation:** The study of social problems makes more sense when it is done interactively. Hence, you are to be an active participant during each class. Attend class having read the materials assigned. I expect each of you to come to class prepared to discuss the material. My role is to generate and steer the discussion of the material always within a civil and respectful atmosphere. Therefore, do not fail to participate for fear of what others may think. Remember there are always other students who are in your same situation. If uncertainty and nervousness take over the class the course will be a total loss. Nothing will be gained from silence, passivity, apathy and lectures turned into monologues.

Ask questions, answer questions, volunteer your views, make comments, be attentive to what others say, avoid using the class as a forum for your own agenda. Overall, cooperate in building a supportive learning environment that benefits us all. Talk to me when you need help before it is too late.

**Survey Assignments:** There are FOUR scheduled assignment submissions in the semester. Please refer to the course outline for the specific deadlines on the assignment submissions on Bb. **Later work will not be accepted unless legitimate reason is provided (see below for policy on excused absences).** Failure to turn in the assignment will earn you a 0 (zero)!

Beginning on the week of September 11th, 2007 students will began work on the first assignment dealing with the social problem being discussed in class. Each assignment consists of three or more statements from which students are to choose ONE to work on. The work involves offering reasons that either support or oppose the viewpoint/position selected. Your reasons are to be referenced with the assigned reading materials or additional academic sources. Thus, students must keep up with the readings in order to express an informed position on the given issues. Make sure your responses to each assignment are expressed in your own words and contain the appropriate references. Always, always keep a copy of your work. Abide by the rules of honesty when doing your survey. Plagiarism will not be tolerated (see below for policy on academic honor and honesty).

The instructions and rubric for grading be posted on Bb for each assignment. The instructions cover length, citation format, content/quality, and due dates and times.

**Exams:** There are three mid-term exams and one final. Each midterm exam covers the assigned material listed in the Course Outline below. All midterm exams are a combination of multiple-choice and true-false questions. The final exam has the same format but covers some specific issues of earlier themes plus the last topics not yet evaluated by any exam.

All assigned readings and lectures are potential exam materials. To facilitate the learning process you will be given a set of study-guide questions a week before each test. Work on these questions. Use the class time and office hours to talk to me about your progress in preparing for the coming test. The study guide is **NOT** a contract that defines the exam!

Rules regarding missing exams are discussed below

**Grading Method:** Each exam including the final one is worth 20% of the final grade. The remaining 20% comes from the assignment submissions.

Regardless of number of questions, all exams are graded on a scale of 0-100. The equivalent letter grade is shown as follows:

Exam Points	Letter Grade
95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
59 and below	F

All exam and journal grades and announcements will be posted on SYG2010-03/ Blackboard. Notify the instructor or the TA of any problems regarding your grades immediately after their posting.

***Talk to me or the TA when you need help.***

### **ESSENTIAL POLICY INFORMATION**

**Attendance:** Students are required to attend class on time. Attendance will be taken via random selection of names from the roster, pop quizzes, or by asking students to write down their name on a piece of paper. A student who accumulates THREE unexcused absences (see below) will receive an F grade for the course. Since lectures deal with material and viewpoints other than the textbook readings, it is to your advantage to keep up with readings, note taking and course-related announcements. If you miss class, obtain lecture notes and information from your classmates. Everything dealt with in class is potential material for exam.

**Courtesy:** Coming in late or leaving before class dismissal is rude and disruptive for all, more so in a mass class as this. Be courteous and avoid these behaviors. However, if for some legitimate reason you foresee to be late for class or to leave class early let me know in advance. In this occasion enter or leave the classroom as inconspicuously as possible. Otherwise, chronic tardiness and early departures are not accepted and will be penalized at my discretion.

A final rule concerns with the use of cellular phones, pagers, beepers, ipods, and laser pointers. **Turn them off and abstain from using them while attending class.**

**Excused Absences:** The following AND only the following absences are eligible to be excused:

- Religious holidays specified by FSU administrators
- Representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events
- Legitimate emergencies
- Legitimate medical illnesses requiring continued treatment by medical practitioners because of its seriousness (i.e., colds, flu, stress, etc. do not qualify as medical illnesses. If you have a chronic illness that could affect your attendance, let me know at the beginning of class.

In order to excuse an absence you need to present documentation about the reason for your absence, such as, copy of obituary, doctor's note legitimating the seriousness of illness and need for continued treatment, court hearing date, or police citation.

**Makeup Exams:** ONE and ONLY ONE make-up exam will be given to a student IF and ONLY IF there is a legitimate reason (appropriate documentation is required) for missing the midterm test. It is your responsibility to notify your TA and me why you are not taking the test. Do so prior to or no later than the next class after the test. In order to justify an absence from the test, students need to show a legitimate document of its cause. This may involve an obituary, court order, doctor-signed prescription or a document from an agency signed by a legitimate authority that fully describes the emergency causing the student's absence. Get in touch with your TA to learn about the date, time, and location of the make-up exam. The make-up exam may have a different format from the original i.e., essay questions.

**Student Conduct:** My many years of college experience, both as student and as instructor, have shown me that for the most part students are bright, good-natured and amiable toward others. In general you are expected to comply with the FSU Code of Conduct at all time while participating in FSU-related activities. Your behavior during class should be courteous, respectful and professional. In short, anyone who ignores my authority to protect the integrity of the classroom will be asked to cease his/her disruptive behavior, may be asked to leave the classroom, and or to drop the course.

**Failure to abide by these rules can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.**

<http://e-soc.net/>

**Academic Honor Code:** Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook. The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Please see the following website for a complete explanation:

<http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/codes/honor.html>

**Academic Dishonesty:** Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. 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. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the University Judicial Office for official adjudication.

<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf>

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring me a letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. Please feel free to see me in case of any problems or concerns and I will be only happy to help! For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities contact:

Student Disability Resource Center, Dean of Students, 08 Kellum Hall  
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4400, (850) 644-9566 (voice),  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD), [SDRC@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:SDRC@admin.fsu.edu),  
<http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

**Incomplete Grades:** Missing work or uncompleted assignments are not sufficient reasons for requesting an incomplete Grade. A grade of Incomplete is given only under extenuating circumstances at the instructor's discretion. Note that College of Social Sciences guidelines require that students seeking an "I" must be passing the course.

### COURSE OUTLINE

Dates of topics, objectives, assigned readings, surveys, and exams are depicted here. We will accommodate to this outline as much as discussion and participation allow it. Any needed changes made to the information below will be announced in class.

<b>Wk</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Learning Objectives</b> (By the end of the class students will be able to)	<b>Content</b> (What will be covered in class?)	<b>At Home</b> (What will students do at home?)	<b>Assessment</b> (To demonstrate learning students will:)
1	Aug 28 <sup>th</sup>	Locate the objectives, content, and requirements of the course in the syllabus	Syllabus	Read through the syllabus and bring questions to class	Put forth queries and express any concerns about the syllabus
	Aug 30 <sup>th</sup>	Discuss several definitions of social problems and their assumptions. Distinguish among the sociological perspectives in terms of main arguments, strengths, and weaknesses to explain social problems	K & J Ch.1 Cr pp: 17-58	Read the chapter	Participate in class
2	Sep 4 <sup>th</sup>	Identify several research techniques in terms of their rationale, advantages and disadvantages to analyze social problems	K&J Ch 1 Cr pp 1- 16	Read the chapters	Participate in class
	Sep 6 <sup>th</sup>	Discuss the extent of the health care problem	K & J Ch.2	Read the chapter	Identify the characteristics of each research technique; match research questions with different research techniques
3	Sep 11 <sup>th</sup>	Identify the connection between the drugs and health care problems	K & J Ch.9 (pp.292-297, 299-301, 303-304); Cr (pp.256-288)	Read the chapters; download study guide #1 and work on the questions	Download <b>assignment #1</b> from Bb and decide statement to work on
	Sep 14 <sup>th</sup>	Identify, compare and contrast the different theoretical views on health care problems	K & J Ch.2; excerpts from Quadagno (2005) on Bb	Read the chapter	Participate in class discussion
4	Sep 19 <sup>th</sup>	Realize the extent and gravity of problems in mental health care; identify, compare and contrast the different theoretical views on mental health care problems		Read the chapter	Submit <b>assignment #1</b> on Bb by midnight Sunday Sep 23 <sup>rd</sup>
	Sep 21 <sup>st</sup>	Relate the problems of alcoholism with mental health care; Review for Test	K & J Ch.4 (pp.96-209)	Read the chapter	Participate in class

		#1			
5	Sep 25 <sup>th</sup>	Review for Test #1			
	Sep 27 <sup>th</sup>		<b>TEST #1</b>		
6	Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Define, describe, and explain poverty in USA	K & J Ch.6; Cr (pp.112-167, 210-234)	Read the chapters	Download <b>assignment #2</b> , and decide statement to work on
	Oct 4 <sup>th</sup>	Connect poverty and globalization	K & J Ch.12	Read the chapter	Participate in class
7	Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	Identify the reasons of race and ethnicity as social constructs	(Gallagher, pp.5-108) on Bb	Read the assigned material on Bb	Submit <b>assignment #2</b> by midnight Sunday Oct 14 <sup>th</sup> on Bb
	Oct 11 <sup>th</sup>	Examine the connection between race, poverty, and discrimination	K & J Ch.7; Cr (pp. 166-185, 320-327)	Read the chapters; download the study guide for test #2 and begin answering the questions	Participate in class Download <b>assignment #3</b> and review statements and literature to support your position about each
8	Oct 16 <sup>th</sup>	Examine the connection between gender, poverty, and discrimination	K & J Ch.8; Cr (pp. 186-209, 250-255)	Read the chapters	Submit <b>assignment #3</b> by midnight Sunday Oct 28 <sup>th</sup> on Bb
	Oct 18 <sup>th</sup>	Examine the connection between gender and family roles	K & J Ch.10	Read the chapter	Participate in class
9	Oct 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Review for test #2	K & J Ch.9	Read the chapter	Participate in class
	Oct 25 <sup>th</sup>		<b>TEST #2</b>		
10	Oct 30 <sup>th</sup>	Interpret the definitions and statistics of crime	K & J Ch.5 (pp. 128-150)	Read the chapter	Download <b>assignment #4</b> , review statements and literature on their pros and cons
	Nov 1 <sup>st</sup>	Examine the known and unknown statistics of crime as they influence policy making	Same as Above	Read the chapter	Participate in class
11	Nov 6 <sup>th</sup>	Identify and apply the different theories of crime and their suggested solution to the problems	K & J Ch.5 (pp.152-173)	Read the chapter	Participate in class
	Nov 8 <sup>th</sup>	Integrate the problem of alcohol and other drugs with the problem of crime and violence	K & J Ch.4 (pp.110-125), Ch.5	Read the chapter	Participate in class
12	Nov 13 <sup>th</sup>	Relate Crime and terrorism	K & J Ch.16; Cr (pp. 59-72, 328-337)	Read the chapters; download the study guide to test #3 and begin answering the questions	Submit <b>assignment #4</b> by midnight Sunday Nov 18 <sup>th</sup> on Bb
	Nov 15 <sup>th</sup>	Review for Test #3		Read the chapters; Bring	Participate in class

				textbooks and Bb lecture notes and extra Readings to class	
13	Nov 21 <sup>st</sup> Nov 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>TEST #3</b>			
			<b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>		
14	Nov 27 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup>	Describe the basic measures of population growth	K & J Ch.14 (pp.430-443); Cr (pp.89-111)	Read the chapters; download study guide for the final test	Participate in class
15	Dec 4 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	Examine the policies of USA immigration in its context and consequences for ethnic diversity Review for Test #4	K & J Ch.14 (pp.444-456)	Read the chapter; Bring textbooks and lecture notes to class	Participate in class
16	Dec 14 <sup>th</sup>		<b>TEST #4 Friday (3:00 – 5:00pm)</b>		