



Florida State University
SYG 2010-01 **Social Problems**
T Th 2:00-3:15 PM
021 BEL
Spring 2009

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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 classes) 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 OBJECTIVES

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

1. Identify, define, and illustrate basic concepts, theories, and 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 and realize that social problems are embedded in and influenced by structural factors such as gender, race, age, class, etc.
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**. (13th. Edition) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. This textbook is identified as K and J in the Course Outline.

This text is available at Bill's and FSU Bookstore

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.

This text is available at Bill's

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 as depicted in the Content of 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.

In order to monitor the regularity of the reading assignments and attendance, you will be given unannounced (pop) quizzes. The hard copy of your quiz will evince your classroom presence while the grade on the quiz will count as extra credit to be added to your score on the coming exam.

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. Remember the possibility of pop quizzes and their consequences for your grade.

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 THREE 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 to the TA (see below for policy on excused absences).** Failure to turn in the assignment will earn you a 0 (zero)!

Beginning on the week of January 19, 2009 students will began work on the first assignment dealing with the social problem being discussed in class. Each assignment consists of several 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 and other research-based source as indicated on p. xx of your textbook. Thus, students must keep up with the readings in order to express an informed position on the given issues and show familiarity with the course literature. 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 will be posted on Bb for each assignment. The instructions cover length, citation format, content/quality, and due dates and times.

Exams: There are four exams; each covers the assigned material listed in the Course Outline below. All exams are a combination of multiple-choice and true-false questions. The last exam has the same format but covers some specific issues of earlier themes plus the last topics not yet evaluated.

All assigned readings and lectures are potential exam materials. To facilitate the learning process you will be given a set of study-guide questions to work on before each test. Work on these questions, and they will help in understanding the material - thus meet the objectives of the class. The questions are in essay format; cover the materials from different angles, and relate issues in a way that complement the text. Use the class time and office hours to talk to me and the TA 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 is worth 20% of the final grade. The remaining 20% is accounted by 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 assignment grades as well as class announcements will be posted on SYG2010-01 Blackboard. Notify the instructor or the TA of any problems regarding your grades as soon as they are posted. Make a habit of keeping copies of your posted grades throughout the semester as well as reading your mail and Bb announcements.

Talk to me or the TA when you need help before it is too late.

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 FOUR or more 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 for whatever reason, obtain lecture notes and information from your classmates. Everything dealt with in class is potential material for exam. See p. 2 of syllabus regarding class readings and class participation.

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 the use of cellular phones, pagers, beepers, laser pointers, and any electronic gadget unrelated to the class. Turn them off and abstain from using them while attending class. If you have to have a cell phone on due to a potential family emergency, keep it on vibrate.

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 to the TA 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. Do so before or immediately after your absence.

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 times 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,
<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.

Wk	Date	Learning Objectives <i>(By the end of the class students will be able to)</i>	Content * <i>(What will be covered in class?)</i>	At Home <i>(What will students do at home before attending class?)</i>	Assessment <i>(To demonstrate learning students will)</i>
1	Jan 6 th	Become aware of the objectives, content, and requirements of the course	Syllabus	Read through the syllabus and bring questions to class	Put forth queries and express any concerns about the syllabus
	Jan 8 th	Examine several definitions of social problems and their assumptions; Distinguish the essence of the Sociological perspectives on social problems	K & J Ch.1; Cr (pp.1-58)	Read the chapters. Download study guide #1 and work on the questions	Participate in class. Answer study guide questions on definitions of social problems
2	Jan 13 th	Become aware of several research techniques employed to analyze social problems and their strengths and weaknesses	K & J Ch.1; Lecture notes on Bb	Read the chapters;	Identify the characteristics of each research technique; match research questions with different research techniques. Answer questions on theory from the study guide #1
	Jan 15 th	Realize the extent and gravity of problems in health care particularly in a world with increasingly larger elderly population	K & J Ch.2, Ch. 9 (pp 308, 312-314, 315-316, 318; * Read excerpts from Quadagno on Bb	Read the chapters. Download assignment #1 from Bb and decide statement to work on	Participate in class; Begin draft on assignment #1

3	Jan 20 th	Identify, compare and contrast the different theoretical views on health care problems and solutions	K & J Ch. 4; Cr (pp.256-288)	Read the chapters	Participate in class; Revise a draft of assignment #1 ^h
	Jan 22 nd	Identify, compare and contrast the different theoretical views on mental health and their implications for social policy	K & J Ch. 3	Read the chapters	Answer study guide questions on health care Submit assignment #1 on Bb by midnight Sunday 25th
4	Jan 27 th	Relate problems in mental health care with alcoholism and other drugs use	K & J Ch. 4 (pp. 102-111; 113-115, 119)	Read the chapter. Finish study guide questions and review class materials..	Answer study guide questions on mental health
	Jan 29 th	Review for Test #1	Bring to class answers to study guide questions, lecture notes, and texts for the review	Remember to bring pencil #2 and eraser to the test	Participate in the review to self-evaluate readiness for test
5	Feb 3rd		TEST #1		
5	Feb 5 th	Define, describe, and explain the gap between “the have” and “the have-not” in USA	K & J Ch.6; Cr (pp.112-167, 210-234)	Read the chapters. Download Study Guide #2 the questions	Participate in class. Answer questions on basic terms on structural inequality and poverty.
6	Feb 10 th	Socio-demographics of poverty in USA	K & J Ch. 6	Read the chapter; Download assignment #2 , and decide on one statement to work on. Review the literature to support your position on it	Participate in class; Draft an answer to the chosen statement for assignment #2
	Feb 12 th	Examine theories of inequality and poverty	Bb Lecture notes	Read the notes	Participate in class Answer study guide questions on poverty theories and implications for policy
7	Feb 17 th	Identify the reasons of race and ethnicity as social constructs. Relate poverty, race/ethnicity and discrimination	K & J Ch 7 ; Cr (pp 166-185; 320-327) Bb: Racial Inequality (Gallagher’s and globalization articles)	Read the assigned material on Bb	Participate in class. Answer study guide question on racial and ethnic minorities. Review your draft for assignment #2
	Feb 19 th	Examine the connection between gender, poverty,	K & J Ch.8; Cr (pp. 186-209, 250-	Read the chapters;	Participate in class Answer study guide

		and discrimination	255)	answering the questions	questions on gender inequality. Submit assignment #2 by midnight Sunday Feb 22nd
8	Oct 24 th - 26 th	Examine the connection between domestic and global poverty policies	K & J Ch.12	Read the chapters	Participate in class. Finish answering study guide questions
9	Mar 3 rd	Review for test #2	Bring to class answers to study guide questions, lecture notes, and texts for test #2 review	Prepare for test. Bring pencil #2 and eraser to test	Participate in class review to self-evaluate readiness for test
9	Mar 5th		TEST #2		
11	Mar 17 th - 19 th	Interpret the definitions of crime and statistics of crime; implications of crime measurement on crime control policies	K & J Ch 5 (pp 133-159; 167-174) Bb: Lecture Notes	Read the materials. Download study guide #3	Participate in class. Answer questions on definitions, types, and measurement of crime
12	Mar 24 th - 26 th	Identify and apply the different theories of crime and their suggested solution to the problems	K & J Ch.5 (pp. 159-180) Bb: Lecture Notes and PowerPoint	Read the chapter. Download assignment #3 , review statements and literature on their pros and cons	Participate in class. Answer questions on crime theories and derived policies.
13	Mar 31 st	Integrate the problem of alcohol and other drugs with the problem of crime and violence	K & J Ch.4 (pp.112, 113, 118, 123-124), Ch.5 Bb: PowerPoint Lecture Notes	Read the chapter	Participate in class. Draft your position on the chosen statement. Answer study guide questions on the crime-drug connection
13	Apr 2 nd	Relate Crime with War and Terrorism	K & J Ch.16; Cr (pp. 59-72, 328-337)	Read the chapter;	Participate in class; Finish answering questions from study guide Submit assignment #3 by midnight Sunday Apr 5th
14	Apr 7 th	Review for Test #3	Bring class materials and answers to study guide questions for in class review	Read the chapter in preparation for test #3. Bring pencil #2 and eraser to test	Participate in class review to self-evaluate readiness for test
14	Apr 9th		TEST #3		
15	Apr 14 th	Describe the basic measures of population growth and impact on the environment	K & J Ch. 13 (pp: 413-421; Ch. 14 Cr (pp.89-111) Bb: PowerPoint lecture notes	Read the chapters; download study guide #4	Participate in class. Answer study guide questions on population measures

	Apr 16 th	Examine the policies of USA immigration in its global context and consequences for ethnic diversity	K & J Ch.14 (pp:459-473)	Read the chapter	Participate in class Finish answering study guide questions
16	Apr 1 st - Apr 3 rd	Examine energy and contamination problems and policies	K&J Ch. 15		Participate in class
16	Apr 23 rd	Review for Test #4	Bring class materials for in class review	Prepare for test Bring pencil #2 and eraser to test	Participate in review to self evaluate readiness for test
17	April 27th		TEST #4 Monday (10:00-12 noon)		