



Social Problems
SYG 2010
Spring 2009
HCB 0214
MW 5:15_{PM} to 6:30_{PM}

Instructor: Kevin L. McPherson
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Required Readings

Understanding Social Problems (6th Ed.) by Mooney, Knox, & Schacht.
(ISBN: 0-495-50531-5)

Additional readings available thru Blackboard.

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will have developed a sociological orientation towards identifying, analyzing, and evaluating social problems. Towards this end, students will be able to define and describe major sociological concepts and theories. Students will then be able to apply these concepts and theories to the interpretation and assessment of variety of social problems. Topics will include health care; drugs and crime; economic inequality, poverty, and unemployment; educational concerns; race, gender, and sexual orientation issues; population concerns; environmental problems; war and terrorism.

In addition to these objectives, students should also achieve the following goals:

- Answer the questions:
 “What is a social problem?” and “How is a social problem defined?”
- Describe and employ the a sociological imagination, and be able to utilize the principles of critical observation.
- Critically evaluate empirical research as well as other available information (e.g., web-based material, media coverage) regarding social problems.
- Understand the structures and culture of society and examine how this impacts a variety of problems present in society.

Blackboard

Blackboard (Bb) is an internet-based resource tool that every student enrolled in this course can access. On the Bb site for this course students can find announcements regarding class, copies of the syllabus and assignments, links to internet resources useful in preparing for exams and completing assignments, discussion boards to post or address questions, as well as resources to check your grades and e-mail the instructor or fellow classmates. If they have not done so already, students will be expected to activate their FSUID account so that they may access the Blackboard site for this course. If a student has not activated their account, or needs assistance in doing so, please contact the instructor or ACNS (<http://www.uccs.fsu.edu/> or (850) 644-8502).

Student Assessment

Although it is the hope of the instructor that students will use the material covered in this class to aid in their understanding of the social world, like taxes and death, grades happen. Therefore, to better assess performance in the course, students will be expected to complete the following assignments:

LEARNING LOGS: During the last 5 minutes of each class students will respond to 2 or 3 questions regarding the material covered that day. Learning logs may be formatted as short answer, reflection, summary, or factual recall questions. Throughout the semester, there will be approximately 20 learning logs. By default, each submitted log is worth 1 point. If responses on a log adequately address the questions, each log may receive an additional 0.25 points.

EXAMS: There will be 4 in-class exams covering the material from the readings, lecture, and class discussion. The format will consist of multiple-choice (30-35) and short answer (3-5) questions. Each exam is worth 100 points. The Final Exam will consist of a 50 question multiple-choice exam covering material from the previous 4 exams.

ASSIGNMENTS: There will be 4 assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will require students to apply material learned in class to “real-world” matters. Most of these assignments will involve, and emphasize, the writing skills of the student.

Grading

Overall, there are X points available for this course. Points breakdown as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u># of</u>	<u>Points Per</u>	<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Percent of Grade</u>
Learning Log	Varies	Varies		
Assignments	4	10 - 50		
Exams	4	75 - 100		
Comprehensive Exam	1	100		

Based on students' performance on these assignments, the following scale will be used to assign grades:

A	93% – >	B-	80% – 82%	D+	67% – 69%
A-	90% – 92%	C+	77% – 79%	D	63% – 66%
B+	87% – 89%	C	73% – 76%	D-	60% – 62%
B	83% – 86%	C-	70% – 72%	F	59% – <

Besides the Learning Logs, students are required to complete and submit each of these assignments. Failure to do so will result in 0 points for that assignment.

Essential Policy Information

ATTENDANCE & LATENESS POLICY:

It is expected that students will attend class and be on time. Attendance for this class will not be explicitly graded. However, students that are absent will be unable to complete the Learning Log assignments. These assignments cannot be made-up or turned in late. In addition, if a student begins to accumulate unexcused absences (3 or more) their grade may be lowered at the instructor's discretion.

** The instructor will decide whether an absence is excused. As guidance, an excused absence is one of the following: religious holidays, official FSU functions where your attendance is required (e.g., varsity sports), verified emergencies, and serious medical illness (generally requiring physician's attention). I reserve the right to require documentation. No one is penalized for excused absences, but everyone remains responsible for all content missed. When possible, please provide prior notification of missing a class.*

If a student arrives late to class, it is expected they will join the class in a manner that does not attract attention or distract fellow students from learning. If a student is continually late to class, or disruptive in entering, their behavior may be individually addressed by the instructor and could result in a lowered grade.

LATE WORK & MISSED TESTS:

Students will be expected to turn in their work or take exams at the time/date specified on the course outline. However, if a student is unable to turn in an assignment or take an exam at the regularly scheduled time, individually based accommodations may be made. *It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor of late work or a missed exam.* Accommodations will be determined based on whether the student's reason can be classified as excused, and the extent to which the student attempted to notify the instructor regarding their circumstance. For students turning in late work or missing an exam, the instructor reserves the right to adjust the requirements of that assignment or exam, or penalize the lateness or absence with a lowered grade for that assignment.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Although this course will demonstrate to students how the field of sociology addresses many of the problems of society, it would be naïve to assume students will mostly learn this process while inside the classroom. Therefore, to facilitate outside learning and to emphasize personal experience with the material covered in class, extra credit opportunities may be made available. Offering these opportunities is completely at the discretion of the instructor, and may vary in point value and grading criteria. Even though extra credit will be available to all students, a student may not exceed 86% of the possible points in this course with extra credit points. Furthermore, if a student receives less than 66% of the possible points on the graded assignments, their extra credit will be voided. Except for the Learning Logs, students may not use extra credit points as substitute grades for incomplete assignments.

FLORIDA STATE HONOR POLICY:

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University."

(FSU Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>.)

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

Some of the materials in this course are may be copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with and for the duration of the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act.

ADA POLICY:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should notify the instructor regarding the necessary accommodation. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the Student Disability Resource Center: <http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

Course Outline

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the grading statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

*(USP = Understanding Social Problems, by Mooney, Knox, and Schacht, 6th Ed.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Content</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Week 1			
01 / 05	- NO CLASS	-----	
01 / 07	- Course Overview	Syllabus	
Week 2			
01 / 12	- Thinking About Social Problems	USP Ch. 1	
09 / 03	- Thinking About Social Problems	USP Ch. 1	
Week 3			
01 / 19	- NO CLASS	-----	
01 / 21	- Theoretical Perspectives	USP Ch. 1	
Week 4			
01 / 26	- Poverty & Economic Inequality	USP Ch. 6	
01 / 28	- Poverty & Economic Inequality / Family Problems	USP Ch. 6 / 5	
Week 5			
02 / 02	- Family Problems	USP Ch. 5	
02 / 04	Exam #1	-----	
Week 6			
02 / 09	- Race & Ethnicity Inequality	USP Ch. 9	
02 / 11	- Race & Ethnicity Inequality	USP Ch. 9	
Week 7			
02 / 16	- Gender Inequality	USP Ch. 10	
02 / 18	- Gender Inequality	USP Ch. 10	
Week 8			
02 / 23	- Issues in Sexual Orientation	USP Ch. 11	
02 / 25	- Issues in Sexual Orientation / Youth and Aging	USP Ch. 11 / 12	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Content</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Week 9			
03 / 02	- Problems of Youth and Aging	USP Ch. 12	
03 / 04	Exam #2	-----	
Week 10			
03 / 09	- NO CLASS		
03 / 11	- NO CLASS		
Week 11			
03 / 16	- Problems of Illness and Health Care	USP Ch. 2	
03 / 18	- Alcohol and Other Drugs	USP Ch. 3	
Week 12			
03 / 23	- Alcohol and Other Drugs / Crime and Social Control	USP Ch. 3 / 4	
03 / 25	- Alcohol and Other Drugs / Crime and Social Control	USP Ch. 3 / 4	
Week 13			
03 / 30	- Crime and Social Control	USP Ch. 4	
04 / 01	Exam #3	-----	
Week 14			
04 / 06	- Work and Unemployment	USP Ch. 7	
04 / 08	- Problems in Education	USP Ch. 8	
Week 15			
04 / 13	- Population Growth and Urbanization	USP Ch. 13	
04 / 15	Exam #4	-----	
Week 16			
04 / 20	Course Review		
04 / 22	Course Review		
FINAL			
04 / 29	Comprehensive Exam Wednesday 4/29 at 5:30pm.	-----	