

Social Problems, Spring 2009
SYG 2010, Section 09
T & R, 12:30-1:45 PM, CON 228

Last updated on 2/3/09

Instructor: Dr. Annette Schwabe Office: 425 Bellamy Building Office Hours: T: 2-3:30; W: 11-12:30 or by appointment Note: You may leave printed materials for me in the Department of Sociology office, 5 th floor Bellamy or slide under my office door in 425 Bellamy.	E-mail: aschwabe@fsu.edu Phone: 644-4456 (my office) or 644-6416 (Sociology Dept.)
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Teaching Assistant (TA): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• JoEllen Pederson, 506 Bellamy <u>Office hours:</u> M, 12-2 & by appointment. TA may be contacted via our e-mail link in Blackboard

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
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WEEK 1.

- T, Jan. 6 Introductions, course review, "Cultural Quiz."
R, Jan. 8 Sociological perspective, definitions, What is a social problem?

Assignment 1. is DUE by 5 p.m. on TUESDAY, Jan. 13th 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, Jan. 13 Characteristics of a Social Problem
R, Jan. 15 Theories & Research Methods

Reading Henslin text, Chapter 2.

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WEEK 3

T, Jan. 20 *In-class exercise 1* and exam review.
R, Jan. 22 **EXAM I**

Part II: Social Problems Related to Social Norm Violations

WEEK 4

T, Jan. 27 Alcohol and other drugs
R, Jan 29 Alcohol and other drugs, continued

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

WEEK 5

T, Feb. 3 Violence (including hazing & sibling violence) & *in-class exercise 2*
R, Feb. 5 Violence, continued

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 5: Violence in Society: Rape & Murder.
NYT article on sibling violence (Bb)
Video: Tough Guise

WEEK 6

T, Feb. 10- Crime and Criminal Justice
R, Feb. 12 Crime and Criminal Justice, continued

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 6: Crime & criminal justice.
Other: Clips on crime (South Park and Jon Stewart)

WEEK 7

T, Feb. 17 Crime: *In-class Exercise 3* and wrap up. **Possible Guest Speaker**
R, Feb. 19 **EXAM II**

Part III: Problems of Social Inequality

WEEK 8

T, Feb 24 Economy and Class Inequality
R, Feb. 26 Poverty: **Possible Guest Speaker (3 attendance points).**

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 7: Economic problems, wealth and poverty.
Readings: Sklar on "Economy Booming for Millionaires & Fiorito on Worker's Rights (on Bb)
Video: *A Question of Fairness*

WEEK 9

T, Mar. 3 Poverty & *In-class Exercise 4*
R, Mar. 5 Race/ethnic inequality

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 8: Race and ethnic problems.
Video: Chappelle clip, 20/20 clip.

WEEK 10

March 10 & 12th: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

PART IV: Social Change and Large-Scale Problems

WEEK 11

T, Mar. 17 Race/ethnic inequality
R, Mar. 19 Gender inequality & *In-class Exercise 5*

Reading: Henslin text, Chapter 9: Problems related to gender.
"Pay Gap Between Men and Women..." *Chronicle of Higher Ed.* & "Feminism...Benefits"

Video: "Blue Eyed."
Assignment 2 due by class time on Thursday, 3/26/09

WEEK 12

T, Mar. 24 Gender, continued
R, Mar. 26 Gender, continued, *In-class Exercise 6 and wrap-up*

WEEK 13

T, Mar. 31 **EXAM III**
R, Apr. 2 Health & Mortality, Big Pharma

NOTE: April 3rd is the deadline for late drop with Dean's permission.

Reading: Henslin, Chapter 10: Medical care; physical & mental health.
Video: Big Pharma (view on own via Bb link)

Part IV: Social Change and Large-Scale Problems

WEEK 14

T, April 7- U.S. Health care system
R, April 9 Obesity: a burgeoning social problem.

Reading: Henslin, Chapter 13: Population and food.

WEEK 15

T, April 14- Obesity, a burgeoning social problem & *In-class Exercise 7.*
R, April 16 Environmental problems

Reading: Articles: "Japan's New Health Problem..." & "Obesity Fight..." & "...What you Grow..."
Video: "Supersize Me"

WEEK 16

T, April 21 Environmental problems
R, April 23 Wrap up and review if time permits.

Reading: Henslin, Chapter 14: Environment.

FINAL EXAM: Friday, 5/1/09 from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

NOTE: if you come more than 15 minutes late for an exam you will not be able to take it.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Blackboard. Please check Blackboard regularly to keep up with posted information and schedule changes.

Attendance. I will not take attendance formally. However, student attendance is required and students will lose points if they miss in-class assignments, guest speakers, or pop quizzes.

If you have an emergency and cannot attend class, please let me know before class via e-mail or phone. You will need a valid written excuse (e.g., evidence of having had emergency medical care), to get attendance points for any activity in that missed class. Class attendance and grades are nearly perfectly correlated so find a way to get to each and every class.

Reading assignments: Lectures will highlight and/or expand on the readings so you should finish assigned readings *prior to* coming to class. Being prepared for class will also enhance your learning experience and allow you to ask questions about the material during the lecture on the assigned topic.

Examinations. The exams will include multiple-choice, definitions, and short answer format items. *Mid-term exams* will not be cumulative as they will cover each section of the course that they follow. The *final exam* will emphasize the last section of the course, but will include some questions that tap into key concepts and findings from the entire course.

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.

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.

I will post directions on the Blackboard site for this course so please look them over well before they are due.

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

Assignment 2: Film Reaction Paper (35 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.
- Assignments must be turned in to the Turnitin assignment link on Bb by the deadline. Point deductions for lateness are as above. If you do not submit to TII within two weeks, you will get a zero.

In-class exercises.

On the scheduled days, I will hand out a short-answer question about an assigned reading or key point on the topic that is presented in the prior lectures. I will allot 15-20 minutes to complete the exercise. You will hand in your work during class and we (TAs and I) will grade them as quickly as possible. The questions will focus on topics presented or readings assigned just prior to the date on which the in-class exercise is given. *Exercises will be worth 5-15 points, depending on the topic.* Students who miss class on that day will get a zero. I will not allow make ups unless the student has a valid documentable excuse such as hospitalization.

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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.
- How to get an estimate of your grade: 1) look in the "grade distribution" section of our course Bb site; 2) find the total points you have to that point, 3) apply your score to that curve to find your approximate letter grade to date. 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.

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. PLEASE DO NOT SURF THE WEB DURING CLASS—it is distracting to other students. 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, we might not reply since I might not know who you ("abc1234.fsu.edu") are or what course you're referring to!

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 than by 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/>

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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.