Social Problems ~ SOC 03

Section | Day/Time   | Location
--------|------------|----------
3        | T/R 3 – 4:15 PM | AMD 152

FACULTY: Debra L. Welkley, M. A.
EMAIL: Within SacCT
HOMEPAGE: www.csus.edu/indiv/w/welkleyd

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday/Thursday 12 – 1:15 PM (& by appointment) – AMD 452A

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION: Introduction to major social problems in the U.S., with an emphasis on systemic problems, such as economic, racism and sexism. Problems in major social institutions such as the family, social services, criminal justice and the environment are also addressed.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to provide an overall framework for understanding and examining pertinent social issues. The course will expand the student’s knowledge, skills, and understanding of social issues that impact individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations. Particular attention will be given to the analysis and evaluation of programs and policies created to address social issues and what we as members of society can do to further impact these problems. Social issues to be explored include but are not limited to changing nature of the family, education, health and illness, drug use, sexual behavior, inequality, and the economy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of issues involved and arguments made in a number of contemporary social problems confronting U.S. society, including: health issues, class, crime, discrimination, education, environment, gender, poverty, and race.

2. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the diversity that exists in human societies.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the contributions to human society of the following groups: women, ethnic, socio-economic, gays and lesbians, and persons with disabilities.

4. Students will become familiar with definitions and theories that are used to understand, analyze, and evaluate social problems through readings and class discussion.

5. Students will demonstrate an ability to apply an analytic approach to major social issues as evidenced through written assignments and discussion having explored the methods used for analyzing social problems as given through readings, assignments, and class discussion.

6. Students will understand how individual problems and issues both affect and are affected by policy and legislation through experiential learning and class experiences.

### Required Texts


### Course Requirements

1. **Attendance & Participation**: Attendance involves demonstrated understanding and mastery of assigned readings through regular and active participation in class discussions and activities. For each day you attend class you will receive 10 points (this starts on the second day of class). If a student arrives late (more than 10 minutes) and/or leaves early he/she will not receive full points for attendance. Additionally, if a student is doing things to distract other students and/or demonstrating that although physically present he/she is not “present” during the class session; partial points may be given for attendance to that class session. Finally, any student who misses five or more class sessions will receive a letter grade drop on the final course grade in the course.

   **Participation** -- I value each student's participation and contribution to each class session. All students are expected to contribute to the discussion of class readings and materials. Students are encouraged to bring newspaper and/or magazine articles to class, which report on issues that have a direct bearing on the topic under consideration. If a student's participation and contribution enhanced class discussion and demonstrated an overall investment in the course material, participation can be worth as much as 10 points toward the attendance portion of the final grade (in addition to those points earned from attending class). If a student's participation and contribution greatly detracted from the learning experience of the rest of the class, as much as 10 points can be detracted from the attendance grade.

   Attendance points will contribute **10% to the final grade**.
2. **Exams:** There will be three (3) exams. Students must complete all exams via SacCT. Exams will be released for students to access up to 3 days prior to their being due. Exam due dates are indicated on the course schedule. Exams provide an added opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts and issues covered in the course through readings, lectures, and class discussions.

There will be **no late exams**. Exams will be in multiple choice and/or short essay format and will **contribute a total of 45% to the final grade**.

3. **Journal Assignments:** Each student is required to complete two (2) journal assignments throughout the course of the class. You are required to use the guidelines delineated later in the syllabus. However, these should be 2 – 4 pages in length, double-spaced, and in 12 point font (minimum). Additionally, ALL Journal Assignments must be **saved either with a “doc”, “pdf”, or “rtf” extension and submitted in that format; assignments will NOT be accepted in any other format**.

These assignments **contribute 20% to the final grade**.

4. **Final Paper:** Each student is required to complete a final paper that they should be working on throughout the entire course and approximately 8 pages long (at least 1500 words) double-spaced. You will research and evaluate a current social issue and discuss ways in which to address the issue both individually, organizationally, at a community level, and at a policy level. Refer to the guidelines for this paper and the schedule for the due date. Late papers will receive a 5-point deduction for every day late it is submitted up to one week beyond the original due date.

Additionally, ALL Final Papers must be **saved either with a “doc”, “pdf”, or “rtf” extension and submitted in that format; papers will NOT be accepted in any other format**.

The final paper **contributes 25% to the final grade**.

---

**Grading**

Letter grades will be determined using the scale below:

- A+ = 100 – 97
- A  = 96 – 94
- A- = 93 – 90
- B+ = 89 – 87
- B  = 86 – 84
- B- = 83 – 80
- C+ = 79 – 77
- C  = 76 – 74
- C- = 73 – 70
- D+ = 69 – 67
- D  = 66 – 64
- D- = 63 – 60
- F  = 59 and below

---
• **Grading Turn Around Time:** journal assignments, and papers will be returned either electronically or by paper depending on the form for which they were required to be submitted.
  
  - The turn around for journal assignments and papers will be done as quickly as possible and generally within **two weeks after the due date**.

• **Grading Criteria:** Where appropriate, the following criteria are used to evaluate assignments, IRFs, book critique, etc.:

  • **Effective use of knowledge:** the integration of concepts, theories, models, and information from readings, lectures, and class discussions is used in a way that demonstrates internalization.
  
  • Generalization of **ideas, observations, concepts, and experiences are carefully supported** with empirical data, conceptual work generated by authors, or researchers, and/or original thoughts.
  
  • **Organization:** thesis in introduction, smooth relationship between ideas and between paragraphs, and overall structure, integrative concluding section. Careful planning is evident in the organization.
  
  • **Clarity:** understandability, good style and form. Central ideas are concrete and clear.
  
  • **Grammar:** Correct syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Sentences and paragraphs are clear, unified, and coherent.
  
  • **Directions:** Demonstrates an understanding and adherence of the directions provided.
  
  • **References** in appropriate format (use of APA format). When references are needed.

---

• If a student performs by **demonstrating the minimum of what is requested** across class requirements and/or in a specific paper, assignment, quiz, and participation a **C grade** will be earned.

• When a student demonstrates s/he is able to incorporate a great deal of the course material, class discussion, and moves his/her own thinking beyond what is being asked of the student a **B grade results**.

• An **A grade** results when a student demonstrates exceptional mastery of the subject matter being presented and presents that understanding in a coherent and thoughtful fashion.

• The **grade of D or F** is earned when a student does not demonstrate an understanding of the **basic premises** that are being presented through readings and class discussions.

---

**GENERAL CLASS POLICIES**

**ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:** My interactions with students are based on the expectation of mutual trust and honor. You are required and expected to do your own work on all class assignments, assessments, papers, etc. Please do not give me any reason to be suspicious.

---

*Social Problems SOC 03 – California State University, Sacramento – Spring 2010* p. 4
CSUS defines academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism, as indicated below:

A. CHEATING. At CSUS, cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.

B. PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is a form of cheating. At CSUS plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporation of another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge.

Any act of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for that assignment. Additionally, if you turn in an assignment that has been "lifted" from others, you will receive a failing grade for that assignment, without the opportunity to redo the assignment.

I will follow the policy outlined in University Policy regarding all occurrences and/or possible occurrences of cheating and/or plagiarism (refer to http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm).

WRITTEN QUALITY: Written work must be mechanically and stylistically acceptable. Serious deficiencies in such areas as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent development and organization will result in lowered grades.

CELL PHONES & PAGERS: Students are expected to turn off ALL cell phones and/or pagers. If there is a reason to have a phone on (i.e., family emergency, on-call at work) please turn it to vibrate mode. Students should not be surfing the Internet, emailing, texting, playing games, or answering calls during class time. If a student is using their cell phone during class to surf the net, play games, text others he/she will lose attendance/participation points for that day.

LAPTOPS: The instructor understands that many students benefit from the use of their laptop during class to type notes etc. However, due to the interactive nature of this class all students are to NOT use their laptop during class time unless there has been explicit agreement with the instructor due to educational needs. When in use it becomes a distraction from class discussion and didactic activity. If a student decides to ignore this policy and use their laptop during class time without an expressed consultation from the instructor, he/she will be marked as absent for that day and lose attendance and participation points.

INCOMPLETES: Students are expected to complete all the work by the last meeting of the class. Incompletes are not given automatically. A grade of incomplete may be assigned only in cases of illness, accident, or other catastrophic occurrences beyond the student's control. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and fulfill the college's policies and procedures for incompletes. Students who do not follow this policy will fail.

SUPPORT SERVICES: Should you have any physical, psychological, or cultural considerations that may affect your ability to learn in this course or complete course assignments, please see me
immediately during the first week of classes. There are counseling and support services at CSUS that can help you succeed.

**Saclink Accounts & SacCT:** All students are required to secure a saclink account by the end of the first week of the semester so that they can access SacCT. Additionally, all students will be required to attend a SacCT orientation workshop to ensure familiarity with SacCT and the course information that has been put together for this course specifically on SacCT. During the first week of the course the instructor conducts an orientation to SacCT. However if a student misses this session and/or does not feel as acquainted with SacCT as s/he needs in order to accurately submit IRFs/papers and assessments in SacCT, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the on-line orientation materials ([http://www.csus.edu/SacCT/student](http://www.csus.edu/SacCT/student)), seek assistance from the Help Desk, and/or inquire with the Help Desk regarding further assistance that students can receive. **All students** are responsible for ensuring they understand how to correctly submit assessments, papers, and IRFs via SacCT so that their submissions are received and are submitted by the correct due dates.