
Sociology 2031-100
Social Problems
Summer 2009
MTWRF 11:00 – 12:35 Hellums (HLMS) 267

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CULearn: <https://culearn.colorado.edu/> (or via 'Courses' tab <https://cuconnect.colorado.edu>)
Office Hours: TBD MF 10:00 AM - 11:AM, W 12:40 AM – 1:40 PM and by appointment

Classmate Information

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Overview

A social problem is a condition in society generally believed harmful, where the cause is public, many are affected, and most agree something should be done. Emphasizing a critical theory approach, we will question basic values, belief systems, privileges and power structures that shape what we recognize as a social problem as well as how we respond as a society. Through the study of social problems, this course will also help provide: 1) a basic introduction to the science of sociology; 2) an introduction in particular to the critical perspective within sociology; 3) an understanding of how to evaluate personal and public circumstances from a sociological perspective, and; 4) an understanding of how sociology complements psychological and biological perspectives on individual and group behavior. This class should also improve critical thinking skills by providing the participant new tools with which to evaluate the world in which we live. Throughout this course we will use various forms of media along with personal experiences to relate course material to the real world.

This course will place considerable emphasis on discussion and in-class responses to questions. Importantly, this course design relies heavily on individual accountability and responsibility. The format of this course is interactive, not merely filling a seat and writing notes. If you prefer filling a seat and taking notes this course is not for you. Cramming, frequently missing class or coming to class unprepared will directly reflect in your grade. Every class meeting this semester you will need to arrive prepared for meaningful discussion and be ready to answer pointed questions about the assigned readings. You are welcome to show up for class with food or drink, bring your lunch, bring a friend if you like, but to do well you must get involved and stay involved. With only 24 total days to cover the course material you will need focus and energy to succeed. As a student in this course you should expect to spend at least two hours per day outside of class for each day of class. If the above structure and requirements are not a good fit for you this course may not be your best choice.

Textbooks

Charon, Joel M. and Lee Garth Vigilant. 2009. *Social Problems: Readings with Four Questions*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. ISBN-10: 0-495-50431-9. ISBN-10: 978-0-495-50431-3.

Additional readings may be assigned and posted on CULearn or distributed in class.

An iClicker is also mandatory for this class and will be used daily for work worth a significant part of your grade

Grading

Short Prompt Papers	28% (280 points - four papers 70 points each)
Daily Questions	40% (400 points total - point values per response calculated at end of term)
Final Essay Exam	32% (320 points – values per question TBD)
Total	1000 points (60% writing / 40% iClicker)

Course Assignments

In addition to reading you will be required to: a) complete four approximately one page short writing assignments; b) answer one or more questions via iClicker during class each day related to the assigned readings using iClicker; c) participate in daily classroom and group discussions, and; d) complete the final essay exam. Each student is granted one 'Get out of Jail Free' allowance to skip class without consequence - which they must request at least 24 hours in advance in writing via email. Days that writing is due and the day of the final exam are exempt from this policy. There is otherwise no late work accepted and no excuses for missed classes and/or opportunities to make up missed points earned in class.

Readings: all reading assignments are due by the day and date listed in the class schedule. All reading assignments are all-inclusive, first page to last, including introductory comments and conclusions, unless otherwise stated. In addition to the readings listed in the initial version of the class schedule, there may be additional online readings posted. You will be expected to come to class familiar with the assigned material sufficient to answer the daily questions and actively engage in class discussion.

Short Papers: Each Friday we will spend a portion of class time responding to a question prompt. Each question will relate to some important element or theme of the readings for the week, including readings due for Friday, or the relationship between some important element or theme of the readings for the week and other major course themes or topics. As stated above, short paper days are exempt from the 'Get out of Jail Free' allowance to skip class without consequence. Grades for the short paper assignments will be awarded as follows: A+ = 70, A = 63, B = 59, C = 52, D = 45, F = discretionary. Grades will awarded as follows: A+ the student exceeds all instructor expectations in terms of material accuracy, insight and lucidity; A the student exceeds most instructor expectations in terms of material accuracy, insight and lucidity; B the student exceeds one or more instructor expectations in terms of material accuracy, insight and lucidity; C the student meets all instructor expectations in terms of material accuracy, insight and lucidity; D the student fails to meet instructor expectations in terms of material accuracy, insight and lucidity; F a failing grade will be awarded for absence, non-response, for a response that fails to accurately respond to the question, or a response that is so poorly written that it fails to communicate its intended meaning. Please note that there is no assumption completing the assignment entitles the student to full credit (i.e. 70 points). The expectation is that the average student will turn in average work – in other words, the expectation is a 'C' and a 'C' is a perfectly acceptable score for assignments in this class. It is up to the individual student to exceed expectations in order to earn a higher score.

Daily Questions: During class on most if not all days I will ask questions related to the material assigned for that specific day. You must be present in class when the questions are asked in order to have the opportunity to answer them. It is entirely at my discretion whether questions will be asked on any given day and no advance notice of days with questions being skipped will be given. I will make sure to communicate to you which material the next set of questions will cover. My intention is to use iClickers for all daily questions – though I reserve the right to do otherwise. Most if not all questions will be multiple choice, fill in the blank, or true/false. However, I might on some occasions use a different format for daily questions such as completion of a diagram or short answer. Questions will not be assigned specific point values in advance – rather, they will be tallied right or wrong and actual value assigned at the end of term based on the total number asked. As this format of evaluation focuses entirely on new material that you should have just finished reading, the questions will generally be difficult and detailed with the expectation that you will have given the readings proper attention and reflection. While the questions will vary in difficulty, they will all be written to a level sufficient that they will reward those that read thoroughly and carefully, will be difficult for those that merely skim and near to impossible for those that are unprepared. To ensure that students who make the effort to study and come to class are not disappointed, everyone that arrives on time and stays to the end will earn one tally point for the day. I will do everything in my power to aid students with the use of iClickers but it will be entirely the responsibility of each student to bring their iClicker to each class meeting, bring it in good working order, remember to turn it on, set the frequency, and submit their responses during the allotted time period.

Final Exam: the final essay exam is worth 32% of your grade and will take place on July 2nd. The final exam will be cumulative with emphasis on major course themes. Expect the requirements for each question to be challenging and the instructions explicit. Failure to complete the final exam will result in a failing grade for the class.

Socy 2031-002 Social Problems – Class Schedule

Week	Mon	Topic / Readings	Tue	Topic / Readings	Wed	Topic / Readings
1	Jun 1	Introduction Syllabus and Introduction	Jun 2	Part XI - Pop/Env Ch 52-54	Jun 3	Part I – Introduction Ch 1-2
Week	Thu	Topic / Readings	Fri	Topic / Readings		
1	Jun 4	Part I – Introduction Ch 3 Part II – Inequality Ch 4	Jun 5	Part II – Inequality Ch 5,8		
Week	Mon	Topic / Readings	Tue	Topic / Readings	Wed	Topic / Readings
2	Jun 8	Part II – Inequality Ch 6,9	Jun 9	Part II – Inequality Ch 7 Part III – Work Ch 11-12	Jun 10	Part III – Work Ch 14 Part IV – Race 15,17
Week	Thu	Topic / Readings	Fri	Topic / Readings		
2	Jun 11	Part IV – Race 16,18	Jun 12	Part IV – Race 19-20		
Week	Mon	Topic / Readings	Tue	Topic / Readings	Wed	Topic / Readings
3	Jun 15	Part V – Gender Ch 21, 23	Jun 16	Part V – Gender Ch 24-25	Jun 17	Part V – Gender Ch 26-27
Week	Thu	Topic / Readings	Fri	Topic / Readings		
3	Jun 18	Part VI – Crime Ch 29, 31	Jun 19	Part VI – Crime TBD		
Week	Mon	Topic / Readings	Tue	Topic / Readings	Wed	Topic / Readings
4	Jun 22	Part VII – Family Ch 34-36	Jun 23	Part VIII – Education Ch 37, 42	Jun 24	Part VIII – Education TBD
Week	Thu	Topic / Readings	Fri	Topic / Readings		
4	Jun 25	Part IX – Healthcare Ch 44-45	Jun 26	Part X – Politics Ch 46		
Week	Mon	Topic / Readings	Tue	Topic / Readings	Wed	Topic / Readings
5	Jun 29	Part X – Politics Ch 47-48	Jun 30	Part X – Politics Ch 49-50	Jul 1	TBD
Week	Thu	Topic / Readings				
5	Jul 2	Final comprehensive exam				

Important Notes

All work must be turned in on time. It is your responsibility to be sure I have your correct email address and that your email is working properly. I will be posting important information via the email addresses in the class list and it is your responsibility to make sure you receive copies of my messages. We will be using CULearn for this course and I will post the syllabus and course content online. It is your responsibility to read the syllabus, know its contents and to check CULearn regularly for updates. Absolutely no discussion of grades will be done before, during or after class or via email. If you need to discuss grades then come to my office hours or make an appointment. You will be responsible for keeping copies of all assignments with regard to any questions or issues – if you cannot provide your own copy I will not discuss the assignment with you. Also, in the case of a dispute, my records prevail. You are responsible for knowing the announcements and material presented in class whether or not you attend class. Please arrange with another student to get missed announcements and notes. If you miss the first two classes you will be dropped.

Expectations and Behavior

Class-time provides an opportunity to discuss and explore material from the readings. As a student it is your responsibility to read to learn (and to learn to read). Class is not a substitute for your own ability to read, to read critically, and to learn from what you read. The primary goal of class is to encourage the learning process through feedback and discussion – not for the instructor to do your thinking for you by outlining the text. Your preparation for and participation in each meeting are critical to your success as well as the success of everyone else in the classroom. In order to create a comfortable and open environment where all members of the class are willing to share their thoughts it is crucial that all students behave in a respectful manner towards one another. While enthusiastic discussion and debate is essential, insensitive or mean-spirited comments based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, ideas or beliefs will not be tolerated. Please do not disrupt other students' ability to participate (e.g., do not arrive late or leave early, do not side-talk, begin packing your belongings before class ends, leave cell phones on, etc.).

The University has a **classroom behavior policy**, which can be found at the following website: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html>. Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in this policy document and to refrain from disrupting class.

Both students and faculty are expected to abide by the University's honor code, which can be found at the following website: <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode>. All work submitted is expected to be the original work of the student and all use of reference materials to be properly cited using ASA style. **Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously and are grounds for failure in this course.**

Disability Statement

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services to me within the **first two weeks** of class. It is your responsibility to contact Disability Services and arrange for a letter to be provided to you. Disability Services: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices.

Other Obligations

Every effort will be made to reasonably and fairly deal with students who, because of religious obligations, participation in athletics or other structured activities have just cause to request assistance coping with conflicts with attendance or assignments. All students to whom this applies must notify me in writing, listing specific obligations and dates, within the **first week** of class. Any notifications after the first week will be accepted only at my discretion.

This classroom is a Hate Free Zone and any intolerant or derisive comments or actions will not be tolerated. In this classroom we will critique ideas not people and everyone is expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. This applies equally to EVERYONE!!! Failure to respect the rights of others will be cause for disciplinary action which may include being asked to leave the classroom, receiving a failing grade for the course, or being reported to campus authorities for misconduct if need be.