
Social Problems - Sociology 2031-001
Spring 2010 - MWF 8:00 – 8:50 a.m.
Humanities (HUMN) 1B80

Instructor: Brian Hawkins
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CULearn: <https://culearn.colorado.edu/> (or via 'Courses' tab <https://cuconnect.colorado.edu>)
Office Hours: F 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Classmate Information

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

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Overview

Sociology is the study of the social lives of individuals, groups, and societies. It is a broad and diverse science bound together by the fundamental insight that our lives are affected not only by individual characteristics but by our place in the social world, not only by natural forces but by their social dimension. Using multiple methods and a broad range of theories, sociology studies everything from short contacts between anonymous individuals on the street to formal and enduring institutions on a global scale. A social problem is broadly defined as a condition in society generally believed harmful, where the cause is public, many are affected, and most agree something should be done. Defining a *particular* condition in society as a social problem and determining *its* causes, consequences and solutions is more difficult. Public and policy attention produces forces for change in society that may mean benefits for some but may also threaten the interests and/or beliefs of others. As a result, policy discussion is usually highly charged and hotly debated from beginning to end - with much to be gained or lost throughout. Social problems and sociology share a long history as it was the rapid change and upheaval accompanying the industrial revolution that motivated people to study society using scientific methods. It is also the case that much of what we know today about social problems comes from sociology. Social Problems as a research area shares some history with Criminology and Deviance and, like its neighbors, investigates the causes and consequences of shortcomings in society. Social Problems, beyond its specific emphasis, is a subject area well suited for introductory coursework in sociology as it studies the form and function of society at multiple levels and explores the interconnectedness of our institutions, interests, and belief systems. The inherently contentious nature of the field provides us an opportunity to evaluate ideas and evidence from multiple areas of sociology plus other academic and non-academic sources. In addition, it provides an opportunity to apply critical thinking techniques to the arguments and evidence presented by scholars, politicians, writers, activists and other opinion leaders weighing in on the subject.

Required: Konradi, Amanda and Martha Schmidt. 2003. *Reading Between the Lines: Toward an Understanding of Current Social Problems*, 3rd ed. New York City: McGraw-Hill.

Optional: Charon, Joel M. and Lee Garth Vigilant. 2009. *Social Problems: Readings with Four Questions*, 3rd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

An iClicker is also mandatory and a portion of your grade will depend upon having one in good working order and properly registered for use in class. In addition to selected readings from the main text, we will be covering readings in the optional text and from several other sources which will be assigned and posted on CULearn.

Grading

Exams	200	points	(600 total, multiple choice)
Group Activity	50	points	(short paper plus class discussion)
Group Reading	50	points	(Short paper plus short presentation to class)
Group Film Critique	50	points	(Short paper plus short presentation to class)
Final Paper/Exam	200	points	(Essay format, cumulative)
iClicker Responses	50	points	
Total	1000	points	

Overview: The goal of this course is to explore social problems as a product of society. Our goal is not to list and describe social problems and the people affected by them; it is to understand how the particular history, organization, beliefs and practices of our society produce particular outcomes that we see as a problem. It is not a study of people and problems unrelated to our own lives; it is a study of how we are connected together as a society and how the structure of our society produces particular beliefs and behaviors that in turn produce and reproduce particular conditions. Seeking to understand rather than describe, our emphasis is on ideas rather than details. Covering selected topics we will draw readings from three different perspectives in sociology: symbolic interaction, structural functionalism and critical theory. This course combines a commitment to reading outside of class with explanation, discussion and group activity in class. To do well this semester you will need to make the time to read actively and carefully, and come to class prepared and able to actively participate. The majority of points for the semester will come from three short multiple-choice exams but the group activities, iClicker points and final exam will heavily influence your final grade. As this is a morning class you are welcome to dress casually and bring beverages or snacks, but to do well you should commit to keeping up with the readings and coming to class regularly. Study aids will be posted on CULearn as complements to your own efforts, not substitutes. If you have questions, missed a class or feel like you are getting behind you should come visit me during office hours or make an appointment.

Readings: reading assignments are due by the day and date they are listed in the schedule. All reading assignments are all-inclusive, first page to last, including introductory comments and conclusions, unless explicitly stated otherwise. In addition to the text there will be readings posted on CULearn and it is your responsibility to know the assignments and be able to access them online. You will be expected to come to class familiar with the assigned material sufficient to actively participate in class. If you have issues reading material online or with printing paper copies please let me know and I will help.

Midterm Exams: midterm exams will be short, consist of multiple-choice questions, and be conducted during our regularly scheduled time in our regular classroom. Exam questions will emphasize comprehension and recognition of key ideas. Scantron forms will be provided by the instructor. All exam materials will be collected after the exam and only results will be returned. The exams should take less than 50 minutes to complete and a shortened class may be conducted on exam days. Make-up exams will be available to students who have a justifiable reason for being absent - though make-up exams will not consist of the same questions or format and may require more time and effort to complete.

Final Exam: the final exam will consist of one multi-part question intended to evaluate the student's ability to understand, explain, evaluate and apply key ideas developed over the course of the semester. The question will be designed to take about the same amount of time and effort as preparing for and taking a typical 2.5 hour final exam. Agreement with class material will not be relevant to doing well on the final but accurate descriptions, explanations or applications of course material will. Our scheduled final exam time is Tuesday, May 4th from 7:30pm to 10:00pm.

Group Work: group work will be done outside of class time with grades based on a short verbal description of the activity by the group in class and a short summary paper. Groups for each activity will be formed spontaneously based on interests. Options will be listed up front and each person will have a chance to select a topic that has an available spot open. It is expected that each person will participate in each part of the activity and contribute equally. Part of your assessment will depend upon member feedback - including a deadbeat clause which may cost some or all of the points for an activity.

iClicker Responses: iClickers will be used in class as a mechanism for feedback, to gauge opinions, and to test understanding of material. Points will be earned as a percentage of participation based on the total number of days we have questions in class rather than a score for particular answers. If we use clickers in twenty classes and a student registers responses on eighteen of those days they will receive 90% of the possible points.

Important Notes

Credit for iClicker responses and for the in-class portion of group work requires the student be present in class the day credit is earned. Any missed work is to be tracked and documented by the student, not the instructor, using an exception sheet provided for this purpose on CULearn. The sheets will be collected at the end of the semester, with decisions made and points recorded at that time. It is up to the student to keep track of their missed work, the exception sheet itself, to document their reason for missed work and to make sure the materials are turned in. No credit will be given for missed work that is not recorded on an exception sheet and properly documented. Valid reasons for missed work include school-related activities such as team sports, religious observances and illness or

injury that prevents attendance or would endanger the health of the student or of other members of the class. Any program related or services related letters should still be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the semester and students should still contact the instructor promptly to request alternate assignments for missed group work credit or to request a make-up exam.

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 your success is dependent in part on regularly checking CULearn for materials and information. It is also your responsibility to read the syllabus, know its contents and to check CULearn for revisions. We are using iClickers in this class and a portion of your grade will depend upon having one in good working order and properly registered for use in class. Absolutely no discussion of your 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 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. 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 relevant to our topic. 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 actively and critically and to learn from what you read. The primary goal of class is to encourage the learning process through explanation, feedback and discussion – not for the instructor to do your thinking for you by outlining the text and summarizing key points for you. Your preparation for class and active presence in each meeting are critical to your success as well as the success of everyone else in the classroom. If you have questions or something is unclear it is your responsibility to ask. 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 courage to ask questions and express ideas is essential, insensitive or mean-spirited comments based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, ideas or beliefs will be interpreted as improper conduct. Please do not disrupt other students' ability to participate (e.g., do not arrive late or leave early, side-talk, leave cell phones on, use laptop computers or cell phones for purposes unrelated to class, or begin packing your belongings before class ends).

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 two weeks** of class. Any notifications after the first two weeks will be accepted only at my discretion.

Waitlisted Students

I will review the waitlist on January 20th – please wait until that date to request that I manually add you to the course. In the meantime, please come to each class session and please notify me by signing the attendance sheet each day that you are still interested in taking the course. On January 20th I will, at my discretion, manually add no more than three students over the maximum enrollment of 65.

Soc 2031-001 Social Problems – Class Schedule

Week	Mon	Topic / Readings	Wed	Topic / Readings	Fri	Topic / Readings
1	Jan 11	<u>Introduction</u> Syllabus and Introduction	Jan 13	<u>Introduction</u> Konradi: Ch1	Jan 15	<u>Foundations</u> Mills: Sociological Imagination Bauman: Introduction
2	Jan 18	Holiday – Martin Luther King	Jan 20	<u>Foundations</u> Sociological Pers, Theoretical Pers, Blakely: He's a Feminist, Eitzen: Ch 1	Jan 22	<u>Foundations</u> Schwalbe: Social World Works
3	Jan 25	<u>Foundations</u> Waller: Words Without Deeds	Jan 27	<u>Foundations</u> Hochschild: American Dream Best: War on Social Problems	Jan 29	<u>Foundations</u> Schwalbe: Reprod of Inequality
4	Feb 01	<u>Teens and Young Adults</u> Luker: Dubious Conceptions	Feb 03	<u>Teens and Young Adults</u> Currie: Crisis of Adolescence Gaines: Teenage Wasteland	Feb 05	<u>Alcohol and Drugs</u> Bertram: Three Fatal Flaws
5	Feb 08	<u>Alcohol and Drugs</u> Goldberg: Taking Sides - Drugs	Feb 10	<u>Alcohol and Drugs</u> Perkins/Wechsler: Norms Film: Spin the Bottle	Feb 12	Exam 1
6	Feb 15	<u>Global Issues and Environment</u> Juergensmeyer: Relig Violence Calazza: Gender Matters	Feb 17	<u>Global Issues and Environment</u> Altheide: Politics of Fear Derber: Wilding of America	Feb 19	<u>Global Issues and Environment</u> Klare: Resource Wars Kuletz: Nuclear Landscape
7	Feb 22	<u>Economic Inequality & poverty</u> Greider: One World	Feb 24	<u>Economic Inequality & poverty</u> Perrucci/Wysong: Global Econ	Feb 26	<u>Economic Inequality & poverty</u> Rodgers: All People Poor
8	Mar 01	<u>Economic Inequality & poverty</u> Ehrenreich: Nickel-and-Dimed	Mar 03	<u>Economic Inequality & poverty</u> Edin/Lein: Making Ends Meet Film: Maxed Out	Mar 05	<u>Crime and Criminal Justice</u> Donziger: Crime and Policy
9	Mar 08	<u>Crime and Criminal Justice</u> Lofquist: Whodunit	Mar 10	<u>Crime and Criminal Justice</u> Jankowski: Gang Business Travis/Waul: Return to Society	Mar 12	<u>Racial and Ethnic Inequality</u> Bobo/Smith: Laissez-Faire Racism
10	Mar 15	<u>Racial and Ethnic Inequality</u> Rifkin: African-American Exp	Mar 17	<u>Racial and Ethnic Inequality</u> Perry: Ethnoviolence Massey: Int'l Migration	Mar 19	Exam 2
11	Mar 22	Holiday – Spring Break	Mar 24	Holiday – Spring Break	Mar 26	Holiday – Spring Break
12	Mar 29	<u>Inequality and Privilege</u> WP Fears: Whiteness Studies Brown et al.: Facing up to Race	Mar 31	<u>Inequality and Privilege</u> McIntosh: Invisible Knapsack Feagin et al.: White Students	Apr 02	<u>Inequality and Privilege</u> Tochluk: Witnessing Whiteness Jensen: White Privilege
13	Apr 05	<u>Inequality and Privilege</u> Takaki: A Different Mirror	Apr 07	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Roth: Selling Women Short Sadker: Missing in Interaction	Apr 09	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Zones: Beauty Myths Film: Killing us Softly
14	Apr 12	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Steinman: Supremacy Crimes Blee: The Place of Women	Apr 14	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Goldstein: Sex and Rape Cockburn: 21st Century Slaves	Apr 16	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Lorber: Embattled Terrain Seidman: Outsider to Citizen
15	Apr 19	Other Issues TBD	Apr 21	Other Issues TBD	Apr 23	Exam 3
16	Apr 26	Other Issues TBD	Apr 28	Other Issues TBD	Apr 30	Wrap-up
17	May 1- May 6	Finals Week	May 1- May 6	TUESDAY, MAY 4TH 7:30PM TO 10:00PM	May 1- May 6	Finals Week