

Syllabus

Course website: <http://sociology.morrisville.edu> > SOCI 201

Spring 2017

SOCI 201: Social Problems

Professor Kurt Reymers, Ph.D.

Office Location: 205 Crawford
Office Hours: M, R, F: 11am-12pm
W: 1pm-2pm
or by appointment
e-mail: reymers@morrisville.edu
web: <http://sociology.morrisville.edu>

Course Description:

A consideration of problems confronting our urban, post-industrial civilization and society. Topics may include poverty, racism, stratification and changing social roles in American and global society. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 101). *3 credits (3 lecture hours; spring semester)*

Course Objectives and Outcomes:

The goal of this class is to further embrace “the socio-historical perspective” that you should have gained in the Introduction to Sociology and/or American History courses. This involves *critical reflection and reaction* to the society that surrounds you and the problems that we face that stem from our social arrangements and institutions. Some of the main concepts employed in analyzing society and which we will come to understand in the class are *cultural relativism, ethnocentricity, bias, objectivity and subjectivity, conflict/critical social theory, institutional dysfunction, deviance, norms, values, and globalization*. Each student should come out of the course utilizing the sociological imagination they have cultivated during the semester in order to better understand the nature of social problems at home and abroad.

The outcomes of the course include:

- understanding sociological theory and methods and how they can be applied to the study of social problems;
- demonstrating concrete facts about and abstract theory regarding specific social problems;
- demonstrating an understanding of modern globalization as it applies to social problems;
- demonstrating the ability to describe the relationships between individual, society, and social problems;

Attending class, taking notes, participating, and *especially* reading the assignments on time should allow you to successfully complete the objectives of the course. Your grade will reflect the effort which you put into achieving these objectives.

Required Resources:

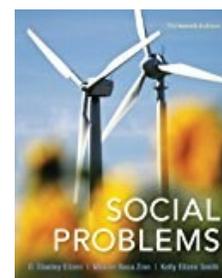


Textbook: *This is a standard textbook with an emphasis on the conflict perspective.*

Eitzen, D. Stanley, Maxine Baca Zinn, and Kelly Eitzen Smith. 2014.

Social Problems, 13th ed. Boston: Pearson. ISBN: 0205881882

The book is available at the college bookstore or online. Reading roughly one to two chapters a week will enhance your understanding of the topics of each weekly class session.



Electronic reserve materials. Available on the course website.

The course website will offer required readings and viewing/listening assignments. You will be responsible for acquiring all resources as they become available on the course website. If you are unfamiliar with how to stream video or audio over the Internet, please see the professor for help. You should **bring to class your annotated readings**, some paper for notes, a pen/pencil, and an open mind that is ready for discussion and debate.

These readings can be found on the course website and will be required reading to supplement weekly topics.



Notebook & writing implement.

Grades:

Research Assignments (40% of final grade)

Five research assignments will be written - a concept paper (5%), an annotated citation list (5%), an annotated outline (10%), a rough draft (10%), and a final draft (10%), on a given topic covered in the course. Research assignments will be graded based on your demonstration of knowledge about the given problem you choose to research and the analysis/synthesis of the research with class discussion and assigned readings, all provided in a standard APA formatted research paper. **Research assignments are collectively worth 40%** of your final grade. **IMPORTANT:** Research assignments **more than one week late** will receive **no credit** – see the *late policy* below.

Exams (30% of final grade)

Two exams (midterm and final) will be made up of multiple choice and short answer questions - study early and be prepared. You are not allowed to bring any books, notes or materials with you during the exam, unless otherwise indicated. You will have the entire class period to complete your exams. **Each exam is worth 15%** of your final grade.

Group Quizzes (20% of final grade)

Several quizzes will be given, but you will be able to use your classmates in preassigned groups as resources in answering the questions. I will use the *Plickers* smartphone technology to conduct these quizzes. Quizzes cannot be made up more than one week after given in class. **Quizzes will be averaged to 20%** of your final grade.

Attendance and Participation (10% of final grade)

Ten percent of your final grade will reflect your interest, participation, and involvement in the course, as demonstrated by attendance and contribution of ideas and questions. These factors will have a *real* bearing on your final grade – come to class, keep up with the assignments, and *participate*. Missing any more than *two classes* impedes your work and may result in a lower grade.

Grade Distribution:

40% of grade: Writing

(1): Concept paper (5%); (2): Annotated citations (5%), (3): Annotated outline (10%);
(4): Rough draft (10%); (5): Final draft (10%)

30% of grade: Each exam is 15% of final grade

20% of grade: Group Quizzes

10% of grade: Attendance and Participation (recorded daily)

100%

Grade Converter:

93 to 100+ = **A** = 4.0 90 to 92 = **A-** = 3.67 87 to 89 = **B+** = 3.33
83 to 86 = **B** = 3.0 80 to 82 = **B-** = 2.67 77 to 79 = **C+** = 2.33
73 to 76 = **C** = 2.0 70 to 72 = **C-** = 1.67 68 to 69 = **D+** = 1.33
63 to 67 = **D** = 1.0 62 and below = **F** = 0.0

Asking about grades:

Feel free to ask your professor in person about your grade in the course at any point during the semester. However, I reserve the right not to respond to email messages inquiring about specific grades on semester exams, papers, or (particularly) the final exam.

Class Policies:

Class Participation and Attendance

- Students should make every attempt to attend all classes. Missing any more than *two classes* impedes your work and may result in a lower grade. **Attendance is taken daily and recorded.** The absences allowed are for athletic events, serious and contagious illness or injury, family emergencies, snow days, car accidents, etc. It is expected that the absences allowed will satisfactorily cover the cases where absence is necessary. If they do not, please meet with the instructor during his office hours to explain your case. If you have too many absences and would like to have your case considered, please provide documentation of the reason for your absence, including date, evidence and explanation of the absence, *in writing* (**not** by e-mail or verbal agreement). As an incentive for good attendance, for each of the absences you are allowed that go unused, you will earn an extra bonus point toward the final grade. Also, if you attend each class before and after the spring break, one point will be added to your attendance score.

Academic Behavior and Honesty

- *Taking cell phone calls or checking messages, eating, sleeping, reading, using a laptop computer,* are examples of *unacceptable* classroom behavior. Students doing such things will be asked to leave the class and *will be marked absent for the day*. However, *talking* in class is not necessarily bad - *civilized* argument, relevant questions, and note taking are *strongly encouraged* behaviors for which you will be rewarded. *Note to laptop/cell users:* you will be marked absent for the day if you are found to have your laptop on or are on your cell phone (even checking messages) during class time, no matter how briefly. RESPECT for the space of the classroom (this includes professor and fellow students) is expected from ALL STUDENTS. If the norms of respect are not being observed, the professor reserves the right to take disciplinary action(s) against the offender(s), including but not limited to affecting the grade and the expulsion of students from the classroom. Please note that, in general, attendance of college classes is directly correlated to the grades that students receive. If you want a higher grade, come to class.
- Arriving late disrupts the class, as does leaving early – people showing up very late (15 minutes or more), or leaving the classroom during class (with the exception of *emergencies only*) will not be permitted to (re)enter the classroom. Every three instances of tardiness will result in one absence marked on the attendance sheet.
- Academic honesty promotes continued academic and occupational success. Maintenance of academic honesty and quality education is the responsibility of both faculty and students. Any written assignment (including all electronic media) submitted by a student must be *original authorship*. Representation of another’s work as his or her own shall constitute plagiarism. See the student handbook for more information.

Plagiarism means theft of intellectual property, obtained from a print or electronic medium. A person has plagiarized if s/he quotes three or more words in sequence from a source and (1) doesn’t use quotation marks (“The quick brown fox...”), and (2) doesn’t identify the source (what is known as “citation”). A person has also plagiarized if s/he records or cites ideas, information, or other material from a source that is not identified, or if the individual paraphrases information from a source that is not acknowledged. The penalty for plagiarism could be failure on the assignment, failure in the course, or even expulsion from the college. *Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse for plagiarism.*

Late/make-up/extra-credit Assignment Policy

My late assignment policy is very strict – late assignments will be marked “late” and the grade will be reduced accordingly by one whole letter grade. *No assignment turned in more than 7 days late will receive credit.* **Make-up exams will not be given**, unless you make arrangements with me more than 48 hours (2 days) in advance of the exam. If you miss an exam without making timely arrangements to make it up, you will receive NO CREDIT for that particular exam. In the event quizzes are given in class, you cannot make up *any* quizzes – be there on time or you will not be given a quiz. I do not give extra credit assignments to individuals – any extra credit will be on a class-wide basis (and there is no guarantee of ANY extra credit assignments in any given semester).

Students with Learning and/or Physical Challenges

If you are a student with a documented disability, who wishes to use academic accommodations you should (1) *Speak with me during the first two weeks of class*. This two-week time frame is to encourage students to arrange accommodations early in the semester. Students with disabilities may arrange accommodations at any point during the semester.

(2) *Talk with David Symonds*, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, to arrange your test accommodations. You may reach his office by e-mail at symondda@morrisville.edu, or visit him (by appointment please) in the Library (2nd floor).

(3) *Using Test Accommodations:* If you wish to use test accommodations for an exam please speak with me the class **before** each exam. Doing this will help me accommodate you. All tests must be completed the same day the test is scheduled. Any other arrangements must be made by agreement between the student and the instructor.

Statement on Academic Assistance

The Academic Enrichment Center (AEC) is a resource available to all students who need assistance with their coursework. The AEC offers peer tutoring in most subjects as well as professional tutoring in math, reading, and English/writing. Supplemental instruction is also available in a number of courses. The tutors and professional staff at the AEC can also assist students with general study skills such as note-taking, test-taking, time management, and critical thinking. The AEC is located in the Library.

Note that this schedule is **tentative and subject to change** – check the website to find out what changes are made.

<http://sociology.morrisville.edu/> > Social Problems Questions? e-mail reymers@morrisville.edu

Week 1. Return to Sociology

On Jan 17: Acquire textbook & review website by Thurs.

For Jan 19: Read *Textbook*, Chapter 1

Week 2. Where Do Social Problems Come From?

Jan 24: Read Chapter 2, The Bias of Wealth and Power

Jan 26: Read [“The theory of everything,”](#)
The Guardian 2009
Watch:

Week 3. The Media: News, Entertainment, and Internet

Jan 31: Read: Kellner, The Media and Social Problems

Feb 2: Read: Mass Media Revision Mapping
Watch: TedX, Allison Graham, [How social media makes us unsocial](#)
Watch: [John Oliver on how the media treats scientific studies](#)
Concept Paper due Feb 2

Week 4. Political Economy: American Social Inequality

Feb 7: Read: *Textbook*, Chapter 7
Read: [The American Middle Class Is Losing Ground](#), Page 1, Pew Research Center, 2015

Feb 9: Read: Haseler, *The Super-Rich*
Read: [Richest 62 people...](#), *Guardian*, 2016
Read: [Inside the Panama Papers](#), *Salon*, 2016

Week 5. Political Economy: American Social Inequality

Feb 14: Read: Domhoff, *Class Domination*
Feb 16: Read: Eco, [Eternal Fascism](#)

Week 6. Race and Ethnic Inequality

Feb 21: Read: *Textbook*, Chapter 8
Feb 23: Read: Hart, *High Price*, Chapter 12
Annotated Citations due Feb 23

Week 7. Review

Feb 28: Exam 1

Mar 6-10: Spring Break

Following weeks' topics dependent upon class vote:

Week 8. TBA

Mar 14: Read *Textbook*, Chapter TBA
Mar 16: Read TBA
Annotated Outline due Mar 16

Week 9. TBA

Mar 21: Read *Textbook*, Chapter TBA
Mar 23: Read TBA

Week 10. TBA

Mar 28: Read *Textbook*, Chapter TBA
Mar 30: Read TBA

Week 11. Global Inequality and International Relations

Apr 4: Read *Textbook*, Chapter 3
Apr 6: Read *World System Theory*, Martinez
Watch: [China vs India - Race to the Top of the World](#), BBC, 2015
Rough Draft due Apr 6

Week 12. War and Terrorism

Apr 11: Read: *Textbook*, Chapter 18
Watch: [The Business of War \(SOFEX\)](#), Vice, 2012
Apr 13: Read: Johnathon Schell, *The Fate of the Earth*, Chapter 1
Watch: Frontline, [The Secret History of Isis](#)
(trigger warning: war violence)

Week 13. Industrialization and Environment

Apr 18: Read *Textbook*, Chapter 4
Apr 20: Read Maslin, 2004, *Global Warming: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 6

Week 14. Review

Apr 25: Read *Textbook*, Chapter 19
Apr 27: Review for exam 2
Final Paper due Apr 27

Week 15. Exam 2, May 2