

Syllabus

Spring 2024 - T/R 11am-12:15pm Crawford 110

SOCI 201: Social Problems CRN: 17104

 **ONLINE "CLASSROOM"**

<https://brightspace.morrisville.edu>

Social Problems 

T/Th 11am-12:15pm Crawford 110 SOCI 201 Spring 2024

Course Description:

A consideration of problems confronting our urban, post-industrial civilization and society. Topics may include poverty, racism, stratification and changing social roles and institutions in American and global society. *Prerequisite:* Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 101) -or- U.S. History 1900-present (HIST 103). *3 credits (3 lecture hours; spring semester)*

Professor Kurt Reymers, Ph.D.

Office Location: 205 Crawford Hall

Office Hours: Mon & Weds: 11am-12pm

Tues & Thurs: 10–11am

Fri: No office hour

or by appointment

e-mail: reymers@morrisville.edu

website: sociology.morrisville.edu

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;
- analyzing a particular social problem using information skills and critical thinking from the sociological perspective.

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:

-  **Online Textbook: *Social Problems: Continuity and Change*.** 2016. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, ISBN 13: 9781946135230. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike CC BY-NC-SA. Download: <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/social-problems-continuity-and-change>



-  **Electronic reserve materials.** Available on Brightspace. The Brightspace page will offer required readings and viewing/listening assignments. You will be responsible for acquiring all resources as they become available on the website. You should **annotate your readings** (i.e. take notes as you read/write on the paper margins or scribble a PDF note on your tablet or phone). These annotations will remind you of what you read and should prompt questions when we meet by video.
-  **Notebook & writing implement.** Even though this is an online class, it’s still an important idea that you should be writing notes. Takes notes in a notebook on anything you read – be sure to DATE all of your notes so you know when you were thinking them. Making notes is the first step to good studying. It really helps. Do it!

Required Graded Course Assignments:

1) Attendance and Participation (10% of final grade)

You are allowed *two absences* available to you without penalty, but unused absences are credited toward your participation. I do not distinguish between “excused” or “unexcused” absences, but I do require an explanation of absences if special dispensation is expected. See the *Class Policies* section of this syllabus for more information regarding attendance.

2) Social Problems Journal (10% of final grade)

The **Brightspace Journal** will be a regular, credit/no credit (1/0) assignment designed to allow you to think out loud, in writing, and share your thoughts with me, your sociology mentor. Note, JOURNAL ENTRIES WRITTEN LATE WILL NOT BE GIVEN CREDIT. You either get it done by SUNDAY MIDNIGHT in the week it is assigned or you do not get credit (certainly you may still do it for your own purposes though).

3) Music Blog (20% of final grade)

Four “Music Blog” entries on Brightspace will be due periodically (see schedule). In reflecting on the class topics, it’s not hard to come up with an example of a social problem that has been related to in music. For this portion of the class grade, you will be asked to periodically complete a short reaction to the weekly reading assignments in the form of a “music interpretation,” **a brief, but concise (at least 250 word) description posted on the course Brightspace page**. More information can be found on Brightspace.

4) Section Quizzes (20% of final grade)

Quizzes will be given in class for each of the four sections of the course. Each quiz will test comprehension and memory of the assigned readings and online resource assignments for that section of the course. Each quiz will make up 5% of the course grade.

5) Creative Project (20% of final grade)

The Creative Project will be a piece of creative work expressing their understanding of a particular social problem – cause, consequence, and potential solutions – through a creative projects such as creating a sociological documentary, piece of artwork, writing, song, poetry, or multimedia presentation. There will be three steps to reporting on the creative project: see the course schedule for details.

6) Exams (20% of final grade)

Two exams (midterm and final) will be made up of multiple choice and short answer questions. They will be timed and administered through Brightspace. Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade.

Grade Distribution:

10% of grade: **Attendance & Participation**
10% of grade: **Social Problems Journal** (Brightspace)
20% of grade: **Music Blog**
20% of grade: **Quizzes**
20% of grade: **Creative Project**
20% of grade: **Two Exams** (each worth 10% of final grade)
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	67 to 69 = D+ = 1.33
60 to 66 = D = 1.0	59 and below = F = 0.0	

Knowing Your Grades:

I DO NOT USE THE BRIGHTSPACE GRADE BOOK. All your grades for this course will be available on a separate link on the Brightspace contents page called “NEW GRADES.” By clicking on the link at the and signing in with a password I will get from you early in the semester, you will be able to see all your grades. Please refer to this page before emailing me with questions about specific grades.

Late/Make-up Assignment/Extra Credit Policy

Exams: Make-up exams will not be given, unless you make arrangements with me within one week of the exam. If you miss an exam without making arrangements to make it up, you will receive no credit for that particular exam, unless you can demonstrate evidence that an emergency occurred. In the case of bad weather on an exam day, see the course webpage for instructions.

Journals: Late Journal entries will be penalized at a rate of 1 point per week late (no points after 2 weeks late).

Quizzes: In-class quizzes can be made up within one week after the quiz is given in class.

Music Blogs: Music blogs submitted after the due date will receive HALF-CREDIT if turned in within five weeks of it being assigned. Inability to access Brightspace to complete the music blog is not a valid excuse for missing an assignment. Be prepared to complete the music blog prior to the due date.

Creative Projects: Project reports turned in late will be penalized 10% of the grade for every week late. Assignments will earn no credit after five weeks late.

Extra credit: 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).

Class Policies:

- **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 Fine Print: The absences allowed are for (college-sponsored) athletic events, sickness (a serious injury requiring hospitalization or contagious illness, for example), family emergencies (death or life-threatening predicaments, for example), snow days, car accidents, etc. It is expected that the absences allowed will cover the cases where absence is necessary. If they do not, please meet with me during my office hours to explain your case. If you have more than the allowed number of absences and would like to have your case considered, please provide documentation of the reason for your absences beyond the first three, 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 mid-semester break, one point will be added to your attendance score.

- **LATE ATTENDANCE Policy:** Arriving late disrupts the class, as does leaving early – anyone showing up more than **15 minutes** after the start of class or leaving the classroom during class (with the exception of emergencies only) will be marked absent. Every **three instances of lateness** prior to the 15-minute deadline **will translate into an absence**.

- **Classroom NORMS:** You are attending class in a college classroom designed specifically to help you seek knowledge. *Being distracted by your cell phone, playing games, texting, calls from friends or family, eating, sleeping, reading outside material, working on other classes' assignments, using a laptop computer outside of class purposes, etc.,* are examples of **unacceptable** classroom behavior.

The Fine Print: Talking in class is ok – however, it should be public, relate directly to the class conversation, should take the form of civilized argument or a relevant question, and should never preempt another speaker (one speaker at a time, please). RESPECT for the space of the classroom (this includes professor and fellow students) and the exercise of SELF-CONTROL is expected from ALL STUDENTS. If the norms of respect are not being observed (usually defined when you disturb the students around you) Professor Reymers reserves the right to take disciplinary action(s) against the offender(s), including but not limited to affecting your grade and asking you to leave the classroom. In general, attendance of college classes is directly correlated to the grades that students receive, despite that it may not be noticeably or regularly enforced. If you want a high grade, come to class and recognize these guidelines.

- **Plagiarism Rule:** 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.

The Fine Print: 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..."), or (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.*

- **IMPORTANT RULES ABOUT COPYING and AI:** In an online setting, it's tempting to "work together" with one or more other students to answer questions and complete assignments and exams. Please know that I have a keen eye and memory, and I have comparison software that can scan your assignment and compare the wording to other students'. If there is an exact match, both/all students involved will fail the assignment (in the case of a first infraction).

The Fine Print: In the case of exams and quizzes, if answers to all questions match exactly or statistically too close to another student(s), both/all students involved will face a penalty. For my AI policy this semester, see the Brightspace page; generally, the same rules apply as above (exact copies from AI, as established by AI checkers, will be penalized, but using AI for ideas and grammar (such as Grammarly) is generally okay.

Starfish

This course participates in the Starfish Early Alert System, an early intervention system designed to enable academic success, student persistence, and graduation. When an instructor observes student behaviors or concerns that may impede academic success, the instructor may raise an alert flag that 1) notifies the student of the concern, 2) requests an individual contact to discuss the issue, and 3) in most cases, also refers the student to the academic advisor. If you receive an email notification of an early alert, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the issue. The purpose of the contact is to determine the severity of the issue, accurately assess its potential impact on your academic success, and to plan actions to prevent negative consequences and enable academic success. For more information about the Early Alert system, contact your academic advisor.

Academic Assistance

The Tutoring Center is a resource available to all students who would like assistance with their courses. Both peer and professional tutors are available Sundays through Fridays by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Help is provided for most subjects taught at the College. The Tutoring Center also provides online tutoring for about ten subjects through NightOWL, which occurs 7:00 PM to midnight Sundays through Thursdays. In addition to assisting students with course content, the Tutoring Center staff can assist students with general study skills such as note-taking, test-taking, time management, and critical thinking. The Tutoring Center also organizes Student Success Seminars, workshops exploring these and other topics that are useful regardless of one's courses or major. The Tutoring Center is located in the back left corner on the first floor of Butcher Library. For additional information, please visit the Tutoring Center's webpages at <https://www.morrisville.edu/contact/offices/tutoring-center> and/or email Stephanie Lawhorne, Director of the Tutoring Center, at LawhorSL@morrisville.edu.

Counseling Support

Successful academic performance is a mutual goal between students and the SUNY Morrisville community. Many problems may arise during your time here that could interfere with your academic course work. Things such as significant stress, mood swings, anxiety, and difficulties concentrating. Problems with strained relationships, drugs/alcohol, family concerns, loss or crisis may also contribute to decreased academic performance. Counseling services are available to assist you in addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. Services are free and confidential for all enrolled students through the Student Health Center. You can call **315.684.6078** to schedule an appointment or visit [health center](#) to find out more about counseling services.

Students in need of accommodations

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Accessibilities Services Office immediately to register for services. You will meet privately to discuss your specific needs and prepare your accommodation sheets for you to distribute to your instructors. Although you may register for services at any time, please attempt to make arrangements within the first two weeks of the semester so all appropriate academic accommodations can be set. For additional information, contact 315.684.6031.

Morrisville Campus Classes: in the Academic Enrichment Center of the Butcher Library. 315.684.6930

Norwich Campus Classes: 607.334.5144 in the Student Services Office at the Norwich Campus.

Title IX Protections

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681) is an all-encompassing federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Although Title IX is often associated with equal opportunity in athletics programs, the law is much broader and includes discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual harassment and sexual assault. Questions or concerns regarding Title IX should be directed to SUNY Morrisville's Title IX Coordinator at 315.684.6981 or for Norwich 607.547.1072. Students should also familiarize themselves with the Student's Bill of Rights located in the student handbook (pg. 43), which outlines students' rights related to the reporting of incidents under Title IX. The official policy can be found online at the [Title IX page](#).

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

COURSE SECTIONS:

Introduction	Jan 22 – Jan 28
1) Topic #1	Jan 29 – Feb 18
2) Topic #2	Feb 19 – Mar 10
3) Topic #3	Mar 18 – Apr 7
4) Topic #4	Apr 8 – Apr 28
Conclusion	Apr 29 – May 5

Week 1. Return to Sociology: Where Do Social Problems Come From?

- Jan 22-23: Gain access to the [Brightspace](#) site or see sociology.morrisville.edu
Review [Syllabus and Course Schedule](#)
Download textbook ([Social Problems: Continuity and Change](#)*, 2016)
- Jan 24-25: Read [The Sociological Imagination](#) (1959)
- Jan 26-28: Read *Introduction to Sociology* [Chapter 1.3](#) and [Chapter 4.2](#)
Read [Chapter 1](#) in the online textbook (SP*)
Submit first journal entry on Brightspace.

[*The Social Problems
textbook will be
abbreviated “SP”]

Section 1: TBD

Section 2: TBD

Section 3: TBD

Section 4: TBD

Conclusion: Week 14

Final Exam Week 15: May 7