

# Social Problems

SOCI 314-100  
3 Credit Hours  
Summer I 2015  
Monday-Friday  
2:00-3:35  
Harrington Classroom  
Building (HECC) 204  
Katherine Willyard  
Texas A&M University



## This course will review different social problems confronting modern society.

We will discuss various social problems facing modern society, their impact, scope, causes and proposed solutions. This course is not designed to teach you what to think, but how to think critically about the world around you and develop logical solutions to modern social problems. It is all about applying sociological knowledge to problem solve.

Throughout this course, you will be introduced to fundamental perspectives to studying social problems, evaluating social problems associated with inequality and addressing institutional social problems. By completing this course you will be able to use the scientific process to evaluate solutions to modern social problems.

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**Required Course Material:** *i>clicker 2*. ISBN 978-1429280471. ~ \$40-50

You can download the required readings using Texas A&M University Library Resources. The assigned readings are listed in the detailed course calendar section of the course syllabus.

You should have your *i>clicker* by the first day of class. You are expected to read all material before class starts and bring your *i>clicker* to class each day. If you do not understand a particular part of the required text, you should prepare your questions and ask them during open office hours or during the lecture when the particular topic is being discussed. You will be tested on your understanding of assigned readings at the start of each lecture using your *i>clicker*. If you are late or absent and miss the lecture quiz for a non-University excused purpose, you will not receive participation credit for the day.

**Important Summer Session Information:** You will not pass this course if you miss multiple lectures. Exams are heavily reliant on your understanding of lecture material. Under no circumstances will I share my lecture notes. In addition, I will only excuse absences that are University approved. I will not reschedule exams, excuse late assignments or missed lecture quizzes for non-University approved reasons (like weddings and family vacations).

# Learning Outcomes

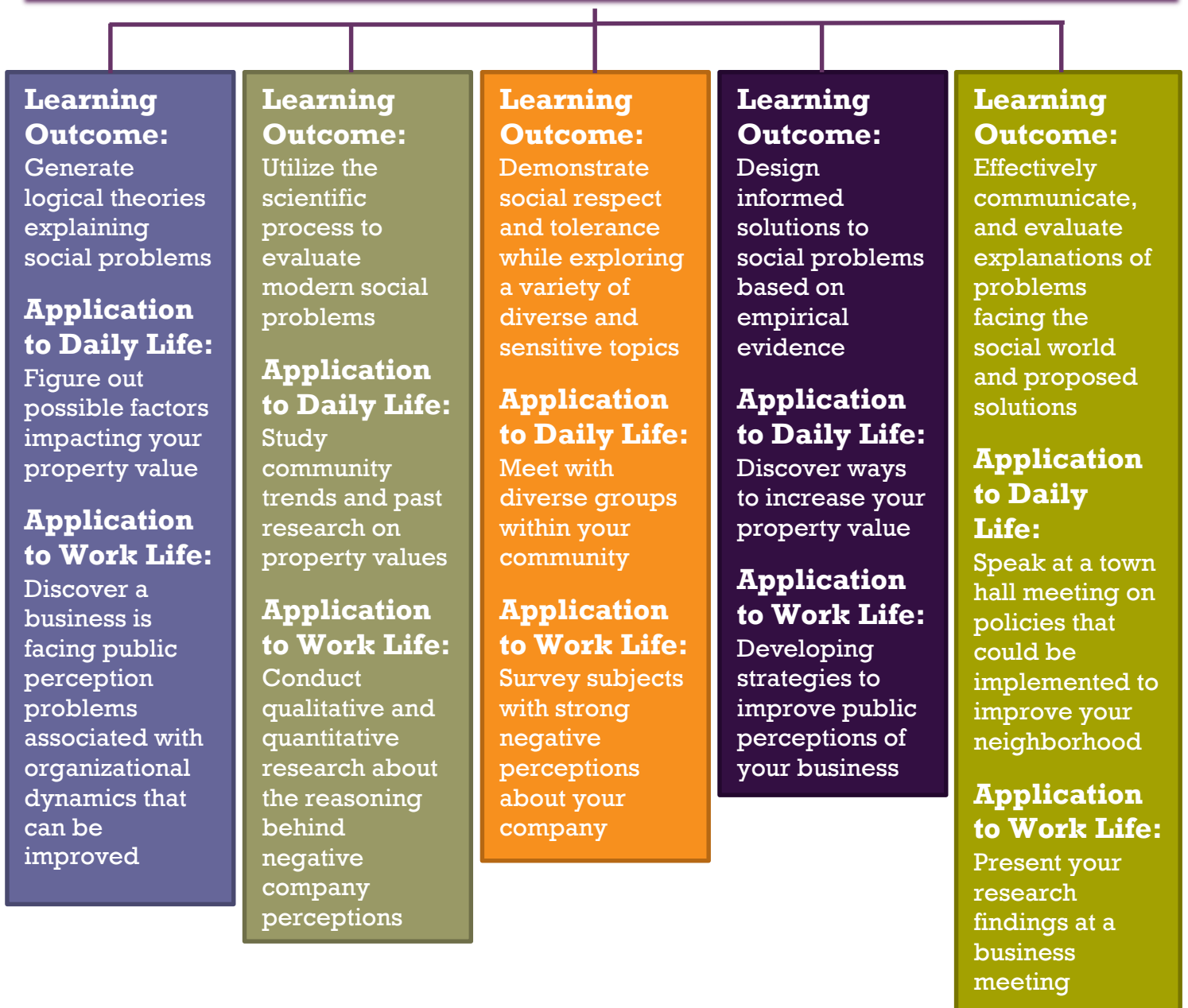
**Example Prompts:** Example scenarios where you would apply skills you will develop in this course.

**Application to Daily Life Example Prompt:** You graduated and bought your first house. However, you notice its value is quickly decreasing. You want to find out why this is happening and ways to change this trend.

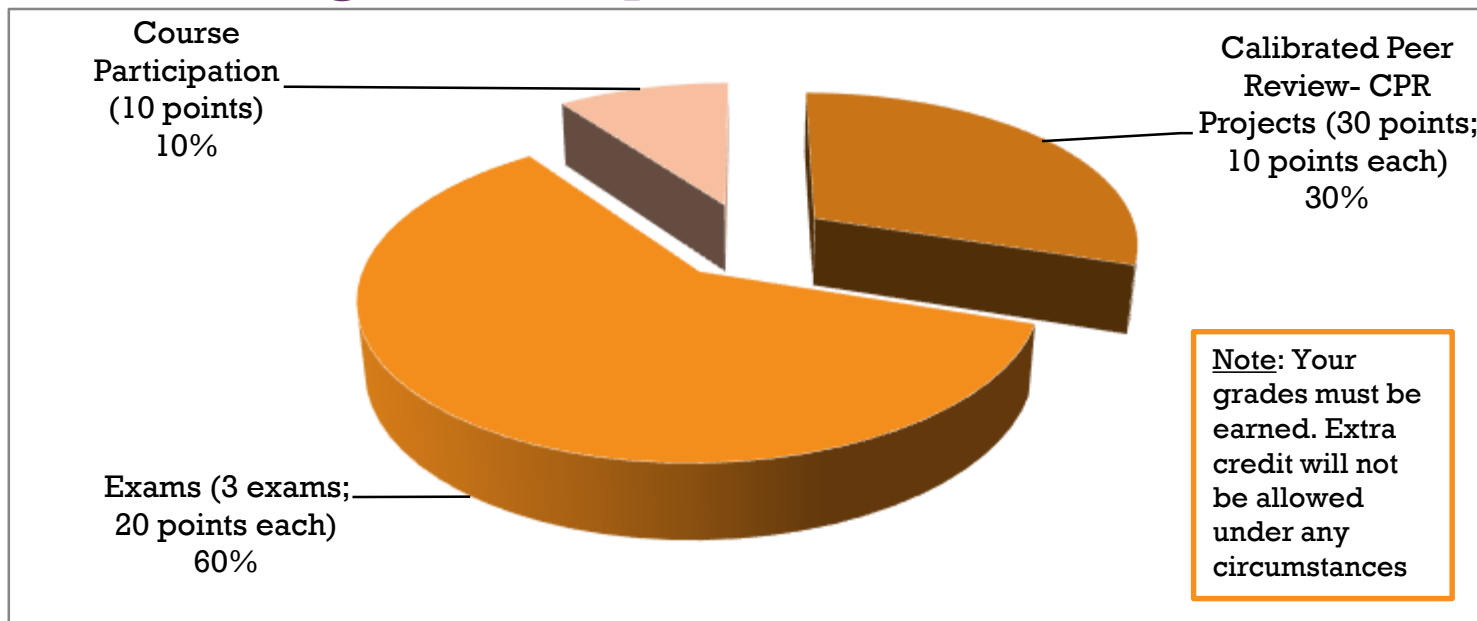
**Application to Work Life Example Prompt:** You work at a large corporation in the public relations department. Citizens are boycotting your firm stirring a negative reaction from investors and the corporation’s value is dropping. You are given the task of finding out why this is happening and developing ways to change this trend.

## Primary Goal:

Use the “sociological lens” to assess social problems facing modern society and develop logical solutions



# Grading Policy



## Exams

You will have three unit exams and a final exam. Three multiple-choice, non-comprehensive unit exams will be held during scheduled class times. You do NOT need to bring a scantron. There will be no make up exams, except in the case that you have a university excused absence. These "Unit Exams" will only cover the material taught within the unit. In addition to the Unit Exams, you will have the opportunity to complete a final exam at the end of the course. The final exam will be an essay exam applying knowledge developed throughout the course. You will receive an exam grade based on your three highest exam scores.

## CPR Projects

A total of 30 points will be earned by completing three Calibrated Peer Review (CPR) assignments. You will be required to write three essays, learn how to use a rubric to evaluate essays, review the essays of your peers and review your own essays. Throughout this exercise you will go through the process of identifying, critiquing and solving a modern social problem. The first essay will examine the environmental justice debate. Next you will critique approaches addressing environmental inequality. Finally you will propose a new strategy to address the problem. More details about this project can be found on the website.

## Participation

Your participation grade will be based on: 1) answers submitted through your i>clicker and 2) your participation during lecture. Half of your daily participation grade will be based on your correct answers to i>clicker questions about the assigned reading. Participation points will not be collected for the first week, days when students are not required to meet or on test days. If you have an excused absence, you will receive full participation points for the day. Your lowest five participation scores will be dropped. Full participation points for the day will contribute one point towards your final grade.



Throughout this course, it is important that you maintain standards of respect, tolerance and civility. You should pay attention to the person speaking and do not disrupt. Throughout the scheduled class time, minimize all disruptions: cell phone use (just turn off your phone or turn off the ringer and put it in your bag), all attempts to multi-task (being in class while playing on your phone, browsing the internet, reading the newspaper, completing puzzles), side conversations, and packing up before the end of class. We will cover sensitive topics that may challenge deeply held beliefs. It is likely that you will not agree with everything that is said throughout this course but it is important to be exposed to a wide array of ideas and perspectives. You will be required to maintain respect for everyone within the classroom and maintain a positive learning environment. Aggression will not be tolerated. If a student's actions disrupt the learning process, the student could face disciplinary actions or removal from class. Remember, throughout this course, you should be developing the skills listed in the "Course Objectives" (Page Two).

## Study Tips

This class requires a lot of work! For every one hour you spend in class, you are expected to spend three uninterrupted hours studying outside of class. You will not be able to pass this course if you do not show up to class prepared each day and take detailed lecture notes. Get to know at least two people in this class so that you can study together.

You are not only required to know course materials, but also how the concepts can be applied. Practice this skill by applying what you learn in lecture to your daily life.

I recommend you use a calendar and create set times to concentrate on studying for this class at least nine hours each week. I also suggest that you write down all assignments and when they are due. Plan to complete assignments and prepare for exams well before the due date. Students do much better if they prepare in advance.

If you are struggling in the course, be sure to make use of all learning resources available to you. If you are struggling in numerous classes, or see yourself falling behind, I suggest making a visit to the Academic Success Center in the YMCA building and meeting with an academic coach.

## Professor Contact Information

**Kate Calle Willyard**

**Office:** ACAD 409E

**Office Hours:**

Tuesdays 4:00-5:00

Wednesdays 4:00-5:00

Thursdays 4:00-5:00

Or by appointment

**Email:**

kate.willyard@tamu.edu

## Course Website

The course website can be accessed through eCampus. You can access eCampus through the icon in your Howdy portal or by visiting [ecampus.tamu.edu](http://ecampus.tamu.edu) and logging in with your NetID and password. The website includes the course syllabus, grades, feedback forms, access to information about the calibrated peer review project, course announcements, discussion groups, and lecture presentations. Lecture presentations will be posted one hour before class starts. Discussion groups are a great place to continue discussing course topics outside of the classroom. All discussions must maintain standards of respect and tolerance. Students are responsible for maintaining a positive learning environment. You will not be tested on the supplemental material found on the website, but it will help further your understanding of the required course material.

## Absence Policy

This course will hold a **firm** absence policy in accordance to Rule 7 in the Texas A&M University Student Rulebook (accessible at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>). No exceptions will be made to the course absence policy.

Please only inform me of your absence/tardiness if it is associated with a University excused absence as explained in 7.1 in the Texas A&M Student rulebook. I do not want to be informed of your absence/tardiness if it is not a University excused absence, regardless of the reason.

As explained in 7.3 in the Texas A&M Student rulebook: "Except in the case of the observance of a religious holiday, to be excused the student must notify his or her instructor in writing (acknowledged email message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. accident, or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. Accommodations sought for absences due to the observance of a religious holiday can be sought either prior or after the absence, but not later than two working days after the absence."



## Disability Services:

Any student in this course who has a disability should register with Disability Services and email me to discuss the issue. The subject line should include your UIN and the topic: "SOCI 314 Disability Registration." When students register with Disability Services and I am made aware of issues, I can make adjustments to improve the flow of this class. Therefore, it is beneficial for the student, the professor and the entire class when students with disabilities register.

According to the Texas A&M University Faculty Senate: "The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation please contact the Disabilities Services in Cain Hall, Room B118 or call 979-845-1637. For additional information see: <http://disability.tamu.edu>."

# Class Policies

## Aggie Honor Code:

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do."

According to the Texas A&M University Faculty Senate: "Upon accepting admission Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code (above), to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information, please visit [aggiehonor.tamu.edu](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu)."

## Plagiarism:

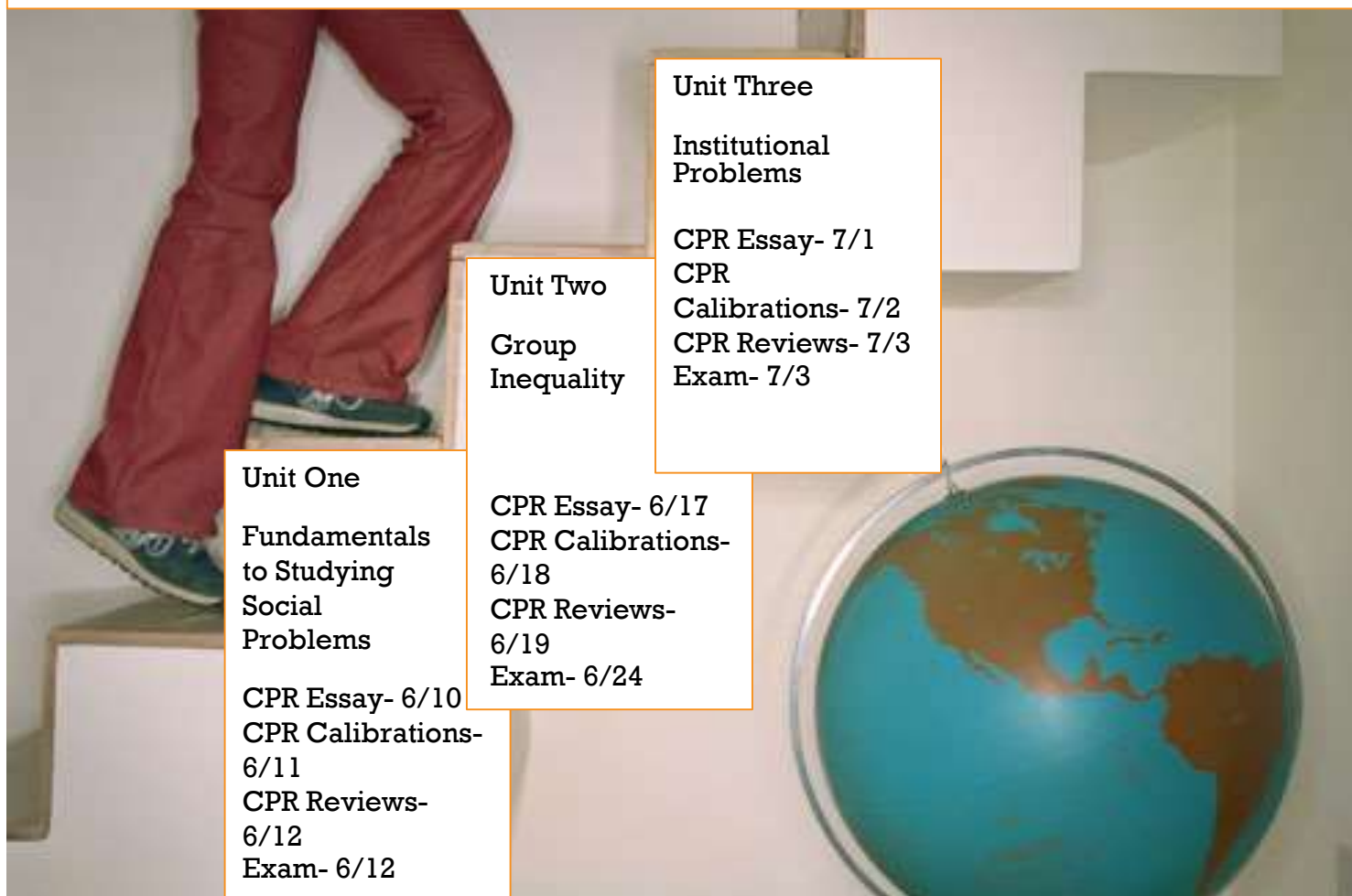
According to the Texas A&M University Faculty Senate: "As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own ideas, words, and writing, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated."

For more information about plagiarism visit <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>.

"The handouts in the course are copyrighted. Handouts include all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, power points, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I grant permission."

# Graphic Syllabus

A cumulative exam covering all units will be held on Monday, July 6, 2015 from 3:30-5:30.



## Unit One

Fundamentals  
to Studying  
Social  
Problems

CPR Essay- 6/10  
CPR Calibrations-  
6/11  
CPR Reviews-  
6/12  
Exam- 6/12

## Unit Two

Group  
Inequality

CPR Essay- 6/17  
CPR Calibrations-  
6/18  
CPR Reviews-  
6/19  
Exam- 6/24

## Unit Three

Institutional  
Problems

CPR Essay- 7/1  
CPR  
Calibrations- 7/2  
CPR Reviews- 7/3  
Exam- 7/3




**Responsibilities:** You must check your Texas A&M email account on a regular basis. I will occasionally send out emails with course updates and information to your university email account. If you have a problem, question, or concern, please address it immediately. Get issues resolved as they arise rather than waiting until immediately before or after exams. This course is reading intensive; be sure to keep up with the work.

In order to facilitate student development, **I will only answer emails that are looking to set up a one-on-one meeting with me due to time conflicts with my office hours.** If you send me this type of email, the subject must include SOCI 314 in the subject line. **Emails sent for any other reason will not be considered or acknowledged.** This policy is in place to facilitate professor-student interaction and to help students develop skills that often go undeveloped in modern society. Since this will mean that I will not answer last minute emails regarding assignments and exams, make sure that you prepare and think of questions ahead of time so that you can ask questions during class or open office hours. It is also recommended that you make use of the course website discussion groups to crowd source information.

Students and professors share responsibilities of maintaining a positive learning environment. Everyone must maintain respect throughout this course. You can expect that I will be in class on time and will be organized and prepared for each lecture. Students are also expected to be in class on time and to be well prepared and alert. If you arrive to class late or are required to leave early, make sure that you enter and exit the room without disturbing your fellow classmates. If I am ever unable to be available during office hours or have to cancel class for any reason, I will let you know by making an announcement on our course website and/or sending out an email to all students.








# Detailed Course Calendar

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-  Lecture
-  Assignment
-  Class Doesn't Meet on 6/18-19








## Unit 1: Fundamentals to Studying Social Problems


<b>Lecture 1</b> 6/2	<b>Introduction</b> Hernes, Gedmund. 2008. "The Interface Between Social Research and Policy Making." <i>European Sociological Review</i> 24:257-265.		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Know your professor and classmates. Navigate the course.
<b>Lecture 2</b> 6/3	<b>Writing about Social Problems</b> Strunk, William and E.B. White. 1920. "The Elements of Style." Retrieved April 27, 2015 ( <a href="http://faculty.washington.edu/heagerty/Courses/b572/public/StrunkWhite.pdf">http://faculty.washington.edu/heagerty/Courses/b572/public/StrunkWhite.pdf</a> )		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Understand how to complete CPR Assignments. Explain how to access writing resources.
<b>Lecture 3</b> 6/4	<b>Methods</b> Uprichard, Emma. 2012. "Being Stuck In(Live) Time: The Sticky Sociological Imagination." <i>The Sociological Review</i> 60:124-138.		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Differentiate between social and personal problems. Describe the problem solving process. Evaluate different research designs and data gathering strategies.
<b>Lecture 4</b> 6/5	<b>Theory</b> Coser, Lewis. 1957. "Social Conflict and the Theory of Social Change." <i>British Journal of Sociology</i> 8:197-207.		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Explain the importance of theory. Describe and apply three different theoretical perspectives: functionalism, symbolic interactionism and critical theory.
<b>Lecture 5</b> 6/8	<b>Economy and Class</b> Sternberg, Ernest. 1993. "Justifying Public Intervention without Market Externalities: Karl Polanyi's Theory of Planning in Capitalism." <i>Public Administration Review</i> 53:100-109.		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Describe different economic systems and the historical development of capitalism. Identify trends related to the economy and class.

<p><b>Lecture 6</b> 6/9</p>	<p><b>Government and Politics</b> Burris, David. 2005. "Interlocking Directorates and Political Cohesion among Corporate Elites." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 111:249-283.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Explain the function of government. Evaluate competing theoretical perspectives of how government works.</p>
<p>6/10</p>	<p><b>CPR Essay One Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Evaluate a modern social problem</p>
<p><b>Lecture 7</b> 6/10</p>	<p><b>Poverty in the United States</b> Brady, David, Regina Baker and Ryan Finnigan. 2013. "When Unionization Disappears: State-Level Unionization and Working Poverty in the United States." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 78:872-896.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Describe trends related to poverty in the U.S. Apply social theory to explain poverty. Evaluate the historical response to poverty in the U.S.</p>
<p>6/11</p>	<p><b>CPR Calibration One Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Evaluate practice essays using rubric criteria</p>
<p><b>Lecture 8</b> 6/11</p>	<p><b>Global Inequality</b> Skocpol, Theda. 1997. "Wallerstein's World Capitalist System: A Theoretical and Historical Critique." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 82: 1075-1090.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Describe world systems theory. Identify global poverty trends. Evaluate the consequences of global inequality.</p>
<p>6/12</p>	<p><b>CPR Peer Review and Self-Assessment One Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Evaluate essays using rubric criteria</p>
<p>6/12</p>	<p><b>Unit One Exam</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Achievement of all unit one lecture, readings and assignment learning outcomes</p>


**Unit 2: Group Inequality**




<p><b>Lecture 9</b> 6/15</p>	<p><b>Racial Inequality</b> Shia, Jiannbin, Thomas Bode, Amber Beyer and Daniel Selvig. 2012. "The Genomic Challenge to the Social Construction of Race." <i>Sociological Theory</i> 30: 67-88.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Define theoretical concepts related to race. Evaluate perspectives of racial inequality.</p>
<p><b>Lecture 10</b> 6/16</p>	<p><b>Immigration</b> Brown, Hana. 2013. "Race, Legality, and the Social Policy Consequences of Anti-Immigration Mobilization." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 78:290-314.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Describe trends related to U.S. immigration. Apply sociological theory to immigration issues. Critique U.S. immigration policy.</p>
<p>6/17</p>	<p><b>CPR Essay Two Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Evaluate solutions to a modern social problem</p>
<p><b>Lecture 11</b> 6/17</p>	<p><b>Crime</b> Simpson, Sally. 2013. "White-Collar Crime: A Review of Recent Developments and Promising Directions for Future Research." <i>The Annual Review of Sociology</i> 39:309-331.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Describe trends related to crime in the U.S. Differentiate between white collar crime and other criminal activities. Understand theoretical perspectives of crime.</p>
<p>6/18</p>	<p><b>CPR Calibration Two Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Evaluate practice essays using rubric criteria</p>
<p><b>Lecture 12</b> 6/18</p>	<p><b>Environmental Justice- CLASS DOESN'T MEET- watch film online</b> Rudel, Thomas, Timmons Roberts and JoAnn Carmin. 2011. "Political Economy of the Environment." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 37:221-238.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Describe the environmental justice movement. Identify trends related to race, class and the environment.</p>
<p>6/19</p>	<p><b>CPR Peer Review and Self-Assessment Two Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Evaluate essays using rubric criteria</p>

<b>Lecture 13</b> <b>6/19</b>	<b>Pornography- CLASS DOESN'T MEET- watch film online</b> Malamuth, Neil, Gert Hald and Mary Koss. 2012. "Pornography, Individual Differences in Risk and Men's Acceptance of Violence Against Women in a Representative Sample." <i>Sex Roles</i> 66: 427-439.		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Evaluate pornography as a social problem. Describe social research associated with pornography. Explain the consequences of pornography on society.
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<b>Lecture 14</b> <b>6/22</b>	<b>Gender Inequality</b> Gorman, Elizabeth. 2005. "Gender Stereotypes, Same-Gender Preferences and Organizational Variation in the Hiring of Women: Evidence from Law Firms." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 70-728.		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Describe trends related to gender. Evaluate theoretical perspectives of gender inequality in the United States.
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<b>Lecture 15</b> <b>6/23</b>	<b>Critical Legal Studies</b> Novak, Kenneth, and Mitchell Chamlin. 2012. "Racial Threat, Suspicion and Police Behavior: The Impact of Race and Place in Traffic Enforcement." <i>Crime and Delinquency</i> 58:275-300.		<b>Key Learning Outcomes:</b> Explain trends in drug use in the United States. Describe critical legal studies. Identify the processes contributing to the criminalization of minority populations. Critique the War on Drugs.
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<b>6/24</b>	<b>Unit Two Exam</b>		<b>Required Skill:</b> Achievement of all unit two lecture, readings and assignment learning outcomes
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## Unit 3: Institutional Problems

<b>Lecture 16</b> <b>6/25</b>	<b>Organization and the Environment</b> Prechel, Harland and Lui Zheng. 2012. "Corporate Characteristics, Political Embeddedness, and Environmental Pollution by Large U.S. Corporations." <i>Social Forces</i> 90:947-970.		<b>Key Learning Outcome:</b> Identify common assumptions related to humans and the environment. Apply sociological perspectives to understand the environment.
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<p><b>Lecture 17</b> 6/26</p>	<p><b>Urbanization</b> Means, Alex. 2008. "Neoliberalism and the Politics of Disposability: Education, Urbanization and Displacement in the New Chicago." <i>Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies</i> 6:35-69.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcome:</b> Discuss patterns and trends in urbanization and city growth. Apply theoretical perspectives to urban problems.</p>
<p><b>Lecture 18</b> 6/29</p>	<p><b>Healthcare</b> Morris, Theresa. 2014. "C-Section Epidemic." <i>Contexts</i> 13:70-72.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcome:</b> Explain how health is a social issue. Describe health problems. Apply social theory to explain health outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Lecture 19</b> 6/30</p>	<p><b>War</b> Hooks, Gregory and Clayton Mosher. 2005. "Outrages Against Personal Dignity: Rationalizing Abuse and Torture in the War on Terror." <i>Social Forces</i> 83:1627-1645.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcome:</b> Discuss patterns and trends related to war. Apply theoretical perspectives about war. Critique the War on Terror.</p>
<p>7/1</p>	<p><b>CPR Essay Three Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Develop strategies to solve a modern social problem</p>
<p><b>Lecture 20</b> 7/1</p>	<p><b>Terrorism</b> Mckeown, Anthony. 2011. "The Structural Production of State Terrorism: Capitalism, Imperialism and International Class Dynamics." <i>Critical Studies on Terrorism</i> 4:75-93.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcome:</b> Evaluate assumptions about terrorism. Apply sociological theory to ideas about terrorism. Identify steps towards peace.</p>
<p>7/2</p>	<p><b>CPR Calibration Three Due</b></p>		<p><b>Required Skill:</b> Evaluate practice essays using rubric criteria</p>
<p><b>Lecture 21</b> 7/2</p>	<p><b>Conclusion</b> Dugan, Laura and Erica Chenoweth. 2012. "Moving Beyond Deterrence: The Effectiveness of Raising the Expected utility of Abstaining from Terrorism in Israel." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 77:597-624.</p>		<p><b>Key Learning Outcome:</b> Apply sociological perspectives to empirical data. Critique approaches to managing social problems.</p>

7/3	<b>CPR Peer Review and Self-Assessment Three Due</b>		<b>Required Skill:</b> Achievement of all unit three lecture, readings and assignment learning outcomes
7/3	<b>Unit Three Exam</b>		<b>Required Skill:</b> Achievement of all unit three lecture, readings and assignment learning outcomes
7/6	<b>Comprehensive Exam</b>		<b>Required Skill:</b> Achievement of all lecture, readings and assignment learning outcomes