
Social Problems - Sociology 2031-100
Spring 2010 - MTWThF 9:15 – 10:50 a.m.
Ketchum (KTCH) 301

Instructor: Brian Hawkins
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CULearn: <https://culearn.colorado.edu/> (or via 'Courses' tab <https://cuconnect.colorado.edu>)
Office Hours: Tue and Fri 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. and by appointment

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

Weekly Short Exams	200 points	(3 exams – 100 each, best 2 out of 3, multiple choice and short essay)
Final Exam	200 points	(Essay format, conceptually cumulative)
In-Class Work	<u>100 points</u>	(iClicker, group work, short responses - proportionate to participation)
Total	500 points	

Description: 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. Skipping classes, not doing the readings when assigned, and/or skimming the readings, will impact your grade. The majority of points for the semester will come from the weekly short exams and the final exam but the in-class work, including group activities, short response paragraphs and iClicker points will significantly influence your final grade. As this is a summer class and a morning class the atmosphere is informal and you are welcome to bring beverages or snacks. Study aids will be posted on CULearn as complements to your own efforts but not as substitutes for effort. 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. The reading material for this class is very interesting but also challenging and will require you to read actively – being alert, asking questions, searching for significance, considering implications and contradictions, taking notes. Passive reading and/or skimming will not be adequate to meet expectations. If you have issues reading material online or with printing paper copies please let me know and I will help.

Midterm Exams: The weekly exams will be short, consisting of ten multiple-choice questions and one or two short essay questions and be conducted during our regularly scheduled time in our regular classroom at the end of class on Monday. Each exam will be on the material covered Monday-Friday of the prior week. Exam questions will emphasize comprehension and recognition of key ideas. All materials required for taking the exam 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 we will conduct a regular class session in the first hour of our time on exam days. Make-up exams may be requested by students who have a justifiable reason for being absent on exam day. At the instructor's discretion, students will be offered the opportunity to take an alternate exam during office hours on Tuesday. 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 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 on the last day of class, Friday, July 2nd from 9:15 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.

In-Class Work: Points for in-class work will be earned as a percentage of participation based on the total number of instances occurring. That is, if we have ten days where we use iClickers, do five short responses and five group activities, then the one-hundred points will be divided evenly between the ten instances and each be worth ten points. iClickers, short responses and group work will be used in class as a mechanism for feedback, to gauge opinions, to test understanding of material and to facilitate learning.

Important Notes

Credit for in-class 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 on the last day of class, 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 three days** of class. Any notifications after the first three days of class will be accepted only at my discretion.

Waitlisted Students

I will review the waitlist on June 3rd – 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 June 3rd I will, at my discretion, manually add no more than three students over the maximum enrollment of 36 students.

Socy 2031-100 Social Problems – Class Schedule

Mon	Topic / Readings	Tue	Topic / Readings	Wed	Topic / Readings	Thu		Fri	
		Jun 01	<u>Introduction</u> Syllabus and Introduction Konradi: Ch1	Jun 02	<u>Foundations</u> Mills: Sociological Imagination Bauman: Introduction	Jun 03	<u>Foundations</u> Waller: Words Without Deeds Hochschild: American Dream Eitzen: Ch 1	Jun 04	<u>Foundations</u> Best: War on Social Problems Schwalbe: Social World Works
Jun 07	<u>Foundations</u> Schwalbe: Reprod of Inequality Exam 1	Jun 08	<u>Teens and Young Adults</u> Luker: Dubious Conceptions	Jun 09	<u>Teens and Young Adults</u> Currie: Crisis of Adolescence Gaines: Teenage Wasteland	Jun 10	<u>Alcohol and Drugs</u> Bertram: Three Fatal Flaws Goldberg: Taking Sides – Drugs	Jun 11	<u>Alcohol and Drugs</u> Perkins/Wechsler: Norms Film: Spin the Bottle
Jun 14	<u>Global Issues and Environment</u> Klare: Resource Wars Exam 2	Jun 15	<u>Global Issues and Environment</u> Juergensmeyer: Relig Violence Derber: Wilding of America	Jun 16	<u>Global Issues and Environment</u> Altheide: Politics of Fear <u>Economic Inequality & poverty</u> Greider: One World	Jun 17	<u>Economic Inequality & poverty</u> Ehrenreich: Nickel-and-Dimed Edin/Lein: Making Ends Meet	Jun 18	<u>Crime and Criminal Justice</u> Travis/Waul: Return to Society Jankowski: Gang Business Film:TBD
Jun 21	<u>Racial and Ethnic Inequality</u> Bobo/Smith: Laissez-Faire Racism Exam 3	Jun22	<u>Racial and Ethnic Inequality</u> Rifkin: African-American Exp Massey: Int'l Migration	Jun 23	<u>Racial and Ethnic Inequality</u> Perry: Ethnoviolence <u>Inequality and Privilege</u> WP Fears: Whiteness Studies Brown et al.: Facing up to Race	Jun 24	<u>Inequality and Privilege</u> McIntosh: Invisible Knapsack Feagin et al.: White Students Takaki: A Different Mirror	Jun 25	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Roth: Selling Women Short Zones: Beauty Myths Film: Killing us Softly
Jun 28	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Steinem: Supremacy Crimes Blee: The Place of Women	Jun 29	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Goldstein: Sex and Rape Cockburn: 21st Century Slaves	Jun 30	<u>Gender Inequality</u> Seidman: Outsider to Citizen Lorber: Embattled Terrain	Jul 01	TBD/Review	Jul 02	Final Exam