

Instructor's Resource Manual on Social Problems

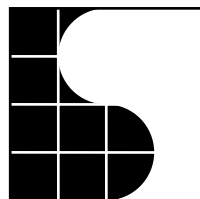
Third Edition

Compiled and Edited by

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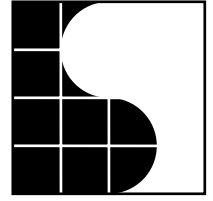
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Introductory Essay: Teaching Social Problems

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TEACHING SOCIAL PROBLEMS: CHALLENGES, RESOURCES, & OPPORTUNITIES*

This third edition of the *ASA Instructor's Resource Manual on Social Problems* provides materials to help those teaching social problems for the first time as well as experienced instructors. The manual includes 13 syllabi, 35 exercises and assignments, and a guide to web resources. In this introduction we reflect on what we have learned in compiling and editing these materials and make several suggestions for fruitful directions for teaching social problems. First we want to explain how we compiled this manual.

We solicited materials for this manual as widely as possible, placing requests for contributions on the Teachsoc electronic discussion list (twice), in the ASA newsletter *Footnotes*, and in the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) newsletter. We also tried to contact all contributors to the previous edition and all SSSP division chairs and newsletter editors. In response to our requests, we received about 20 syllabi, a wide variety of assignments, and other assorted materials. We do not claim that the materials in this manual are a representative sample of all approaches to teaching social problems, but we *do* think that they provide important information on how social problems courses are taught at the beginning of the 21st century. Perhaps even more interesting, they indicate how social problems are not taught.

Reflecting on teaching social problems leads to an obvious question, one that Brooks and Broad raised in the previous edition of this manual: "What does the social problems course add to a curriculum, both for majors and for minors" (Brooks and Broad 1997:1)? This question took on immediacy for one of us recently in the context of new program development. A joint Sociology and Anthropology department that had long offered a criminology concentration within the sociology major was developing a new major in Criminal Justice. Discussion of the new program was intense and often contentious. Much of the debate focused on whether students in the Criminal Justice major would be required to take Introduction to Sociology or whether they could take either Introduction to Sociology or Social Problems as a required introductory course.

Keeping in mind that the new major was criminal justice rather than sociology, one can make good arguments for either position. However, that is not our point here. What was striking about much of this disagreement was the view of social problems courses on which it was based. That view seemed to reflect, at least in part, dated assumptions about the nature of such courses. Brooks and Broad had noted that many still questioned whether the social problems course was "just a grab-bag of 'problems du jour,' an a-theoretical collage of sociological voyeurism that only serves to remind students of a high school civics class" (1997:1)? The second edition of the manual offered evidence that the stereotype was not true in 1997; this edition makes it even clearer.

The materials we received contradict the image of social problems courses as "grab-bags of 'problems du jour.'" Naturally, social problems classes by their nature do focus on social problems and issues that are in the news, but

most of these classes then anchor an analysis of those problems in basic social structures and social relationships. It is true that social problems classes do not focus on the discipline as systematically as do introduction to sociology courses, although introductory classes certainly vary in this regard. Nevertheless, despite the wide variety of ways in which the instructors represented here approach social problems, the essential sociological soundness of these courses is apparent. In the next section we discuss how these courses indicate that soundness.

TEACHING SOCIAL PROBLEMS TODAY

The materials we received demonstrate the diversity of approaches sociologists take to teaching social problems. However, we can identify some common themes or trends underlying that variety. The materials all reflect strong commitments to helping students to develop their critical thinking skills by learning to use and exercise the Sociological Imagination. Most of the syllabi explicitly address those objectives, and many of the assignments and exercises will be useful in developing them. The instructors represented here approach these objectives using different approaches and techniques in their classes.

Many of these courses draw on films and videos. We have included Weitz's syllabus for her course Film and Social Problems, as well as several viewing guides for media and videos (Habel, Jackson). Forster relies heavily on *Taking Sides* readers that encourage students to consider social problems from a point/counterpoint perspective. Forster also incorporates a service learning option into her class. The manual also includes Steiner-Aeschliman's assignment for a service-learning paper. Instructors further interested in service learning will find useful resources in *Cultivating the Sociological Imagination: Concepts and Models in Service-Learning in Sociology*, published by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) in cooperation with the ASA (Ostrow, Hesser, and Enos 1999). Mork has his students work in Cooperative Learning Groups.

In addition to the emphases on critical thinking and the Sociological Imagination, at least five other themes emerge from the materials:

- inequality
- theory
- global and comparative social problems
- solving social problems
- Internet and World Wide Web use

The syllabi and assignments in this manual emphasize the importance of inequality; especially inequalities based on class, gender, and race and ethnicity. On at least some counts, the economy of the United States became healthier during the 1990s, but that prosperity was accompanied by growing inequality. The distribution of wealth became increasingly "top heavy" (Wolff 1996). Recent research has documented a "pulling apart" in terms of income (Bernstein et al. 2000), to an extent that the distribution of income is less equal in the United States than in about any other industrialized nation (Gottschalk and Smeeding 1998). Other research has demonstrated a "widening gap"

in affordable housing in the United States (HUD 1999). Many of the instructors represented in this manual would agree with Gregg Carter that “the root of many of the most pressing social problems in virtually every nation is inequality — and that, indeed, inequality itself is the greatest social problem” (2001:95). Sociologists have long studied and taught about the consequences of inequality. People’s life chances, their access to valuable resources, vary by class, gender, and race and ethnicity. For example, much research has documented correlations between one’s level of resources and access to health care. Some recent research suggests that inequality may have even stronger and more far-reaching effects than expected. For example, epidemiologists, public health researchers, and other social scientists have developed the “relative income hypothesis,” which suggests that the extent of inequality in a city, state, or country has an impact on measures of population well being (Kawachi, Kennedy, and Wilkinson 2000; Tarlov and St. Peter 2000). This research, which asks “is inequality bad for our health?” (Daniels, Kennedy, and Kawachi 2000), is controversial (Wagstaff and van Doorslaer 2000) but suggestive.

The materials in this manual also reflect relatively high levels of theoretical sophistication and self-awareness. These are by no means social theory courses, but given that the vast majority of social problems courses are taught at the introductory level, that few have prerequisites, and that many fulfill general education distribution requirements, the use of theory in these courses is impressive. Many of the courses stress the role of theory in analyzing and solving social problems. Some instructors and texts still rely on the functionalism/conflict/interactionism triumvirate common to introductory sociology courses and texts. Others draw on the full range of theories that have been used in studying social problems. Depending on the social problems examined, the instructors represented in this manual emphasize labeling, value conflict, disengagement, or anomie theory, among many others. However, perhaps the dominant trend is an increasing emphasis on social constructionism and conflict theory. Although these are sometimes seen as competing approaches, they can be complementary, depending on the particular social problem being analyzed.

Conflict theories especially figure greatly in the emphasis on global aspects of social problems, which is another theme that emerges from the materials in the manual. Social problems courses had long focused on the United States, but the inadequacies of focusing on just one society, even for understanding that society, have become increasingly evident. Global transformations have profound effects on all societies. Many of these courses and an increasing number of available resources reflect that. In addition to the global focus, some of these courses take an explicitly comparative perspective. New resources are available for those emphasizing comparative and global perspectives. For example, Moulder’s reader *Social Problems of the Modern World* (2000) presents materials on social problems from American, comparative, and global perspectives. The comparative emphasis is also evident in several recent collections of readings that focus on solutions to social problems (Eitzen and Leedham 1998; Heiner 1999). Nakagawa (1995) suggests that social constructionism is growing in Japan and suggests that this can foster more comparative approaches to social problems. We agree that an increasing emphasis on analyzing and investigating the construction and consequences of social problems in other societies can lead to a truly comparative sociology of social problems.

Another theme emerging from these materials is an emphasis on finding solutions for social problems. Many of the syllabi explicitly deal with solving social problems. That emphasis is reflected in social problems texts that incorporate materials on social policy and solutions to social problems (Kornblum and Julian 1998; Levin et al., 2000), as well as in books focusing specifically on solving problems (Scarpitti and Cylke 1995). We noted above several collections of readings that provide comparative approaches to solving social problems.

In the previous edition of this manual, Brooks and Broad suggested that the most significant change in teaching since the first edition of the manual was “the rise of the Internet and the use of virtual teaching methods or approaches that rely on the use of computers in the classroom or in the teaching/learning experience” (1997:4-5). The materials in this edition reflect the increasing use of those resources. Several of the courses represented here have course websites, and some incorporate web exercises and web-based readings and resources. We also include the syllabus for Steven Steele’s web-based course. However, despite increasing use of on line materials, not everyone agrees with increased Internet and Web use.

In presenting an earlier version of this introduction at a New England Sociological Association (NESA) conference, we commented on receiving fewer web-based materials than we expected. From the back of the room, one sociologist yelled, “Good!” We understand his qualms and realize that others share them. Controversy continues over the social implications of the web and its potential usefulness in education. Some commentators refer in glowing terms to the Information Superhighway, to the creation of an Information Society that will give people enhanced access to information and data, or to a new Information Ecology. Others note the bias and distortion of much information on the web, and warn about information overload. In his *Silicon Snake Oil*, Clifford Stoll (1995:2), a leading critic of the Internet and a “high tech heretic,” wonders if too much emphasis on information technology might be “an ostrich hole to divert our attention and resources *from* social problems?” (italics added). Although we take the reservations of the skeptics seriously, we do think that web resources can help in teaching and learning about social problems.

For some examples of how the web can enrich our pedagogy, one can go to the web site of Robert Wood of Rutgers University at Camden. His Social Stratification Virtual Tour, for example, directs students to useful web sites to find answers to questions about stratification. In addition to learning about the specific questions they answer, students taking these web tours learn about the range of information available. Faculty members might consider developing web tours for social problems classes. The virtual tours represent only one way in which the web can enrich courses. Wood provides a wealth of additional valuable information on pedagogical uses of the Internet on his web site. We hope that the much-expanded Guide to Web Resources for Teaching Social Problems in this manual will stimulate others to integrate the web into their courses more fully.

In addition to using the web for teaching social problems, the web itself is a fascinating topic for exploration in social problems courses. Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, provides a sense of the design and vision that guided the creation and development of the World Wide Web in his *Weaving the Web* (1999). Berners-Lee notes that “the Web is more of a social creation than a technical one” (1999:123). His history of the web is fascinating, his vision for the web is powerful, and his assessment of its current uses is troubling.

A MISSING TREND: INQUIRY-BASED INSTRUCTION

We were puzzled by something we did not find in materials submitted to us. Almost none of the materials introduced inquiry-based instruction into courses. In recent years instructors in the social and natural sciences have increasingly emphasized inquiry-based or active learning in their courses. Incorporating social science inquiry into social problems classes seems like an especially valuable way to help students develop critical thinking skills. In the January 1997 issue of *Footnotes*, Carla Howery noted that “critical thinking seems to be particularly useful in social problems courses,” and suggested that infusing social science inquiry into lower level sociology courses would help foster critical thinking. It would also enable students to “experience sociology as a process of discovery, hypothesis testing, reflection on theories to identify predicted relationships, and as a creative process” (Howery 1997:9).

According to an old Chinese proverb: “I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand.” We think that *doing* sociology by using sociological data to investigate social problems can enhance student understanding, and enable them to see sociology as a process of discovery and testing. Given the emphasis on inquiry-based learning in many disciplines and knowing that many sociologists have been involved in such approaches, we were surprised that only one syllabus in this manual (Carroll) emphasized elementary data analysis and social science inquiry. Some of the syllabi provided here and some of the assignments seem designed to emphasize inquiry, but almost none of the courses build it in systematically. For example, Crone emphasizes students developing their ability to interpret statistics. Habel provides two exercises in which students use statistical data, and so does Steele. Nonetheless, we had expected more emphasis on using sociological data to analyze social problems. This may just reflect the syllabi we received; yet it surprised us nonetheless.

Certainly there are sufficient resources available for infusing inquiry-based learning into social problems classes. There are at least two workbooks designed expressly for social problems courses: Carter’s *Analyzing Contemporary Social Issues: A Workbook with Student CHIP Software* (2001), and Healey, Babbie, and Halley’s *Exploring Social Issues: Using SPSS for Windows* (Pine Forge Press, 1997). Carter uses Student CHIP to enable students to analyze data from the General Social Survey (GSS), U.S. and international censuses and vital statistics reports, FBI crime summaries, and the National Center for Education Statistics’ “High School and Beyond” survey. *Exploring Social Issues Using SPSS for Windows* draws on the 1994 GSS for its exercises. Another workbook, *Investigating Change in American Society: Exploring Social Trends with U.S. Census Data and StudentChip* (Frey and First 1997), can be used in social problems courses, although it was not designed expressly for them. All three workbooks enable

students to analyze data on their own.

Instructors need not adopt these workbooks to incorporate inquiry-based instruction into their courses. Numerous data sets are available on the web. The GSS, for example, is available on several web sites. See the Guide to Web Resources for more information on these.

ABOUT THE RESOURCE GUIDE

We follow the previous edition in some ways, while diverging in others. We follow the second edition in not including lists of textbooks or book reviews. The syllabi list numerous texts, and other social problems texts are widely known. *Teaching Sociology* publishes valuable reviews of social problems texts and additional materials, so there is no need to duplicate those here, at an additional cost to the reader. We have also mentioned some resources in this introduction. We diverge from the second edition in including syllabi only for social problems courses. Brooks and Broad included syllabi from upper level courses that dealt with topics frequently taught in social problems courses. We think that instructors interested in syllabi for courses such as social stratification, deviance, or other related topics would benefit most from the ASA teaching guides for those areas. Like the previous edition we include a guide to web resources, but reflecting the growth of such resources, we have greatly expanded that section. The Guide to Web Resources is also available on our web sites (Carroll: <http://webhost.bridgew.edu/wcarroll>; Kaelber: <http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/kaelber.html>.)

In selecting the syllabi included in this edition, we were looking for clear statements about the following components:

- Description of the course content;
- Course objectives;
- Requirements to meet these objectives, and course policies;
- Evaluation of learning; and
- Course Schedule or calendar.

We chose those syllabi that in our judgment best included these components. The other materials—exercises, assignments, and guidelines—were selected to address the different learning styles of students, and to provide opportunities for active learning in diverse ways. The materials were edited for consistency in appearance.

We hope that anyone teaching social problems will find something of value in this manual. Those faced with teaching social problems for the first time will find almost everything useful, but even experienced social problems instructors will find nuggets that may enhance their courses.

We would appreciate comments, suggestions, or corrections. Please email them to either Walter Carroll (wcarroll@bridgew.edu) or Lutz Kaelber (lkaelber@zoo.uvm.edu).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Carla Howery for her support and encouragement in compiling and editing this resource manual. We are also grateful to all those who submitted materials to us. The syllabi, assignments, exercises, and other materials they provided encourage us greatly about the teaching of social problems today. Walter Carroll thanks Robin Roth for her editorial acumen, sociological acuity, and emotional support. Lutz Kaelber thanks Andy Kozmin, Lynn Carew and Bev Cooper for technical and editorial assistance.

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*We presented an earlier version of this introduction as "Teaching Social Problems in the 21st Century: Strategies for an Era of Prosperity & Inequality," at the New England Sociological Association Fall 2000 Conference at Merrimack College, November 4, 2000.

Syllabi

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Walter F. Carroll
Social Problems: SO 103-01

Bridgewater State College
Fall 2000

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociologists suggest that the *origins and causes of social problems lie outside of individuals*, even though the effects of such problems are reflected in the behavior of individuals. This class examines a variety of contemporary social problems. Topics treated may include drug abuse, crime, juvenile delinquency, divorce and other family problems, mental illness and other health problems, social class, and selected social issues. After examining how sociologists define, study, and interpret social problems, the course then focuses on specific problems. In addition to defining and establishing the prevalence of each problem, the course also explores their causes and consequences. We also consider possible interventions that could alleviate each problem. In this course students will have the opportunity to study social problems by carrying out basic sociological data analysis. This course satisfies the GER in Behavioral Sciences, and has no prerequisite.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how sociologists define social problems.
2. Be familiar with the prevalence of major social problems.
3. Understand how sociologists research social problems.
4. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations of social problems, especially those focusing on individual, cultural, and social explanations.
5. Understand the consequences of social problems.
6. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of interventions aimed at solving social problems.
7. Be able to think critically about major social problems.
8. Be able to use elementary data analysis to carry out sociological analysis of social problems.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Levin, Jack, Kim Mac Innis, Walter F. Carroll, and Richard Bourne. 2000. *Social Problems: Causes, Consequences, Interventions*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing. (new: \$48.00; used: \$36.00)

Carter, Gregg Lee. 2000. *Analyzing Contemporary Social Issues: A Workbook with Student CHIP Software*. Second Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon (\$29.50). (This workbook comes with a CD-ROM that includes Student CHIP software. You can use the software on your own computer or on the campus network.)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND INFORMATION

1. *Attendance*: Attendance is required. If you miss more than three classes, I will reduce your final grade average by ten points for every additional absence. If you do miss a class, you are responsible for all information presented during that class. As with any college class, you should expect to spend two hours working outside of class for every hour in class.
2. *Class Format*: I teach in a combined lecture/discussion format, and I emphasize active class participation. At times you will meet in small groups to work on specific topics and questions. Please ask questions or bring up points for discussion at any time. Complete the assigned readings and assignments on time so that you can take useful notes and participate in class discussions.
3. *Films and Videos*: During the semester we will watch several films and videos. We will discuss these in class and I will include questions about them on exams.
4. *Classroom Etiquette*: Class starts promptly at 11:00 AM. Be in class ready to start by then. Late arrivals disrupt the class and should be avoided. Class ends at 11:50 AM. Do not leave the class until then. We will discuss some very controversial issues this semester. You may disagree with other students, with your readings, or with me. If so, try to disagree in a generous and open-minded fashion, using logic and evidence to support your views. You will have access to much data in this class and you should use it to enhance your understanding of the material and to advance your arguments.
5. *Extra Credit*: During the semester you will have several extra credit opportunities. You may do extra credit opportunities for up to 10 points added to your class average.
 - You will have the opportunity to do one extra credit assignment for five additional points added to an exam grade. During the semester the Campus Climate Action Group (CCAG) will sponsor several valuable programs. You may attend and write about one of those for extra credit. For information

- check the CCAG web page (<http://www.bridgew.edu/DEPTS/AffActn/CCAG.htm>). One especially valuable opportunity will occur on Wednesday, October 18. Dr. Bill Levin, Professor of Sociology here at Bridgewater State, will speak on stereotypes and the elderly (12:30-1:30 PM, One Park Avenue, Rondileau Campus Center). There may be other opportunities in addition to the CCAG programs.
- Many of the topics we will cover show up in the news. During the semester you may bring in up to four newspaper *news* articles related to topics being discussed. You may bring only one article for each topic. At the beginning of class let me know if you have an article and then explain the article and its relevance to the class. After class hand in the article. Make sure your name, the newspaper name, date, and page are on the article. These should be substantial articles, and, again, should be news articles. I will give you one additional point for each article.
 - There are numerous charts, figures, and tables in the text (*Social Problems*). Although the text was published in 2000, much of the data on which the charts, figures, and tables are based dates back several years. You may bring in updated versions of up to *four* of the charts, figures, or tables. I will give you one point of extra credit for each. Note that you may receive a maximum of five additional points for any combination of newspaper articles and updated data.
6. *Course Web Page*: An expanded version of this syllabus is available on my web page (<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/wcarroll>). There is also a web page for the textbook that includes links to the web sites listed in the book. (<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/wcarroll/socialproblems.htm>).
 7. *Disability Services at Bridgewater State College*: Bridgewater State College is committed to making its facilities, services, and programs accessible to all students and toward that end is in compliance with section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If a student has a documented disability, and, as a result, needs a reasonable accommodation to attend, participate, or complete course requirements then he or she should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. For further information about Bridgewater State College services for students with disabilities, please contact the Disability Services in Room 106 of Boyden Hall. Appointments may be scheduled by calling (508) 531-1276 or (508) 531-1384 TTD.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Grading Component	Percentage of Grade	Date
Exam 1	20	October 4
Exam 2	20	November 8
Final Exam	30	December 18 (11:00 AM-1:00 PM)
Class Participation	10	
Assignments	20	Listed in Course Schedule

- **Exams:** Exams 1 and 2 will include multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will also include essay questions, and will be cumulative. The exams will draw equally on your readings, on material discussed in class, and on your workbook assignments. I do not grade on a curve.
- **Class Participation:** This grade will be based on attendance, intelligent and informed classroom discussion, and your participation in small groups. In some of these group discussions you will work on assignments from *Analyzing Contemporary Social Issues (ACSI)*.
- **Assignments:** Most weeks you will do a data analysis exercise from *ACSI*. I collect all of these exercises, but will grade only four of them. You should do all of them. Some exam questions will be based on graded or non-graded assignments. Much of our class discussion will be based on these data analysis assignments. No prior knowledge of computers or statistics is assumed for these. I will teach you what you need to know. Most of Carter's chapters include two or three assignments. You will usually do only one. You may do others for extra credit or out of interest. You may find Gregg Carter's Student Chip Tutorial on his website helpful (<http://web.bryant.edu/~gcarter/student.htm>). If you have any problems with the tutorial or have any questions about it, check with me rather than with Gregg Carter. Carter includes additional data sets on his web site.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Topic	<i>Social Problems</i>	<i>Analyzing Contemporary Social Issues</i>
9/6	Introduction to Course	Preface	Pp. v-vii (optional)
9/8	Understanding Social Problems	Chapter 1	“About Student CHIP” (1-4)
9/11	Thinking Critically about Social Problems		“Reading and Thinking Critically about Contemporary Social Issues” (5-14)
9/13-15	Data Analysis Tools for Studying Social Problems with Student CHIP		“Elementary Data Analysis Tools Needed to Study Social Issues” (15-33)
9/18-22	Studying Social Problems		Chapter 1 Exercises: pp. 35-71
9/25-10/2	Inequality & Poverty	Chapter 2	Chapter 3 Exercises: pp. 95-110
10/4	Exam 1		
10/6-13	Racial Inequality	Chapter 3	Chapter 4 Exercises: pp. 129-138
10/9	Holiday — No Class		
10/16-20	Gender Inequality	Chapter 4	Chapter 5 Exercises: pp. 157-163
10/23-27	Age Discrimination	Chapter 5	Chapter 6 Exercises: pp. 181-190
10/30-11/3	Sexual Orientation & Homophobia	Chapter 6	Extra Credit Web Assignment: http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/GSS99
11/6	Review		
11/8	Exam 2		
11/10	Holiday — No Class		
11/13-17	Crime and Violence	Chapter 7	Chapter 7 Exercises: pp. 195-200 <i>or</i> pp. 201-206
11/20-22	Substance Abuse	Chapter 8	
11/24	Holiday — No Class		
11/27-12/1	Family & Divorce	Chapter 11	Chapter 8 Exercises: pp. 211-219
12/4-8	Health & Health Care Problems	Chapter 12	Chapter 9 Exercises: pp. 225-234 <i>or</i> pp. 235-243)
12/11-13	Environmental Problems	Chapter 15	Chapter 11 Exercises: pp. 251-258
12/18	Final Exam (11:00 AM-1:00 PM)		

James A. Crone
Social Problems: Their Causes, Consequences, and Solutions: Sociology 219

Hanover College
Winter 2001

OBJECTIVES FOR THE COURSE

1. To continue to develop your sociological perspective from your introductory sociology course, that is, to apply and interrelate sociological concepts, ideas, and theories to social phenomena—in this case, to social problems in this society and throughout the world.
2. To analyze typical stages of a social problem.
3. To apply sociological theory to social problems.
4. To study statistics on specific social problems, discover the causes, uncover the unintended consequences, and discuss how we might solve these social problems.
5. To address, in detail, how you would solve a particular social problem, which is your final exam question.
6. To connect our studying of social problems and how we might solve or ameliorate them with how we can make a more just and humane world.
7. To become much more conscious of the connection between causes of a social problem and the possible solution.
8. To become more conscious of the larger social structure and how it contributes to the creation of social problems and that solving or ameliorating a social problem may, at times, require change in our social structure.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

The above objectives will be achieved through a program of:

- (1) Readings,
- (2) Class lectures, discussions, and exercises,
- (3) Seminar Papers and Discussions,
- (4) Speakers,
- (5) Videotapes, and
- (6) Exams (objective and essay).

(1) Readings:

Crone, James A. 1999. *Solving Our Social Problems: A Sociological Approach*.

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Craig S. Leedham. 1998. *Solutions to Social Problems: Lessons from Other Societies*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Maxine Baca Zinn. 2000. *Social Problems*. Eighth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

(2) Class lectures, discussions, and exercises:

In terms of class lectures, I will discuss the chapter readings and add research findings not reported in the chapter readings and attempt to make the connections between causes and consequences and what might be some possible solutions that logically follow from the causes.

In terms of class discussions, I will continually ask you to give your own contribution to causes, consequences, or solutions. I will also ask you to interpret the statistical data and say what these data mean. I will ask you to discuss sociological questions, that is, questions dealing with what is occurring. I will also, at times, ask you nonsociological questions dealing with what you think should occur. These “should” questions are outside the realm of sociology but I think are of utmost importance in dealing with the solution part of social problems. How *should* we decrease the poverty? How *should* we create more opportunity for people who are given inadequate educations? How *should* we provide decent-paying jobs for all Americans who want them? How *should* we promote more harmonious racial and ethnic relations? These are crucial questions for all of us to face and attempt to arrive at some kind of realistic and humane answer. Our knowledge of the statistics of a social problem and also the social problem’s causes and consequences will give us a good foundation upon which to address the solution part of social problems.

As to class exercises, I will, from time to time, give you a short survey to take in class or some other exercise and then as a class, we will interpret the findings, e.g., our views on pornography, homosexuality, or legalized prostitution. Through these anonymous surveys, we will see how our entire class feels on a certain social problem

and then discuss the implications of these findings on what we think solutions might be or compare our class findings to national surveys of the entire American population.

(3) Seminar Papers and Discussions:

On Fridays, I want to change the pace and have seminar discussions where you develop the class discussion. On these days, you need to do two things to prepare for the class. First, write an open-ended question over the assigned readings. Second, write a one to two page answer to your seminar question. On seminar day, ask your question to see how your fellow students would answer your question. Most of the time, I want you to ask sociological questions versus “should” questions. But if you have a good should question that you want to bring to the class, you can do that, too.

My purpose in having this weekly seminar is to get you to talk and be a part of the discussion and to get you to think and write more sociologically about social problems. I find that as students put their thoughts down on paper, they think more systematically.

In writing your answer, you need to write in an organized fashion, using logic and statistics.

After we discuss your question for a while, I may, at times, ask you to give your answer to the class. You may have points in your essay that the class did not consider. Hence, your answer will add more to our understanding.

(4) Speakers:

We will have speakers give their insight on a particular social problem and have a chance to ask them questions. Hearing from a person who is directly experiencing a social problem or who is, in some way, closely affiliated with a social problem will be another way to achieve a greater understanding of a particular social problem.

(5) Videotapes:

We will view videotapes on various social problems and analyze them from a sociological perspective. I will “set the stage” before showing the tape by telling you some things to look out for sociologically so that you can “see the sociology” in the tape.

(6) Exams (objective and essay):

You will take four exams, three objective and one essay.

The three objective exams will be over the material we covered in one of the three parts of the term. I will ask you questions that will require you to recall, analyze-interpret, and apply. For example, recall: “What did so-and-so find out about poverty?” Analyze-interpret: “Analyze the data in this table and interpret what these data are saying.” Apply: “Apply the ideas of conflict theory to the following social problem.” You will have three objective exams, each lasting 50-55 minutes.

The essay exam will be the last two hours of the three-hour final exam slot and will consist of the following question that you can prepare for all term.

Final Exam Question (two hours to write):

Take a particular social problem of your choosing. Create an essay saying how you would solve that social problem. Your answer must be realistic and humane. The more detailed and organized you are in your solution, the better your essay.

Do five things in your essay exam:

- (1) start your essay with a thesis statement, that is, a one-sentence answer to the essay question,
- (2) what are the major causes of the social problem you are considering,
- (3) how would you go about solving the social problem,
- (4) what do you predict will happen with your solution in the next 10-20 years, and
- (5) why?

Helpful hint: As the term progresses, go to your computer and keep adding ideas to the above five points. As the end of the term approaches, you will feel comfortable in knowing that you already have your essay exam well prepared and ready to write.

HOW YOU WILL EARN YOUR GRADE

	Points	Cum
<u>Exams</u> : The three objective exams and essay exam are each worth 15 points.	4 @ 15 = 60	60
<u>Seminar Papers</u> : The seminar papers are worth 25 points altogether.	25	85
<u>Class Participation</u> : Your class participation is very important in this class because we can arrive at new and innovative ideas regarding solving social problems. Your asking and answering questions will be the primary ways I will evaluate your class participation.	10	95
<u>Attendance</u> : You will receive 5 points for the term if you miss 3 or fewer classes. If you need to miss class, use your misses wisely, e.g., on obligations you already know about or when you are sick. Beginning with the fourth miss, you will lose 1 point for every class missed. If you happen to get to class after I take the roll, see me after class and say “I was here today” and I will count you present.	5	100
Total Points		100

You need to accumulate the following points to earn the following grades:

Points = Grade

- 92-100 = A
- 90-91 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 83-86 = B
- 80-82 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 73-76 = C
- 70-72 = C-
- 67-69 = D+
- 63-66 = D
- 60-62 = D-
- 59/less = F

SCHEDULE

Class/Day/Date

First Third of Course

Week One:

- 1 M 8 Introduce course; discuss syllabus; pick two seminar groups.
- 2 T 9 Ch. 1: The Sociological Approach to Social Problems.
- 3 W 10 Ch. 1: The Sociological Approach to Social Problems and Eitzen and Leedham, article 1.
- 4 F 12 Seminar papers and discussion over Crone, Chs. 1 & 2. Group 1.

Week Two:

- 5 M 15 Ch. 2: Wealth and Power: The Bias of the System.
- 6 T 16 Ch. 2: Wealth and Power: The Bias of the System.
- 7 W 17 Ch. 3: World Population and Global Inequality: The Third World and the United States.
- 8 F 19 Seminar papers and discussion over Eitzen and Leedham, Articles 7, 8, and 9. Group 2.

Week Three:

- 9 M 22 Continue on Ch. 3: World Population and Global Inequality.
- 10 T 23 Continue Ch. 3: World Population and Global Inequality: The Third World and the United States.
- 11 W 24 Video: Problems of Overpopulation and Environmental Problems.
- 12 F 26 Seminar papers and discussion over Crone, Chs. 3 and 4. Group 1.

Week Four:

- 13 M 29 Ch. 4: Threats to the Environment.
- 14 T 30 Ch. 4: Threats to the Environment.
- 15 W 31 Seminar papers and discussion over Eitzen and Leedham, Articles 28 and 29. Group 2.
- 16 F 02 **Exam One:** Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Middle Third of the Course

Week Five

- 17 M 05 Return **Exam One** and go over.
- 18 T 06 Ch. 6: Urban Problems in the United States.
- 19 W 07 Ch. 6: Urban Problems in the United States.
- 20 F 9 Seminar papers and discussion over Eitzen and Leedham articles 24, 25, 26, and 27. Group 1.

Week Six:

- 21 M 12 Ch. 8: Racial and Ethnic Inequality.
- 22 T 13 Ch. 8: Racial and Ethnic Inequality.
- 23 W 14 Tape: Eyes on the Prize.
- 24 F 16 Seminar papers and discussion over Crone, Ch. 8. Group 2.

Week Seven:

- 25 M 19 Finish up Ch. 8: Racial and Ethnic Inequality and begin Ch. 7: Poverty.
- 26 T 20 Ch. 7: Poverty.
- 27 W 21 Ch. 7: Poverty.
- 28 F 23 Seminar papers and discussion over Crone, Ch. 9. Group 1.

Winter Break begins at the close of the class day today. Have a good one!!!

Week Eight:

- 29 M 05 Seminar papers and discussion over Eitzen and Leedham, articles 4, 5, and 6. Group 2.
- 30 T 06 Ch. 16: Crime and Justice.
- 31 W 07 Ch. 16: Crime and Justice.
- 32 F 09 Seminar papers and discussion over Eitzen and Leedham, articles 30, 31, and 32 Group 1.

Week Nine:

- 33 M 12 Ch. 17: Drugs.
- 34 T 13 Ch. 17: Drugs.
- 35 W 14 Seminar papers and discussion over Eitzen and Leedham, articles 33 and 34. Group 2.
- 36 F 16 **Exam Two:** Chs. 6, 7, 8, 16, and 17.

Last Third of Course

Week Ten:

- 37 M 19 Return **Exam Two** and go over.
- 38 T 20 Ch. 9: Gender Inequality.
- 39 W 21 Ch. 9: Gender Inequality.
- 40 F 23 Seminar papers and discussion over Crone, Ch. 10. Group 1.

Week Eleven:

- 41 M 26 Ch. 12: Families.
- 42 T 27 Ch. 12: Families.
- 43 W 28 Ch. 13: Education.
- 44 F 30 Seminar papers and discussion over Eitzen and Leedham, articles 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. Group 2.

Week Twelve:

- 45 M 02 Ch. 10: Sexual Orientation: Prostitution and Eitzen and Leedham, articles 35 and 36.
- 46 T 03 Ch. 10: Sexual Orientation: Prostitution & Pornography.
- 47 W 04 Ch. 10: Sexual Orientation: Homosexuality.
- 48 F 06 Seminar papers and discussion over Crone, chs. 5 and 6. Group 1.

Week Thirteen:

- 49 M 09 Speakers on male and female homosexuality.
- 50 T 10 Ch. 10: Sexual Orientation: Homosexuality.
- 51 W 11 Finish discussion of homosexuality.

52 F 13 Evaluation of professor. Seminar papers and discussion over Crone, chs. 7 and 11 and Eitzen Text: Ch. 18 Solving our Social Problems. Group 2.

April 16-20: Final Exam Week.

First hour: **Exam Three:** Chs. 9, 10, 12, and 13.

Last two hours: **Exam Four:** Essay on how you would solve a social problem.

Take a particular social problem of your choosing. Create an essay saying how you would solve that social problem. Your answer must be realistic and humane. The more detailed and organized you are in your solution, the better your essay.

Do five things in your essay exam:

- (1) start your essay with a thesis statement, that is, a one-sentence answer to the essay question,
- (2) what are the major causes of the social problem you are considering,
- (3) how would you go about solving the social problem,
- (4) what do you predict will happen with your solution in the next 10-20 years, and
- (5) why?

Final Note:

Use sociology in your life:

- (1) to understand the causes and consequences of social problems,
- (2) to solve or ameliorate these problems, and
- (3) to create a more just and humane world.

Brenda Forster
Social Problems: Sociology 301

Elmhurst College
Fall 1999

DESCRIPTION

Students will examine the major theoretical and conceptual explanations for social problems. Specific social problems at the individual, group, and societal levels will be analyzed using these perspectives. The mechanisms and effects of social control measures will be discussed.

The *People, Power, Politics* General Education category objectives will be met. Students will gain knowledge of the social, political, historical, and economic theories and institutions that determine the environments in which citizens function within a society. Students will study how groups coexist within social and political contexts and will examine how power relationships affect subsets of the population.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify and describe various theoretical perspectives on social problems and deviant behavior.
2. Document, analyze, and debate ongoing social problem processes and issues using a sociological framework.
3. Investigate and analyze one current social problem in-depth, or investigate and analyze one agency involved in the handling of a social problem.
4. Meet the *People, Power, Politics* General Education category objectives:
 - a. examine actions from the perspective of social responsibility over the long term;
 - b. demonstrate increased respect for others, commitment to social justice, personal integrity, and service; and
 - c. demonstrate heightened sensitivity to political and cultural issues, including consideration of race, ethnicity, gender, and class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

James W. Coleman and Donald R Cressey. Social Problems. Seventh Edition. New York: HarperCollins, 1999.
Harold A. Widdison (ed.). Social Problems 99/00. Twenty-seventh Edition. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1999.

RESERVE TEXTS

Gloria Bird and Michael J. Sporkowski. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Family and Personal Relations. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1992. **(B&S 1st)**
Kurt Finsterbusch and George McKenna. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Social Issues. Seventh Edition. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1992. **(F&M 7th)**
Kurt Finsterbusch and George McKenna. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Social Issues. Ninth Edition. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1996. **(F&M 9th)**
Kurt Finsterbusch and George McKenna. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Social Issues. Tenth Edition. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1999. **(F&M 10th)**
Richard C. Monk. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Social Issues in Race and Ethnicity. Second Edition. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1996. **(M 2nd)**
Richard C. Monk. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Crime and Criminology. Fifth Edition. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1998. **(M 5th)**
Ann Vail. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Family and Personal Relationships. Fourth Edition. Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1999. **(V 4th)**

EVALUATION COMPONENTS AND CRITERIA

The student will be evaluated by the following:

1. Attendance and participation (required, bonus or penalty points)
2. A social problems article analysis (25%)
3. One written debate with an oral presentation (25%)
4. An applied final project (50%)

The following criteria will be used in converting point scores to letter grades:

500-600 - A	Excellent work. Demonstrates superior command of the theories and principles from the course.
400-499 - B	Good work. Demonstrates solid command of the theories and principles from the course.
300-399 - C	Fair work. Demonstrates acceptable command of the theories and principles from the course.
250-299 - D	Marginal work. Demonstrates little command of the theories and principles from the course.
0-249 - F	Unacceptable work. Demonstrates lack of command of the subject matter.

Written presentations will be evaluated by the *Written Work Evaluation Criteria* (p. 9). Oral presentations will be evaluated by the *Oral Presentation Evaluation Sheet* (p. 10). All presentations should conform to appropriate scholarly format and should reflect *Academic Honesty* (p. 11 and the 1998-99 E-Book, pages 66-72). **All written work should be typed or computer-printed, double-spaced, spellchecked, and proofread.** You should retain a copy of any work submitted. Students gaining fewer than 300 points on the projects except oral presentations and the final may, with permission from the instructor, be granted one additional opportunity to redo the project. The instructor reserves the right to reject any apparently plagiarized work. Make-up or late work must receive prior permission from the instructor. (See *Clarification of Grading Guidelines*, pp. 40-41, for further specifications.)

EVALUATION DESCRIPTIONS

A variety of evaluation measures will be gathered in order to assess as fully as possible your work in the course. Besides gaining mastery of specific sociological content, you are expected to demonstrate general education competencies, across the curriculum skills, and work-world related behaviors, such as punctuality, effort, class involvement, and willingness to work with others in cooperative learning assignments. These components are assessed for the final course grade as follows:

1. Course Involvement

- A. *Attendance*: You are expected to attend class. Students missing more than 3 classes will have their final grade lowered 1 grade (-100 points). Excessive absences (6 classes missed) will lead to a further grade reduction (-200 points). Students missing 8 or more classes will fail the course (-400 points). Tardiness will also be noted and will count as ¼ or more of a class missed. Specifically assigned make-up work can add up to 100 points for 4 or more misses. Students must contact the instructor after each miss, beginning with the 4th miss, to get specific make-up assignments. (See *Clarification of Grading Guidelines*, pp. 40-41).
- B. *Class Participation*: You are expected to come to class prepared to contribute to class discussions. The ratio of outside study to class time is 3 to 1; that is, for every class meeting, you should spend 4 hours of study time, or about 9 hours a week. Students coming to class without the assigned reading write-up(s) more than 3 times will lose 15 points from the final course score for each subsequent day they are unprepared. Students coming prepared will receive a bonus of 15 points to their final course score. Late write-ups for a missed class will not receive full credit. Counts as required, bonus or penalty points.

You should come to class prepared with written answers to the following questions, based on assigned Coleman and Cressey and *Social Problems 99/00* material. Keep a copy for your use in class.

Reading Discussion Questions

1. What are the main ideas/problems/trends/effects of the problem? (Use #1, page 5, components; can be done as a list; add relevant Coleman and Cressey information.)
2. What does this material tell you about the causes and solutions of the problem(s) at the micro, mid, and macro levels? Identify opposing conservative, liberal, and radical views on this. Indicate what research has been done that supports or counters these views. (Can be done as outline/list; include relevant Coleman and Cressey information.)
3. What can you comment on this information? How is this problem similar to and different from other social problems?

2. Social Problems Article Analysis

During the first several weeks of the course, you should collect newspaper or news magazine accounts of social problems. One problem will be selected for an 8-10 page analysis. The selected article should be explicitly analyzed using the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5). Attach a copy of your article. See **examples on Reserve**. The analysis counts 25% of the final grade.

3. Written Debate With Oral Presentation

You will select one social problem issue for Unit V to present in a written debate format on the dates assigned. The written debate will have a summary of arguments page and a short prose description (see pp. 23-24 and **example on Reserve**). Multiple drafts for improvement will be done. In addition, you will present a 5-minute oral presentation in class on the assigned date. The debate counts 25% toward the final grade.

4. Applied Final Project

You will select one topic, issue, or problem to investigate utilizing the course materials, relevant external research, and the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5). You are encouraged to gather data first-hand, as well as to utilize library sources. Some possible approaches are the following:

- A. **Library Research:** Investigate one major world problem (population, hunger, development, energy, environment, terrorism, war/peace). See *Applied Final Topic Resources* (p. 38) for a list of basic resources to get you started. Use the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5) to organize your information. The paper should identify the Social Problem (1, 2a,b), then for each ideology analyze Causes (2c,d,e,f,g,h,i) and Solutions (2c,d,k,l,m). Try to link solutions to causes. The discussion should integrate (“hide”) the **Analytic Framework** components. About half of the paper should focus on solutions. See **Reserve examples**.
- B. **Service-Learning:** Participate in a relevant service-learning experience coordinated by Dr. Lynda Slimmer, Coordinator of Service-Learning. Analyze the underlying social problem for which the service is addressed. Be sure to investigate alternative and controversial views about the problem and its solution. Use the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5) to organize your information. The paper should identify the Social Problem (1, 2a,b), Causes (2c,d,e,f,g,h,i), and Solutions (2c,d,j,k,l,m). Be sure to identify alternative views and solutions to the ones used by the agency you select. (Try to link solutions to causes.) The discussion should integrate the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5) components. About half of the paper should focus on solutions. Utilize your own service-learning experience as a major source of information. See **Reserve examples**.
- C. **Agency Interview:** Interview at least two different agencies which are handling the same social problem (see *Social Problems Interview Guide Questions*, p. 39). You should determine their history and organization, client profiles, services provided, staff characteristics, successes, current concerns, and controversies. Analyze the information using the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5) with a focus on solutions. Compare and contrast the agencies.
- D. **Survey Research:** Design or replicate and execute a survey to test attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of people toward a social problem. Incorporate the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5).

Students choosing option B, C, or D must have a personal conference with the instructor for approval of the project before undertaking it. Approval should be gained no later than 10/14. Each student will share an informal, oral summary of his/her final project with the class 12/9. The final write-up is due not later than the scheduled final exam time for the class. The write-up should not exceed 10 pages excluding tables, appendices, and bibliography. Incompletes must be negotiated in writing before the final due date. The project counts 50% of the final grade.

Pass/No Pass Option: Students taking the course P/NP may delete the Applied Final Project if their other work is at a passing level (275 points or more).

Cheating: See policy on *Academic Honesty* (pp. 11 and 41) and 1998-99 E-Book pp. 66-72.

Accommodations for Disabilities: The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this course, please contact the Director of Advising at 103 Goebel Hall (630-617-3450).

ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK*

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

- 1) What is the problem? (brief statement: type [Syllabus, p. 12], specific major problem, sub-problems; identify level, scope, and trend)
- 2) Analyze the problem.

- a) What is the history or background, the facts?
- b) What are the effects or consequences of this problem (negative and positive)?
- c) What individuals, groups, organizations, social institutions are involved?
- d) What values, beliefs, norms, and issues by whom are involved?
- e) What stand and (political) ideology are taken by whom?

CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

- f) What sociological assumption(s) fit this problem?
- g) What social factors (causes) are involved by level? (Who says so? research done?)
- h) What sociological perspectives are involved (Syllabus pp. 13-15) by whom?
- I) What deviance paradigm fits (Syllabus, p. 15)? (Be sure to first identify the deviant person or group and whose point of view you are presenting.) [OPTIONAL]

SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

- j) What stage of protest is the problem in (Syllabus pp. 16-18)?
- k) What solution(s) are proposed by whom (individuals, groups, ideologies, perspectives)? Which causes are addressed? Which are not?
- l) What solution(s) have been tried already? What solutions work? Research support?
- m) What additional problems do the solutions raise?

- 3) Summarize and take a personal position

What conclusion(s) can you draw about the problem? What are your own reactions now that you've analyzed it? What do you think would be the best solution? Why? Be sure to back up your conclusions with relevant research and data to support your view. You should also separately address each of the three *People, Power, Politics* objectives (Syllabus p. 1, #4a,b,c) explicitly in your discussion.

*For use in class discussion of texts, article analysis, written debate and oral presentation, and applied final project. Use texts and other course materials to document and explain your ideas. Give citations to Syllabus, lecture, texts, films, and discussion materials to show your use of resources. Use a modified APA format for citations. For the applied final project, use appropriate quotes from your library resources, observation, interview, or research articles as well as appropriate course materials to illustrate your conclusions.

COURSE CALENDAR

C&C = Coleman & Cressey Social Problems
W = Widdison Social Problems 99/00

NOTE: Dates for class discussions may be changed to meet class needs but students should read the material by the date assigned. If you miss class, you are responsible for checking on the next class meeting and assignment, for getting the information missed, and for arranging make-up. See course Web site for further resources: <http://www.elmhurst.edu/library/soc301.html>.

TBA: To Be Assigned for out of class viewing for report to class. Films may or may not be shown in class depending on class needs.

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
Introduction to the Course	8/31	Fill out forms
I. What is a Social Problem?	9/2	C&C Ch. 1, pp. 1-5 W #1 Syllabus p. 12 Speaker: Dr. Lynda Slimmer, Coordinator of Service-Learning
II. Understanding Social Problems	9/7	C&C Ch. 1, pp. 17-23
III. Perspectives on Social Problems	9/9,14	C&C Ch 1, pp. 5-17 W #2 <i>Five Perspectives on Social Problems</i> (pp. 13-15, 9/10)
<i>Paradigm for Analyzing Deviants</i> (p. 15, 9/9) <i>Stages of Protest about a Social Problem</i> (pp. 16-18, 9/9) <i>Example for Analysis</i> (pp. 19-20, 9/14)		
IV. Personal Deviance as Social Problems [Micro Level]		
Sexual Behavior	9/16	C&C Ch. 11 W #21 Film: Sex for Sale* (47 min., oversized 16mm) GO TO LIBRARY #029
Personal Violence	9/21	W #32,33,35 Syllabus p. 21
Crime and Delinquency	9/23	C&C Ch. 13 W #30,31,34 Syllabus p. 22 Speaker: Ben Greer, PACE Institute Film: Juvenile Rehabilitation* (29 min., VC 482)
Drug Use	9/28	C&C Ch. 12 Syllabus pp. 23-26 Film: Drug Legalization Debate* (29 min., VC 502)

Debater: Dr. Brenda Forster

V. Inequalities as Social Problems [Mid Level]

The Poor	9/30	<p>C&C Ch 7 W #9,11,12 W #13,14,15 Syllabus p. 27 Film: The Migrants* (52 min., VC 242) <u>TBA</u> Film: Union Maids* (60 min., VC 1602) <u>TBA</u></p>
Racism	10/5,7	<p>Analysis Due 10/5 C&C Ch. 8 W #16,17,18 (10/7) Syllabus pp. 28-29 Film: True Colors (10/5, 20 min.) Speakers: Peer Educators (10/5) Film: Klan: Legacy of Hate* (10/7, 20 min., VC 490) <u>TBA</u></p>
<p>Film: Klanwatch* (10/7, 20 min., VC 440) <u>TBA</u> Film: Starting Small* (10/7, 30 min., VC 1590) <u>TBA</u> Film: Not in Our Town* (10/7, 20 min. VC 1601) <u>TBA</u></p>		
Ageism	10/12	<p>C&C Ch. 9</p>
Sexism	10/12	<p>C&C Ch. 10 W #19,20 Syllabus p. 30 Film: Still Killing Us Softly* (35 min., VC 1361)</p>
<p>Film: Men and Women: Talking Together* (30 min., VC 1568) <u>TBA</u> Film: Save the Males* (60 min., VC 1556) <u>TBA</u></p>		

VI. Institutional Social Problems [Macro Level]

Family	10/14	<p>GO TO LIBRARY 029 C&C Ch. 2 W #23,24,25 Syllabus p. 31 Film: Fatherless in America* (33 min., VC 1167)</p>
Film: Motherland* (VC 1360)	10/19	<p>Written Debate (first draft) due 10/19. See Syllabus pp. 36-37.</p>
DEBATE WORK	10/19	<p>C&C Ch. 3 W #26,27 Student Teams: As Assigned; films on school violence prevention</p>
Education	10/21	<p>Film: Unequal Education* (30 min., VC 1715)</p>
Health Care	10/26,28	<p>Written Debate (second draft) due 10/26 C&C Ch. 6 W #22,28,29 Film: Back Wards to Back Streets* (10/28, 58 min., VC 1923)</p>
Debate: Safe Sex (Syllabus p. 32, 10/26)	11/2,4	<p>Oral Debate Presentations; Written Debate due (11/4)</p>
ORAL DEBATES	11/2,4	<p>C&C Ch. 4 W #5,6,7,10 Film: Fighting Ministries* (60 min., VC 166)</p>
Economics/Business/Religion	11/9	<p>C&C Ch. 5 W #3,4 Film: Television and the Presidency* (90 min., VC 1122)</p>
Media/Government	11/9	<p>C&C Ch. 5 W #3,4 Film: Television and the Presidency* (90 min., VC 1122)</p>

VII. World Trends as Social Problems [Macro Level]

Globalization	11/11	
Urbanization	11/11	C&C Ch 14 W #8 Film: Fate of the Forest* (60 min., VC 724)
Population	11/16	C&C Ch. 15 W #37,38 Team Discussion Leading: Handout: Food First Film: The Silent Explosion* (15 min., VC 1387)
Environment	11/18,23	C&C Ch. 16 W #39,40 Syllabus pp. 33-34 Team Discussion Leading (11/18) Handout: Eggibusiness Film: Animal Rights* (11/18, 17 min., VC 351)

Team Discussion Leading (11/23)

Film: Love Canal* (11/23, 40 min., SCS 20)

Film: Environmental Vision* (11/23, 20 min., VC 767) **TBA**

[**THANKSGIVING BREAK**, 11/25-11/28]

International Relationships	11/30,12/2	C&C Ch. 17 W #41,42 Syllabus p. 35 Handout: Africa Handout: Foreign Policy Film: The Africans: Garden of Eden in Decay* (11/30, 60 min., VC 247)
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Team Discussion Leading (12/2)

Film: Workers in the World* (12/2, 28 min., VC 441) **TBA**

Film: Through the Eyes of the Poor* (12/2, 20 min., VC 369) **TBA**

War	12/7	C&C Ch. 18 W #36
PROJECT PRESENTATION	12/9	Last Class. Informal Sharing. Course Evaluation

FINAL PROJECT DUE 12/14 **All work due by Thursday, December 14,**

10:00 a.m. at SC #019

* **We own this film.** If you miss the class, you can arrange to see it with the Media Center (CSTC #109, 630-617-3154).

NOTE: Failure to attend the final class meeting will result in 50 points being taken from the student's final score.
Give me a self-addressed, stamped envelope or your campus mail box number for project return.

Shelly K. Habel
Social Problems: SOC110

Whitman College
Spring 2000

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce you to a variety of current social problems in the United States and it will help you develop critical and sociological thinking through the analysis of these issues. The course uses popular media as well as sociological materials to examine a range of issues, including but not limited to race, class, gender, crime and inequality. Many of these topics are closely intertwined, so you will find throughout the semester that we will return to issues already discussed, approaching them from a somewhat different angle. We will examine human behaviors and social conditions that violate the dominant norms and values in society or that represent potential threats to the general quality of life. Much of the material presented in this course will challenge your values and beliefs since adopting a sociological perspective entails looking at the world from a different vantage point than the one you typically use. Whether your ideas ultimately change or remain the same, this course should help you clarify why you believe what you believe, help you understand the implications and consequences of those beliefs and help you to compare your perceptions with empirical studies of the social world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this course is to give you the information and critical skills necessary to make intelligent choices about political and policy debates concerning social problems. This general objective is achieved when you have begun:

1. To understand how a social problem is constructed;
2. To understand different theoretical perspectives used to explain particular social problems;
3. To learn when and how to ask the questions which form the core of critical thinking;
4. To develop the ability to evaluate arguments – to answer the questions which form the core of critical thinking, including the ability to evaluate evidence and the willingness to search for missing information;
5. To acquire a desire to apply critical thinking skills in listening, reading and writing in a variety of contexts;
6. To gain an appreciation of diverse perspectives on social issues and develop a more critical view on issues;
7. To develop the ability to write and to apply critical thinking skills to your own writing in creating a persuasive extended argument for your own position on a social issue;
8. And, to gain an increased understanding of and appreciation for sociological concepts, theories and methods in understanding social life.

TEXTS*

- ☞ Amanda Konradi & Martha Schmidt, 1998, *Reading Between the Lines: Toward an Understanding of Current Social Problems*, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company (referred to as RBL in the reading schedule; Also available on reserve at the Penrose Memorial Library).
- ☞ Bernard Lefkowitz, 1997, *Our Guys*, New York, NY: Vintage Books (Also available on reserve at the Penrose Memorial Library).
- ☞ Sanyika Shakur, 1993, *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*, New York, NY: Penguin Books (Also available on reserve at the Penrose Memorial Library).
- ☞ Ron Suskind, 1998, *A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League*, New York, NY: Broadway Books (Also available on reserve at the Penrose Memorial Library).
- ☞ The Sociology Writing Group, 1998, 4th edition, *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press (Also available on reserve at the Penrose Memorial Library).

*All texts are required and can be purchased at the Whitman College Bookstore. Each text is also available on reserve at Penrose Memorial Library.

WEB RESOURCES

- ☞ Andrew Harnack & Eugene Klappinger, 1998, *Online! A Reference Guide to Using Internet Resources*, <http://www.smpcollege.com/online-4styles-help/index/html>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

There are a total of 500 points possible in this course. There are a number of written assignments; group assignments, class attendance, preparation and participation are also elements.

REQUIREMENT	RATIO	POINTS
Quizzes (5)	20%	100
Analytical Papers (3)	60%	300
Participation/Prep	20%	100
TOTAL	100%	500

BASIS FOR THE FINAL GRADE

There are no letter grades assigned to individual assignments. Grades will be based on a percentage of the total points achieved (500 maximum) and will be computed according to the following format:

96.67-100.0%	A+
93.34-96.66	A
90.00-93.33	A-
86.67-89.99	B+
83.34-86.66	B
80.00-83.33	B-
76.67-79.99	C+
73.34-76.66	C
70.00-73.33	C-
66.67-69.99	D+
66.34-66.66	D
60.00-66.33	D-
0.00-59.99	F

Each assignment's rationale and grading criteria will be posted on the assignment handout itself and will be evaluated thereafter. You are strongly advised to examine these criteria as you complete your work. What follows is a general guideline of what constitutes an "A," "B," or "C" grade for this class. Please note that completion of an assignment or all of its required tasks in no way equate the work with an "A," a grade that is solely reserved for excellence.

An "A" or "A-" will be given to assignments that are clearly superior in form as well as content. In terms of form, such assignments will:

1. Contain virtually no typographical errors;
2. Exhibit elegant as well as clear prose;
3. Include virtually no mistakes of grammar or punctuation (e.g., run-on and/or incomplete sentences, misused semi-colons and/or apostrophes, misplaced commas, etc.);
4. Furnish adequate citations for all quotations;
5. Be well organized, with a coherent introduction as well as a conclusion that does more than merely summarize what has already been said;
6. And so forth and so on.

In terms of content, such assignments will:

1. Indicate a thorough and careful reading of the assigned texts;
2. Prove unusually sophisticated in their grasp of the subtleties of the assigned texts;
3. Demonstrate an ability to go beyond what we have covered in class;
4. Exhibit a capacity to draw connections between nonobvious points;
5. And so forth and so on.

I am always delighted to award some form of an "A" to an assignment. However, I believe that if we are going to employ the practice of grading them, then this designation should mean something; hence I award it only when it is clearly merited. Because form is at least as important as content in the construction of an assignment, no matter how

original and sophisticated, I will not give any sort of “A” to either a sloppy assignment or an assignment whose prose fails to measure up to the quality of the ideas.

Some form of “B” will given to assignments that:

1. Indicate a good grasp of the text in question, a competent ability to develop a coherent argument and a capacity to write decent prose. Such assignments are average in the sense that they represent what I think most Whitman students are capable of producing. As such, these assignments do not stand out from the crowd in the way “A” assignments do.
2. Some form of “B” will also be given to assignments that are either unusually strong in content, but somewhat weaker in form, or vice versa. Obviously, a “B+” will go to assignments that are better than the majority and that demonstrate at least the potential to be truly excellent.
3. A “B-“ will go to assignments, which, although coherently argued and decently composed, do not go much beyond a solid understanding of the text under consideration. Grades in the “B+” to “B-“ range should be read as expressions of my sense that you are doing an acceptable job of assimilating the assigned material.

Some form of “C” will go to assignments that I find seriously flawed for one reason or another. I will give you some form of a “C”:

1. If the quality of your writing is impeding your ability to express your thoughts clearly;
2. If when I complete your assignment, I still cannot identify your central argument;
3. If your assignment fails to go beyond a simple summary of the assigned reading;
4. If your assignment fails to provide the evidence and argumentation necessary to articulate and defend your basic claims;
5. And/or if your assignment is poorly organized, i.e., if it appears to jump from topic to topic without rhyme or reason.

If at any time you have questions about grades, please come and see me at your earliest convenience. If you need to make an appointment with me to discuss specific questions about graded assignments, I ask that before meeting with me, you make a written outline of the concerns you wish to raise, returning to the original assignment requirements and your work to review for any discrepancies. You are required to bring this agenda to the meeting. In addition, you must wait a minimum of 24 hours after an assignment is returned before the meeting can take place. Please note that you are responsible for saving all of your graded materials until after the semester ends. I also advise you to keep a copy of your assignments until your graded assignment is returned.

READINGS

Although the reading is extensive for some weeks, I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the material without exception. This not only requires that you read the material, but that you also interact with the reading. Failure to do so will be reflected in your participation grade. Please note that each week’s readings are listed for the entire week, but I will notify you on each Thursday of the coming week’s daily reading schedule. Please see me if you require more advance notice. In preparing the readings from *RBL*, be sure to consider “Questions for Discussion” that follow many of the readings, as these may form the basis of class discussion on any given day during the week that the readings are assigned.

I would like to keep the classroom discussion oriented. This is only possible if you are willing to stay current with the reading schedule and if you abide by the conventions of civilized discourse. This does not mean “political correctness” in speech, but it does mean that all points of view must be expressed politely and with due respect for differing opinions of others. *Finally, your work should reflect sociology and not simply your own opinions. In other words, did you use your “sociological imagination” and base your conclusions and/or contributions on research, not simply anecdotal evidence? This principle applies to all contributions in this class, written and oral alike!*

As a test, this class has the opportunity to access the reserve readings through an on-line pilot program. What this means is that you do not have to go to the library to check out reserve readings. To be able to do this, you will need to download a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader so that you can read the file in its PDF format. You can download a copy of it from: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>. Most of the computers in the labs on campus already have this software available. However, you will need to download a copy of it on your own

machine if you choose to access these readings via your personal computer. Once you have done this, you can access the reserve readings. Procedures on how to do this will be discussed in class.

QUIZZES (100 points)

Five quizzes, given randomly throughout the course of the semester, will be used to gauge your knowledge of the course's subject matter. These quizzes are not listed in the syllabus, but you will be provided one class period's notice of when a quiz will take place. The quizzes will take on a variety of formats and may be made up of several short essay questions, a number of multiple-choice questions, one longer essay, a question asking you to respond to a statement, or it may involve a small research component, or a combination of these options. You will not know ahead of time what format the quiz will be in before taking it. If you are absent the day I give the quiz and you do not have an excused absence (see following section on Attendance, Preparation and Participation), you will be given a different quiz than that given in class. It is in my discretion when to administer the quiz and whether it will be on the same topic as the one that was missed.

ANALYTICAL PAPERS (300 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to apply the sociological perspective to the materials presented in class and to your own experience. Learning objectives for this assignment include: 1) gaining a deeper understanding of how social structure affects your own life; 2) increasing your familiarity with course concepts by having you apply them to concrete social situations; 3) gaining additional insight into specific aspects of American society; and 4) developing skills related to critical thinking and analytical thinking.

You will carry out this exercise with the help of the three novels we read this semester (*A Hope in the Unseen*, *Our Guys* or *Monster*). Each assignment is specific to the book, so be sure to address the issues as they are stated in that particular handout. These assignments will be made available two weeks before the paper is due. ***These assignments must be typed and double-spaced and must adhere to all other criteria stipulated in the handouts.*** Other formatting and style specifics will be provided to you, but you are expected to abide by the style requirements stipulated by an accredited format, e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. I am not particular about which style you choose to apply, but ask that you apply it consistently throughout your work. To achieve consistency, you are expected to either refer to the style guide used in Core, or see Part I, Chapters 4 and 5 in *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*. You can also gain insight into the sociological perspective by consulting Part I, Chapter 1 of this book.

A NOTE ABOUT WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the designated day. If you show up late on the day an assignment is due, I will deduct a full letter grade from your final grade for that particular assignment. **All assignments, unless otherwise noted, must be typed! No exceptions! Handwritten assignments will not be accepted,** with the exception of the occasional in-class collaborative group assignment. Observe the page guidelines, as I will not read beyond the number indicated in the assignment. Unless you're doing something self-consciously artsy/experimental, essays must be double-spaced and printed/typed in a standard 12 point font. Your assignments should also have page numbers. Absolutely no big margins – no more and no less than one inch. **Yes, spelling and grammar count. I reserve the right to deduct points, as much as 20% for poor grammar and proofreading.** Cover pages are optional, but no folders or binders, please. Staple assignments in the upper left-hand corner. For more specifics on each task, please consult the individual handouts for each assignment, as well as *A Guide for Writing Sociology Papers*.

When carrying out your research, it is of utmost importance that you understand how to cite and reference your sources properly. You can find useful information on how to cite and paraphrase in your book *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*. Failure to cite properly often times results in plagiarism, which falls under the Whitman College Academic Honesty Policy (refer to the Whitman College Student Handbook, page 25). Incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism will be handled in accordance with established College disciplinary procedures. It is therefore in your best interest to refer to an appropriate style guide, like the one used in Core, or ask questions when you are uncertain about your use of references. This applies to all types of sources!

ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION (100 points)

Generally speaking, the topics addressed in this course are examined through active learning, so it is important that each of you come to class prepared for the unexpected. That is, this class is not lecture oriented. There will be some days when I spend the entire class period lecturing, but more often, there will be days when my lecture will involve

a dialog with the class, or you will be asked to participate in a group activity. Either way, you must come to class ready, willing and able to participate at a fairly sophisticated level. There is no room for the passive learner! As we examine the issues of race, class, gender, crime and inequality, you will constantly be asked to engage with the materials at hand. This demands that you stay current with the class materials and that you build upon your cumulative knowledge base as the semester progresses. Many of the assignments are designed to reinforce concepts, theories, ideas and skills learned from previous work. In short, I am asking you to demonstrate the understanding and application of knowledge accumulated over the course of the semester, from beginning to end.

This portion of your grade involves completing all the reading assignments; attending all classes; evidence of thorough preparation like bringing completed, thoughtful, timely assignments to class; on task behaviors; active participation in individual tasks, group activities and discussion; taking notes during video presentations; taking notes and posing questions to guest speakers; demonstrating effective communication skills like listening and speaking in a thoughtful manner (in class and in group activities) and asking and answering relevant critical questions (in class and in group activities). Note that to achieve excellence in this area, attendance in class and doing all assigned readings is essential, but does not in any way guarantee or entitle you to an “A.” An “A” grade is reserved for work and/or contributions that are deemed to be truly outstanding in some way. As a result, mere completion of tasks is insufficient grounds to award an outstanding grade. Also note that I reserve the right to lower your grade for unexcused absences. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining any assignments (including quiz announcements), handouts, class notes, etc., and for finding out what you missed, including the completion of in-class assignments.

As a future professional, it is important that you develop sound work habits, like time management and ways to fulfill your obligations. **All assignments are due on the dates noted in the syllabus or on other class materials. Do not ask for extensions because of course work in other classes or unexcused absences. Late work, no matter how late, will not be accepted and you will receive a “0” for the assignment.** I will, however, negotiate due dates for assignments in the case of excused absences. Refer to the *Whitman Student Handbook* guidelines about what constitutes excused and unexcused absences. The only other exceptions to this rule are the attached “Argh!” cards – use them wisely! **Note that these cards cannot be used in conjunction with an excused absence. You are also not permitted to use any of these cards on the final assignment, due in the Maxey Division office at 9am, Thursday, May 11, 2000.** You are also not allowed to share, trade or swap cards – three to a customer!

It is your responsibility to get your work in on time and to arrange extensions for assignment dates in these cases (excused absences and Argh! cards) before they are due or to contact me before class if you are sick. Requests should be cleared orally with me before they are valid. Assignments shall be handed in at the beginning of the class period - **do not put them under my door!** If you have used an “Argh! card” or negotiated an extension for an excused absence, you may turn the assignment in to the Maxey Division Office, but make sure that you have obtained a secretary’s signature on the assignment before placing it in my mailbox, as these are time sensitive materials. **There are no provisions for extra credit assignments in this course.** It is therefore in your best interest to do your best work on each assignment. Incompletes and deferrals will only be given in emergency situations.

Your participation in this class is expected and is an important aspect of the class. As a component of the learning process, it is your responsibility to read assignments, attend class, ask questions, think critically and discuss your ideas with the class. Not everyone is comfortable with the same level of participation and I am sensitive to these differences. However, there are a variety of ways in which you can actively participate should verbal communication not be your forte. For example, you can bring relevant articles, books, news stories, tapes or videos, etc., to share with the class. You can also participate through e-mail on the class list-serve by continuing or beginning a discussion. Of course, one’s presence is a necessary prerequisite for any participation, but attendance without participation will be assigned the minimum grade. **The bottom line is that it doesn’t matter how you participate, but that you do so regularly and consistently in some way, shape or form!**

I want you to succeed and I will be making all reasonable efforts to help you. However, you have to make a choice to succeed – to do the readings, to participate in discussion, to attend lectures and ask questions. The most likely way to fail this course is not to make a choice to succeed. **In short, I am asking you to be actively engaged in the learning process and to take responsibility for your own education.**

LECTURE & READING SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

INTRODUCTION

Tuesday, January 18

Course Expectations

Thursday, January 20

What is a Social Problem?

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ General Introduction, *RBL* (pages 1-10).

WEEK 2

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS, PART I

Monday, January 24

Foundations of the Sociological Approach

Tuesday, January 25

Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Thursday, January 26

The Interpretation of Data

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Chapter 1, The Sociology Writing Group, 1998, 4th edition, *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- ◆ Thinking About Social Problems, *RBL* (pages 11-14).
- ◆ Elizabeth Szockyj & Nancy Frank, "Corporate Victimization of Women" (*RBL reading #2*).
- ◆ Donileen R. Loseke, "Social Problems Work and the Production of Public Problems" (*RBL reading #3*).
- ◆ John W. Kingdon, "Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies" (*RBL reading #4*).

WEEK 3

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS, PART II

Monday, January 31

Social Problems & Values

Tuesday, February 1

Library Skills

Thursday, February 3

Social Class in the US

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Peter Francese, "Lies, Damned Lies . . ." in *American Demographics*, November 1994, v16 n11, p2.*
- ◆ Stephen Budiansky, "Consulting the Oracle," in *U.S. News & World Report*, December 4, 1995, v119 n22 p52(4).*
- ◆ Article of your choice*
- ◆ Power, the Economy, and Class, *RBL* (pages 59-61).
- ◆ Donald L. Barlett & James B. Steele, "Have-Mores and Have-Lesses," (*RBL reading #7*).

WEEK 4

STRATIFICATION, PART I

Monday, February 7

Poverty in the US

Guest Speaker: Susan Alves, WorkFirst Case Manager & Julie Kramer, WorkFirst Social Worker, Department of Social and Health Services

Tuesday, February 8

Stratification in the US

Thursday, February 10

Stratification in the US

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Poverty, *RBL* (pages 103-5).
- ◆ Ruth Sidel, "The Enemy Within," (*RBL reading #9*).
- ◆ Herbert Gans, "The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy," (*RBL reading #13*).
- ◆ A Citizen's Guide to the Federal Budget <http://cher.eda.doc.gov/BudgetFY97/guidetoc.html> – bring printouts of budget divisions for reference on Thursday!

WEEK 5

STRATIFICATION, PART II

Monday, February 14

The Intersection of Class & Race

Tuesday, February 15

The Social Construction of Race in the US

Thursday, February 17

Deep Viewing

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Andrew Hacker, “Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal” (*RBL reading #10*).
- ◆ William Julius Wilson, “Ghetto-Related Behavior and the Structure of Opportunity,” (*RBL reading #11*).
- ◆ Mary C. Waters, 1996, “Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?” Silvia Pedraza & Rubén Rumbaut, eds., *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in America*, pp. 444-54 (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Race, *RBL* (pages 146-8).
- ◆ American Anthropological Association’s Statement on “Race” <http://www.ameranthassn.org/racepp.html>
- ◆ Michael Omi & Howard Winant, 1998, “Racial Formations,” in Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., *Race, Class & Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study, 4th edition*, pp. 13-22, New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Ron Suskind, *A Hope in the Unseen*, Chapters 1-3.

WEEK 6

RACE

Monday, February 21

WASHINGTON’S HOLIDAY – NO CLASS!

Tuesday, February 22

Consequences of Race

Thursday, February 24

Institutional Racism

ASSIGNMENT: HOMEWORK #3 DUE

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Visit the web page for the Coalition Against Bigotry and Bias, *Affirmative Action, Myths & Facts* <http://bbcc.ctc.edu/~webb/cabb.htm>
- ◆ Visit the web page for the *Americans Against Discrimination & Preferences* <http://www.aadap.org/>
- ◆ Peggy McIntosh, 1998, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” in Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., *Race, Class & Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study, 4th edition*, pp. 165-9, New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Heidi Hartmann, “Who Has Benefited from Affirmative Action in Employment?” (*RBL reading #26*).
- ◆ James L. Robinson, “Racism or Attitude: The Ongoing Struggle for Black Liberation and Self-Esteem,” (*RBL reading #17*).
- ◆ Ron Suskind, *A Hope in the Unseen*, Chapters 4-7.

WEEK 7

EDUCATION, PART I

Monday, February 28

Schools and Societies

Tuesday, February 29

Schools in the US, Part I

Thursday, March 2

Schools in the US, Part II

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Education, *RBL* (pages 355-7).
- ◆ David C. Berliner & Bruce J. Biddle, “The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud and the Attack on America’s Public Schools,” (*RBL reading #34*).
- ◆ Jonathan Kozol, “Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools,” (*RBL reading #35*). Pierre Bourdieu, 2000, “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction” in Richard Arum & Irene R. Beattie, eds., *The Structure of Schooling*, pp. 56-69, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Ron Suskind, *A Hope in the Unseen*, Chapters 8-end

WEEK 8

EDUCATION, PART II

Monday, March 6

Education - "The Great Equalizer?"

Tuesday, March 7

Problems in Education - Race

Thursday, March 9

Problems in Education - Gender

ASSIGNMENT: A HOPE IN THE UNSEEN PAPER DUE

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ James Coleman, et. al., 2000, "The Coleman Report," in Richard Arum & Irene R. Beattie, eds., *The Structure of Schooling*, pp. 754-67, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Christopher Jencks, et. al., 2000, "Inequality in Educational Attainment," in Richard Arum & Irene R. Beattie, eds., *The Structure of Schooling*, pp. 168-81, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Joe R. Feagin, Hernán Vera & Nikitah Imani, "Confronting White Students: The Whiteness of University Space," (*RBL reading #37*).
- ◆ Myra Sadker & David Sadker, "Missing in Interaction," (*RBL reading #36*).

MARCH 11-26

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9

GENDER

Monday, March 27

Rape in American Culture

Guest Speaker: Barbara Panzl, Associate Dean of Students

Tuesday, March 28

Gender Socialization in the US

Thursday, March 30

Representation of Gender in Print Media

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Judith Lorber, 1998, "The Social Construction of Gender" in Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., *Race, Class & Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study, 4th edition*, pp. 33-45, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Judith Lorber, 1999, "Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender," (*RBL reading #19*).
- ◆ Cooper Thompson, 1998, "A New Vision of Masculinity" in Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., *Race, Class & Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study, 4th edition*, pp. 559-65, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Bernard Lefkowitz, *Our Guys*, Parts I & II.

WEEK 10

GENDER, SPORT & CULTURE

Monday, April 3

Role of Social Institutions in Socialization

Tuesday, April 4

Whitman College Undergraduate Conference

Thursday, April 6

Role of Sport in American Culture

Guest Speaker: Coach Travis Feezel

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Michael Messner, "Boyhood, Organized Sports and the Construction of Masculinities" pp. 113-127, in Susan J. Ferguson, ed., *Mapping the Social Landscape, 2nd edition*, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Press (*on reserve*).
 - ◆ Don Sabo, 1998, "Pigskin, Patriarchy and Pain" in Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., *Race, Class & Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study, 4th edition*, pp. 325-8, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press (*on reserve*).
 - ◆ Mindy Stompler, "Buddies or Slutties: The Collective Sexual Reputation of Fraternity Little Sisters" (*RBL Reading #22*).
 - ◆ Bernard Lefkowitz, *Our Guys*, Parts III & IV.
-

WEEK 11

SOCIAL DEVIANCE & CRIME

Monday, April 10

The Social Construction of Crime as a Social Problem

Tuesday, April 11

The Nature of Deviance & Crime

Thursday, April 13

Types of Crime

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Alexander Liazos, “The Poverty of the Sociology of Deviance: Nuts, Sluts and Preverts” (*RBL reading #1*).
- ◆ Dorothy Nelkin & M. Susan Lindee, 1997, “Elvis’s DNA,” in David M. Newman, *Sociology, Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life, 2nd Edition*, pp. 161-7, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press (*on reserve*).
- ◆ William J. Chambliss, 1997, “The Saints and the Roughnecks,” in David M. Newman, *Sociology, Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life, 2nd Edition*, pp. 135-44, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, “The American Drug Panic of the 1980s” (*RBL reading #38*).
- ◆ Steven R. Donziger, “The Real War on Crime: Report of the National Criminal Justice Committee” (*RBL reading #39*).
- ◆ Bernard Lefkowitz, *Our Guys*, Parts V & VI.

WEEK 12

GANGS

Monday, April 17

Criminological Theory

Tuesday, April 18

Delinquent Subcultures and Subcultures of Delinquency

Thursday, April 20

Urban Gang Culture

ASSIGNMENT: OUR GUYS PAPER DUE

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Kathryn Waterson, “Injustices in the Justice System: Does the Punishment Fit the Crime?” (*RBL reading #40*).
- ◆ Elijah Anderson, 1999, “The Code of the Streets” in Charles A. Gallagher, ed., *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race & Ethnicity*, pp. 347-57, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company (*on reserve*).
- ◆ Martin Sanchez Jankowski, “Gang Business: Making Ends Meet” (*RBL reading #41*).
- ◆ Sanyika Shakur, *Monster*, chapters 1-3.

WEEK 13

CRIME & THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Monday, April 24

Gangs in Walla Walla

Guest Speaker: J. Patrick Wells, Department of Court Services and Juvenile Justice Center, Walla Walla/Columbia Counties

Tuesday, April 25

The American Justice System

Thursday, April 27

The Role of Prisons in the US

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Sanyika Shakur, *Monster*, chapters 4-7.

WEEK 14

CRIME & THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, PART II

Monday, May 1

Injustices in the Justice System

Guest Speaker: Professor Timothy Kaufman-Osborn

Tuesday, May 2

Social Institutions, Crime & The Criminal Justice System

Thursday, May 4

Epilogue

WEEKLY READINGS

- ◆ Renée Heberle, 1999, “Disciplining Gender; Or, Are Women Getting Away with Murder?” in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 24(4):1103-11.
- ◆ Sanyika Shakur, *Monster*, chapters 8-11, Epilogue.

WEEK 15

Thursday, May 11

ASSIGNMENT: MONSTER PAPER DUE IN MAXEY DIVISION OFFICE, 9AM

This syllabus is subject to changes!!!!!!

Jenifer Hamil-Luker
Social Problems: Sociology 20

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Summer 1999

COURSE OVERVIEW

During this course, we will apply a sociological perspective to the study of social problems. We will learn that the causes of social problems are not rooted in personalities or genes. Instead, social problems emerge through conflict between and within social institutions. We will learn that social problems are not random occurrences, but are socially patterned.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. You will be equipped with a sociological imagination, enabling you to understand the relationship between private troubles and public issues. You will be able to explain to others how social structure, history, and biography intersect in the shaping and experience of social problems.
2. For each of the topics we will cover (crime, racism, sexism, and ageism), you will be able to define the social problem, comprehend and evaluate alternative causal explanations, and use the theories you have learned to point to solutions that logically follow from the causal analysis.
3. You will practice and improve basic skills of the educated person:
 - Writing summaries of assigned readings
 - Orally presenting your ideas in small groups
 - Applying sociological thinking to important issues
 - Locating information from books, government documents and the internet
 - Problem-solving in small and large group discussion contexts
 - Evaluating evidence for and against a position
 - Choosing and defending a position from alternative viewpoints

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The format of this course is a combination of discussion and lecture. In order to fully participate in class discussions and exercises, I recommend you spend about two hours in preparation for each class. Before you come to class, please carefully read the day's assigned text, take notes on the key ideas, and formulate your own questions or comments related to the readings.

In class, we will practice important skills and apply major concepts in small work groups of three to five students. This strategy, called cooperative learning, is designed to increase your mastery of course content and develop skills you will need once you leave college. These small group discussions will also give you the opportunity to hear new and diverse viewpoints from your classmates.

Summary of Requirements:

Daily Quizzes	35%
Position Paper I	15%
Position Paper II	15%
Position Paper III	15%
Final	20%

Grading Scale:

A = 93 - 100	C+ = 77 - 79
A- = 90 - 92	C = 74 - 76
B+ = 87 - 89	C- = 70 - 73
B = 84 - 86	D = 60 - 69
B- = 80 - 83	F < 60

Class Participation:

You will benefit most from this class if you regularly attend and offer your thoughts and opinions during group discussions. Please notify me before class if circumstances prevent you from attending. Because we will be learning from each other through class discussions, I welcome your opinions as an essential contribution to our class. We need your committed effort to offer ideas, listen to others, and be a constructive force in the learning process.

Daily Quizzes:

To encourage you to come to class prepared, we will have daily in-class quizzes. Each quiz will be worth 10 points and will consist of five to ten short answer questions addressing major concepts in the reading. To give you an example of the type of questions that will be on the quizzes, the first quiz will be for practice only. If you have carefully read the assignment, you should do well on the quizzes. I will drop your lowest 5 quiz grades and count a total of 15 quizzes toward your average. You cannot make up a quiz. If you are absent, you will receive 0 points on that day's quiz.

Three Position Papers:

Position papers give you the opportunity to apply the theories and concepts we have learned to a specific question related to that week's social problem. For your paper:

1. Read the assigned reading and the question listed with each writing assignment below.
2. In your position paper, summarize the article by providing at least two alternative positions the author gives to the posed question.
3. Evaluate the alternative positions and choose the alternative with which you most agree. Use theoretical arguments, statistics, or any other tool we have learned in class in order to logically defend the position you choose. Note any flaws in the alternative argument. You may also cite sources we have not discussed in class to support your argument.
4. On the date your paper is due, we will discuss the position papers in class. Be prepared to discuss alternative positions and evaluate both sides of the argument.

Your papers should be 3 to 5 pages, double-spaced, with standard one inch margins. Please do not turn in handwritten papers. Because mistakes in fundamental writing skills prevent you from communicating most effectively, check your paper for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Avoid writing in the male or passive voice. I will grade your papers on a 10 point scale and they are due at the beginning of class. If you need assistance in improving your writing, please see me. You can also contact UNC's Writing Center. It is located in the lower level of the Phillips annex. The Writing Center's phone number is 962-7710. You may reach their grammar hotline at the same number.

Position Paper I:

"The Titanic Riddle: Should a Good Feminist Accept Priority Seating on a Lifeboat?" by Charles Krauthammer, *Time* March 30, 1998

Question: On the sinking Titanic II with no children on board, should women receive priority over the men for the limited lifeboat seats?

Position Paper II:

Doob, Chapter 10: Racism in the Land of Dreams

Question: What are the most effective ways to combat racism in the United States?

Position Paper III:

“Should We Ration Health Care for Older People?” by Harry R. Moody

Question: Should we ration healthcare on the basis of age?

Final Exam:

Your final exam will be worth 100 points. The test will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. If you have kept up with the readings throughout the semester and participated in class discussions, you will do well on the exam.

HONOR CODE

The Honor Code is in effect at all times during this course. Specifically, this means that you sign a pledge on all written work, stating “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.” This applies to all quizzes, papers and exams. The first time you hand in an assignment, I expect you to write the entire pledge. On future assignments, simply write “Pledge” and sign your name.

TEXTS AND READINGS

1. *Racism: An American Cauldron* by Christopher Bates Doob
2. “Getting Paid:” *Youth Crime and Work in the Inner City* by Mercer L. Sullivan
3. Articles are on reserve in the library.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

I. Introduction to Reading and Thinking Critically About Social Problems

May 21 What is a social problem?

Introduction to each other and course content

May 22 What is a sociological imagination and how can it help us investigate social problems?

The Sociological Imagination by C. Wright Mills

Chapter 1, Sections 1 and 2

“Social Problems as Collective Behavior” by Herbert Blumer

Social Problems 18: 258-306

“Mad About the Boy” by Tamala M. Edwards

Time Magazine February 16, 1998

II. Sexism

May 26 How do media images and language shape our understanding of women’s position in society?

“Barbie Doll Culture and the American Waistland” by Kamy Cunningham

Symbolic Interaction 16(1): 79-83

“Hunger” by Naomi Wolf, in *The Beauty Myth* (pp. 201 - 217 are optional)

“Language: The Inescapable Socializer” by Laurel Richardson

in *The Dynamics of Sex and Gender: A Sociological Perspective*

Film: *Still Killing Us Softly*

May 27 How does work construct and reaffirm cultural definitions of gender?

"I Need a (Traditional) Wife: Employment Family Conflicts"

by Janet Saltzman Chafetz in *Analyzing Social Problems*

"Bringing the Men Back In: Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work" by Barbara F. Reskin, *Gender & Society 2(1)*: 58-81

May 28 Is violence against women simply the act of individual men against individual women, or is it created and perpetuated by social institutions?

"The Man in the Street: Why We Harrass"

by Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer, in *Feminist Frontiers IV*

"Domestic Violence: Hitting Us Where We Live" by Linda Rouse
in *Analyzing Social Problems*

"Wife Abuse: Its Magnitude and One Jurisdiction's Response"
by Jerri Schneider Shevlin, in *Conflict and Gender*

Guest speaker from the Rape Crisis Center

May 29 On the sinking Titanic II with no children on board, should women receive priority over the men for the limited lifeboat seats?

Position Paper I Due

"The Titanic Riddle: Should a Good Feminist Accept Priority Seating on a Lifeboat?" by Charles Krauthammer, *Time* March 30, 1998

III. Crime

June 1 What theories do social scientists use to explain crime?

Sullivan, Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-57 (skim Chapter 1)

June 2 How do employment opportunities influence crime patterns among adolescents?

Sullivan, Chapter 4, pp. 58-105

(read pp. 58-60 and 100-105, skim pp. 60-100)

Sullivan, Chapter 5, pp. 106-22

Film: *Behind Bars: Keepin' It Real*

June 3 How do neighborhood characteristics influence crime patterns among adolescents?

Sullivan, Chapters 6-7, pp. 123-77

June 4 How do crime patterns in Sullivan's three study neighborhoods differ from and resemble each other?

Sullivan, Chapters 8-9, pp. 178-213

June 5 What are the theoretical implications of Sullivan's empirical findings?

Sullivan, Chapters 10-11, pp. 214-253

IV. Race and Ethnic Relations

June 8 What is racism and what tools help us study it?

Doob, Chapter 1 and 2, pp. 1-37

June 9 What role does race play in America's political processes, criminal justice system, and mass media?

Doob, Chapter 4, pp. 67-96
Chapter 8, pp. 191-211

Library trip: Internet search on racial hate groups

June 10 What restricts minorities' freedom of movement in work and housing?

Doob, Chapter 5, pp. 97-129

June 11 Does racism exist in America's educational system?

Doob, Chapter 6, pp. 130-159

June 12 What do you think are the most effective ways to combat racism in the United States?
Position Paper II Due

Doob, Chapter 10, pp. 238-46

V. Ageism

June 15 What is ageism?

"On Gray Hair and Oppressed Brains" by Ann E. Gerike
in *Journal of Women and Aging Volume 2*
"Dispelling Ageism: The Cross-Cutting Intervention" by Robert Butler
in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 503*: 138-47

June 16 What barriers do older workers face in the job market?

"The United States: The Privatization of Exit" by Harold L. Sheppard
in *Time for Retirement*
"The Busy Ethic" by David J. Ekerdt
in *The Gerontologist 26(3)*: 239-44.

June 17 How widespread is elder abuse and inadequate housing among the elderly?

“Elder Abuse and Child Abuse: A Consideration of Similarities and Differences in Intergenerational Violence” by Jill E. Korbin, Georgia J. Anetzberger, and J. Kevin Eckert
in *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect* 1(4): 1-13
“Shelter: Bring Us to This Hovel” by Richard Margolis
in *Risking Old Age in America*

June 18 Is the rising affluence of American elderly at the expense of the children?

“Born to Pay: The New Politics of Aging in America” by Philip Longman
“Ties That Bind: The Interdependence of Generations in an Aging Society” by Eric Kingson, John Cornman, and Barbara Hirschorn

Library trip: Search the internet and *Statistical Abstract of the United States*

June 19 Should we ration health care on the basis of age?

Position Paper III Due

“Should We Ration Health Care for Older People?” by Harry R. Moody
in *Aging: Concepts and Controversies*, pp. 97-108

June 22 What is the relationship between death, technology and politics?

“Death-Making in the Human Services” by Sandra Meucci
in *Social Policy* 18(Winter): 17-20
“In Defense of Voluntary Euthanasia” by Sidney Hook
The New York Times, March 1, 1987
“Neither for Love nor Money: Why Doctors Must Not Kill” by Leon Kass
in *The Public Interest* 94: 26-37, 42-45

Lutz Kaelber
Social Problems: SOC201

Lyndon State College
Fall 1999

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to SOC 201, the sociological study of social problems. This course provides a survey of social problems as they occur in American and other societies. From a comparative and cross-cultural perspective, we will look at issues such as world population growth, threats to the environment, racial, ethnic, and gender inequalities, demographic changes in the U.S., and trends in the economy. The prerequisite for this course is SOC101 or sophomore standing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

After taking this course, students should be able to

- demonstrate understanding of major social problems concerning the U.S.;
- place local, regional, and national social problems in global context;
- identify, and distinguish between, causes and consequences of social problems;
- analyze social problems using sociological approaches and concepts;
- find and interpret qualitative and quantitative information about social problems; and
- identify and evaluate policies that address social problems and assess the policies' impact on society.

READING MATERIALS

D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn, *Social Problems* (8th ed.; Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999). The book is available for purchase at the LSC bookstore (ISBN 0-205-29456-1). Note: Earlier editions cannot be used.

Additional reading materials are on reserve for this course in the LSC Library.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance, Participation, Lateness: Students are expected to come to class and participate in it. In the past, students have found it impossible to obtain a satisfactory grade without regular attendance. I reserve the right to implement LSC's academic policy regarding absences: more than four absences can result in dismissal from the course with a failing grade (see the LSC Undergraduate Catalog). Every instance in which a student misses a class completely, or a part thereof (for example, because a student arrives late or leaves early), is counted as an absence. Absences will be excused only if you provide me with a legitimate reason for your absence in written, verifiable form within 24 hours after your absence, or as soon as possible if this limit is not applicable. Legitimate excuses include severe illness or jury service. At the least, each absence beyond four will result in the deduction of 50 points from a student's total score.

Classes will consist of lecture, discussion, in-class writings, student presentations, and other activities. If students miss a class, they should contact their classmates to obtain notes. I will not make my lecture/discussion notes available, but I will be glad to give you materials handed out in class, or go over your notes with you. One of the easiest ways to increase the likelihood of doing well in class is to come see me in my office and go over class materials.

Active participation consists of reflecting thoughtfully on course or related materials and voicing these thoughts in class at the appropriate time. Even if you are somewhat shy or hesitant to speak up, please express your thoughts, questions, and concerns. In order to make this easier for all of us, we shall be courteous and respectful of each other's views and opinions. Some of the discussions will take part in small groups, which will give all students an opportunity to participate. Participation, including the discussion of homework and in-class assignments, is a graded part of this course.

Late arrivals and early departures disturb me and other students. Please let me know in advance if you have to arrive late or leave early. In those cases, sit next to the door, and arrive or leave quietly.

Office Hours: I will make every effort to be available to you outside of class. My regular office hours are on the first page of this syllabus. If you wish to come at a different time, please contact me first by telephone at my office

or home, or send me e-mail. (See front page.) Close attention to students' needs is emphasized at LSC, so please come see me as often as you wish.

Assignments and Readings: Expect a *fairly heavy reading load*. I hope that you will find the readings both stimulating and valuable. Please discuss your thoughts about the readings openly in class and with me. We will all learn more if you do.

All readings and assignments are required and have to be done before class so you can actively participate in discussions and understand new material presented in lectures and class activities. Students who are unwilling to do the readings on a regular basis should drop the class. Insufficient preparation for class almost always results in a low grade.

Special Needs: If you have special needs, I will do my best to make the necessary accommodations. Please let me know as soon as possible.

Cheating: Do not cheat. The vast majority of students are honest--I appreciate that. To the few students who do not hold such ideals, I want to stress that cheating (getting unauthorized help on an exam or assignment) and plagiarism (submitting work as your own that is someone else's) in any form are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Failure to comply by this directive will be dealt with according to Lyndon State College policy. This may result in a "0" or an "F" on a specific exam, or in a failure for the whole course. See the Academic Policy Manual and the Undergraduate Catalog for details.

Classmates: Use the allocated space to write down the names, e-mail addresses, and/or phone numbers of at least three other students in the class you might contact for class notes, assignments, etc.

An Important Note

In this course we may read texts, watch movies, or discuss materials that include explicit language and explore sensitive themes such as racial conflict or domestic violence. Some of the views expressed in this course may challenge ideas or beliefs that you hold dear; while it is understood that at times you might feel discomfort, it is generally expected that you will be able to read these texts, watch these movies, and discuss the materials. In other words, for students enrolled in this course it is assumed that they are consenting to grapple with sensitive issues, in a critical and respectful manner. However, students are not a captive audience and retain the option to refrain from participation; they may always leave the classroom if they feel uncomfortable with a topic or material.

STUDENT EVALUATION: TESTS, PROJECTS, PRESENTATIONS, AND PORTFOLIO

Quizzes: Many students complain that they do not wish to be "bored" by an instructor lecturing; on the other hand, many students do not read the assigned reading until the evening before the exam. To ensure that students read the assigned chapters in the textbook and the reader, I will give a short multiple-choice quiz (15 questions, 1 point each) on the assigned readings for the week (not the previous week!), typically at the beginning of the first class of the week.

Policy: Students who are late for the quiz will not be given extra time. No make-ups.

Exams: The exams cover materials presented in lectures and in class activities. They are non-cumulative and consist of a combination of any of the following: multiple choice, sentence completion, and brief essay. There will be a review sheet for each exam.

Policy: Make-ups will be given only for excused absences. Written documentation is required.

Project Papers: There will be several student project papers, such as a student survey. Detailed guidelines are given for each project. The projects will be graded on the basis of a) accuracy and thoroughness of content, and b) formal organization and clarity.

Policy: No make-ups. For each day a project is turned in late, 3 points will be deducted. Projects more than a week late will not be accepted.

Presentations: It is important to be able to express oneself clearly and intelligently in front of a group. To help you acquire this skill, I require you to give a presentation in a group and individually. Detailed guidelines for the presentations will be distributed. **Policy:** Students who do not show up for their presentation will not receive credit.

Portfolio: You are responsible for putting all projects and in-class writing activities for this class in a portfolio at the end of a semester--make it neat! I require this because it is a very good way to document learning that takes place in a course.

Policy: Students who fail to turn in their portfolio will not receive a passing grade for the course. For each day the portfolio is turned in late, 5 points will be deducted.

<i>Components</i>	<i>Max. Points</i>	<i>Your Scores</i>	<i>Grade Schedule</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Exam no. 1	75		500-483 points (100-97%)	A+
Exam no. 2	75		482-466 points (96-93%)	A
Textbook/reader quizzes (8 best x 15 points each)	120		465-450 points (92-90%)	A-
Project papers (3 x 25 points each)	75		449-433 points (89-87%)	B+
Group presentation	50		432-416 points (86-83%)	B
Individual presentation	25		415-400 points (82-80%)	B-
Portfolio	30		399-383 points (79-77%)	C+
Attendance and participation	50		382-366 points (76-73%)	C
TOTAL	500		365-350 points (72-70%)	C-
			349-333 points (69-67%)	D+
			332-316 points (66-63%)	D
			315-300 points (62-60%)	D-
			299-000 points (59-0%)	F

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Note: This is a tentative schedule. Handouts are not listed; keep track of them.

M–Monday; W–Wednesday; F–Friday

Date	Topics	Readings	Tests/Papers/Presentations
Week 1 Aug. 30 – Sep. 3	1. Introduction; Sociological Approaches to Social Problems	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 1	W: In-class writing assignment (ungraded)
Week 2 Sep. 6 – 10 No class on M, Sep. 6 (Labor Day)	2. Wealth and Power	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 2 Mills, Levine, Domhoff, Sherrill	W: Text/Reader Quiz #1
Week 3 Sep. 13 – 17	3. World Population and Global Inequality	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 3 Kane, Dunn, Leonard, Tofani	M: Text/Reader Quiz #2 F: Project 1 Paper Due
Week 4 Sep. 20 – 24	4. Environmental Problems	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 4 Vitousek et al, Brown, Durning, Bullard	M: Text/Reader Quiz #3
Week 5 Sep. 27 – Oct. 1	5. Demographic Change in the U.S.	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 5 Brimelow, Isbister, Glastris	M: Text/Reader Quiz #4
Week 6 Oct. 4 – 8 No class on F, Oct. 8 (Fall Break)	6. Urban and Rural Problems (I)	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 6 Jencks, Wilson	M: Text/Reader Quiz #5 W: Project 2: LSC Survey Due
Week 7 Oct. 11 – 15	6. Urban and Rural Problems (II)		F: Exam #1
Week 8 Oct. 18 – 22	Group Presentations		Presentations Due
Week 9 Oct. 25 – 29	7. Poverty	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 7 Lewis, Edin/Klein, Bray	M: Text/Reader Quiz #6
Week 10 Nov. 1 – 5	8. Social Problems Related to Race and Ethnicity	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 8 Harjo, Hacker, Williams, Page, Moskos	M: Text/Reader Quiz #7
Week 11 Nov. 8 – 12	9. Social Problems Related to Gender	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 9 Martin/Hummer	M: Text/Reader Quiz #8
Week 12 Nov. 15 – 21 Nov. 22 – 26 No classes (Thanksgiving Break)	Individual Presentations		Presentations Due
Week 13 Nov. 29 – Dec. 3	10. Work and the Economy	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 11 Norton, Wolff, Newman	M: Text/Reader Quiz #9 W: Project 3: Commentary/Web Site Review Due
Week 14 Dec. 6 – 10	11. Crime	Eitzen/Zinn, chap. 16 Blumstein; Begley	M: Text/Reader Quiz #10 F: Portfolio Due
Week 15 Dec. 13 – 15	Wrap-up and Review		
Dec. 16 – 18 Final Examinations			Exam #2 (Final): TBA

ARTICLES

1. Introduction and Orientation; Sociological Approaches to Social Problems

2. Wealth and Power

- C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite," in *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology*, ed. John J. Macionis and Nijole V. Benokraitis (3rd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), pp. 277-82.
- Peter Levine, "Expert Analysis vs. Public Opinion: The Case of Campaign Finance Reform," in *Annual Editions: Social Problems 99/00*, ed. Kurt Finsterbusch (Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1999), pp. 31-35.
- G. William Domhoff, "Who Rules America?" in *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology*, ed. Susan J. Ferguson (2nd ed., Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), pp. 259-73.
- Robert Sherrill, "A Year in Corporate Crime," in *Annual Editions: Deviant Behavior 98/99*, ed. Lawrence M. Salinger (Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1998), pp. 100-106.

3. World Population and Global Inequality

- Hal Kane, "Leaving Home," in *Sociological Footprints: Introductory Readings in Sociology*, ed. Leonard Cargan and Jeanne H. Ballantine (7th ed.; Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1997), pp. 423-35.
- Dana Dunn, "Gender Inequality in Developing Societies," in *Analyzing Social Problems*, ed. Dana Dunn and David V. Waller (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997), pp. 201-205.
- Elizabeth Leonard, "Global Population, Poverty, and Child Labor," in *Analyzing Social Problems*, ed. Dunn and Waller, pp. 209-212.
- Loretta Tofani, "The AIDS Epidemic in Africa," in *Seeing Ourselves*, ed. Macionis and Benokraitis, pp. 370-73.

4. Environmental Problems

- Peter M. Vitousek, Harold A. Mooney, Jane Lubchenco, and Jerry M. Melillo, "Human Domination of Earth's Ecosystem," in *Annual Editions*, ed. Finsterbusch, pp. 199-204.
- Lester R. Brown, "Food Scarcity: An Environmental Wakeup Call," in *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Social Issues*, ed. Kurt Finsterbusch (10th ed.; Guilford, CT: Dushkin, 1999), pp. 340-46.
- Alan Thein Durning, "Supporting Indigenous Peoples," in *Seeing Ourselves*, ed. Macionis and Benokraitis, pp. 417-424.
- Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Racism," in *Crisis in American Institutions*, ed. Jerome H. Skolnick and Elliott Currie (10th ed.; New York: Longman), pp 247-55.

5. Demographic Change in the U.S.

- Peter Brimelow, "Alien Nation," in *Taking Sides*, ed. Finsterbusch, pp. 42-47.
- John Isbister, "The Immigration Debate," in *Taking Sides*, ed. Finsterbusch, pp. 48-55.
- Paul Glastris, "The Alien Payoff," in *Annual Editions*, ed. Finsterbusch, pp. 197-98.

6. Urban and Rural Problems

- Christopher Jencks, "The Homeless," in *Sociology: Windows on Society*, ed. John W. Heeren and Marylee Mason (4th ed.; Los Angeles: Roxbury, 1996), pp. 104-113.
- William J. Wilson, "When Work Disappears," in *Mapping the Social Landscape*, ed. Ferguson, pp. 456-68.

7. Poverty and Welfare

- Oscar Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty," in *Readings from Scientific American* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1969), pp. 134-40.
- Kathryn Edin and Laura Klein, "Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive on a Welfare Check," in *Mapping the Social Landscape*, ed. Ferguson, pp. 302-17.
- Rosemary L. Bray, "So How Did I Get Here? Growing Up on Welfare," in *Crisis in American Institutions*, ed. Skolnick and Currie, pp. 331-38.

8. Social Problems Related to Race and Ethnicity

- Suzan Shown Harjo, "The American Indian Experience," in *Sociological Footprints*, ed. Cargan and Ballantine, pp. 353-57.
- Andrew Hacker, "Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal," in *Annual Editions*, ed. Finsterbusch, pp. 95-98.
- Walter E. Williams, "Affirmative Action Can't Be Mended," in *Taking Sides*, ed. Finsterbusch, pp. 170-76.
- Clarence Page, "Supply-Side Affirmative Action," in *Taking Sides*, ed. Finsterbusch, pp. 177-83.
- Charles Moskos, "The Army's Racial Success Story," in *Sociology*, ed. Heeren and Mason, pp. 183-87.

9. Social Problems Related to Gender

- Patricia Yancey Martin and Robert A. Hummer, "Fraternities and Rape on Campus," in *The Meaning of Sociology: A Reader*, ed. Joel M. Charon (5th ed.; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996), pp. 220-30.

10. Work and the Economy

- R. D. Norton, "Creative Destruction in American Manufacturing," in *Perspectives on Current Social Problems*, ed. Gregg Lee Carter (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), pp. 73-84.
- Edward N. Wolff, "Top Heavy," in *Crisis in American Institutions*, ed. Skolnick and Currie, pp. 99-104.
- Katherine Newman, "The End of An Era," in *The Meaning of Sociology*, ed. Charon, pp. 394-400.

11. Crime

- Alfred Blumstein, "Violence by Young People," *Annual Editions*, ed. Salinger, pp. 46-52.
- Sharon Begley, "Why the Young Kill," *Newsweek* (May 3, 1999), pp. 32-35.

Kimberly A. Mahaffy
Social Problems: SOC540 (1&2)

University of New Hampshire
Fall 1999

INTRODUCTION

When social conditions threaten the well-being of many members of society, they often become defined as social problems and prompt intervention. However, the conditions that are designated as social problems are not the same from one generation (or society) to the next. They are also highly contested because they incite conflicting sets of values and challenge existing social arrangements. In this course, we will examine four contemporary, American social problems in-depth: **poverty, teen pregnancy, racial inequality, and adolescent girls' low self-esteem**. We will investigate several other social problems as determined by student interest. We will also study these social problems by looking at the social policies that affect them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you will have become familiar with the "sociological imagination" and the research process that sociologists use to examine social problems. You will be able to apply a sociological perspective as you analyze these problems. This encompasses exploring the social processes that cause these issues to be defined as social problems, identifying the values and norms that are at stake, explaining the consequences of these problems, and describing the relevance of social policy.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching and learning are reciprocal parts of an interactive process. It is my responsibility to come prepared to class, share information with you in an intelligible manner, direct you to resources which help you fulfill your tasks, provide you with opportunities to meet outside of class, ensure that the classroom is a place where we are free to respectfully acknowledge and express our differences, answer your questions, stimulate creative thought, facilitate discussions, evaluate your progress, and return your work in a timely fashion. It is your responsibility to also come prepared to class, ask questions, participate in class discussions, think critically, apply the concepts you will learn in class, be respectful of me and others in the classroom, and finish your assignments on time. If either one of us fails to live up to these standards, this interaction will break down and education becomes more difficult. To maximize your learning, I expect that you will have the reading completed before class, you will attend class, and you will inform me when you are having difficulty meeting your obligations. Last, I value your comments regarding the development of the course. If you are particularly pleased or dissatisfied with some aspect of this class, I encourage you to speak with me.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

These texts are available for purchase at the Durham Book Exchange 38 Main Street. The reading packet is available at the MUB Copy Center. I also placed a copy of the texts and articles at Dimond Library's reserve desk.

Currie, Elliott and Jerome H. Skolnick. 1997. *America's Problems: Social Issues and Public Policy*, 3rd edition. Reading, MA: Longman.

Edin, Kathryn and Laura Lein. 1997. *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low Wage Work*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Gans, Herbert J. 1995. *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy*. NY: Basic Books.

Kotlowitz, Alex. 1991. *There Are No Children Here*. New York: Anchor Books.

Luker, Kristin. 1996. *Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

There is a required reading packet that is available at the MUB Copy Center.

You will also need a package of 4 x 6 cards (about 50 cards).

Please bring your books and materials to class.

GRADING

I use various methods to evaluate your learning. All assignments are required. The in-class exams cover the material from the readings, lectures, videos, and presentations, but they are not cumulative. Instructions for completing the note cards will vary each class session. However, they are short, in-class writing assignments that will be graded

based on whether they were submitted or not. The paper and presentation will allow you to explore a social problem of your choice with the option to complete this assignment with other students in the class.

3 exams at 20% each	60%
Note cards	15%
Paper & presentation	25%

I use the following grading distribution. I round tenths place values ≤ 0.5 to the ones place below and tenths place values > 0.5 to the ones place above.

A = (93 - 100)	B = (83 - 86)	C = (73 - 76)	D = (63 - 66)
A- = (90 - 92)	B- = (80 - 82)	C- = (70 - 72)	D- = (60 - 62)
B+ = (87 - 89)	C+ = (77 - 79)	D+ = (67 - 69)	F = (below 60)

MISCELLANEOUS

Attendance: I adhere to a philosophy of active learning that necessitates full participation on the part of every student. We learn from each other and benefit from everyone's contributions to the class. Consequently, I require and monitor attendance. Missing more than 3 classes will reduce your final grade by 1 point for every class missed unless your absence is excused (e.g., documented by the health center, athletic department, court).

Late Work: Timely completion of your assignments is imperative. However, emergency and unexpected situations do occur. Therefore, if you notify me in advance of the assignment's due date (not immediately before class on the day it is due) I will consider your request for an extension. Work that remains outstanding by the time of the exams will be assigned a zero (0). If you are working in a group, there is no reason for your presentation and paper to be late. If the person(s) responsible are unable to complete the assignment on time, the other group members will need to make arrangements for someone else to take responsibility for the work. Unless there is an extreme emergency which must be documented, the negligent parties will receive a zero (0). Make up exams will only be given in the event of a medical or other serious emergency and must be documented. I do not permit make up assignments or extra credit work.

Academic Honesty: Please read the relevant pages in the Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities handbook for a detailed explanation of the university's policy. Briefly, if you plagiarize, cheat, or misrepresent yourself or your work, I will assign you a zero (0) on the assignment. The second offense will result in being reported to the Dean of the college.

People with Physical or Learning Disabilities: Please speak to me within the first two weeks of class if you require accommodations.

The University Writing Center: This center is located in the basement of Hamilton Smith Hall. The staff provides assistance with the organization and development of papers. They do not proofread or correct spelling and grammar. That is your job. I have been very pleased with the assistance they have given my students. Therefore, I will add four (4) points to your final paper if it was reviewed by the writing center staff and revised at least 2 days before the deadline. To receive the bonus points, proof of your visit must be sent directly to me from the writing center staff.

All written assignments must be completed on a word processor and proof read before submission.

For more information about the sociology department, major, and our faculty, visit the department's home page: <http://www.unh.edu/sociology/>

SOCIOLOGY 540 COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments Due
M 8/30	Introduction	
W 9/1	The Sociological Imagination	Mills "The Promise" (reader) p. 3 - 18
F 9/3	Social Problems	Currie and Skolnick Ch 1
M 9/6	No Class - Labor Day Holiday	
W 9/8	An Overview of Sociology and Social Science Research	Sullivan Chapter 1 (reader)
F 9/10	Social science research continued	Sullivan Chapter 2 (reader)
M 9/13	The Economy and Society	Currie and Skolnick Ch 2 - 3
W 9/15	Poverty and Wealth	Currie and Skolnick Ch 4 Boston Globe articles from June 21, 1999 (reader) On line article: "Federal Aid to Dependent Corporations" http://www.cato.org/pubs/wtpapers/corpwelfare.html (see also http://www.cato.org/about/about.html)
F 9/17	"Ending Welfare as We Know It" video	
M 9/20	Video continued	
W 9/22	Discussion	
F 9/24	Welfare and the Working Poor: A Focus on Single Mothers	Edin and Lein Foreword & Ch 1 [Decide on a paper topic]
M 9/27		Edin and Lein 2 - 3
W 9/28		Edin and Lein Ch 4
F 10/1		Edin and Lein Ch 5 - 6
M 10/4		Edin and Lein Ch 7 - 8
W 10/6	Exam # 1	
F 10/8	Waging a War of Words Against the Poor	Gans Introduction & Ch 1
M 10/11	No Class – Midsemester Break	
W 10/13	The "Underclass" label	Gans Ch 2 (pp. 27 - 37; 46 - 57) & 3
F 10/15	The Undeserving Poor	Gans Ch 4 (pp. 91 - 102)
M 10/18	Policies	Gans Ch 5
W 10/20	Solutions	Gans Ch 6
F 10/22	Racial Inequality	Currie and Skolnick Ch 5
M 10/25	Racial Inequality and Urban Life from Children's Perspectives	Kotlowitz Preface and Ch 1 - 9
W 10/27		Kotlowitz Ch 10 - 15
F 10/29		Kotlowitz Ch 16 - 21
M 11/1		Kotlowitz Ch 22 - Epilogue
W 11/3	Student presentations	
F 11/5	Student presentations	
M 11/8	Exam # 2	
W 11/10	Teen Pregnancy	Luker Ch 1
F 11/12		Luker Ch 2
M 11/15		Luker Ch 3
W 11/17	Teen Pregnancy continued	Luker Ch 4
F 11/19		Luker Ch 5 - 6
M 11/22		Luker Ch 7
W	To Be Announced	

11/24		
F 11/26	No class - Thanksgiving Holiday	
M 11/29	Student presentations	
W 12/1	Student presentations	
F 12/3	Student presentations	
M 12/6	Adolescent Girls' Low Self-Esteem	Sadker and Sadker Ch 4 & 8 (reader)
W 12/8		Orenstein Intro & Ch 1 – 2 (reader) Pipher Ch 1 – 3 (reader)
F 12/10	Wrap Up	Currie and Skolnick Ch 13
	Final Exam Date and Time to be announced	

Jack Niemonen
Social Problems: Sociology 150 (015)

University of South Dakota
Fall 1999

REQUIRED TEXTS

PRIMIS. 1999. *Sociology* (ISBN # 0-390-11353-0). New York: McGraw-Hill. (49 articles in one volume)

At first glance, individual volumes of the McGraw-Hill PRIMIS series are difficult to distinguish from each another. You will have the appropriate volume if the book you have matches the ISBN number above. The ISBN number appears on both sides of the title page and on the last page.

Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. 1998. *Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking*. Fifth Edition. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

On the surface, identifying and describing social problems appears relatively easy. All of us are aware of problems such as crime, violence, unemployment, poverty, sexism, racism, inequitable health care, pollution, alcohol and drug abuse, and AIDS; and most of us will agree that they require some form of public attention. However, these conditions do not in and of themselves constitute social problems, contrary to popular belief. Defining social problems is problematic; and the conditions themselves are imprecise and ambiguous. For example, what is it that makes crime a social problem? Is it the absolute number of crimes committed over a given time period? Is it the type of crimes that are committed? Is it an increase in the rate of some crimes? Is it because social policies are inefficient or don't seem to work? Is it because some people are afraid they will be victimized? The position of this course is that whether some condition is considered a social problem or not is dependent on the values and assumptions of those examining it. Given conflicts over values and assumptions, conflicts over what is and what is not a social problem will occur as well. A social problem cannot be said to exist until it is defined as such by a large number of people. Definitions are produced by those who argue for and act on their evaluations of certain conditions.

One of the major objectives of this course, then, is to demonstrate why we cannot take social problems for granted. The idea that social problems are conditions that exist in and of themselves will be abandoned in favor of a conception of them as claims-making activities. People who find some condition repugnant, such as state-sanctioned gambling, will attempt to call attention to it. They will assert the need to eradicate, ameliorate, or otherwise change it.

Values play an important part in the claims-making process. Values are conceptions of what is good, right, or proper. Participants use them to articulate their claims, or to persuade others to legitimize them. Value judgments encourage people to experience conditions as offensive and to define them as social problems requiring attention. People who make claims often express indignation, phrasing claims as demands for more God-fearing, Christian, humane, equitable, orderly, or convenient arrangements. By definition, then, claims are normative phenomena. They are statements about conditions that ought not to exist. To say that claims-making activities are heavily freighted with values is not to say that values cause social problems, or that values lead people necessarily to define conditions as social problems. Rather, values must be understood as components in the process of making claims.

Another major objective of this course, then, is to show how claims are made and why. Whether institutions will act upon these claims is the next issue. Depending on how institutions respond, a claim may or may not be legitimized. Groups often vie for control of the definition of a condition. When one group wins, its vocabulary may be adopted and institutionalized while the vocabulary of the opposing group(s) falls into obscurity. When vocabularies change, an important signal is given that something has happened to the history or career of the social problem. For example, note how both the definition of, and attitudes toward, homosexuality in the United States have changed over time.

These points become more clear if we contrast them with a traditional explanation of a social problem--for example, deviance. In the traditional explanation, deviance may be understood as follows:

1. We describe the values and norms of the society under study.
2. We regard any departure from these values and norms as deviant.
3. Then, we ask in what ways the deviants differ from the non-deviants, focusing on psychological, social, or cultural conditions that seem to make deviant behavior more likely.

4. We may categorize behaviors widely acknowledged to be deviant: mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, homosexuality, habitual criminality, vagrancy, witchcraft, disreputable poverty, etc.
5. From this we may derive a theory of deviance and a treatment considered appropriate to such deviants.
6. We may develop a formal typology of social control. For example,
 - a. At the personal level the individual refrains from deviance by virtue of self-control.
 - b. At the informal social level the offended parties may warn the individual that he or she is getting out of line and that disapproval or other social sanctions are forthcoming. (We may even suggest that this corrective feedback is occurring constantly in social life.)
 - c. At the formal level specialized agents designated for the purpose sanction deviants, as in conviction and imprisonment.
7. Alternately, we may develop a typology of societal responses to deviance, which may include the following:
 - a. acceptance;
 - b. mutual hostility, hidden in the language and mannerisms of politeness and good taste;
 - c. patronization, as in raised eyebrows, winks, and sneers;
 - d. accommodation, meaning that normal individuals tolerate the deviant so long as an agreed upon set of boundaries are maintained;
 - e. rehabilitation or behavioral modification;
 - f. exclusion;
 - g. extermination.

The problem is that this approach makes a number of questionable assumptions. For example, this approach assumes widespread consensus in society on values and norms, and on what is normal and what is not normal. This alleged consensus makes it relatively easy to identify deviance and other social problems. Or does it? We can make this problem more apparent by asking the following questions:

1. What are the conditions under which acts come to be defined as deviant? How does an individual, group, or community decide what forms of conduct should be singled out?
2. Who is doing the valuation, and why?
3. Is deviance immutable and timeless, or does it grow and diminish, rise and fall, change over time?
4. Do groups with different value priorities disagree as to whether a particular type of deviance is dangerous, harmless, or socially desirable? If so, which group has the correct conception?
5. Whose rules should prevail and be enforced? (This becomes a troublesome question if we reject the assumption of a consensus on values.)
6. Under what circumstances is the label “deviant” successfully, or unsuccessfully, applied?
7. How does a group manage to get its definition of deviance accepted or legitimated?
8. Whose interests do deviance designations serve?
9. Do deviance designations change as political and economic conditions change? If so, why?
10. What are the intended (and unintended) consequences of social control?
11. Does the way we look at deviance shape our reactions to it?

Clearly, traditional explanations of social problems are too restrictive. For example, groups with different value priorities will disagree. Deviance designations do shift; they are not immutable. Note that homosexuality alternately has been considered a sin, a sickness, and a normal behavior. When an offense occurs, sanctions do not follow necessarily. Applying sanctions does not result necessarily in the diminution of the deviation. Individuals may not be aware that they are violating norms or appreciate the offensive consequences of the act. In fact, extenuating circumstances may exist to justify the deviance. Some authors have taken the radical (and ethically problematic) position that we would be hard pressed to identify a social act that in itself is not appropriate, or at least excusable, in some social context. Others have argued that consistent moral definitions of behaviors exist only in the abstract; as applied to concrete events, these definitions are highly variable, fluctuating from one setting to another.

(Arguably, merely attempting to define what a social problem is affects virtually all of the major theoretical, conceptual, and empirical problems in the sociology of social problems--to the point that the identity of the field itself is at stake.)

In short, contrary to popular belief, questions about what causes social problems and how to solve them are very difficult to answer. Popular answers to these questions cover a wide range of perspectives from conservative to radical, and from the demonic or supernatural to conspiracy theories. This is also true of sociology, where

perspectives range from social problems as a product of social disorganization, to social problems as a social construction of reality, to social problems as an expression of conflict relations. In this context, we will examine (briefly) the historical transformation of some of the explanations of social problems. Categories or types of social problems will be subordinated to the study of the explanations themselves. Reviewing competing perspectives on social problems reveals as much or more about those who construct them as they do about the problems themselves. Any account of social problems is more than a set of abstract notions about their causes, nature, or consequences; the account is also a perspective that has many consequences that are expressed at the everyday level. For example, views of deviance derived from the notion of demonic possession resulted periodically in creative, if painful, public executions. Thus, it should be no surprise that within particular perspectives, deviants may be seen as ill, annoying, disturbing, or heroic—as J. L. Simmons observed of the latter, the world seems to love its outlaws even as it hangs them.

The approach this course will take, indeed the one which informs the statements made above, is labeled loosely the interactionist approach. The interactionist approach is constructed from a set of ideas that you may find controversial. To wit:

1. **Reality is a social construction.** It is not something that exists “out there” for the sociologist to discover, but is a social construction that emerges from and is sustained by social interaction.
2. **Socially constructed reality is not a unitary whole.** It is multiple, not singular. These multiple realities are more contradictory than consistent, more in conflict than in harmony.
3. **The meanings to which people respond are of their own making.** Social problems do not exist until they are designated as such. Problems and non-problems represent states of mind resulting from the assignment of meaning to conditions. Thus, social problems are human creations, resulting from people interacting with one another.
4. **Social problems are a universal phenomenon.** All societies have definitions of behaviors, activities, or events seen as problematic, deviant, or morally reprehensible. The very idea that a society has social norms ensures that possibility. However, there are few, if any, universal forms of social problems. Behaviors, activities, or events are not intrinsically unnatural or deviant; they become so only in relation to social definitions which can vary by time and place.
5. **Social problems are relative.** Different societies define different behaviors, activities, or events as problematic. Thus, social problems are contextual. What is labeled as a social problem varies by social context, including society, culture, time, place, who is involved, and who is offended.
6. **“Social problem” is not a property inherent in behaviors, activities, or events.** It is a property conferred upon behaviors, activities, or events by the people who come into direct or indirect contact with them. A social problem is a socially attributed condition; it is, in a curious way, an ascribed status.
7. **A social problem is not a state as such, so much as an evaluation of the meaning of a state.** The only way to answer questions about the emergence of social problems designations is to attempt to locate their origins in history and identify the social groups that generate and support them.
8. **Casting a social problem is a consequence of a process that may have only a marginal relationship to the behavior, activity, or event.** The outcome of any attempt to define a condition as a social problem is problematic because the decisions reached are negotiable (hence unpredictable); they are subject to the influence of several situational factors and are altogether resistible.
9. **The morality of society is socially constructed and relative to actors, contexts, and historical frame.** Morality does not just happen. Because it is socially constructed, there must be constructors and constructors make claims based on their own particular values, interests, and views of the world. Those who have comparatively more power in society are typically more able to impose their rules and sanctions on the less powerful. Therefore, a social problem is a condition that is defined as inappropriate to, or in violation of, certain powerful groups’ conventions.

In short, this perspective emphasizes the fact that people act upon their world. The goal is to describe the processes by which people evaluate this world, and the consequences that result. Social problems are viewed as a social process rather than as static entities. At any point in time, various behaviors, activities, or events will be in a state of definitional uncertainty or in a process of change. For example, at one time the use of coffee and tobacco held the same status as the use of marijuana does today. People were punished for consuming coffee and tobacco and supplies were confiscated and burned. Recognizing this point of view challenges us to go beneath our surface thoughts to reflect on matters we have come to take for granted as acceptable. The result, clearly acknowledged here, may be a loss of innocence about the “natural” character of things.

Two general orientations to the study of social problems are possible, then: a traditionalist approach, and an interactionist (or relativistic) approach. The traditionalist approach assumes that social problems are definable in a straightforward manner as conditions that violate permissible boundaries as determined by a consensus on values. Boundaries are apparent in normative expectations for behavior, and these expectations are assumed to be widely known and shared. Thus, to study social problems is to take their existence for granted and then to search for causes of social problems rooted in either individuals or society. For example, if poverty is understood as a form of deviance, the traditionalist might explain it in the following terms: the poor do not subscribe to the normative expectation to work hard; they are lazy, shiftless, and irresponsible, or they are products of a culture of poverty that reproduces itself. By virtue of individual or subcultural characteristics, as well as access to deviant opportunities not available generally to the middle classes, the poor are predisposed to erratic work habits, delinquency, crime, addictions, disorganization, and disintegration.

Traditionalist accounts are popular, but problematic. For example, how did we arrive at a definition of who is poor? Has this definition changed over time and, if so, why? Who do we include, or exclude, in this categorization? Are the grounds that we use objective or defensible? Why are the poor stigmatized? Are the poor fundamentally different from the working and middle classes--for example, do they reject the value of education and seek immediate gratification? Is "being poor" a permanent state that reproduces itself from generation to generation? Can we trust statistics that claim the poor are predisposed disproportionately to the behaviors noted above, or are the statistics themselves socially constructed and--perhaps--of dubious value? Why do we downplay the significance of, or ignore altogether, similar (and more costly) behaviors among the middle and upper classes? Why does the public define poverty in moral terms even though sociologists can demonstrate convincingly that poverty is a structural phenomenon? Why do myths about the poor continue to circulate in public discourse? The interactionist approach makes clear that efforts to understand, address, and redress problems like poverty are predicated on, and shaped by, unexamined values and assumptions, as well as hidden agendas.

Therefore, the interactionist approach is a useful corrective to traditional approaches to the study of social problems. However, this approach has problems of its own--for example, its failure to focus on structured inequalities in American society that prevent people from realizing their interests by other than deviant means. Indeed, the term "social problems" itself may have political implications, because it tends to focus attention on underdogs in society rather than on oppression by the powerful or dominant groups. Critiques of the interactionist approach often come from a conflict perspective. This perspective assumes the following:

1. **As a concept, social problems embodies social conflict** because it suggests that people are competing over the right to name the world.
2. **Social problems reflect specific power relations** because some group, usually the dominant group, has the capacity to impose its definition of the world on other social groups.
3. **Definitions of unacceptable conditions reflect priorities of values:** the less the consensus on value priorities, the greater the controversy over what values and norms should govern in defining social problems. (Note that norms rest on values; legal norms against the theft of property rest on the value of private ownership of property, for example.)
4. **The chance that a group will get community support for its definition of a social problem depends on a number of variables;** for example: its relative power position, prestige, size, access to resources, efficiency, unity, ability to articulate, ability to form coalitions, access to decision-makers, and ability to get mass media support.
5. **Social control is a political mechanism by which certain groups can dominate other groups.** How this conflict is played out differs according to one's theoretical perspective (contrast pluralist with instrumentalist accounts, for example).

In short, social problems are the outcome of the antagonisms, contradictions, and conflicts in society. Social problems are constructed through a politicized process and legitimated in legal statutes, medical vocabularies, or other means. The conflict perspective helps us answer an intriguing question: many conditions successfully labeled as social problems are actually less costly than other conditions that are not labeled as social problems; yet, the former receive a disproportionate share of attention. Why? Conflict theorists suggest that conditions receive attention when they threaten the control of those with enough power to shape the way society constructs the boundary between right and wrong, good and bad, normal and pathological, acceptable and not acceptable. How much interest the state (or the system of political governance) has in the outcome of a particular definitional struggle

will vary considerably, depending on the ramifications of the condition at issue. While the state plays a role with respect to social problems, there is great variation as to the nature and degree of its participation.

We should be aware that formal definitions of social problems are often uneasy compromises rather than definitive resolutions. If the conflict theorists are correct, then we cannot escape from the conclusion that the study of social problems and social control is inherently political. Social problems do not exist except in relation to those who attempt to control them.

This course will examine a limited number of issues in the context described above; the schedule of readings provides a good overview.

COURSE FORMAT

The schedule of readings is noted below. Class periods will be heavily oriented toward lecture and discussion. Lectures will clarify difficult readings and provide supplementary material not included in the readings. If you find some of the material difficult to understand, be sure to raise questions in class.

The instructor is suggesting that you approach the readings critically. Indeed, one of the purposes of this course is to encourage you to evaluate arguments and arrive at independent conclusions. In addition to Ruggiero's monograph *Beyond Feeling*, the following guidelines for reading the PRIMIS articles and evaluating in-class arguments should facilitate this objective. (They are adapted from Dan Gallagher, *Using Taking Sides in the Classroom: Methods, Systems and Techniques for the Teaching of Controversial Issues*, The Dushkin Publishing Group, 1986, pp. 7-11.)

1. Is the thesis supported by relevant, accurate, scientific, and up-to-date data? What type of research (if any) supports the thesis outlined? How is it documented?
2. What is the distinction between fact and opinion? Can you identify hidden values, assumptions, and biases in the author(s)' argument? Note that a fact is a statement that can be proven; an opinion is a statement that expresses how an author feels about an issue, or what he/she thinks is true.
3. Are propaganda techniques being used? Propaganda is used to influence for purposes that are not always made clear. Look for the use of words or phrases with negative connotations, such as "slob," "prude," "moron," or "embarrassing." Also look for the use of words or phrases with positive or pleasant connotations, such as "warm," "lovely," or "delicious." Another technique is the use of testimonials; that is, recommendations or endorsements by prominent or influential individuals. Yet another technique is the use of "card stacking;" that is, presenting only that information or those arguments most favorable to a particular point of view. Making a list of all the advantages of buying a new car without making a similar list of all of the disadvantages would be an example of card stacking. Finally, be aware of your own biases. An argument that reinforces your own opinion may carry more weight than one that disputes long-held beliefs or convictions.
4. What cause and effect relationships are being proposed? Much of the popular material on social problems is written to establish or advance a hypothesis that some set of circumstances causes specific things to happen. Any thesis that begins with "why?" is likely to be followed with "because." Many of the issues in the study of social problems have at their core a disputed cause and effect relationship. For example, has video lottery in South Dakota *caused* an increase in gambling addictions, petty crimes, and personal bankruptcies; or, is the relationship spurious? Many cause and effect statements are flawed because spurious relationships cannot be ruled out in the absence of scientific research. There may be other hidden factors underlying the alleged relationships. Faulty cause and effect statements are often used by authors, claims-makers, and moral reformers to defend their points of view and to influence social policies. One way to identify this problem is to think of alternative plausible hypotheses for any cause and effect relationship. For example, it may be the case that some people *turn to* video lottery and other forms of gambling as a hoped for, and readily available, "solution" to financial crises. In this example, the financial crisis preceded the gambling behavior. Therefore, the gambling behavior could not have caused the financial crisis, although the gambling behavior may exacerbate (make worse) the financial crisis.
5. Is the information which is presented subtly distorted? Statistics and research can be cited in such a way as to support a point of view that is contrary to what the statistics and research actually establish. A common technique is to cite approvingly supporting statistics and research and critique disconfirming statistics and research, or to ignore the latter altogether.
6. Does the author over-simplify the issue? Over-simplification comes in part from ignoring opposing viewpoints. It also reflects a tendency to confuse apparently obvious causes with empirically verified causes.

7. Is the author stereotyping? This is a serious problem in statements made about the poor and other groups, and it derives in part from faulty generalizations based on inaccurate or incomplete information.
8. Does the author's article advance upon, or undermine, a particular theory or thesis? Indeed, does it have anything new to say?

Evaluation will be based on three in-class, closed book exams to be given on, or near, the following dates:

Exam I	Thursday, October 14
Exam II	Tuesday, November 23
Exam III	Friday, December 17 (7:30 - 9:30 a.m.)

A typical exam will consist of 40 to 50 multiple-choice questions and *possibly* one or more short-answer essay questions. If essay questions are used, they will require you to demonstrate the ability to interpret empirical evidence, support or refute a proposition, or outline and critique theoretical arguments. They will also emphasize analytical, critical, comparison/contrast, and synthesis skills. Each exam will cover *primarily* required readings and lecture material up to its administered date. The extent to which an exam may be cumulative and the organization of the exam itself will be discussed during a review session prior to the actual taking of the exam. No new material will be introduced during the review session. This is an opportunity to review past material, raise questions and issues, and learn what topics are most likely to be covered on the exam. A formal study guide will be presented. Each exam is worth 150 points, and the course total is 450 points.

Grading is not curved, but is based on the following scale:

Exam I	150 points	90% or better	(405-450) = A
Exam II	150 points	80 to 89%	(360-404) = B
Exam III	150 points	70 to 79%	(315-359) = C
	450 points total	60 to 69%	(270-314) = D
		59% or below	(0-269) = F

Borderline grades (such as 404 = B) will be adjusted upward **if all three of the following conditions are met: the student is within three points of 270, 315, 360, or 405; the student has three or fewer unexcused absences from class; and the student showed continual improvement on exam performance over the course of the term.**

Active participation in class discussion may also help one's cause. If a student meets these conditions, he/she will receive an A instead of a B, for example. The instructor reserves the right to use discretion in exceptional cases.

Generally, borderline grades (such as 270 = D) will *not* be adjusted downward. In other words, if a student did not attend class consistently, did not show continual improvement in exam performance over the term, and did not participate in class discussion, that student would still earn a D for the course if he/she accumulated 270 points. An exception would be a case of documented cheating on exams, whereupon the instructor is likely to impose penalties (typically, a score of 0 for the exam). Class attendance is the responsibility of the student, but accurate records will be kept. Grades of "Incomplete" will not be given unless the student strictly meets the criteria set forth in U.S.D. policy. If a student meets these criteria, grades of "Incomplete" must be removed within one term or one year, depending on the circumstances in which they were given. Approximately two-thirds of the students who have taken incomplete grades from me in the past ten years have not removed them within the specified period of time. Some students have requested extensions. Extensions will not be granted! If the incomplete is not removed within the specified period of time, the student in question will not receive a grade for the course regardless of circumstances.

Extra-credit projects will not be accepted. THE ONLY EXCEPTION will be for those students who, after Exams 1 and 2, earned less than 210 points. The amount of extra-credit a student can earn will be the difference between 210 points and the student's total on Exams 1 and 2 combined. For example, if a student earned a total of 195 points after two exams, he/she could earn an additional 15 points in extra-credit work. The extra-credit is designed to help students (who otherwise may fail) prepare for Exam 3 and is negotiated on an individual basis. Typically, it requires students to submit in writing answers to some or all of the questions on the Exam 3 study guide. Note, however, that submitting extra-credit work in this context does **not** guarantee that one will receive all of the points for which one is eligible. Points will be deducted for hasty, sloppy, careless, incomplete, and last-minute work. Fulfillment of this requirement gives the student the equivalent of a bottom-line C going into Exam 3 and an opportunity to earn a C for the course. The final grade will depend on one's performance on Exam 3. **NOTE: No**

other extra-credit will be allowed under any circumstances, and the extra-credit option described above will not be available to students who have accumulated more than three unexcused absences by the date the second exam is given.

POLICY FOR MISSED EXAMS

Given the difficulties associated with make-up exams (such as time constraints, as well as finding an appropriate place in which to administer them because of heavy demands on classroom space in East Hall), all students in Sociology 150 are expected to be present for scheduled exams. Planning ahead is strongly advised. If a **serious** medical or family emergency arises, causing a student to miss an exam, arrangements can be made to schedule a make-up exam by notifying the instructor **prior** to the time of the exam. If the instructor cannot be reached by telephone, leave an e-mail message (jniemone@usd.edu) or contact the Social Behavior Department secretary (677-5401). Make-up exams should be taken before, or at, the time the exams are returned and discussed in class. Unexcused absences from a scheduled exam will result in no points being awarded for that exam, as well as a forfeiture of the right to extra-credit as stated in this syllabus. If you have any questions about these, or any other, administrative procedures pertinent to the course, please contact the instructor.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Note: The schedule of readings is ambitious. Some of these readings will not be discussed in class or be covered on the scheduled exams. Readings will be edited or omitted as circumstances dictate. The study guides will identify which readings will be covered on the scheduled exams. All changes will be announced in class.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Text:</u>	<u>Author or Chapter:</u>	<u>Title:</u>
<u>T., Aug. 31:</u>			INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW OF COURSE
<u>R., Sept. 2:</u>	PRIMIS	Calhoun & Ritzer	The Study of Social Problems
	PRIMIS	Ritzer	Social Problems Theory
<u>T., Sept. 7:</u>	Ruggiero	Ch. 1	Who Are You?
	PRIMIS	Ritzer & Calhoun	A Sociological Approach to Social Problems
	PRIMIS	Fine	Symbolic Interaction
<u>R., Sept. 9:</u>	PRIMIS	Blumer	Social Problems as Collective Behavior
	PRIMIS	Staggenborg	Abortion as a Social Problem
<u>T., Sept. 14:</u>	PRIMIS	Lynch & Groves	Causes of Crime: A Radical View
	PRIMIS	Pontell	Social Deviance
	PRIMIS	Stafford	Juvenile Delinquency
<u>R., Sept. 16:</u>	<u>Introduction to Critical Thinking:</u>		
	Ruggiero	Ch. 2	What Is Critical Thinking?
	Ruggiero	Ch. 3	What Is Truth?
	Ruggiero	Ch. 4	What Does It Mean to Know?
	Ruggiero	Ch. 5	How Good Are Your Opinions?
<u>T., Sept. 21:</u>	Ruggiero	Ch. 11	Oversimplification
	Ruggiero	Ch. 12	Hasty Conclusion
	Ruggiero	Ch. 13	Unwarranted Assumption
	Ruggiero	Ch. 14	Logical Fallacies
	Ruggiero	Ch. 15	The Problems in Combination
<u>R., Sept. 23:</u>	<u>Example:</u>		
	PRIMIS	Cavender, Jurik, & Cohen	The Baffling Case of the Smoking Gun
	<u>Example:</u>		
	PRIMIS	Tittle & Meier	Specifying the SES/Delinquency Relationship
<u>T., Sept. 28:</u>	PRIMIS	Hirschi	Crime
	PRIMIS	Simpson	Corporate Crime
	PRIMIS	Scarpitti	Organized Crime
<u>R., Sept. 30:</u>	PRIMIS	Currie	Crime in World Perspective
	PRIMIS	Chambliss	The Saints and the Roughnecks
<u>T., Oct. 5:</u>	PRIMIS	Farr	Revitalizing the Drug Decriminalization Debate
	PRIMIS	Walker	Reform the Law: Decriminalization

	PRIMIS	Weisheit	The Intangible Rewards From Crime: Domestic Marijuana Cultivation
	Ruggiero	Ch. 9	Face-Saving
<u>R., Oct. 7:</u>	GREAT PLAINS SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING—NO CLASS (TENTATIVE)		
<u>T., Oct. 12:</u>	REVIEW SESSION		
<u>R., Oct. 14:</u>	EXAM 1		
<u>T., Oct. 19:</u>	PRIMIS	Harrington	A Definition of Poverty
	PRIMIS	Turner	Poverty and Inequality
	<u>OPT:</u> PRIMIS	Domhoff	Who Rules America Today?
<u>R., Oct. 21:</u>	PRIMIS	Gans	The Uses of Poverty: The Poor Pay All
	PRIMIS	Lewis	The Culture of Poverty
	PRIMIS	Steinberg	The Culture of Poverty Reexamined
<u>T., Oct. 26:</u>	PRIMIS	Ritzer	The Economy
	PRIMIS	Harrington & Levinson	The Perils of a Dual Economy
<u>R., Oct. 28:</u>	PRIMIS	Rossi & Wright	The Urban Homeless: A Portrait of Urban Dislocation
	PRIMIS	Wright	The Homeless: Issues and Controversies
	PRIMIS	Reich	Consequences of the Global Economy for American Inequality
<u>T., Nov. 2:</u>	Ruggiero	Ch. 6	The Basic Problem: "Mine Is Better"
	Ruggiero	Ch. 10	Stereotyping
<u>R., Nov. 4:</u>	PRIMIS	Yetman	Race and Ethnicity
	PRIMIS	Wilbanks	Defining Racism
	<u>OPT:</u> Ruggiero	Ch. 7	Resistance to Change
	<u>OPT:</u> Ruggiero	Ch. 8	Conformity
	Proficiency Exams		
<u>T., Nov. 9:</u>	PRIMIS	Wilson	The Black Underclass
	PRIMIS	Blauner	Black Youth and the Ghetto Streets
<u>R., Nov. 11:</u>	VETERAN'S DAY—NO CLASS		
<u>T., Nov. 16:</u>	PRIMIS	Wacquant	Redrawing the Urban Color Line
	PRIMIS	McLaughlin	Beyond 'Race vs. Class': The Politics of William Julius Wilson
	PRIMIS	Gottdiener	Social Problems and the City
<u>R., Nov. 18:</u>	REVIEW SESSION		
<u>T., Nov. 23:</u>	EXAM 2		
<u>R., Nov. 25:</u>	THANKSGIVING RECESS—NO CLASS		
<u>T., Nov. 30:</u>	PRIMIS	Rindfuss	The American Family
	PRIMIS	Glick	American Families: As They Are and Were
<u>R., Dec. 2:</u>	PRIMIS	Gelles	Family Violence
	PRIMIS	Harris	Single-Mother Families
	PRIMIS	Pittman	Teenage Pregnancy
<u>T., Dec. 7:</u>	PRIMIS	Taylor & Whittier	Gender Inequality
	PRIMIS	England	Work for Pay and Work at Home: Women's Double Disadvantage
	PRIMIS	Ehrenreich & Fuentes	Life on the Global Assembly Line
	<u>OPT:</u> PRIMIS	Caringella-MacDonald	Rape
	<u>OPT:</u> PRIMIS	Schwartz	Sex as a Social Problem
	<u>OPT:</u> PRIMIS	Bellah et al.	Love and Marriage
	<u>OPT:</u> PRIMIS	Gans	Popular Individualism
<u>R., Dec. 9:</u>	Ruggiero	Ch. 16	Knowing Yourself
	Ruggiero	Ch. 17	Being Observant
	Ruggiero	Ch. 18	Clarifying Issues
	Ruggiero	Ch. 19	Conducting Inquiry
	Ruggiero	Ch. 20	Forming a Judgment

T., Dec. 14: REVIEW SESSION—LAST DAY OF CLASS
W., Dec. 15: READING DAY
F., Dec. 17: EXAM 3 (7:30 - 9:30 a.m.)

Mark D. Rubinfeld
Social Problems: SOCI-X132-001

Loyola University, New Orleans
Spring 2000

REQUIRED BOOKS (Available at University Bookstore)

Bales, Kevin. 1999. *Disposable People*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
Kozol, Jonathan. 1995. *Amazing Grace*. New York: HarperPerennial.
Parillo, Vincent N. 1999. *Contemporary Social Problems*. 4th Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To learn about social problems from a sociological perspective: what are social problems; what causes social problems; who defines social problems; and how are societies, on the individual and the institutional level, attempting to deal with social problems?
- To look at different sociological theories and approaches to social problems, and how these theories and approaches may affect our understanding of, and our answers to, the questions listed above.
- To examine, more specifically, a number of current national and international social problems including, but not limited to: poverty, crime, violence, drugs, race relations, alienation, sexual inequality, and sexual violence.
- To explore the many different ways that these social problems, and attempts to deal with these social problems, impact on all of our lives.

PROCEDURES AND COURSE OUTLINE

This course utilizes a variety of learning tools including readings, lectures, videotapes, class discussions, class debates, field trips, small group exercises, and in-class presentations. Reading assignments appear on the attached course outline. Any corrections or addendums to the reading assignments will be announced in class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your final grades will be based on the following: a mid-term (30% of the final grade), a final examination (30% of the final grade), two papers (30% of the final grade), and a group presentation (10% of the final grade). In addition, you will be responsible for up to three short homework assignments during the course. To pass the course, you must complete all of the course assignments. Final grades will be based on the percentage of total points earned: A (90-100), B+ (85-89), B (80-84), C+ (75-79), C (70-74), D+ (65-69), D (60-64), F (below 60).

Mid-term and Final Exam: Both the mid-term and the final exam will include multiple choice, true-false, and short essay questions covering information from the readings, lectures, and class discussions.

Two papers: You will have at least two weeks to complete the two papers, each four-to-six pages long (double spaced), related to the readings.

Group Presentation: You will be placed into groups with each group giving a twenty minute presentation on a current social problem.

Up to Three Short Homework Assignments: These will be used to prepare, and facilitate, discussions on the readings. They will require no outside research, just thinking, and reaction, to the readings. They may be handwritten or typewritten, two pages long, and each should take no more than a half an hour-to-an hour to complete. They will be graded, simply, as completed, or not completed.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Classroom discussions are important; they help to clarify various issues and questions that arise from the readings and add diversity to our discussion. I expect that all students will participate in classroom activities and discussions. This means that you should be prepared to answer questions in class pertaining to the weekly reading assignments. Because participation is critical to this course's success, and because in the "real" world, attendance is a large part of the evaluative process, I will be taking daily attendance. Attendance is mandatory. Excused absences include illness (with documentation) or family emergency (e.g., death in the family). **Any more than four unexcused absences during the semester will result in a loss of points off of your final average.** On the other hand, perfect and near perfect attendance will be rewarded as follows:

No unexcused absences = plus one point on your final average.

One unexcused absence = plus one-half of a point on your final average.

Two-to-four unexcused absences = no points added or subtracted from your final average.

Five unexcused absences = minus one point off your final average.

Six unexcused absences = minus three points off your final average.

Seven unexcused absences = minus five points off your final average.

Eight unexcused absences = minus eight points off your final average.

For every unexcused absence over eight, subtract an additional three points off your final average (e.g., nine unexcused absences = minus 11 points; ten unexcused absences = minus 14 points; eleven unexcused absences = minus 17 points).

Also, you are responsible for showing up to class on time. ***Every two late appearances (showing up more than five minutes late or missing signing the attendance sheet when it is passed around at the beginning of the class) will count as one absence, and will be added to your total of unexcused absences.*** Finally, I reserve the option of giving quizzes, assigning additional homework, or emending this syllabus as the need arises.

STUDENT-STUDENT AND STUDENT-FACULTY RELATIONSHIP

All students must be respectful of other students. This means no talking while other students are talking or trying to listen. Once class begins, no chatting, no reading, no sleeping in class. If you must eat, make sure it is a “quiet” food. In other words, act appropriately for a college class; if your actions create a distraction, you will be asked to leave. At any time, feel free to meet with me to discuss readings, lectures, assignments, or other matters relevant to this course. If you cannot meet with me during my scheduled office hours, I am also available by appointment. It is especially important for you to see me early in the semester if you are having difficulties with the course. Do not wait till the end of the semester when there is little, if anything, I can do to help you out. Finally, feel free to meet with me if you think you may be interested in pursuing sociology as a major or a minor and would like to learn more about the discipline.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Due to time constraints, there are a number of social problems that we will not be able to cover in the course. In order to provide you with an overview of some of these social problems, we will use group presentations that will: 1) allow us to cover more material than we could normally cover through lectures and readings, 2) provide you with a greater variety of viewpoints, and 3) afford you the opportunity to experience working on a group project that includes public speaking.

Early in the semester, we will form groups with each group being responsible for reporting on a social problem of interest to the group and class. Each group will have 20 minutes (including time for questions and answers) to report on the social problem. The group should not try to cover all aspects of the social problem but focus, instead, on a few of the most pertinent points, serving as the “professor for the day,” and emphasizing what it thinks the students should learn.

Depending on how you wish to budget your twenty minutes, all members--or just some members--of the group may speak, although I expect all non-speaking members to provide their input and insight to the topics that are covered. All students in the group will receive the same grade (with the rare exception of students who refuse to participate, or contribute their fair share to the group process--such students will receive a zero for the assignment). On the day of the group presentation, each group must submit an outline of its presentation detailing what is being covered. The final exam may include several questions stemming from the presentations so it is important that students not presenting on a certain day listen attentively. It has been my experience that the best presentations are those that involve the following:

Solid preparation: All group members should be equally prepared for the presentation. This usually necessitates a clear delineation of member roles in preparing for and conducting the presentation. In addition, many of the best presentations involve outside research or activity. For example, one group visited a federal prison to gather information about prison conditions and attempts at prison reform. Another group used part of their presentation to put on a skit dealing with AIDS awareness. Still another group went around campus interviewing males and females about their attitudes on sexual harassment, videotaped the interviews, and showed the videotape as part of their presentation. The bottom line is that the format is up to each group. There are only two limitations: that the presentation take no more than 20 minutes, and that the presentation is tied to a current social problem.

Class activity and/or handouts: Having the class take an active role in at least part of the presentation (through handouts, posters, transparencies, games, videos, or any other audio or visual aids that the group deems useful) often results in better class attention and discussions. In presenting your material, strive to be informative,

engaging, and creative. Try to think of different ways of involving the class into your presentation so they stay interested.

Introduction of the panel members: You can make the group presentation more personal by introducing yourselves at the beginning of your presentation. This helps to lessen the “intimidation factor”, and to create an atmosphere more conducive to audience participation. Furthermore, try not to forget to establish eye contact with members of the audience, and to smile from time to time. If you can, also try to avoid reading from your notes or cue cards.

Careful time budgeting: Use your time wisely. Twenty minutes is not very long for a presentation. While you should be prepared to use the entire 20 minutes for your presentation, this does not mean that you should try to cram as much information or activities as possible into your presentation. It is better to cover two well-developed points about a topic than to zip through ten confused and disjointed points.

Expectations about audience participation: Of course you will do the best you can to encourage participation and discussion from the class. However, the burden of responsibility is not entirely yours. The rest of the class is also responsible for ensuring that the group presentations are an engaging and rewarding experience for everyone involved. This entails: 1) listening attentively (showing respect for speakers), 2) taking part in the discussion and/or activity, and 3) preparing at least one question or comment to share with the class during the question and answer period.

Grading: As previously mentioned, each member in the group receives the same grade. The grades for the group presentations will be based on the following criteria: 1) substance or content, 2) creativity and resourcefulness (use of materials, exercises, activities, etc.), and 3) form and style (articulation, length, organization, preparedness, etc.).

Having fun: Education does not always have to be a chore. In addition to learning new material, this is an opportunity to develop public speaking skills, gain self-confidence, make new friends, and have some fun. This is your time to teach and to reach. Go for it!

COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Introduction to Social Problems: Definitions and Perspectives	due: Fri. January 14 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 1), pp. 1-28.
2	Urban Decline and Growth	due: Mon. January 24 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 13), pp. 391-417.
3	Race and Ethnic Relations (and) Poverty	due: Mon. January 31 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 6), pp. 161-189. due: Mon. January 31 <i>Amazing Grace</i> , (Chapters 1 and 2), pp. 3-54. due: Fri. February 4 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 7), pp. 190-223.
4	Poverty (and) Alcohol and Drug Abuse	due: Wed. February 9 <i>Amazing Grace</i> , (Chapters 3 and 4), pp.57-138. due: Fri. February 11 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 3), pp. 55-90.
5	Alcohol and Drug Abuse (and) Crime and Violence	due: Wed. February 16 <i>Amazing Grace</i> , (Chapter 5), pp. 141-182. due: Fri. February 18 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> (Chapter 5), pp. 123-157.
6	Crime and Violence (and) Midterm Review	due: Mon. February 21 <i>Amazing Grace</i> (Chapter 6 and Epilogue), pp. 185-256.

Week	Topic	Assignments
7	Midterm Exam (and) Global Inequality	Mon. February 28 ****Midterm Exam**** due Wed. March 1 ***First Paper*** due Wed. March 1 <i>Disposable People</i> (Chapters 1), pp. 1-33
8	Global Inequality	due: Mon. March 13 <i>Disposable People</i> (Chapters 2-3), pp.34-120 due: Wed. March 15 Top Three Choices for Group Presentations. due: Fri. March 17 <i>Disposable People</i> (Chapters 4-6), pp. 121-231
9	Global Inequality (and) Alienation, Anomie, and Postmodernist Perspective	due: Mon. March 20 <i>Disposable People</i> (Chapter 7), pp. 232-264. due: Fri. March 24 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 2), pp. 29-52.
10	Alienation, Anomie, and Postmodernist Perspectives (and) Sexual Behavior	due: Wed. March 29 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 4), pp. 91-122.
11	Sexual Behavior (and) Gender Inequality	due: Mon. April 3 ***Second Paper*** due: Wed. April 5 <i>Contemporary Social Problems</i> , (Chapter 8), pp. 224-253.
12	Gender Inequality (and) Group Presentation Preparations	No assignments. In addition to classes, students should plan to meet outside of class to prepare for, and rehearse, their group presentations.
13	Group Presentations	Mon. April 17
14	Group Presentations	Wed. April 26, Fri. April 28, Mon. May 1
15	Final Wrap-up, Final Exam Review, Group Presentation Grades, Course Evaluations	Wed. May 3 Last Class ***FINAL EXAM*** T.B.A. (covering text chapters: 2, 4, 8; all of <i>Disposable People</i> , and significant material from the group presentations)

Marybeth Stalp
Contemporary Social Problems: SOCI1600

University of Georgia
Fall 1999

There is nothing that humans socially construct that they cannot socially change.
Beth Rubin, Shifts in the Social Contract

COURSE OVERVIEW

Society is filled with social problems, both “known” and unacknowledged. Specifically, this class focuses on understanding two major approaches to the study of social problems: the social constructionist perspective, and the objectivist perspective. We examine how society defines social problems (objectivist) versus how some sociologists define social problems (constructionist).

We study the structural mechanisms/processes of naming something a social problem, and the general industry of social problems. A situation may contain societally problematic components, but it may not be labeled/considered a legitimate social problem. As we examine the general “naming” process social problems go through, we’ll also note how some issues are labeled legitimate social problems, while others are not, asking questions such as: Why are some issues deemed social problems while others are not? How does an issue become known as a social problem? These and other related questions will help “tease out” some of the components issues have, and the processes of legitimation issues undergo, for society to consider something a bonafide social problem, worthy of attention, policy and financial assistance.

By the end of this course, students should know the predominant perspectives and concepts that sociologists use to understand and analyze social problems. Additionally, students will be able to identify social problems not just as society deems them, but according to the claims-making process that some social problems scholars discuss.

Class readings reflect both the objectivist and the constructionist perspectives. By including both perspectives, students will understand the basic structural components in the process of naming something a social problem (claims-making). Students will essentially learn to decipher social problem constructions, how the objectivist perspective differs from the constructionist perspective of social problems research, and above all, to use their sociological imaginations.

CLASS FORMAT

The course will use a variety of formats, including lectures, discussions, guest speakers, and individual out-of-class projects. On occasion we will view videos. Previous careful reading of assigned texts will be vital to active participation and comprehension in both lectures and discussions. Attendance is required at all scheduled classes.

CLASSROOM POLICY

Arriving to class late, sleeping, talking, eating, reading newspapers, doing crossword puzzles (or being otherwise distracted and distracting) are not acceptable classroom activities, and are disrespectful to your instructor and to other students who want to listen and learn. Please let me know immediately if you have a health problem or a disability that necessitates either eating or leaving the classroom during lectures/discussion. Similarly, if you are likely to have a regular problem with getting to class on time, please inform me immediately.

All assignments must be completed on time and handed in at the beginning of class on the stated due date. All papers must be word processed, written in 12 point font, and stapled; papers not following these guidelines will not be accepted and will be marked late. Late submissions will have 5% deducted for each day after the due date (including weekend days). Please plan your schedules accordingly.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is very important to me and, I’ve discovered, to the vast majority of students at UGA. I expect that all work presented will represent original effort by the student. See the brochure “A Culture of Honesty” available on the web page of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (www.uga.edu/~vpaa/).

REQUIREMENTS

I require from students an open mind, a willingness to learn, and respect for others in the classroom. Grades are based on several criteria: attendance/class participation, four exams, two short papers, and a current events journal.

Attendance and Class Participation 10%

Attendance

Regular attendance is important to success in this course. *Persistent nonattendance at any stage of the course will be the grounds for an instructor-initiated drop.* Attendance is crucial to this class—contact me in advance if you have difficulty attending a class session; otherwise, consider class attendance required.

Class Participation

Come to class prepared, having read the materials with a few questions or comments to share with the class for discussion. Your participation grade will not be based simply upon frequency of comments, but also upon the quality of your comments. For example, bringing up a point from the reading that was unclear or critiquing an argument in the reading is more involved (and of more quality) than merely reciting descriptive information from the text. Additionally, quality listening skills are important to the class—I value the ability to build discussion with other class members, value others' opinions, and exhibit respect for one another in the classroom. You have complete control over this portion of your grade! And, remember, these points are NOT automatic; you must earn them by participating and attending class.

Exams 60% (15% each), 4 short answer/essay exams

The exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. These questions draw on your understanding of reading assignments, lectures, class discussions, and on issues surrounding the various perspectives and concepts. Test questions also gauge your ability to apply sociological concepts.

Short Papers 10% (5% each) 2 short papers, 3-5 pages

Writing is a life skill that you will use the rest of your lives; therefore, this class provides you some opportunity to write beyond the traditional multiple-choice exam. During the semester, we will be looking at a variety of social problems through popular culture mediums such as films, television and print, as well as listening to outsider speakers, when applicable. You will write **two** 5 page reflection papers about the topic of your choosing—see the instructor to discuss appropriate topics. Primarily these papers should apply the concepts of the course to the topic you choose. Further, you might examine how an event itself (film, television program, or outsider speaker) lends insight to your understanding of examining social problems through a sociological lens. **These papers are due October 7th, and November 30th.**

Current Events Journal 20%

The purpose of this assignment, which will continue throughout the semester, is to encourage you to think in a sociological manner and learn to apply sociology and social problems theory to events in everyday life. You should learn to integrate the ideas we discuss in class, and start to regard aspects of society critically. Each week of the semester, you will locate two (2) items in popular culture venues (e.g., newspaper, magazine, television, Internet), and write a short (1-2 page) analytical essay to complement your media selections for the week. Keep these media sources (a Xeroxed copy is adequate) and essays together in a folder or three-ring binder. I will collect them from you periodically during the semester. **Periodically during the semester, you will give updates to the class about your current events journal to the class, as well as a final presentation in the last two weeks of class.** You will receive a handout specific to this assignment in the second week of the semester.

Summary of grade breakdowns:	Participation.....	10
	Exams (4).....	60
	Short Papers (2)	10
	CE Journal.....	20
	Total.....	100%

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY: You have the option of attending events/lectures or viewing films (all pre-approved by the instructor) and turning in six (6) short essays (minimum one page typed). If you turn in six acceptable essays, this will count for an additional 3 points added to your final grade. If interested, see the instructor

to discuss appropriate films and/or events. When approved, the essays may be turned in at any time, but *all essays must be turned in on or before Thursday, December 2nd*.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Shifts in the Social Contract, Beth Rubin.

The McDonaldization of Society, George Ritzer. 1996. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.

A Hunger So Wide and So Deep: A Multiracial View of Women's Eating Problems, Becky W. Thompson. 1994. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Random Violence: How We Talk About New Crimes and New Victims, Joel Best 1999. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Readings Packet, Bel-Jeans, 163 Broad Street, Downtown Athens.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Occasionally, I will provide you with short readings as part of the required reading for class. These readings will be included as testable material. As the semester progresses, I reserve the right to alter the syllabus as I see necessary. I will keep you informed should the syllabus need alteration.

Part One: Introduction to Sociological Thought: What is Sociology About, and How Can It Help Us Understand Social Problems?

WEEK ONE: 8/23-27

T 8/24 Introduction to class, going over syllabus and class assignments together
R 8/26 *Shifts in the Social Contract* Preface, and Chapter One

WEEK TWO: 8/30-9/3

T 8/31 *Shifts in the Social Contract* Chapter 2
R 9/2 *Shifts in the Social Contract* Chapter 3
One Page, Typed Description of Current Events Journal Due

Introduction to Social Problems—Objectivist vs. Constructionist Approaches—Understanding How to Recognize Social Problems

WEEK THREE: 9/6-10

T 9/7 *Shifts in the Social Contract* Chapter 4
From Empty Nest to Crowded Nest, Allan Schnaiberg & Sheldon Goldenberg
R 9/9 *Shifts in the Social Contract* Chapter 5
Doing Gender, West/Zimmerman
The Glass Escalator, Christine L. Williams

The Emergence of Social Problems: Claims-making/Constructing Social Problems

WEEK FOUR: 9/13-17

T 9/14 *Shifts in the Social Contract* Chapter 6
Teenage Pregnancy, Richard A. Davis
Coffee Drinking, R. Troyer & Gerald Markle
R 9/16 *Shifts in the Social Contract* Chapter 7
The Discovery of Hyperkinesis, Peter Conrad

WEEK FIVE: 9/20-24

T 9/21 **Exam One**
R 9/23 *The McDonaldization of Society* Preface and Chapter One
The Rise and Fall of Social Problems, S. Hilgartner & C. Bosk

WEEK SIX: 9/27-10/1

- T 9/28 *The McDonaldization of Society* Chapters Two and Three
R 9/30 *The McDonaldization of Society* Chapters Four and Five
If Men Could Menstruate, Gloria Steinem

The Social Problems Industry

WEEK SEVEN: 10/4-8

- T 10/5 *The McDonaldization of Society* Chapters Six and Seven
R 10/7 *The McDonaldization of Society* Chapters Eight and Nine
Paper One Due

WEEK EIGHT: 10/11-15 (October 13th is midpoint of session)

- T 10/12 *The McDonaldization of Society* Chapter Ten
R 10/14 **Exam Two**

Medicalizing (and Stigmatizing) Social Problems

WEEK NINE: 10/18-22

- T 10/19 *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep* Chapter 1
Medicalization and Social Control, P. Conrad
R 10/21 *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep* Chapter 2
Limitations of the Medical Model in the Care of Battered Women, C. Warshaw

WEEK TEN: 10/25-29

- T 10/26 *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep* Chapter 3
The Emergence of PMS as a Social Problem, C. Amanda Rittenhouse
R 10/28 *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep* Chapter 4
The Social Problem of Infertility, Shirley Scritchfield

Other Arenas for Social Problems: Health, Home and Work

WEEK ELEVEN: 11/1-5

- T 11/2 *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep* Chapter 5
Changing Medical Practice and Medical Malpractice Claims, Stephen L. Fielding
R 11/3 *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep* Chapter 6 and Biographical Sketches
Social Construction of MB Whitehead, Michelle Harrison
Comment on Harrison: The Commodification of Motherhood, Barbara Katz Rothman

WEEK TWELVE: 11/8-12

- T 11/9 **Exam Three**

Policy and Technology: Their Impact on Social Problems

- R 11/11 *Random Violence* Preface and Chapter One
The Crack Attack, Craig Reinerman & Harry Levine

WEEK THIRTEEN: 11/15-19

- T 11/16 *Random Violence* Chapter Two
Writing Rights, Donileen Loseke
R 11/18 *Random Violence* Chapter Three
The Razor Blade in the Apple, J. Best & G. Horiuchi

WEEK FOURTEEN: 11/22-26

T 11/23 *Random Violence* Chapter Four
R 11/25 Thanksgiving Holiday

Summing Up: Coming Up With Solutions

WEEK FIFTEEN: 11/29-12/3

T 11/30 *Random Violence* Chapter Five
Paper Two Due
Current Events Journal Presentations
R 12/2 *Random Violence* Chapter Six
All Extra Credit Papers Due
Current Events Journal Presentations

WEEK SIXTEEN: 12/6-9

T 12/7 *Random Violence* Chapter Seven
Current Events Journal Presentations
R 12/9 *Random Violence* Chapter Eight
Review for Exam Four
Current Events Journal Presentations

FINAL EXAM WEEK

Exam Four will be held during the university-scheduled final exam period.

Stephen F. Steele
Social Problems: SOC122 [On line]

Anne Arundel Community College
<http://www.aacc.cc.md.us/soc/soc122/start.htm>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a "tools" course in guiding citizens to actively identify, understand and act on problems in their community and society. Sociological skills and perspectives are employed to empower students to work toward intervention and creative solutions to problems. Problems studied vary from class to class depending on historical and contemporary relevance.

REQUIRED BOOKS

You will need two books for the course:

Introduction to Social Problems by Thomas J. Sullivan, Fifth Edition, Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

Solution-Centered Sociology: Addressing Problems Through Applied Sociology by Stephen F. Steele, AnneMarie Scarisbrick-Hauser and William Hauser, Sage Publications, 1999.

Both books are available at the AACC bookstore. You may buy them in person or they may be shipped to your home via UPS if you wish! Contact the bookstore by phone, email or in person.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

When you have completed this course you will be able to:

1. Apply sociological concepts and theories in determining and understanding whether a social condition constitutes a social problem.
2. Recognize and apply basic sociological tools in making sense and analyzing social problems.
3. Understand and apply the practical uses of sociology to propose solutions to social problems.
4. Recognize the value of ingenuity and creativity in addressing these problems.
5. Use the computer as a problem investigation and problem-solving tool.
 - a) Write effectively, b) Perform basic analysis of sociological data, and c) Locate important information on the internet.
6. Competently engage social situations in daily life that may constitute social problems.

COURSE POLICY

This is a distance-learning course. As such, participants have a great amount of flexibility in completing the course. Persons enrolled in this section must complete all course requirements as outlined in the following section. However, in many cases the date and time on which material is completed and submitted will be determined by the participant. It is the responsibility of the course participant to schedule, complete and submit required course assignments. Likewise, participants are responsible for scheduling and completing the eleven course modules, the relevant reading for the course and understanding of associated exercises and tools. Material must be completed and submitted on or before the end of the term as defined by Anne Arundel Community College and the professor. A final grade will be issued at the end of the term on the date required by the College.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The course is divided into twenty modules. Each module includes (1) a check-in site (you must check in every time that you enter a new module, a (2) a set of topics and terms (core concepts for that module), (3) tasks (reading, and an internet assignment which is an exercise with applications which will help you understand the material) and (4) a tool box which will take you back to the basic problem analysis tools for the course. Required reading is assigned for each module. You should complete all reading, topics and tasks to be properly prepared for the course.

Since this is a distance learning course, dates and times have not been assigned to modules. You will create your own schedule within the boundaries of the term in which you are enrolled. We will schedule on-campus sessions and class on-line chats using the WebCT or First Class system. You may select these as time permits (note points will be given for participation, see Level 1 above).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Course grades are measurements of the course objectives. As such they directly relate to the learning objectives stated above. The underlying structure for grading is as follows:

Level 1: Core Topics and Tools.....TOTAL POINTS FOR THIS LEVEL=600

To earn a grade of B or below...

B level work is "Good." A person who shows a "good, fair or poor" understanding of social problems will be able to demonstrate this by providing a "good, fair or poor" mastery of the understanding material ideas (concepts, topics) and their application (tasks).

Note: All written work at this level may be resubmitted for an improved grade. So submit these items on time, then, you will have time to rewrite them to improve your score!

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS	DUE	POINTS
<p>0. Completion of an Entrance Essay Criteria: A brief 1-2 page paper which includes at least three parts: 1) A discussion of your learning goals for this course (What do you, personally want to learn?) 2) A discussion of your personal goals for this course (What do you personally expect to "get out of this course." For example: self improvement, new skills, etc. Be specific. 3) A discussion of your assessment of your view of social problems now, at the beginning of the course.</p>	second week of the course	50
<p>1. Cumulative Exam covering core concepts, topics, tasks and theories These exams may be taken in the testing center or in on-campus sessions. They may be taken up to four times. You will receive your best score.</p>	Taken up to four times, on-campus sessions or testing center	300
<p>2. Interactive Exercises. Most modules have at least one interactive exercise that you must complete and submit electronically. There are a total of 20. Each is worth 5 points.</p>	Completed for each module	5 each x 20 = 100
<p>3. A Combination of 50 Points-Worth of the following (you may attend more, but the maximum you may receive is 50 total points): a) On-line chats with class using the WebCT or Web CT Bulletin Board responses. b) On-campus sessions to be announced</p>	As scheduled, see the homepage	Chat 10 points each On campus 10 points each Total 50
<p>4. Completion of an Exit Essay 1) A discussion of the degree to which you achieved your learning goals for this course (What did you, personally learn?) 2) A discussion of the degree to which you achieved your personal goals for this course (What did you personally "get out of this course." For example: self improvement, new skills, etc. Be specific.) 3) A discussion of your assessment of your view of social problems now, at the end of the course. 4) At least one thing that can be done to improve this course.</p>	When you complete module 20 or when you finish the course	50
	Total	600

Level 2: To earn a grade of A ... Complete level B and complete a **400 point Project**

1) A level work is "Excellent." A person must show a "good" understanding of sociological ideas (concepts, terms) and their application to social problems. In addition, she/he must demonstrate a "good-excellent" ability to use these concepts and tools to create new information or new understanding.

Creating "new information or new understanding" means that you must produce something that integrates the sociological concepts in it. Hence, new knowledge and/or new action will emerge. The media for presentation vary widely: videotape, audio tape, computer and internet formats, written original research, term papers, art work, games, social programs, workshops, brochures and more.

Two steps are required:

1) A proposal outlining the project you plan to complete. The project is worth **400** points. The proposal must be approved before you may proceed. <[The outline for this proposal may be found by clicking here.](#)> When is it due? Prior to and including the beginning of Module 11 (or mid-term whichever comes first). If you plan to attempt an A you must submit this proposal! You may withdraw a proposal or simply not turn in your project. If project is not received, your grade will be based on Level One only (i.e. the maximum grade would be a B).

2) Delivery of a finished project. When is it due? By the middle of Module 20 (or one week prior to the end of the term, whichever comes first).

ASSIGNING GRADES

Your grade will be based on

(1) The level you have chosen, and (2) your performance on the course requirements. Points are achieved and totaled based on the values for each course requirement stated above.

Grade	Without Project	With Project
A	Not available	900-1000
B	480-600	800-899
C	420-479	700-799
D	360-419	600-699
F	359 or below	599 or below

James A. Vela-McConnell
Private Troubles, Public Issues: Contemporary Social Problems: SOC390A

Augsburg College
Spring 2000

PREREQUISITES

Junior standing. It is also recommended that you have taken or are currently taking the Research Methods (SOC 363) course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course represents an advanced-level study of social problems while engaging the sociological imagination. We will be drawing a link between microlevel and macrolevel analyses, linking our own private troubles with larger public issues. Most theory in sociology focuses either on the micro level, such as symbolic interactionism, or at the macro level, such as structuralism, and ignore middle-range theories regarding how the microlevel and macrolevel connect and are interrelated. That connection is critical to our understanding of society. With this in mind, we will explore the following questions: How do social problems develop? What impact do they have on individuals and society, and what is the connection between them? What has been and/or can be done about them? In this course, students will conduct a research project on a public issue which they also experience as a private trouble.

GOALS

The first set of goals reflect general skills which students should acquire in any college course in the social sciences:

1. To foster **critical thinking**.
2. To encourage clarity and creativity in **writing**.
3. To develop confidence in **speaking**.
4. To promote effectiveness when **working with others** as well as when **working alone**.

Private Troubles, Public Issues is a **SPEAKING SKILLS COURSE**. In order to meet the General Education Graduation Skill requirement for speaking, a grade of at least 2.0 must be earned. Students must demonstrate the ability to:

1. Be able to speak effectively in a variety of situations.
2. Deliver an effective presentation as judged by the presentation's content, delivery, and response.
3. Be able to structure the content of verbal communication with an introduction, body, and conclusion.
4. Deliver oral presentations in a fluent and confident manner, using appropriate eye contact, sufficient vocal volume, and variation in vocal pitch, stress and tone while avoiding distracting physical mannerisms.
5. Be able to pay attention to the response by listening, discerning listeners' understanding, responding to questions, and being able to defend or modify a position appropriately.

These skills will be applied to sociological discussions, interviewing, and presentations of research. For this reason, there are three additional speaking skill goals which are specific to this course:

1. To develop the skill of facilitating and participating in substantive discussions.
2. To develop the skill of conducting intensive interviews.
3. To develop the skill of orally presenting research results in a sociological manner and context.

A grade of at least 2.0 on the discussions, intensive interviews, and oral presentation is necessary (but not sufficient) in order to receive a 2.0 in the course and speaking skill credit.

In addition to these general skills and the speaking skills, students will develop a firm understanding of the themes of this course as exhibited in the following:

1. The ability to exercise one's sociological imagination.
2. An appreciation of sociology as a *craft* as well as a social science.
3. A grasp of the major concepts and theories covered in the course.
4. The ability to describe what constitutes a social problem.
5. The ability to apply a sociological perspective to the various forms of social problems.
6. The ability to draw a link between micro and macro processes and manifestations of social problems.
7. The ability to relate knowledge and skills gained in this course to one's own experiences in daily life and the ability to use personal experience to enhance one's understanding of sociology.

REQUIRED TEXTS

In addition to the following texts, additional articles or chapters have been assigned. They are on reserve in the library.

Rubington & Weinberg. *The Study of Social Problems*

MacLeod. *Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood*

Gergen. *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*

Loeb. *Generation at the Crossroads: Apathy and Action on the American Campus*

Private Troubles, Public Issues Course pack

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

The following texts, while not required, will be helpful in meeting the requirements for this course:

Vela-McConnell. *Who Is My Neighbor? Social Affinity in a Modern World.*

Gorden, Raymond. *Basic Interviewing Skills.*

Johnson, et al. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation (100 points). Students are expected to have completed the readings *prior to* the class for which they have been assigned. In this way, you will be able to take an active role in class discussions. Participation represents more than just being present during an entire class (i.e. attendance). Questions and comments about the readings, lectures, and other class activities are strongly encouraged. Such student participation lets us know where your interests lie and generally makes the time spent in class more dynamic and appealing for everyone. Regular attendance is required since many lectures and discussions, while on the same topic as the readings, will not be a simple repetition of what you have already read. Note that the exams will cover not only what is contained in the assigned readings, but will also include what is presented and discussed in class. On occasion, there will be assignments done during class or to be taken home for the next class which will be graded on a pass/fail basis and included in your participation grade.

Group Discussion Facilitation (25 points). (For an explanation of this assignment, see the description in your course pack.) In addition to the regular class discussions, there will be three formal discussions for which the class will be divided into three or four groups. One student will then lead the discussion in each group. The discussions will focus on the chapters assigned from *The Study of Social Problems*. Every student will be expected to facilitate one discussion and all students are expected to participate in the discussions being led by their peers. For a more detailed description on how to prepare for the discussion you and your partner(s) facilitate, see the Formal Discussion Guidelines in the course pack. I will be monitoring participation in these discussions.

Seminar Discussions (30 points, 10 points each). In addition to the group discussions, there will be three seminar-style discussions, one on each of the topical books read during the semester. On the days in which we have a seminar discussion, you will need to bring a typed reaction to the book and a set of approximately five discussion questions. Your typed reaction should include a brief analysis of the book in terms of its micro/macro connections. How does the author connect the macro and micro levels of analysis in this book? How effective is that attempt at drawing connections? How do individuals and society interrelate given the problem of the book? What do you think of the problem described? And what are your reactions to the book?

Research Project (100 points for your written paper and 50 points each for your presentation/outline and your interview). (For an explanation of this assignment, see the description in your course pack.) Students will be learning intensive interviewing research skills in class and will then conduct a research project utilizing that method. This research will require four in-depth interviews which you will then analyze. This analysis will form the basis of your research paper and class presentation.

Final Exam (100 points). The exam will be a take-home case narrative analysis. For this assignment, read case narratives 11 and 12 in your course pack and analyze them in terms of the individual's orientation to the social problem, the construction of social consciousness, sentiment, and action (see the "Narrative Analysis Checklist" in your course pack). Be sure to include quotations from the narrative to support the points you make. For an example of how to approach this analysis, read Case Narratives 9 and 10 and the "Sample Narrative Analyses" in your course pack.

	GRADING	
Attendance and Participation:	100 points	95% to 100% = 4.0 = A
Group Discussion Facilitation:	25 points	90% to 94% = 3.5 = A-
Seminar Discussions (10 points each):	30 points	85% to 89% = 3.0 = B
Research Project:		80% to 84% = 2.5 = B-
Written paper:	100 points	75% to 79% = 2.0 = C
Interviews:	50 points	70% to 74% = 1.5 = C-
Presentation & Outline:	50 points	65% to 69% = 1.0 = D
Final Exam:	<u>100 points</u>	60% to 64% = 0.5 = D-
	455 points	59% & below = 0.0 = F

Format for Papers and Other Take-Home Assignments: Everything you turn in should be typed (double spaced). Pay attention to grammar and spelling as they will be included as part of your grade. Be sure to include page numbers. The papers must be stapled—binders, folders, etc. will not be accepted. Keep a copy of each paper for your own records. If a paper is lost and you don't have a backup, you will receive an automatic zero for the assignment. Finally, and of extreme importance, you must cite your sources and include a bibliography, even if you are only paraphrasing. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated.** A paper without the appropriate citations will be given an automatic zero.

Note: Late papers and assignments will have five points deducted for each day they are late, which is equal to an entire letter grade. "On time" means that they must be turned in before you leave the class in which they are due. **DO NOT** turn in a paper by putting it in campus mail. Any papers lost this way will be given an automatic zero. Also, throughout the semester, there may be several opportunities for extra credit. Finally, be advised that this syllabus is subject to change and you are responsible for any changes announced during class.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS
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<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
Feb. 1	INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS	

<p>SECTION ONE: THE ECONOMY Reading for this Section: MacLeod, <i>Ain't No Makin' It</i> (Complete by February 24)</p>

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
Feb. 3	PRIVATE TROUBLES/PUBLIC ISSUES: THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL	On Reserve: Mills, <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> , ch. 1; Look up what the saying "The personal is political" is about using the internet/library. Bring what you find to class.
Feb. 8	THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT & THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION	
Feb. 10	DEFINING A SOCIAL PROBLEM	
Feb. 15 & 17	THE U.S. ECONOMY & POVERTY	
Feb. 22	THE GLOBALIZING ECONOMY	Seminar Questions are due
Feb. 24	SEMINAR DISCUSSION DAY	<i>Ain't No Makin' It</i>

Feb. 29	METHODS: FORMULATING QUESTIONS	On Reserve: <i>Code of Ethics</i> , American Sociological Association, 1997, pp. 1-24; Recommended: Gorden, chs. 1-4
March 2	METHODS: CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS	Interview Schedules are due; Recommended: Gorden, chs. 5-9

SECTION TWO: CULTURE
 Reading for this Section: Gergen, *The Saturated Self*
 (Complete by March 30)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
March 7	METHODS: ANALYZING DATA	Recommended: Gorden, ch. 10
March 9	THE PROBLEM OF MODERNITY	Practice Interview evaluation is due; Recommended: Vela, ch. 1
March 14	A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF SOCIETAL DISCONNECTION	Discussion presentation/questions are due; Recommended: Vela, ch. 2
March 16	GROUP DISCUSSION DAY	Rubington & Weinberg, chs. 1-3
March 21 & 23	Midterm Break	
March 28	ORIENTATIONS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS	Read Case Narratives 1-8 in the Coursepak; Seminar Questions are Due; Recommended: Vela, chs. 3-4
March 30	SEMINAR DISCUSSION DAY	<i>The Saturated Self</i> ; Discussion presentation/questions are due

SECTION THREE: CONFRONTING SOCIAL PROBLEMS
 Reading for this Section: Loeb, *Generation at the Crossroads*
 (Complete by April 18)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
April 4	GROUP DISCUSSION DAY	Rubington & Weinberg, chs. 4-6
April 6	THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS	Recommended: Vela, ch. 5
April 11	SENTIMENTS AND THE PERSONAL/ SOCIETAL LINK	Recommended: Vela, ch. 6
April 13	SOCIAL ACTIVISM: A CALL TO ACTION	Seminar Questions are due; Recommended: Vela, ch. 7
April 18	SEMINAR DISCUSSION DAY	<i>Generation at the Crossroads</i>

April 20	WRITING A LITERATURE REVIEW	Discussion presentation/questions are due; Recommended Readings on Reserve: (1) Hart. <i>Doing a Literature Review</i> and (2) Galvan. <i>Writing Literature Reviews</i>
April 25	GROUP DISCUSSION DAY	Rubington & Weinberg, chs. 7-9
April 27	TRAVERSING THE “SOCIAL EPICENTER”	Recommended: Vela, ch. 8
May 2 & 4	PRESENTATIONS	Research project & presentation outline are due on May 2
May 9	APPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL AFFINITY	Recommended: Vela, ch. 9
May 11	<i>WALLSTREET:</i> BRINGING TOGETHER AFFINITY, THE ECONOMY, & CULTURE	
May 16 10:15 a.m.- 12:15 p.m.	FINAL DISCUSSION: Private Troubles, Public Issues and the Macro/Micro Link	Narrative Analysis is due

Rose Weitz
Film and Social Problems: SOC 394

Arizona State University
Fall 1999

Course Overview

Purpose: This class is devoted to exploring social problems through film. In this class, we will use film to understand sociology, and sociology to understand film. Specifically, we will look at how film can both reflect and perhaps create popular ideas about social problems, and will compare those ideas to discussions of the same topics in sociological writings. Thus, this course will focus on the *sociological* implications of film, rather than on film theory or production. This class will be harder than you think, but should also be fun.

Format: This is not a lecture course. Class sessions will be based on discussion and analysis of the readings and films, and will focus on learning to critique and develop arguments. For this structure to work, you must do the assigned readings *before* coming to class. If you don't, class will be very boring and I will get very cranky.

Notes:

- Some of the films we will view will contain vulgar language and explicit depictions of heterosexual and (mild) homosexual activity. If you would find this difficult to handle, please consider taking a different course.
- Please see me in the next week or so if you need accommodation for a disability.
- The most efficient ways to contact me are through e-mail or leaving notes/papers with the department receptionist. I typically reply via the same mode within a day or two.
- I have tried to make the schedule accurate, but may need to make changes as we go along.
- All written assignments are expected to meet normal standards for neatness and for English grammar, spelling, and coherency. If you are a non-native speaker, please see me to discuss options.

Required books:

Joe Feagin and Melvin Sikes. *Living with Racism: The Black Middle-class Experience.*

Katherine Newman, *Falling from Grace: The Experience of Downward Mobility.*

Rose Weitz, *Life with AIDS.* Rutgers University Press,

Carols Brooks Gardner, *Passing By: Gender and Public Harassment,*

**Books are available for purchase only at Changing Hands Bookstore, 414 S. Mill Avenue. All books are also available at Hayden Library Reserve.

Note: You may be required to see one or two films outside of class. If you don't have access to a VCR, you may use one at University Media Resources (across from the ASU bookstore).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: All readings must be done *before* the day listed on the schedule.

1. Introduction

August 25: Film: *American Cinema #11: Film Language*

2. Racial prejudice and discrimination

Sept. 1: Film: *Do the Right Thing*

Sept. 8: Book: *Living with racism.* Read chapters 1, 2, 3, and 8

Sept. 15: Film: *A Time to Kill*

3. Economic inequities

Sept. 22: Film: *Roger & Me*

Sept. 29:

Katherine Newman, *Falling from Grace* chapters 1,2,6,7, and 8.

Oct. 6:

Film: *Down and out in Beverly Hills*

*First short paper due

4. Disability

Oct. 13: Weitz, "Experience of Chronic Illness and Disability." (Chapter from Weitz, *Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care*. Available for purchase from Hayden Copy Center.)

Oct. 20: Film: *Waterdance*

5. AIDS

Oct. 27: Film: *Kids*

Nov. 3: Weitz, *Life with AIDS* (whole book)

Nov. 10: *Philadelphia*

*Second short paper due

6. Gender relationships

Nov. 17: *Cinderella* (original Walt Disney version)

Nov. 24: *Passing By* (whole book)

Dec. 1: Film: *Thelma and Louise*

Pulling it all together

Dec. 8: Discussion and conclusions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Journal: 10% of grade. You will be required to keep a film journal throughout the semester. After viewing each film, you will be required to write a 1½-2 page analysis (12 point typeface, double spaced) based on one or more of the questions below or similar questions of your own devising. Journal entries will be graded pass/fail, and are expected to be rough drafts. No more than ½ page should be used to summarize the film's plot; entries will fail if they are primarily a plot summary. Keep your journal in a three-hole punch notebook so you can turn in your entries regularly.

2. Class participation: 10% of grade. Class participation grade will be based on attendance, amount of participation, and quality of contributions to class discussions.

3. Short papers: 50% of grade. You will be required to write two short papers, based on revised journal entries. Compared to the journal entries, the papers *must* be longer, take a position, and use materials from the readings to make their argument. Papers can either analyze one film or compare two films. Imagine as your reader a smart friend who is a biology major. Note: you are responsible for keeping back-up copies of your papers and for getting them to me on time. No late papers will be accepted without a valid excuse, and I will not consider an excuse valid unless I hear from you in advance or it is an emergency. If for some reason you cannot do an assignment, please see

me beforehand to discuss whether alternative arrangements can be made. All papers must be typed, 12 point type, double spaced, 4-6 pages. More details will follow.

4. Final exam: 30% of grade. I will give you several questions to study before the exam, and your exam will consist of some of those questions. (I will choose which ones; you will have no choice.) I encourage you to work in groups, but you must write your own answers. You may bring a 3x5 card with notes to the exam.

TOPICS FOR JOURNALS/PAPERS

Your goal in both the journals and the papers is to analyze the films using the sociological concepts from this course. To analyze a film, you must tell me something that is not immediately apparent to everyone watching the film. The questions below are examples of possible topics.

According to this film:

Are people from different races/classes/sexes inherently different from each other?

Is one group superior to the other?

Is one group the enemy of the other?

Does prejudice and discrimination based on race, gender, or social class exist?

If yes, what is the source of this prejudice and discrimination?

Do those who experience discrimination contribute to it?

Is it possible to end or escape prejudice and discrimination?

What is resistance? What makes resistance/social change possible or impossible?

How does the depiction of the issue differ between the film and the sociological literature?

Do the attitudes reinforced by or depicted in this film help explain the behaviors displayed in another film we viewed?

What responsibilities do individuals have to their community? do communities have to individuals? do the wealthy have to the poor?

Why are people content or discontent with their lives?

PAPERS

Your paper may discuss either one or two movies. Your first paragraph should lay out your argument. (If you discuss two movies, your argument must be broad enough to incorporate both movies.) Your argument should take approximately the following form:

“The film *Do the Right Thing* sends the message _____.”

The message you select should be a statement about the nature of a social problem or social group. Some examples follow:

1. “The film *Do the Right Thing* argues that whites are so racist that violence is the only solution available to oppressed minorities.”
2. “The film *Do the Right Thing* argues that blacks and whites can and, indeed, must learn to live together to avoid tragedy.”
3. “Although *Do the Right Thing* was intended to increase our empathy with blacks, and *Roger and Me* to increase our empathy with workers, both have the unintended consequence of reinforcing stereotypes about those groups.”

The rest of your paper should largely be devoted to providing evidence to back up your argument. For example:

“The film *Do the Right Thing* argues that whites are so racist The film does this in three ways. First, the film portrays whites as racist by showing... Second...

You should *not* spend space discussing why racism is wrong. (This is not the theme of your paper). You must, however, explain why you agree or disagree with the film’s message--*take a stand*.

You must use the readings to bolster your conclusions. Find ways in which the evidence from the readings either supports or refutes the film's message, or your response to the film's message.

For example:

“The message that whites are so racist that racial harmony is impossible is supported by the book *Living with Racism*, which documents how racism is an everyday part of black experience and suggests that any interaction between whites and blacks has the potential for racism.”

To get an A (rather than a B), your argument is going to have to be more detailed, better documented, and more complex, looking at the nuances rather than just at the surface. For example, if your thesis is that “The film *Do the Right Thing* argues that whites are racist,” you can provide many examples and make your case clearly. But in the end it won't be that interesting--there's just not that much to say about the subject. To make it more interesting, you'd need to also discuss things like what the movie suggests is the cause of this social problem, and what are the possible solutions. Papers that simply summarize the plot will get a D, as will papers that are seriously flawed in other way.

For your papers to be critiques and to get full credit, you need to:

1. state a thesis (e.g., Spike Lee's film *Do the Right Thing* tells us that all humans, regardless of race, are racist)
2. provide evidence for your thesis (e.g., in the film, both Pino and Mookie are equally horrified that their relative would flirt with someone of a different race)
3. judge the accuracy of the thesis (e.g., I believe that this view of human nature is inaccurate because ...). (In final papers, cite the course readings if appropriate. *Do not* cite the readings in your drafts—you don't have enough space.)
4. discuss the social consequences that will occur if people believe the message of this film, making it clear whether you think those social consequences are good or bad. (e.g. telling us that all people are racist makes it seem that fighting racism is impossible. This would be a terrible thing, as then people would feel justified in continuing as they are.)

I'm writing this in very bald terms. You do not need to follow this model exactly--and probably shouldn't--but at least it gives you a starting point.

Because your emphasis is on arguing a thesis, you probably shouldn't summarize the film, as doing so will distract the reader from your thesis. You might want to have a couple of sentences at the beginning summarizing the film. It's probably better, however, to weave your summary of the film into your discussion of the thesis (e.g., Spike Lee's film *Do the Right Thing* tells us that all humans, regardless of race, are racist. The film, which depicts one day in the life of a poor New York City community, shows the interactions between members of different races, all of whom seem equally to dislike the others.)

Assignments, Exercises, and Policy Guidelines

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M. Eugenia Deerman

University of Michigan

GUIDELINE: EXAMPLE OF STRONG PARAGRAPH WRITE-UP

Violence on television has raised many eyebrows in society. The issue of whether it is directly correlated to violence among humankind has been studied. I plan to analyze this from many viewpoints. These viewpoints would include the networks, advertisers, democrats, republicans, and of course, groups like *American for Responsible Television*. This issue has been a touchy topic for many years, and has been very difficult for people to prove. I would say it became a social problem about ten years ago when more cable was installed in homes across America. One could also pinpoint this as a social problem when the news story broke of a child burning his home, and afterwards repeating the familiar Beavis and Butthead words “Fire, fire, huh, huh.” This type of action created a reaction from the American Public that made society question the content of television programming and whether censorship was needed. Since then *TV Guide* has rated programming and networks have changed times that certain shows air, however the content of television remains the same. I plan to explore this further and answer the question why it has become a social problem.

Reasons this works so well:

- problem identified as one that concerns a lot of people (not just the student)
- focus is on the process of becoming a social problem
- student includes some hypotheses on factors contributing to the rise of this problem
- key moments in the career of the problem are identified
- various invested groups are identified

Please note that the student does not:

- propose a report on the objective condition or problem
- investigate an idiosyncratic or personal issue
- plan to “prove” their own assumptions or prejudices about the problem

M. Eugenia Deerman

University of Michigan

GUIDELINE: FEEDBACK ON ROUGH DRAFTS

Be careful of “it’s a social problem because . . .” statements.

- the “because” depends on your theoretical model and must be consistent with it!
- no model asserts it’s a social problem simply because some people say it is (there’s qualifications around disorganization or breaking of norms or requiring the “expert” sociologist to validate the public perception of a social problem)
- make sure you lay out how your model defines social problems so that you can demonstrate that you are, indeed, looking at a social problem.

Do Not Lift Entire Sentences from Your Sources!!!!

Do Not Borrow the Structure of a Sentence and Substitute a Few Words!!!!

PLEASE remember our discussion about **plagiarism**. Take your own work seriously and rely on your own thoughts to carry out the argument. When other people’s words seem especially “right” then use them and **put them in quotes**.

<i>strong</i>	<i>ok</i>	<i>weak</i>	
			thorough use of sources available to you
			editing (spelling, grammar, punctuation)
			correct use of sociological terms
			correct and consistent in text citation
			discussion of why your “trouble” is a “social problem”
			explication of the model being used
			application of the model to your problem
			use of examples from your sources
			complete analysis (are all parts of the model used in analysis)
			giving context of the social problem
			quality of overall argument
			thoughtful presentation of own conclusions

M. Eugenia Deerman

University of Michigan

ASSIGNMENT: LECTURE CRITIQUE

Write a one to two-page statement summarizing and commenting on the lecture. The summary portion is judged on accuracy, comprehension, and conciseness. The comment portion is judged on creativity and logical development. Use the following sample critique (borrowed from Professor Gayle Ness) for a guide.

I. Summary

The central point of this lecture was that social position affects, shapes or molds human behavior. A social position is a condition or position of an individual with socially defined rights and obligations, or expectations. Being socially defined implies that there is broad agreement within the society on the rights, obligations and expectations attached to the position. Examples include marital status, age group, gender and occupation. Through agreement on appropriate behavior in these positions, society shapes and molds human behavior.

The evidence for this argument was in the form of covariance drawn from five different forms of human behavior. (*Discuss the examples!*)

II. Comment

(In what follows I provide partially developed examples of two types of comments. The first points out the limitations. The second seeks to extend the argument. Choose one approach for your paper; you are not limited to just these two! Other types of comments that raise questions, or discuss significance are also appropriate.)

Marshalling evidence from such a wide range of behavior provides support for the social position perspective. It does appear that social position can explain patterns of variance in human behavior. Nonetheless, it does not appear that all behavior can be explained by reference to social position. For example, individual behavior may not be adequately explained. The social position argument seems to leave no room for “genius” or for the impact of “great men and women” on history. (*Give more examples on this line.*) Another form of behavior that seems outside the purview of social position arguments is large-scale social change. How do we explain industrialization or mass migrations or war? (*Continue with this line of argument, either raising further questions or providing alternate explanations.*)

Alternative comment

The argument for the importance of social position was made from evidence of small-scale behavior. Differences in suicide, fertility or voting preferences provided the evidence. Can this argument also be used to explain large-scale change? Can it explain other types of very important social change?

To extend the social position perspective to larger social movements would require demonstrating that leaders of movements (like revolutions) came from distinctive social backgrounds and that these backgrounds were similar for many leaders. For mass movements, it would be necessary to show that people from roughly similar social positions were doing roughly similar things. This would lead us to ask what might be important questions to ask about these large-scale movements (*continue with this line of argument, focusing on extending the perspective into new areas.*)

M. Eugenia Deerman

University of Michigan

ASSIGNMENT: PORTFOLIO

Introduction to the assignment

Over the course of the term you will develop a “social problem portfolio.” The idea is to encourage students to independently explore a social problem of their choice. Much of your interpretive analysis will emerge from the discussions within your team. Teams should strive for a variety of social problems. You are required to develop your own data and analysis; having a unique social problem will facilitate this for you. Furthermore, each file must contain distinctive materials.

Goals

- Acquire specific library research skills
- Learn to annotate articles
- Differentiate scholarly from popular media accounts
- Produce a term paper you are proud of!

And most importantly, **develop your own understanding of a social problem that matters to you!**

The assignments outlined below will generate your portfolio. In creating this portfolio you will learn and practice research skills, critical writing, and interpretive analysis. Although each assignment is structured, I expect you to think creatively about how to fulfill the requirements and choose the items that go in your portfolio. In your write-ups make clear what it was about the piece that moved you to choose it rather than the many others available. The quality of the whole portfolio depends on your imaginative talents.

Realize that I may not be familiar with the items that end up in your portfolio and this is your chance to demonstrate your own intellectual talents and capabilities. Through the portfolio you take on the role of educator and this means you must take responsibility for engaging your audience (in this case, me). Let me know what it is that interested you and why.

Overview of the assignments

1. Choose your problem and find 10 articles on it.
2. Compare a scholarly account of your problem to a popular media account.
3. Annotate your 10 articles on the problem.
4. Outline your term paper.
5. Find newspaper accounts of your problem.
6. Develop your thinking on your social problem into a draft of your term paper.
7. Write a short essay reflecting on your engagement with the problem.
8. Bring together all of your work into a compelling and convincing term paper. The paper will be graded in the context of your portfolio. A solid portfolio is necessary for a solid term paper. Do not count on a “strong finish” to bring up your grade!

Brenda Forster

Elmhurst College

GUIDELINE: ACADEMIC HONESTY: USING THE IDEAS OF OTHERS APPROPRIATELY

Academic credit is granted when a student has demonstrated that he or she is competent in something. This means a student has presented evidence to demonstrate first-hand knowledge of the content for which he or she is attempting to earn credit. The following procedures are appropriate ways to utilize the ideas of others when a student submits evidence of being competent in a subject:

- (1) When someone else's work or scholarship is a part of material submitted to demonstrate competency, the source of the material should be given credit. It should not be stated or implied that such material is the student's own work.
 - (a) When using exact material from a publication (i.e., book, journal, article, film, etc.) that material should be enclosed in quotation marks or otherwise set off and the source of the material should be acknowledged.
 - (b) When paraphrasing published material (i.e., putting the idea in one's own words but drawing the idea from some author) the source should also be acknowledged.
 - (c) Material written by another student should **NOT** be used. Such use is considered cheating and will result in automatic failure for all parties involved. Students may discuss ideas together, but each should do his/her own write-up in his/her own words.
 - (d) Material should be prepared jointly with one or more other individuals only with the permission of the instructor. The contributions of all individuals to this material should be clearly acknowledged when it is submitted.
 - (e) Having someone else prepare material for a student to submit should **NOT** be done.
- (2) The same piece of work should be submitted for credit in more than one course only with the permission of all instructors involved.
- (3) A student should refuse to make work available to another student who intends to submit part or all of that work as if that other student has written it. Do not allow another student to borrow your paper. You can discuss ideas with other students but must do your own write-up in your own words.
- (4) As a general rule no more than 1/3 to 1/2 of the paper should consist of the ideas of experts. The majority of the writing should reflect the student's own understanding and analysis.
- (5) **See the 1998-99 Elmhurst College E-Book pp. 66-72 for more specifics and examples.**

Brenda Forster

Elmhurst College

GUIDELINE: DEBATE ORAL PRESENTATION FORMAT

Debates are not a summary of author information. You should draw arguments from both the pro and con authors, the course text and reading, course films and discussion, and your own ideas. The example below uses the information on Syllabus p. 23.

Your debate oral presentation should run about 5 minutes. The debate format is as follows (an example outline):

Introduction: *[Introduce your debate by using the **Analytic Framework** (p. 5) problem information -- type, major problem, level, scope, trend. Then identify the first side.]*

To begin, I will argue that legalization of psychoactive substances, especially marijuana, is beneficial to society for two (2) reasons.

Body PRO: First, psychoactive drugs such as marijuana meet a natural human need to relax and enjoy experiences.

[Give some data, research, case examples, expert quotes, or other evidence to develop this point.]

Second, there is greater harm from criminalization of psychoactive substances than there is from their use.

[Give some data, research, case examples, expert quotes, or other evidence to develop this point.]

Body CON: *[Now introduce the opposing side.]*

Now I will argue the opposing view that psychoactive substances should remain illegal. First, use of psychoactive substances harms a person's functioning.

[Give some data, research, case examples, expert quotes, or other evidence to develop this point.]

Second, there will be even greater personal and societal harm if psychoactive substances are made legal.

[Give some data, research, case examples, expert quotes, or other evidence to develop this point.]

Conclusion: In conclusion, there are two (2) strong reasons why psychoactive substances should be legalized. First, just as humans meet natural needs by eating foods, humans meet natural needs in altering their states of consciousness. *[Expand a bit why this is important.]* Second, there are disproportionate personal and societal dysfunctions created by criminalization of psychoactive substances for which there is need and demand. *[Expand a bit.]*

However, the opposing side counters with two (2) strong reasons to maintain criminalization of "recreational" psychoactive substances. First, there is the personal, familial, and societal loss from the secondary physical, psychological, and economic harms from use of illegal substances. *[Expand a bit.]* And second, the situation at all levels will be worsened by widespread legal availability of currently illegal substances. *[Expand a bit.]*

As I have shown, there are significant concerns on both sides of the legalization of psychoactive substances debate.

Brenda Forster

Elmhurst College

**GUIDELINE: COLLECTING INFORMATION (DATA) FROM STUDENT'S SERVICE LEARNING
EXPERIENCE FOR USE IN FINAL PROJECT**

Obtain whatever **printed information** about the program that is available. Ask your agency contact person for descriptive documents and reports. They may not generally distribute such documents but likely will share them with you if you ask.

Keep a journal in which you jot down your observations, experiences, reactions, etc., for each involvement, including the orientation. Do your writing as soon as possible after the experience so you have a clear memory. You want to consider the kinds of people being helped, how the service is delivered, successes and problems with the service, and reactions to it.

Your final paper will focus on a critique of solutions for the problem being addressed as follows.

Intro

Problem

History and effects (#1,2a,2b)

Analysis of solution(s)

What is your agency doing and why (#2k-2m)

Critique (#2k-2m)

Strengths and weaknesses

What not addressed

Alternative views (ideology)

Conclusion (#3)

What you learned

What changes you'd suggest

People, Power, Politics [general education] applications

Brenda Forster

Elmhurst College

GUIDELINE: ORAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION SHEET

NAME _____

COURSE _____

DATE _____

CRITERIA

1. Sociological concepts, framework, and perspectives were explicitly used for analyzing and organizing the material. **[Concepts Use]***
2. The listener was explicitly made aware of how the material being presented was relevant to sociological concepts and issues; ties to course materials given. **[Logic]**
3. The speaker's presentation was knowledgeable and accurate; citations were used from course and other sources. **[Knowledge]**
4. The speaker presented the material in a well-organized manner with introduction, main points, and conclusion. **[Organization]**
5. Important ideas, concepts, and salient features were concisely and clearly presented to the listener; a summary and conclusion was used to emphasize points. **[Clarity]**
6. The high points of the presentation were acceptably impressed in the listener's mind by illustrations, and/or reinforcement, and/or other means; the presentation was dynamic and interesting. **[Delivery Dynamics]**

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Score</u>	
Excellently	85-100 points	1.
Well	65-84 points	2.
All Right	50-64 points	3.
Poorly	40-49 points	4.
Extremely Poorly	0-39 points	5.
		6.
		Total 600

500-600 (A)	Demonstrates superior command of the theories and principles from the course.
400-499 (B)	Good work. Demonstrates solid command of the theories and principles from the course.
300-399 (C)	Fair work. Demonstrates adequate command of the theories and principles from the course.
250-299 (D)	Marginal work. Demonstrates little command of the theories and principles from the course.
0-249 (F)	Unacceptable. Demonstrates lack of command of the subject matter.

***NOTE:** Failure to explicitly use sociological terms in presenting information will lead to a grade of not more than a D no matter how dynamic and knowledgeable the presentation. The main objective is to explicitly use sociological concepts.

Brenda Forster

Elmhurst College

GUIDELINE: EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN WORK

The following is the evaluation form that will be used in evaluating all written projects. The bracketed numbers represent the approximate weight given to each of the components.

Theoretical Ideas (200)

Constructs (120)	Use of the sociological framework and perspective covered in the course to approach the topic
Labels (80)	Explicit application of sociological concepts to the problem being discussed; concepts and technical words used where appropriate; citations utilized

Creativity (170)

Novelty of Ideas (100)	Putting together diverse concepts to shed light on a problem; analyzing facts to reach a unique solution or conclusion
Uniqueness of Approach (70)	Handling a topic originally and analytically

Clarity (130)

Logic (80)	Arguments or analytic points enumerated concisely, precisely, fully
Language (50)	Ideas understandable, clear, specific

Organization (100)

Sequencing (60)	Ideas and information given as needed to fully develop each topic and point
Structure (40)	Headings, topic sentences, summary, conclusions provided and appropriate to the topic

Style*

Format -- introduction, clear sections and transitions between sections, conclusion

Grammar -- proper sentence structure and use of words.

Spelling -- correct spelling and tense of words used; run spellcheck function.

Proofreading -- typographical errors, erasures, other errors corrected in final copy.

Legibility -- a readable copy typed or computer-printed, double-spaced.

Citations -- sources of data, quotes, or paraphrased information given using abbreviated

APA format (author initial and page number in parentheses in the text).

*Although specific points will not be taken off for style problems, they will be noted on the first paper and will affect the clarity and organization points. Consistent errors (unchanged in subsequent papers) will lead to reduction in points for those papers.

Shelly K. Habel

Whitman College

ASSIGNMENT: THE CODE OF THE STREET

Elijah Anderson discusses the social and cultural dynamics of the interpersonal violence in the city, which he sees as undermining the quality of life in many urban neighborhoods. According to Anderson, there are two orientations that spring from the circumstances of life among the poor in the ghetto: that of "decent" families and of "street" families. Consider Anderson's analysis in the context of the characters in *Monster*. Begin by outlining the values that are at the heart of the code of the streets, then apply those to the situations *Monster* finds himself in.

Once you have done this, outline the values that are at the heart of "decent" families. To the best of your ability, examine Cedric Jennings' life in the context of this typology.

Compare and contrast the two outlines and try to explain Cedric's and *Monster*'s behavior based on Anderson's analysis of life in the city. Provide specific examples that illustrate your answers. How well does Anderson's framework explain these two individual's experiences? What are the strengths and weaknesses of his analysis? Explain your critique of his typologies in a paragraph or two.

What you need to turn in:

- one detailed outline each of decent and street family values
- group responses to each of the statements/questions in paragraph 3

Shelly K. Habel

Whitman College

ASSIGNMENT: CRIME, FEAR, MEDIA, AND STATISTICS

Part 1

As a group, tally the averages for each of the sources listed below. Once you have done this, discuss and record as a group, why these sources affect you to the degree that they do. You may write your responses on the back of this sheet.

_____ Direct personal experiences (e.g., serving on a jury; having been a victim of crime; working professionally in some component of the criminal justice system; participating in a community crime watch program)

_____ Education/training experiences (e.g., courses taken in high school and/or college; special training courses such as reserve officer training or police academy course; reading related professional journals)

_____ Entertainment sources/media (e.g., fictional movies related to crime; fictional TV programs related to crime; crime-related novels).

_____ Indirect personal experiences (e.g., family member or close friend who has served on a jury; who has been a victim of a crime; who works or has worked professionally in some component of the criminal justice system; who participates or has participated in a community crime watch program)

_____ Information and/or “info-tainment” sources/media (e.g., TV magazine programs such as “60 Minutes” or “48 Hours”; check-out counter newspapers such as National Enquirer; TV programs based on “true” crime stories such as “Hard Copy”; popular crime-related magazines such as *True Detective*)

_____ News sources/media (e.g., news articles in newspapers; national news on radio; local news on radio; news magazines such as *Newsweek* or *U.S. News*; local news on television; national news on television)

_____ Opinion sources/media (e.g., radio talk shows such as Larry King; TV talk shows such as Geraldo, Donahue, or Oprah Winfrey; popular magazines such as *Readers Digest*; newspaper editorials)

Part 2

Discuss your fears as they are explained in the handout entitled Crime & Fear. These fears should be compared and contrasted with your findings from the crime data you gathered. How do your perceptions agree or disagree with what the actual crime statistics suggest? What are the implications of any mismatch between perception and reality as it is presented in the crime statistics? You may write your responses on the back of this sheet.

Shelly K. Habel

Whitman College

ASSIGNMENT: GROUP PROJECT: CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Public opinion polls consistently show that substantial portions of Americans see violent crime as one of the most important problems facing our nation. Such concern is certainly not without warrant, for the United States is perhaps the most violent nation in the post-industrialized world. Images of violence that appear so prominently in entertainment television and film are matched with alarming regularity by the real-life acts of violence we read about in our newspapers and see recounted on television news. In fact, the most logical conclusion to be reached by anyone who relies solely on media coverage is that the rate of violent crime is at an all-time high and continues to rise. My question to you is, is this really the case?

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Go to Penrose Memorial Library and update the statistics for the following five tables with the most recent data available to you. Record your results in the blank boxes of the tables below.
2. Answer the seven questions that follow the tables in essay format. Write a one two to three page summary of your findings. Explain how these findings contribute to the study of social problems as they apply to gender issues in the United States. Use the assigned readings, as applicable, to support your arguments. ***Each member of the group must sign the summary before it is turned in.***
3. ***Include at least five other new references.*** For each of these references, you must include an annotation, which summarizes the text, identifies the audience and critiques the content (strengths and weaknesses, point of view, etc.). Attach this annotation to the end of your assignment, but include the references in your regular bibliography.

TABLE 1 CRIMES OF VIOLENCE PER 100,000 POPULATION

Year	NCVS Estimate	UCR Estimate
199?	?	?
1992	3210	301
1983	3100	221
1973	3260	187

TABLE 2 VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION PER 100,000 BY TYPE OF CRIME

Year	Female Rape	Robbery	Assault	Homicide*
199?	?	?	?	?
1992	80	580	2550	9.3
1983	140	600	2410	8.3
1973	180	670	2490	9.3

*UCR Estimate

TABLE 3 VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION PER 100,000 BY AGE OF VICTIM

Year	12-15	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
199?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
1992	7570	7790	7010	3760	2120	1000	480
1983	5130	6480	6010	4110	2040	900	550
1973	5560	6140	6430	3460	2160	1310	850

TABLE 4 VIOLENT VICTIMIZATIONS PER 100,000 BY RACE OF VICTIM

Year	Caucasian	African-American
199?	?	?
1992	2990	5040
1983	2990	4060
1973	3160	4170

TABLE 5 MURDER VICTIMS (15 TO 19 YEARS OLD) BY TYPE OF WEAPON USED*

Year	Gun	Cutting/Stabbing	Blunt Object	Personal	Other
199?	?	?	?	?	?
1992	2433	230	40	34	114
1983	891	326	56	67	95
1973	1005	271	58	46	96

*UCR data used in this table.

QUESTIONS

1. Do the trends in the estimates of violent crimes for the period 1973-1992 in Table 1 continue to hold in the years for which you collected the data? If not, is there any reason to think the more recent data reflect a real change in the trends reported above as opposed to the normal fluctuation we might expect to find from one year to the next? If so, what might account for such a change?
2. Do the trends in violent victimizations for the period 1973-1992 reported in Table 2 continue to hold as well? If not, is there any reason to think the more recent data reflect a real change in the trends reported above as opposed to the normal fluctuation we might find from one year to the next? If so, what might account for such a change?
3. Do the trends in violent victimizations for the period 1973-1992 reported in Table 3 continue to hold? If not, is there any reason to think the more recent data reflect a real change in the trends reported above as opposed to the normal fluctuation we might find from one year to the next? If so, what might account for such a change?
4. Do the trends in violent victimizations for the period 1973-1992 reported in Table 4 continue to hold? If not, is there any reason to think the more recent data reflect a real change in the trends reported above as opposed to the normal fluctuation we might find from one year to the next? If so, what might account for such a change?
5. Do the trends in violent victimizations for the period 1973-1992 reported in Table 5 continue to hold? If not, is there any reason to think the more recent data reflect a real change in the trends reported above as opposed to the normal fluctuation we might find from one year to the next? If so, what might account for such a change?
6. Given the information discussed in class and in the readings, what steps can society take to reduce the threat of violent crime?
7. What are some of the key obstacles we face in reducing the threat of violent crime?

GRADING CRITERIA (25 points)

1. Self and group assessment
 - ◆ Completed and submitted day assignment is completed
2. How well does the essay address and fulfill the assignment?
 - ◆ Interesting
 - ◆ Enlightens with useful, current, relevant information
 - ◆ Clear organization and shows evidence of thoughtful preparation and thought
3. How well do the authors demonstrate their grasp of course concepts?
 - ◆ Essay is specifically related to course concepts and objectives? Are these articulated in your writing?
 - ◆ How well do the authors use those concepts in building their analysis of the topic?
 - ◆ How well do the authors use examples (from class materials, own research, etc.) to support his/her argument? Are the examples factually correct?
4. Bibliography
 - ◆ Includes at least 5 relevant citations from varied sources (in addition to the ones assigned for this reading)
 - ◆ Citation format correct (see ASA Style Guide)

Shelly K. Habel

Whitman College

ASSIGNMENT: GROUP PROJECT: DEEP VIEWING*

The purpose of this exercise is to become aware of our culture as we perceive it and construct it through communicable images and categories. This technique provides an experience of the possibilities and limitations imposed by the availability of pre-existing images and categories. Clear parallels can be drawn here with culture as a process by which images and categories are made differentially available to social groups. To achieve an understanding of this culture and the implicit messages conveyed you are to become actively engaged with an advertisement. This will involve a systematic process known as “Deep Viewing” (Himley 1991), which is a method for critically analyzing, understanding and interacting with information.

As with other group assignments, you should assign each group member a different role. Although there is no facilitator assigned in the original group roles, someone should take on the duties of discussion facilitator. The written report that you turn in should specifically address bullet items in First Level Analysis, bullet items 4 and 5; Second Level Analysis, bullet items 5 and 6; and, Third Level Analysis, bullet item 6. Also note that you are required to turn in all individual notes, (responding to First Level Analysis, bullet item 2; Second Level Analysis, bullet items 1 and 2; and, Third Level Analysis, bullet item 5) as well as the written summary of the Deep Viewing exercise. **Failure to complete the individual response as part of the group exercise will result in up to a 20% grade reduction for that individual.**

CODES FOR ANALYSIS

1. **Action/Sequence** Notes events in the text through oral discussion, written notes and/or visual devices like flow charts and time lines. They also note relationships of time. *They ask: What happens? When and how long do events take place?*
2. **Semes/Forms** Semes are units of visual meaning. Notes forms in the text – both objects and people. Examine the characteristics of these forms: colors, textures, repeated, emphasized and contrasted forms (i.e., objects that are paired with other objects like lightness with darkness), as well as the appearance, types of dress, and features of actors. Intersected lists are a good way to record information for this category. *They ask: What objects are seen? What are their traits?*
3. **Actors/Discourse** Examines what the characters/actors say. They note words and phrases that may sum up main ideas or themes, repeated language, terms particular to a group, or language that seems out of place. Also notes qualities of what is heard: the tone, rate pitch of voices, and the lyrics of songs in a production. *They ask: What words are said? How are they heard?*
4. **Proximity/Movement** Examines all movement, including gestures and movements of characters/actors and other forms. They note vectorality (where objects or actors move), relationships (how the forms move in relation to each other), and dimensions and relative sizes (does one form dominate by standing in front?). *They ask: what sorts of movements occur?*
5. **Culture/Context** Notes the symbolic and discourse references to cultural knowledge like science, art, educational practice, or popular culture. *They ask: What social knowledge is referred to and assumed? What is implied? What is missing? Where are the creators and actors in this text situated historically and culturally?*
6. **Effects/Process** Examines “Artistic devices”: the use and repetition of techniques, quality of visual and sound effects and musical accompaniments, camera angles and technological enhancements, etc. In less sophisticated productions, viewers examine camera or observer angles, noting what is seen and missing, and posit how perspectives influence understanding. In print texts, they examine the devices used to structure the text, interest the audience, and further the author’s purpose. Focus on the quality of the text: e.g., how do factors like sound, angle of perception and focus affect meaning? *They ask: What production devices and elements are in the text?*

INSTRUCTIONS – FIRST LEVEL

4. There is no talking in the group at this point in time – it is an individual activity!
5. Level one is literal. *Describe only what you see and hear – do not interpret or evaluate.*
6. Observe within each focus or code. While viewing the advertisement, participants should write notes and/or draw diagrams as they view and talk. Record questions that puzzle you.

7. After viewing, go around the group, each reading aloud your notes about what you have seen and heard in the text. Describe only what you perceive in the text. The recorder should record the observations.
8. Summarize. Remain brief, but remain as true as possible to what each participant feels or perceives is the main point of his/her observation. Recorder underlines or summarizes main ideas.

INSTRUCTIONS – SECOND LEVEL

1. The purpose of Level Two is to explore a range of interpretations and responses to the data made explicit in Level One. There are no single “right answers,” but a range of possible interpretations. For example, “The symbol X was repeated four times throughout the text,” or “The image of Y was often paired with the image of Z.” Continue by asking yourself (There is no talking in the group at this point in time – it is an individual activity!):
 - ☞ What the connotations of symbol X are (e.g., of freedom, entrapment, good, evil, etc.). Also ask yourself what objects were repeated most?
 - ☞ Which ones are paired? Why?
 - ☞ What feelings, memories, and thoughts do you associate with these symbols?
 - ☞ In what other texts (forms of media) have you encountered these symbols?
 - ☞ What might they mean to a person from a culture different than yours?
 - ☞ What did you expect to see that was missing?
 - ☞ Why do you think the creators used these particular symbols? Would you use the same ones? Why or why not?
2. Begin to note a particular strategy like persuasion, a specific issue like stereotypes, a theme stressed in class materials, or guided inquiry into connections between the current text (advertisement) and others (forms of media). Note what the artistic devices used are and what the possible motivations for their use are. For example, ask yourself:
 - ☞ Why is this subject viewed from below? Does this connote power or respect?
 - ☞ How do the special effects enhance or detract from the text?
 - ☞ How am I aware of how devices are used?
 - ☞ What responses do I have to them?
 - ☞ How many different angles and effects can you identify?
 - ☞ How do these devices capture the viewer’s interest?
 - ☞ What sorts of devices were used to develop the story?
 - ☞ How are they used?
 - ☞ What devices are used to create feelings in the viewer, like suspense or tension?
3. Often, some of the responses drawn from codes of analysis will begin to overlap at this level. This overlap is desirable, but in Level Two, focus on each individual code of analysis until all observations are completed.
4. Go around the group again, but this time each viewer makes an observation. These observations should be based upon explicit aspects of the text (advertisement). Note what is present and what is missing. Begin with observations that are readily apparent and move to more inferential levels as you continue.
5. Talk at this level continues until group members agree that their observations are complete and are ready to move into the third level.

INSTRUCTIONS – THIRD LEVEL

1. The purpose of Level Three is to synthesize, to evaluate and to apply the information and interpretations made explicit in the first two levels. During this level, there is no cross talk in groups until each participant has had two uninterrupted turns. Viewers may talk in any order and question each other. In this level, participants should start with one particular analytical code focus, and then may progress to a discussion of the other codes.
2. Begin to make broader inferences about the text’s meaning. Besides making more speculative comments, participants now indicate their likes and dislikes about aspects of the text (advertisement).
3. Participants should also pose questions. Discuss these questions and respond in your groups. Be explicit about textual and personal connection. Say “I” when expressing an opinion or observation; say “in the text,” when expressing perceptions of what you noted at the literal level.
4. At this level, the codes will overlap, as participants draw from the findings of other group members.
5. Participants should relate the text to their own experiences, expectations, feelings and knowledge.
6. Those taking on the role of facilitator should allow reflective pauses in order for participants to assimilate and to formulate ideas. Questions and responses are discussed in the groups until members agree that the topic has been exhausted, and then a group summary is written, describing the findings the group sees as particularly

interesting or important. *The facilitator should be alert at this level, to keep participants on task.*

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* This handout was adapted and developed in coordination with Ann Watts Pailliotet, 1999, Whitman College, Department of Education.

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ASSIGNMENT: GROUP PROJECT: STRATIFICATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Generally speaking, many people think of the US as a more or less equal society, especially since we have never had a titled aristocracy and, with the exception of our racial history, this nation has never known a caste system that rigidly ranks categories of people. Quite often, in fact, we often see ourselves as a middle class society. Despite this, inequalities do exist. Inequality, however, does not necessarily mean that class is all that important. In fact, for many Americans, class is not seen as very important because most people believe that regardless of social class, everyone has about the same chance to get ahead in society. What really justifies the US stratification system is the idea of “equality of opportunity.”

But what exactly do “stratification” and “equality of opportunity” look like in our society? What are the impacts of social inequality on the lives of contemporary Americans? We cannot begin to answer these questions without taking some initial steps. Let’s first take a look at the most basic collective within society: the household. This unit can be made up of as few as one person and as many as ten.

To begin this part of the exercise, make a list of important household budget items that a family needs in order to survive. Your list must include rent/mortgage, food, utilities, transportation, insurance, clothing, education and savings. Other things you might want to include are childcare, entertainment, pets, the list goes on. ***If you don’t know how much each of these items costs per week or month, find out!*** You may ask your parents or friends if you need help with this. Bring this list with you to the next class period.

GOOD LUCK!

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EXERCISE: SELF ASSESSMENT - SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

To the best of your ability, please respond to the following questions in the space provided. Feel free to attach additional sheets if you need more space. ***Failure to turn this assessment form in on time will result in a 5% per day grade reduction.*** This reduction will occur on your final participation grade at the end of the semester.

1. Describe your experience of being in another person's socioeconomic position.
2. Describe your perception of distributive justice as being more or less complex as a result of this activity.
3. Were there any changes in your level of knowledge about issues of stratification as a result of this learning activity? Explain in detail any changes you observed. If there were no changes, please explain why you think this is so.
4. Were there any changes in your attitudes toward any issues related to social stratification (such as welfare, national spending, etc.) as a result of this activity? Explain in detail any changes you observed. If there were no changes, please explain why you think this is so.
5. Give one specific example of something you learned from the group that you probably wouldn't have learned working alone. Explain.
6. Give one specific example of something the other group members learned from you that they probably wouldn't have learned working alone. Explain.

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ASSIGNMENT: THE INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Assignment Description

This quiz will allow you to become familiar with one of the most difficult tasks in social science. It requires a degree of objectivity, it demands an awareness of common pitfalls; and, it requires an accumulation of factual knowledge. Data lead nowhere by themselves, but must be interpreted before they have meaning. The first problem is to establish with reasonable certainty whether the data are “true.” The popular faith that “they couldn’t say those things if there weren’t some truth in them” underestimates both the skill of developing a persuasive argument and the unintended distortion inherent in one’s frame of reference.

The Interpretation of Data

Following your library skills session, you are to find the following two assigned articles from the library’s databases:

- ◆ Peter Francese, “Lies, Damned Lies . . .” in *American Demographics*, November 1994, v16 n11, p2.
- ◆ Stephen Budiansky, “Consulting the Oracle,” in *U.S. News & World Report*, December 4, 1995, v119 n22 p52 (4).

Each of these articles should make you a more critical consumer of the arguments based on statistics presented to you in your everyday life. Once you have found and read these two articles, use your newly acquired expertise in searching Whitman’s databases to find yet another article on which you can exercise your critical mind. You may choose an article on any topic from any newspaper, magazine or journal, **but it must have some sort of poll that you can comment on.**

In one page, briefly address the following issues:

1. Briefly summarize the main finding of this study.
2. What is the population to which the findings of this survey can be generalized?
3. Comment on the sample – how was it drawn? Was it representative? Why or why not?
4. Were the types of questions asked and the research design valid? Why or why not?
5. Could this research have been improved?

Criteria for Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the accuracy with which you apply the concepts of research design and clarity with which you support and explain your assertions.

**As is the case with all out-of-class assignments, the assignment must be typed and double-spaced, using 12 point font and one inch margins!*

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ASSIGNMENT: MONSTER

There are a number of sociological phenomena that you could take issue with in the book *Monster*. Although this is the case, I would like you to concentrate on one of three topics by writing a five to six page essay (typed, double-spaced, page numbers, one inch margins, twelve point font, ASA style citations) in response to the questions posed. Note that there is a page restriction on this assignment and that you should be able to complete this assignment in the space allotted. This page count does not include your bibliography.

In addition to using the text itself to write your essay, you are also required to include at least five references, two of which must be references you acquire through your own independent research. The other three may be course materials, but may also be new references. The book itself does not comprise one of the five references. You are to use these references to support or refute your ideas as stated in the paper.

Last but not least, you are required to apply one of the sociological theories discussed in class to guide your analysis. Now, each and any one of these theoretical paradigms is appropriate to apply, so long as you clearly illustrate the connection between your theoretical applications and the point you are trying to make. The purpose of the application is that your analysis will be ordered in such a way that it follows directly from the tenets of the paradigm you choose. You are also free to use more than one theoretical paradigm, if you deem this appropriate. It may be wise to refer back to one of the theory handouts you were given in class to help you identify the main tenets of the theory and to develop your argument.

The Code of the Street

Elijah Anderson (1999) discusses the social and cultural dynamics of the interpersonal violence in the city, which he sees as undermining the quality of life in many urban neighborhoods. According to Anderson, there are two orientations that spring from the circumstances of life among the poor in the ghetto: "Although there are often forces which can counteract the negative influences, by far the most powerful being a strong, loving, 'decent' family that is committed to middle- class values, the despair is pervasive enough to have spawned an oppositional culture, that of 'the street,' whose norms are often consciously opposed to those of mainstream society" (Anderson, 347:1999). Ultimately, children who grow up under these kinds of circumstances must learn to live and cope with the reality of their lives.

Carefully and thoroughly consider Anderson's analysis, as it applies to the families and individuals in *Monster*. Begin by outlining the values that are at the heart of the code of the streets, as they are illustrated in *Monster*. What purpose does the code serve for individuals, as they apply to the figures in the book? Once you have done this, describe the socialization of street children into the code of the streets as it is illustrated in *Monster*. What do they personally gain for themselves and their family if they are able to learn and use the code of the streets? What are the short and long term consequences of this socialization for the individual, the community and society? What are the specific social problems that develop as a result of this socialization? What can we, as a society, do to change the gang situation, as it is portrayed in *Monster*?

The War on Crime

Steven Donziger, in his piece entitled "The Real War on Crime," examines two recent trends in American criminal justice policy. He claims that the increases in the number of prisons and severity of sentencing cannot be tied to the general amount of crime and suggests that these policies follow directly from an increasing fear of crime. Politicians successfully prey on the public's fears and are able to funnel tax money into prison construction and "get tough" legislation. Consider the construction of new prisons and the three common forms of "get tough" legislation in Donziger's article in the context of *Monster*. If "get tough" legislation were applied to the individuals in *Monster*, what would the practical outcome of this legislation be for the individuals and the community? Is incapacitation the answer to the gang and crime problems as they are illustrated in *Monster*?

Explain why, according to Donziger, putting money into incarceration is a "plan for social failure" and illustrate your answer with evidence from the text. Does Donziger make a convincing case that reducing social inequality in the United States will reduce the amount of crime more effectively than longer periods of incarceration? Would reducing inequality in Monster's world help solve the gang problem? Why or why not? What else would contribute to resolving the gang problem? Use specific examples from the book and outside research to illustrate your answers.

The "Bad" Genes?

Deviance is not an inherent feature of certain behaviors. Instead, it is a consequence of a definitional process. However, in recent years, the field of biomedical research has been particularly influential in creating and applying explanations of deviance. In "Elvis's DNA," Nelkin and Lindee explore our culture's fondness for genetic explanations of deviant behavior. They claim that by attributing "evil" to some inherent genetic flaw, we, as a society, are spared the threatening task of questioning the role our long-stranding social arrangements play in creating criminal behavior.

Consider Nelkin and Lindee's explanation in the context of *Monster*. Why is there such a strong tendency in this society to look to biological causes of "bad" behavior? Is Monster just a victim of his own defective genes? Who, in society, benefits from such explanations of deviance? Who in *Monster* would benefit from this kind of explanation? What are the potential dangers of this kind of argument? If Monster is "evil" due to his genetic make-up, what are the problems and consequences of this claim? Suppose that criminal or addictive behavior (overeating, gambling, alcoholism, etc.) could, in fact, be traced to a single "deviant gene." What then would be the most effective way to control deviance? How would you control Monster? How would the existence of this gene affect the public perception of criminals and addicts? Would the public perception of Monster change if he were genetically defective? Would deviant identities in general be more or less stigmatized? Explain. Use specific examples from the book and outside research to illustrate your answers.

References

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ASSIGNMENT: OUR GUYS

There are a number of sociological phenomena that you could take issue with in the book *Our Guys*. Although this is the case, I would like you to concentrate on one of three topics by writing a five to six page essay (typed, double-spaced, page numbers, one inch margins, twelve point font, ASA style citations) in response to the questions posed. Note that there is a page restriction on this assignment and that you should be able to complete this assignment in the space allotted. This page count does not include your bibliography.

In addition to using the text itself to write your essay, you are also required to include at least five references, two of which must be references you acquire through your own independent research. The other three may be course materials, but may also be new references. The book itself does not comprise one of the five references. You are to use these references to support or refute your ideas as stated in the paper.

Last but not least, you are required to apply one of the sociological theories discussed in class to guide your analysis. Now, each and any one of these theoretical paradigms is appropriate to apply, so long as you clearly illustrate the connection between your theoretical applications with the point you are trying to make. The purpose of the application is that your analysis will be ordered in such a way that it follows directly from the tenets of the paradigm you choose. You are also free to use more than one theoretical paradigm, if you deem this appropriate. It may be wise to refer back to one of the theory handouts you were given in class to help you identify the main tenets of the theory and to develop your argument.

Sport as a Social Institution

An institution is an enduring set of ideas about how to accomplish goals generally recognized as important to society (Johnson 1995). Institutions differ from one another by focusing on different social functions. Like most aspects of social life, institutions are experienced as external to the individuals who participate in them; but they are also shaped and changed by that participation.

Based on this definition, explain why Coach Travis Feezell views sports as one of the major social institutions in the United States. How is sport experienced as external to the individual? How is sport shaped and changed by the individuals who participate in it? What role do American values play in the creation of this social institution and the social problems that are associated with sport as a social institution? Provide examples from *Our Guys*, outside research and your own experiences to support your answers to each of these questions.

Gender Socialization as a Social Problem

Cooper Thompson, in his piece entitled "A New Vision of Masculinity," discusses a variety of ways in which American society socializes its young men. Discuss the various ways in which this socialization plays out in *Our Guys*, providing specific examples from the text. Once you give consideration to what happens in the text, discuss the greater implications of the ways boys are socialized. What function does gender socialization serve in our society? What happens as boys grow older and accept adult roles? What are the specific social problems that develop as a result of this socialization? How can we, as a society, change this process of socialization? Use specific examples from the book, outside research and your own experience to illustrate your answers.

The Social Construction of Gender

Our Guys illustrates and underscores discussions of gender socialization and specifically, gender discrimination. According to Judith Lorber and Michael Messner, gender is a socially constructed concept, as opposed to sex, which is a biological category (Lorber 1998; Messner 1999). Why do they make this assertion? On what do they base this claim?

What examples from *Our Guys* illustrate the social construction of gender? What is the interplay between gender construction and gender discrimination? What reasons do some of the authors (Cooper, Messner, Sabo, Gonzales, Stomblor and Lefkowitz) present for the gender discrimination that takes place throughout *Our Guys*? What social

institutions are involved in gender socialization and in what way do they socialize individuals? How are these social institutions closely intertwined and how do they enable/facilitate the gender discrimination that is evident in *Our Guys*? Lastly, consider how gender discrimination affects all of us. Use specific examples from the book, outside research and your own experience to illustrate your answers.

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QUIZ: UNOFFICIAL SCHOOLING IN AMERICA*

This is a little quiz about some educationally related matters. Try and answer the 40 questions to the best of your knowledge. Sure, there are some trick questions, but don't let that dissuade you!

Population/Enrollment Demographics

1. What is the population of the United States (right now)? _____
2. What percent of the population of the U.S. is:
White? _____
Black? _____
Hispanic? _____
Asian? _____
American Indian or Eskimo? _____
**Hispanics can be of several races, according to the government.*
3. Which of the above population groups is growing the fastest? The slowest?
Fastest? _____
Slowest? _____
4. By the year 2010, what percent of the population of the U.S. will be non-white? _____
5. How many young people are enrolled in school (elementary through high School, public and private)? _____
6. Have private school enrollments gone up or down in the past 25 years? _____
7. The 3 to 5 year olds of which group has the highest pre-school enrollment?
The poor _____
The middle class _____
The rich _____
All about the same _____

Funding Issues

8. What is the total expenditure for elementary and secondary education in the US? _____
9. What percent of that amount comes from the federal government? _____
10. What is the average amount spent per pupil, K-12? _____

Societal Influences

11. What percent of US families form "traditional" (dad, mom at home, and two or more kids at school)? _____
12. What percent of births are "out-of-wedlock"? _____
13. How many marriages end in divorce? _____
14. What percent of children are being raised by a single parent? _____

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15. How many reported cases of child abuse are there? _____
 16. What percent of children under 18 live in poverty? _____
 17. What is the average monthly TANF payment received? _____
 18. What is the median family household income? _____
 19. What is the poverty level for a family of four? _____
 20. What would place a family income at the 95th income percentile? That is, what is the dollar amount of income of a family such that 95% of families make less than this amount? _____
 21. Is the gap between the rich and the poor narrowing, widening, or staying about the same? _____

Retention & Educational Attainment

22. Is the high school dropout rate higher or lower than 25 years ago?
Higher _____
Lower _____
About the same _____
23. What percent of young adults (16-24) are high school dropouts? _____
24. What percent of high school graduates are enrolled in a 2 or 4-year college the October after graduating from high school? _____
25. What is the average cost per year of a 4-year private college education (including room & board)? _____
26. What is the average cost per year of a 4-year public college education (including room & board)? _____
27. What percent of persons over 25 have:
High School diploma _____
Associate's degree _____
Bachelor's degree _____
Master's degree _____
Professional degrees (e.g., law, medicine) _____
Doctorate (Ph.D.) _____
28. What is the median income for women with bachelor's degree (full-time workers)? _____
29. What is the median income for men with bachelor's degree (full-time workers)? _____
30. True or False: Falling SAT scores show that student achievement in schools is declining. _____
31. True or False: American schools are second-rate compared to those in other industrialized countries. _____

Drugs, Violence & Other Serious Problems

32. What percent of high school seniors reported ever having used the following in the last 30 days?
Cigarettes _____
Any illicit drug _____
Marijuana only _____
Cocaine _____
33. What do you think are the most serious problems in public schools? List three _____

34. How many children were murdered in schools last year? _____

35. How many children died from gunfire last year? _____

Expectations

36. Besides basic education, list three “very important” goals for the nation’s schools.
- Item #1 _____
Item #2 _____
Item #3 _____
37. In two recent surveys, personnel directors were asked to rank the five most important and five least important skills needed by workers. What do you think were one of each?
- Most important _____
Least important _____

Media & Education

38. According to television, having fun in America means:
- a) Going blonde
 - b) Drinking Pepsi
 - c) Playing Nintendo
 - d) Reading
39. A good way to gain a high income and acquire status in our society is to:
- a) Win a slam-dunk contest
 - b) Take over a company and sell off its assets
 - c) Start a successful rock band
 - d) Become a kindergarten teacher
40. To help learn that “history is a living thing,” Scholastic Inc., a publisher of school magazines and paperbacks, recently distributed to 40,000 junior and senior high school classrooms:
- a) Free copies of Plato’s dialogs
 - b) An abridgement of Alex de Tocqueville’s “Democracy in America”
 - c) Replicas of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address
 - d) Free copies of Billy Joel’s hit single “We Didn’t Start the Fire” (which recounts history via a vaguely chronological list of warbled celebrity names)

* This quiz is adapted from Professor Tom Callister, Fall 1999.

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ASSIGNMENT: RACE IN THE MEDIA

Both racist and egalitarian ideas and symbols can be found in every part of American history and culture. Each portion of the following exercise is intended to have you examine some part(s) of your cultural environment for examples of both racist and egalitarian messages, symbols and interactions. It should be noted that a curious and disturbing feature of prejudice is that many of our beliefs and attitudes about other racial or ethnic groups are formed without any direct contact with members from these groups. The media – most notably – television – play a significant role in providing the public with often inaccurate and oversimplified information about racial and ethnic groups that indirectly shapes public attitudes.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read the pieces listed below that are on reserve at Penrose Memorial Library.
2. Your task is to analyze a variety of television programming. Choose ***five different television programs*** (sitcom, drama, TV movie, news program, feature film, cartoon, etc.). Be sure to make note of the name of the program, the day and time it is aired and the broadcasting company. ***You must watch at least fifteen minutes of each program, excluding commercials.***
3. Use the data coding sheets attached to analyze the people, symbols, messages and interactions that you see in the television programs. In the first five tables, put “hash marks” in the appropriate box for each person, character or message that you see and hear. In the next five tables, mark the number of each type of interaction among the people or characters in the programs you observe. You will probably see several of each type in each program, so be prepared to make many hash marks recording each occurrence. You may also want to take notes for some of these instances if you find them particularly interesting or exceptional in some way.
4. Answer the three questions that follow the coding sheets (two to three pages). Explain how these findings contribute to the study of social problems as they apply to race and ethnic relations in the United States. Use the assigned readings, as applicable, to support your arguments – you must use at least one of these! You may also use outside examples or specific examples to illustrate your point.
5. ***Include at least two other new references.*** For these references, you must include an annotation, which summarizes the text, identifies the audience and critiques the content (strengths and weaknesses, point of view, etc.). Attach this annotation to the end of your assignment, but include the references in your regular bibliography.

GRADING CRITERIA (25 points)

1. How well does the essay address and fulfill the assignment?
 - ◆ Interesting
 - ◆ Enlightens with useful, current, relevant information
 - ◆ Clear organization and shows evidence of thoughtful preparation and thought
2. How well does the author demonstrate her/his grasp of course concepts?
 - ◆ Is the essay specifically related to course concepts and objectives? Are they articulated in the writing?
 - ◆ How well does he/she use those concepts in building his/her analysis of the topic?
 - ◆ How well does the author use examples (from shows, Usenet groups, WWW sites, etc.) to support his/her argument? Are the examples factually correct?
3. Bibliography
 - ◆ Includes at least 2 relevant citations from varied sources (in addition to the ones assigned for this reading)
 - ◆ Citation format correct (see ASA Style Guide)

READINGS

- ♫ CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL, 1991, “COLOR ADJUSTMENT,” PARTS I & II (87 MINUTES) (*ON RESERVE*).

- ☞ ROBERT M. ENTMAN, 1999, “AFRICAN AMERICANS ACCORDING TO TV NEWS,” IN CHARLES A. GALLAGHER, ED., *RETHINKING THE COLOR LINE*, PP. 372-6, MOUNTAINVIEW, CA: MAYFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY (*ON RESERVE*).
- ☞ ELLEN SEITER, 1995, “DIFFERENT CHILDREN, DIFFERENT DREAMS,” PP. 99-108, IN GAIL DINES & JEAN M HUMEZ, EDS. *GENDER, RACE & CLASS IN MEDIA*,” THOUSAND OAKS, CA: SAGE PUBLICATIONS (*ON RESERVE*).
- ☞ NORMA MIRIAM SCHULMAN, 1995 “LAUGHING ACROSS THE COLOR BARRIER: IN LIVING COLOR,” IN GAIL DINES & JEAN M HUMEZ, EDS., *GENDER, RACE & CLASS IN MEDIA*,” PP. 438-44, THOUSAND OAKS, CA: SAGE PUBLICATIONS (*ON RESERVE*).
- ☞ RAMÓN CHÁVEZ, 1996, “THE MEXICAN AMERICANS,” IN PAUL MARTIN LESTER, ED., *IMAGES THAT INJURE: PICTORIAL STEREOTYPES IN THE MEDIA*,” PP. 27-33, WESTPORT, CT: PRAEGER (*ON RESERVE*).

PART IA

Viewing Images and Messages of Racial Egalitarianism or Nonegalitarianism on Television

TV Show # __ :

	White	Black	Hisp.	Asian	Nat. Am.	Other
How many people or characters from each category did you see						
The central figure/star in each scene is?						
The “bad guy,” criminal, or other person shown in a negative role is?						

TOTAL

PART 1B

Viewing Images and Messages of Racial Egalitarianism or Nonegalitarianism on Television (continued)

How many of each of the following types of interactions did you observe?

TV Show # __ :

	Number of Occurrences
No interaction between minority and white characters.	
Equal status interactions between minorities and whites	
High status whites and lower status minorities.	
High status minorities and lower status whites	

TOTAL

QUESTION 1

What do you conclude from your television observations about the images and messages about racial equality and racial inequality in the United States today? For example, are some groups over-represented and under represented in egalitarian or racially stereotyped roles? Is there a pattern with respect to the portrayal of minorities in positive or negative roles? Do the plots of the shows revolve around what you might consider “racial” themes? That is, how often does the issue of race come up during the course of the show?

Summarize your research findings.

QUESTION 2

Based on your summary in question #1, what are the implicit messages communicated by the portrayal of

racial/ethnic minorities? What are the greater implications of your findings?

QUESTION 3

How do you feel about the programs you watched? What did you discover after examining them? Do you think that these programs accurately reflect your own experiences? If you were to redesign these texts, what would you keep, and what would you change? Why? List the dominant discourses in these texts. Where else have you encountered these? How do the concepts in this text reflect social beliefs or cultural norms?

PART 2A

Detecting Egalitarian and Nonegalitarian Racial Expressions in Everyday Life

Racially egalitarian and racially nonegalitarian expressions may take any number of different forms. In addition to their expression in the mass media, such expressions may occur in the words of casual conversation, in an “innocent” joke, on a bumper sticker, in the way that people work or play together, in the political arena or economic sphere – practically anywhere.

You are to carry this observation sheet with you for one day. Record the day and record in the table below specific examples of racially egalitarian and nonegalitarian messages, symbols and behaviors you experience directly or observe in the course of your day. Also, record the specific location where each observation was made. I know this may prove to be particularly challenging, but I strongly encourage you to be keenly aware of what goes on around you and to explore the possibility of doing some of these observations off campus.

	Messages	Symbols	Behavior	Location
Racial equality				
Racial inequality				

TOTAL

PART 2B

Detecting Egalitarian and Nonegalitarian Racial Expressions in Everyday Life (continued)

Now that you are more sensitive to different expressions of racial equality and inequality, the second part of this observation exercise asks that you identify specific examples of such expressions in different settings. Find examples of equality and inequality expressions in at least four of the six situations in the table below. You may provide one example from some other area of social life not noted in the list and have it count as one of the four required examples. *Note that the examples you provide here should be different from the examples used in Part 2A of this exercise!*

	Equality	Inequality	Location
School			
Family/Roommate			
Neighborhood			
Work			
Church			
Politics			
Other			

TOTAL

Good luck!

Shirley Jackson

Southern Connecticut State University

ASSIGNMENT: NON-GRADED: “♪Getting to Know You...♪”

This is a required non-graded assignment. The purpose of this assignment is two-fold. First, it helps me to discover what issues you, the student, are interested in. You are to write* a one-page, single-spaced discussion of what you know about social problems and what you hope to get out of the course. You are asked to discuss your specific areas of interest in the course material. Please do not use the course texts for this assignment! You will not be graded on what you do or do not include.

Next you will give a list of topics that you think should be of most concern to society and require our immediate attention. Explain your reasons for the problems that you list. This assignment will enable me to gain a grasp of your expectations through the content of the assignment. Your responses will be discussed at the next class meeting as we begin our discussion of social problems as you see them. We will then begin connecting what the class has submitted to the course readings. These topics will also be useful in helping you to determine your presentation topic later in the semester.

The second reason for this assignment is to allow me to get an idea of your particular writing style so I will know what to look for later in the semester. It will allow me insight into where you might need help with your writing as we progress through the course.

*This assignment may be either typed or neatly handwritten. If it is hand-written, it should be two pages in length. Correct your typos. I will give you pointers on margins, fonts, etc., so don't be surprised if I make such comments on your paper. Again, don't worry! You will not receive a grade for this assignment!

Please note: I will not grade your graded assignments until I have received this assignment from you on the due date!! No joke! If you do not submit the paper on the due date, I will ask you to step into the hall for the duration of the class and complete the assignment while the rest of the class participates in lecture and discussion. It will be up to you to catch up on your own time.

Shirley Jackson

Southern Connecticut State University

ASSIGNMENT: FILM: LINKING COURSE MATERIAL TO FILM TOPICS (“PLOTS”)

Review one of the following films and discuss the film’s explanation of sociological concepts as they apply to social problems. Choose a film with a topic that you feel might be an interesting one to discuss sociologically. By doing so, you will find the assignment a much easier task to accomplish. It may help if you take notes during your viewing of the film you have selected. There is a mixture of films and I am certain one will pique your interest. All films are on reserve in the Learning Resources room on the third floor of Buley Library.

Clearly discuss the plot of the film in sociological terms. Do NOT simply give a summary of the film! Describe the concepts evident in the film by drawing on the course material. For example, if crime is a theme in the film, discuss it as a social problem. If racism exists, discuss it and the related concepts of prejudice and discrimination, and any other related terms and concepts discussed in the course material and in lectures. What types of ethical dilemmas are involved in the film? How are they dealt with?

- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*
- *American History X*
- *A Clockwork Orange*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *Life is Beautiful* (Italian with English subtitles)
- *Set it Off*

(Films are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.)

Paper Writing Guidelines

Your paper should be double-spaced and your pages numbered. Your margins should not be wider than 1". You do not need a cover page. You will need to use a bibliography (especially if you are citing newspaper articles, etc.) Citing the partial titles of the articles from which you obtained your information and references to the course readings are sufficient if these are the only materials you used in your paper. If you are making direct quotes in the body of your paper, they should not be extremely lengthy. Quotes longer than two lines should be indented one inch from the left margin. For an example, see pp. 15-6 in your text. Always include the source (author’s name, year, and page number of each and every direct quote made. Do not hesitate to see me if you have questions.

Approximate paper length: Three to four pages.

Shirley Jackson

Southern Connecticut State University

ASSIGNMENT: HEALTH—AIDS IN AFRICA

An analysis of 161 countries found that, in general, countries with high levels of literacy have low levels of HIV (World Health Organization and United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS 1998). However, in the region of the world worst affected by HIV, sub-Saharan Africa, there is also a relationship between literacy rates and HIV, but the direction of the relationship is reversed. In this region, the countries with the highest levels of HIV infection are also those whose men and women are most literate. What are some explanations for this? (The first part of this question is taken from p. 55 in your text, *Understanding Social Problems*). Discuss the significance of AIDS in Africa by reviewing various reports, news articles, etc. Present a comprehensive, but brief, overview of the problem and the potential impact. Consider the impact that AIDS will have on children and the future of many African countries. You may find it helpful to go to the World Health Organization website: <http://www.who.int/> for more information.

Paper Writing Guidelines

Your paper should be double-spaced and your pages numbered. Your margins should not be wider than 1". You do not need a cover page. You will need to use a bibliography (especially if you are citing newspaper articles, etc.) Citing the partial titles of the articles from which you obtained your information and references to the course readings are sufficient if these are the only materials you used in your paper. If you are making direct quotes in the body of your paper, they should not be extremely lengthy. Quotes longer than two lines should be indented one inch from the left margin. For an example, see pp. 15-6 in your text. Always include the source (author's name, year, and page number) of each and every direct quote made. Do not hesitate to see me if you have questions.

Approximate paper length: Three to four pages.

Shirley Jackson

Southern Connecticut State University

ASSIGNMENT: THE FAMILY

Choose either question A or B

A. Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Class and Family

This problem focuses on the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, class, and nationality in the way the United States views multiple births. Explain the relevance of the following quote: "...on a certain November Day an obscure woman in Iowa gives birth to seven babies; we marvel and rejoice. On the same day an obscure woman in Nigeria gives birth to her seventh child in a row; we are distressed and appalled" (Zwingle 1998, 38). Why might reactions to these two events be so different? In order to answer this question, compare newspaper reports of multiple births by reviewing the way in which the characteristics of the parents are closely scrutinized by the public, the medical establishment, and the media, in general, in its reporting of such events.

B. The family -- What accounts for its (in)stability?

This problem focuses on the family and the debate surrounding its stability. Some scholars and politicians argue that "stable families are the bedrock of stable communities." Others argue that "stable communities and economies are the bedrock of stable families." Which of these two positions would you take and why? Remember to support your position by using the appropriate readings and theoretical approaches, regardless of which position you support.

Paper Writing Guidelines

Your paper should be double-spaced and your pages numbered. Your margins should not be wider than 1". You do not need a cover page. You will need to use a bibliography (especially if you are citing newspaper articles, etc. for question A.) Citing the partial titles of the articles from which you obtained your information and references to the course readings are sufficient if these are the only materials you used in your paper. If you are making direct quotes in the body of your paper, they should not be extremely lengthy. Quotes longer than two lines should be indented one inch from the left margin. For an example, see pp. 15-6 in your text. Always include the source (author's name, year, and page number) of each and every direct quote made. Do not hesitate to see me if you have questions.

Approximate paper length: Four to five pages.

Shirley Jackson

Southern Connecticut State University

GUIDELINES: TEAM PRESENTATION AND PAPER

Description as stated in syllabus:

You will be paired with another student to prepare a 10-minute presentation on a social problem. The presentation should include a clear definition of the problem of the social problem. A detailed description of the presentation guidelines will be handed out in class. You will be expected to relate the social problem to the course material, especially as it relates to what comes to be considered a social problem. You may also relate the presentation to similar topics covered during the course of the semester. Everyone is required to be present as each student presents his or her paper. You will also be submitting a joint paper that covers in detail a description of the presentation topic. The presentation should be lively enough so that you keep the attention of the majority of the members of the class. Be prepared to answer or ask questions on your presentation topic.

Presentation guidelines:

- Both students are required to participate equally within the allotted time.
- The presentation should not be a verbatim reading of your paper.
- You may choose whatever topic you would like as long as it is a relevant social problem (i.e., a bad roommate is not a social problem, but a society where people are becoming prone to violent behavior is a social problem if you can make a clear case for it). It may be best if you choose a topic that is found in the course readings.
- You may present handouts to the class, or use the board, overhead, or other equipment during your presentation if you desire. Please let me know in advance if you will require any special materials or xeroxing of handouts.
- If you choose to show a video clip, it must be cued (ready to go!) and limited to no more than 2 minutes of your total presentation time. It should also be relevant so that it does not appear to be “empty filler,” taking up time best spent as part of your oral presentation.
- Make sure you time yourself in advance! You would be amazed at how quickly time flies when you give an oral presentation!
- If you do not present, you forfeit your entire grade for this assignment. Thus, even if your name appears on the paper that is submitted, you will not receive a grade for the assignment.
- See me if you have any questions or problems associated with this assignment.
- Each person’s name must appear on the same paper, thus, you should not be submitting two separate papers for this assignment. If you need to learn how to merge your two papers, please see me or seek help at one of the computer labs. Try to find out if you and your partner have compatible computer programs to make this process much easier.
- Do not include any type of folder, plastic or otherwise, when submitting your presentation paper. Simply staple the pages together on the left-hand top corner. The cover sheet should simply include the paper title, the names of both of the presenters, the course number, my name, and the date. Do not use extra large fonts when including this information (this includes the title).
- Finally, you will be graded on your ability to present the facts, the interest you show in your topic, the interest of the rest of the class, clarity/organization, content/thoroughness, and style/professionalism. (Note: professionalism does not mean how you appear in terms of dress, rather, how clearly you speak and show knowledge of your topic).

Bruce Mork

University of Minnesota, Duluth

ASSIGNMENT: COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUPS

THE COOPERATIVE LEARNING METHOD: A significant portion of your time in this course will be spent actively discussing or researching sociological concepts as part of a small group. You will be working as part of a team, a permanent group of about six students. In some cases, your group work will depend on previous work that you do as an individual and bring to the group session. In that case, your individual work is your “ticket” to the group session, and you can’t get credit for the group work without that ticket. Leadership and note taking in the groups will be rotated among group members, although your group also needs a permanent facilitator. Procedures for the group meetings are as follows:

1. Facilitator: A facilitator should be chosen for the whole quarter, someone who generally sees herself/himself as a regular attendant. The facilitator is responsible to receive group assignment sheets from the teacher, and also to pick up graded assignments and share the results with the group.

2. Leader: This is a rotating position. Do not end a group meeting without choosing a leader for the next session.

- a. Collect individual worksheets (if applicable) and put your initials in the upper right-hand corner of each worksheet that has been filled out. Return the worksheets to group members for use during the meeting.
- b. Start the group discussing the first question. Help the members to react and interact. Help the group identify points of agreement, and help with the wording of the group report. If some members of the group are hesitant to participate, or some members of the group tend to dominate the discussion, try a round-robin format, in which each member of the group reacts to the question in turn.
- c. Watch the time; be sure it’s divided among the different questions and tasks. Be sure the group goes through all the points of a question.
- d. When the group work is completed, collect the individual worksheets, as well as the Project Record Sheet, which has been completed by the report writer. **BE SURE THAT EVERY MEMBER OF THE GROUP WHO QUALIFIES FOR CREDIT HAS SIGNED BOTH PAGES OF THE PROJECT RECORD SHEET!** Staple the whole packet together and turn it in at the end of the class period.

3. Report Writer: Another rotating position.

- a. Use a pen to fill out the Project Record Sheet; you may use the back of the sheet and add additional pages as necessary; if your writing is difficult to read, please print. Use clearly worded, grammatically correct sentences organized in a logical manner. Answers should be numbered to correspond to numbers on the assignment sheet, and pages should also be numbered sequentially in the top right corner.
- b. The group report should be more elaborate and “better” than any of the individual worksheets because it will include the viewpoints of all the others in the group. Get help from the group in summarizing the discussion when it gets complicated.

4. Group members. In a group this size, leadership is actually a shared responsibility. Help your leader out if s/he is not yet very good at this process. Be sure that you’ve signed both pages of the Project Record Sheet. **ALL WRITTEN MATERIALS INVOLVED IN PREPARATION FOR THE GROUP SESSION NEED TO BE SUBMITTED ALONG WITH THE PROJECT RECORD SHEET TO GET FULL CREDIT. FOR GROUP SESSIONS BASED ON A FILM, THE FILM WORKSHEET DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS THE DAY OF THE FILM MUST BE INCLUDED FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE GROUP. A HANDWRITTEN VERSION IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE.**

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. First meeting | 5 points |
| 2. Stratification and culture in the schools | 5 points |
| 3. Classroom participation | 10 points |
| 4. The Sociological Imagination | 5 points |
| 5. Who is Socializing Our Children? | 5 points |
| 6. If Society Were a Matriarchy | 5 points |
| 7. Sentencing Board | 5 points |
| 8. Applying Theories to “Children of Violence” | 5 points |
| 9. What Makes a Good or Bad Job? | 10 points |
| 10. Down and Out in Duluth | 10 points |
| 11. Lakota/US Relations | 5 points |
| 12. Gay and Lesbian Families | 5 points |
| 13. Religion in America | 10 points |
| 14. Politics and Homelessness | 5 points |
| 15. Human Social Ecology | 5 points |
| 16. Civil Rights and Justice | 5 points |

Total points possible 100 points

Notice that many of the group assignments involve advance preparation on your part, but take a particularly close look early in the quarter at the projects that are worth 10 points. These projects involve fieldwork on your part—observing in a classroom, interviewing people about jobs, visiting a soup kitchen, visiting a church or synagogue in an religious tradition unfamiliar to you. These assignments are apt to involve advance planning and shouldn’t be left until the last moment.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUP SCORES: Project worksheets will be scored promptly and returned to you. Your score for group work will be the total of the scores earned by your group in all the sessions you attended multiplied by a factor established through peer evaluations. I shall ask group members to evaluate each other’s contributions at the end of the quarter, as follows:

Usually conscientious and prepared	100%
Inconsistent, sometimes a contributor, sometimes not	85%
Poor preparation, poor participation	70%

For example, if you attend all the sessions and your group earns a perfect 100 points, and your group rates you as an inconsistent contributor, your score on the group projects would be: $100 \times 85\% = 85$ points.

WHAT IF YOUR GROUP DOESN’T FINISH A PROJECT?

These projects are designed to take about 50 minutes of group time, but if your group ends up getting into more depth on a particular item, it may not finish. I want you to be able to get into that kind of depth at times. Therefore, a group that has done an excellent job with the earlier items but hasn’t finished can still be awarded full credit for the exercise.

WHAT IF YOUR GROUP DISAGREES ON AN ANSWER? This is college and we are, hopefully, getting past the belief that there is just one right way of looking at the world. Make a note of disagreements rather than trying to force a consensus.

Karrie Snyder

New York University

ASSIGNMENT: FINAL PROJECT: CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

As a final project for this course, you will analyze a social problem of your choice. The goal of your research will be a 10-12 page final paper and a presentation to the class. You will need to look at both popular and scholarly work on the subject. Choose a social problem not discussed in class.

Central Topic:

How has the social problem you have chosen come to be defined as a problem? What are the causal factors (social, political, economic and/or cultural) that have led to the social problem's definition as a social problem? Why has the social problem you have chosen remained in or fallen out of the public spotlight?

Variations on the main theme:

A. Cross-cultural or historical perspective - Explain the diverse reactions to similar conditions across cultural and social settings. Why is a particular social phenomenon considered a social problem in one setting, but not in another? Compare two different countries/cultures or compare different historical eras within the same country/culture.

B. Why has something not become a social problem? What are the causal forces that have kept a social phenomenon from becoming defined as a social problem?

Sample topic ideas:

How did child abuse come to be defined as a social problem in the U.S.?

Why is marijuana illegal, but not alcohol?

Why is the physical punishment of children considered a problem in some settings and but not in others?

Why do some cultures define FGM as a social problem and others see it as a beneficial practice?

Although the topic for the paper is very open-ended, you must develop a central and unifying argument for your paper. Also, you need to support arguments with evidence to show how and why you are reaching a particular conclusion. Unsubstantiated arguments will not strengthen your project. Your main emphasis for this project will be the causal factors that have led to the definition of a particular condition as a social problem. Although you may uncover reasons that lead to the condition itself (examples - What factors lead to an increased divorce rate? or What characteristics are associated with illegal drug use?), the main focus of this paper is to understand why a society or a group considers a certain condition or situation problematic.

The following are central questions that you will help you explain the causal factors and the rise/fall of your social problem. These are guiding ideas for your papers. You should consider all of the following applicable questions, but not all of the following need appear in your final draft.

- What is the history of the social problem? Has it always been a public concern? Has its definition changed over time? What are the competing definitions? Is there a consensus that it is in fact a social problem?
- What agents (politicians, advocacy groups, nonprofit agencies, etc.) first defined the situation as a social problem? What agents have kept it in the national spotlight? Have any groups challenged the definition of it as a social problem?
- What has been the role of the media? How has media coverage fluctuated during the history of the social problem?
- How is the problem related to the social structure? How is the issue of power connected to the social problem? What are the power relationships between those defining the problem and those directly affected?
- What has been the role of the state in defining, controlling, or attempting to eliminate the problem? What have been the consequences of the state's intervention or neglect?
- What public debates surround the issue? Who are the competing sides? What are their moral and empirical claims? What does each side see as the problem's solution?

- What theoretical perspective from class best explains your social problem? What cannot be answered by this perspective?
- How does this problem relate to other social problems we have discussed?
- What are the popular misconceptions and myths surrounding the social problem? How have these misconceptions influenced the natural history of the social problem and its popularity?

Guidelines:

- 12 pt. courier type, double-spaced, one inch margins.
- Papers should have an introduction, a central argument and a conclusion. The separate sections of the paper should have a clear focus and transition from topic to topic smoothly.
- Papers must be well-cited and have a works cited page. Choose a standard style guide (Chicago, APA, ASA) and be consistent throughout the paper. Citing other people's research and ideas is not only ethical, but in addition when you cite other people's research you help the reader understand why you are reaching a particular conclusion.

Preliminary Assignments:

Topic: Wednesday (Feb 2)

Proposed topic idea. (1-2 paragraphs)

Annotated Bibliography: Wednesday (Mar 8)

List of seven potential sources. After each citation, give short overview (1 -2 paragraphs) of the content of the source.

Rough Draft or Outline: Wednesday (Apr 5)

Bring to class rough drafts or outlines of your paper to discuss in small groups. Students will fill out peer review sheets.

In-Class Presentations: Wednesday (Apr 27)

Prepare a five to ten minute presentation for the class. As part of the project assignment, you are also required to attend all presentations.

Final Papers: Wednesday (Apr 27) - No Extensions

Papers are due *in class* on Wednesday (Apr 27) .

Late papers will be penalized one grade letter per day late.

Helpful hints:

- Narrow your topic to a manageable project. For example, instead of trying to explain sexism in general as a social problem, narrow your discussion to an aspect of the subject such as how dating violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment has been defined within a particular society.
- In your final papers, clearly define what the problem is you are analyzing and for what time period and culture. This is especially important for people doing a comparative analysis.
- The WWW has a lot of great information. It is especially useful for finding web sites of organizations involved in the management of social problems (ex. Pro-choice and GHMC webpages). Remember, that the web is only one source of information. Academic journals, books, videos, and periodicals are also sources of information. Although I encourage the use of web sources, you should not rely on it as your sole source of information. Be critical of the information you find on the web, as you would be of any data source. REMINDER - When using information of the Internet, you need to properly cite your sources.

The following articles are great examples to use as guides for this assignment:

Ball, Richard A. and J. Robert Lilly. 1982. "The Menace of Margarine: The Rise and Fall of a Social Problem." *Social Problems* 29: 488-498

Pfhol, Stephen J. 1977. "The 'Discovery' of Child Abuse." *Social Problems* 24: 310-323.

Grading:

I will informally evaluate all preliminary assignments. Late, incomplete or substandard work will lower your overall project grade.

GOOD LUCK!!!!

Marybeth Stalp

University of Georgia

ASSIGNMENT: CURRENT EVENTS JOURNAL

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment, which will continue throughout the semester, is to encourage you to think in a sociological manner and learn to apply sociology and social problems theory to events in everyday life. You should learn to integrate the ideas we discuss in class, and start to regard aspects of society critically.

Directions: Each week of the semester, you will locate two (2) items in popular culture venues each week (e.g., newspaper, magazine, television, Internet), and write a short (1-2 page) analytical essay to complement your media selection for the week. Keep these media sources (a Xeroxed copy is adequate) and essays together in a folder or three-ring binder. I will collect them from you periodically during the semester.

Before you start collecting materials for your journal, you will write a one-page summary of the path you'll be taking with your current events journal. For example, you can look at current events generally, or focus on a specific media source, topic, region, etc. Past journals with a specific focus have included Y2K hysteria, youth violence (school shootings), body image, celebrity privacy, domestic violence, and pokemon trading/collecting.

For each dated entry include the following:

- Bibliographic information about the source (e.g., title, author, publication).
- A summary of the source.
- Why you selected this source/its significance.
- A link to class materials (lectures, readings, class discussion).

Your essays should be critical. This means they should make a point, back the point up with evidence from the article you are analyzing, have some connection to the discussions we've had in class concerning social problems (e.g., claimsmakers, how the social problem is being defined, are there any solutions proposed & by whom?), and be academically enlightening.

Periodically during the semester, you will give updates to the class about your current events journal to the class, as well as a final presentation in the final two weeks of class.

At the end of the semester, you will have an interesting record of some of the happenings in the world over the course of several months, and analyses of these happenings. In your final summary essay, you will summarize what you've learned from keeping this journal, reflecting both on the social problem(s) you chose to focus on, as well as how your approach to the journal relates to the class in general.

Stephen F. Steele

Anne Arundel Community College

EXERCISE: AGE AND AGING [ON LINE]

Complete this first -

Your Name Course Number: SOC Section #

Your email address

Exercise Topic: (see exercise title above)

Now do this -

Overview – The age of the persons in a society has an impact on that society's needs and capabilities. What is happening to the overall age of the population of the United States? Now let's focus on the segment of the population that is over 65 years of age. Go to

<http://www.census.gov/socdemo/www/agebrief.html>

- 1) Describe the growth of this segment of the U.S. population? How will this group grow over the next 50 years?
- 2) Will this group have any special needs as they age?
- 3) Under what conditions might a social problem emerge?
- 4) What can be done to minimize the impact of this condition?

- Put your brief answers in the text box below and submit exercise here

Did you find the social conditions in the analysis above to be a social problem? **Yes**

No

If "Yes," use one or more of the measurement tools and theoretical tools we've learned and suggest some possible solutions to this problem below:

Now send this -

Stephen F. Steele

Anne Arundel Community College

EXERCISE: HEALTH [ON LINE]

Complete this first -

Your Name

Course Number: SOC

Section #

Your email address

Exercise Topic:

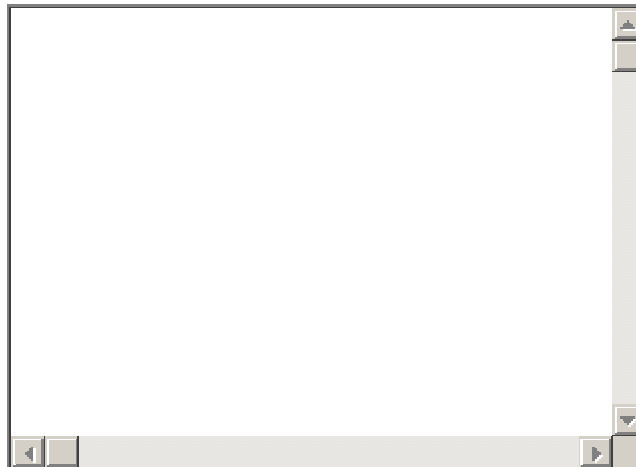
(see exercise title above)

Now do this -

Overview – The health of members of a society is extremely important. Let's compare the U.S. and other countries.

Exercise – Let's start by looking globally. Go to: <http://www.who.ch>

- 1) Click on "WHO Reports" and review the 1997 World Health Report, focus on 50 facts of health
- 2) Summarize briefly your findings... very briefly below. Then,
- 3) Now let's turn to the U.S. Go to: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/ssbr.html>
- 4) Summarize briefly the information on this site.
- 5) As social problems, how would you compare the health problems of the developed vs. the developing worlds?
 - Put your brief answers in the text box below and submit exercise here

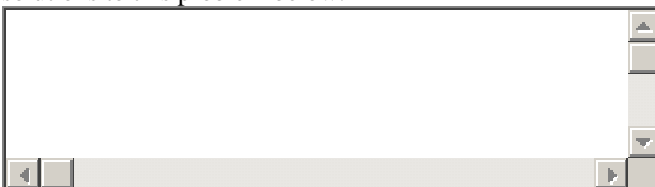


Did you find the social conditions in the analysis above to be a social problem?

Yes

No

If "Yes," use one or more of the measurement tools and theoretical tools we've learned and suggest some possible solutions to this problem below:



Now send this -

Submit

Reset

Sherrie Steiner-Aeschliman

Washington State University

ASSIGNMENT: JOURNAL

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: 1) to facilitate reflective critical thinking about your own life; and (2) to facilitate sharing about your life from a sociological angle with the instructor and with a peer. Throughout the semester, questions will be suggested for you to consider for journaling. Feel free to respond to these or to questions of your own making. Just remember, think sociologically! Although the questions posed will encourage personal reflection, the journal is not meant to be used as a diary. Keep in mind that the journal will be read at the end of each unit alternatively by a peer of your own choosing and the instructor.

By the end of the semester, your journal should have a minimum of 15 pages of writing (averages out as a page per week of entries—handwritten or typed, with one inch margins in a reasonable-sized script). When you prepare your journal for final evaluation on December 11, choose five entries and mark these with a star in the upper right hand corner of each page. These are your “designated pages for evaluation.” If all 15 pages are present and meet the basic criteria of thinking sociologically in response to the questions and the videos, you will receive a “B.” The quality of the “designated pages” will determine a grade above that. Incomplete journals will receive a “C” or lower.

Sherrie Steiner-Aeschliman

Washington State University

ASSIGNMENT: KNOWING YOUR PASSIONS

Unfortunately, social problems are so complex and the field of sociology is so new, sociologists may raise far more questions than they seem to answer. In addition, it seems that social problems are rapidly increasing in our current society rather than decreasing. Consequently, a course on social problems can be overwhelming and painful for students. Since I do not want to lose you to apathy as we progress through this course, I have specifically created this assignment so that your peers and I might benefit from knowing more about your own passions as they relate to social problems.

You are encouraged to take an artistic/expressive approach and use a variety of mediums: music, visuals (collage, photography), etc. For example, share with us a few of your favorite songs (on CD or tape—bring the lyrics printed out so we can understand the lyrics the first time through) and share how they comment upon social problems. The goal of this exercise is to facilitate your internal connections between “what is” (as observed via sociology) and your perceptions of “what could be” or “what should be.” If this class seems only to exacerbate this disjuncture, then artistically express your emotional/intellectual frustration. It is important to be as honest as possible on this assignment. Students are to be nonjudgmental about what is presented and it will be graded on a credit/no credit basis based on participation (as opposed to evaluation of the content). Please keep the presentation to ten minutes maximum.

Sherrie Steiner-Aeschliman

Washington State University

ASSIGNMENT: SERVICE-LEARNING REFLECTION PAPER

To some extent, social problems are socially constructed. We create racism, we create sexism, we create ageism, etc., in the service of maintaining a stratified, hierarchical system of those who have and those who have not. Although the barriers of sexism, racism, etc. may be socially constructed, it is important to recognize that the problems of poverty and oppression are real. If the barriers are not real, they are real in their consequences. To drive this point home, this assignment requires that each student participate in a short-term service assignment (4-10 hours) through the service-learning center in Pullman or at home over Thanksgiving break. The service assignment should relate to one of the social problems covered during the semester (e.g., environmental degradation, problems related to aging, homelessness, poverty, family dysfunctions, etc). Once the service assignment has been completed, you are to write a personal essay relating your experience to the discussion of the social problem in this course. Address questions, such as: Have the readings and this service experience altered your views? Can you sociologically analyze the views you held previously? Discuss your background. Did you grow up in the city, small town, or on a farm? What type of religious influence did you have? Where might you have gotten your attitudes toward this social problem—family, friends, peers, TV, religious leaders? What do you believe now about this social problem? Why are you interested in this social problem and do you consider it serious? Who should be responsible? How do you react to groups organized to address this social problem? Are they effective?

Remember, this essay is intended to be exploratory rather than full of solutions with an authoritative stance.

Sherrie Steiner-Aeschliman

Washington State University

ASSIGNMENT: LETTER

The purpose of this assignment is for you to take action with what you know: to use writing persuasively for something that you care about. You might write a letter to your legislative representatives (state or federal); city or county commissioners; your hometown newspaper; the Daily Evergreen; a campus official; your fraternity, sorority, or residence hall advisors; a business (local or national); a civic group; an author whose work you've read (whether you agree or disagree)—the possibilities are endless.

On October 25, bring two copies and a stamped, addressed envelope and we will place the letters in the mail together. See me if you need any help.

James A. Vela-McConnell

Augsburg College

ASSIGNMENT: RESEARCH PROJECT: PRIVATE TROUBLES, PUBLIC ISSUES

Overview of the Research Topic: The focus on your research project will be on a social problem in our society today. In class, we will be looking at the idea of the Sociological Imagination and how much creativity within sociology comes from being able to step back from our private troubles and look at the larger, public issue implications of our own personal experiences. This is what I would like you to accomplish in your research project: begin with a private trouble of your own and research the public issue dimensions of that same problem.

Project Requirements:

Four Interviews: You will interview four different people utilizing the intensive interview method learned in class. These interviews should be with individuals who are directly affected by the social problem you have chosen to research. Each interview should be tape recorded (with the written permission of those whom you interview) and then transcribed. After each interview, type out an "Interview Memo" (see sample memo in this course pack) which includes (a) a short description of how the interview went and what the individual you interviewed was like and (b) your initial analytical thoughts about the interview. When you turn in your research paper, you will need to include (1) your interview schedules (including drafts with comments), (2) the written permissions of those whom you interviewed, (3) the coded transcript of each interview, and (4) the memo which corresponds with each interview.

Research Paper: For the research paper, you will conduct library research on the social problem, specifically with regard to its "public issue," macro dimensions and then link this with an analysis of the interviews you have conducted. You should include at least five social science references. The entire paper should be framed in the context of at least one and no more than two of the theoretical perspectives learned in Rubington and Weinberg's book, *The Study of Social Problems*. Please see the Suggested Research Paper Outline in this course pack for further details on what the paper should include.

Class Presentation: Finally, you will be expected to present your research to the class in seminar format (meaning we will be sitting in a circle and you should allow for discussion). The presentation portion should be 15 minutes long and you should allow 5 minutes for questions and discussion. Please see the Oral Presentation Tips in this course pack. On the day of your presentation, you will turn in a copy of your presentation outline so that I can follow along (remember to keep a copy for yourself!). Be sure to attach the Oral Presentation Evaluation Checklist to your outline which you turn in. I will use it to assess your presentation, so you might want to look it over before your presentation so you know what I'll be looking for.

Schedule of Due Dates:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| March 2 | INTERVIEW SCHEDULES |
| March 11 | PRACTICE INTERVIEW EVALUATION (See the "Interview Evaluation" in the course pack. You will interview another student in the class for practice. This interview will focus on the social problem they are focusing on for their own research project. You will use the interview schedule they have prepared.) |
| April 27 & 29 | PRESENTATION/COMPLETE RESEARCH PROJECT is due, including in the following order): |
| | – Title Page |
| | – Research Paper |
| | – Presentation Outline |
| | – Interview Schedules (final draft and all rough drafts, including the copy with my comments) |
| | – Copies of the Informed Consent form (final version and all drafts with comments) and all written permissions |
| | – A copy of the practice interview in which you were interviewed by your partner as well as a copy of the informed consent form you signed |

- A one-page self-evaluation of your interviewing skills including a discussion of (1) what your skills were when you started this research project and (2) when you finished, (3) how you worked to achieve improvement, and (4) how effective those strategies were.
- Coded Interview Transcripts
- Master Code List and Code Dictionary
- Research Paper Scoring Guide (included in this course pack)

Technical Stuff: The completed paper should be 15 pages in length. Everything you turn in should be typed (double-spaced). Pay attention to grammar and spelling as they will be included as part of your grade. Be sure to include page numbers. The papers must be bound in a folder (no three-ring binders!). Keep a copy of everything for your own records. If a paper is lost and you don't have a backup, you will receive an automatic zero for the assignment. Finally, and of extreme importance, you must cite your sources and include a full bibliography, even if you are only paraphrasing. Be sure to look at the "Research Paper Scoring Guide" for specifics of what I will be looking for when grading your research project.

Guide to Web Resources for Social Problems

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GUIDE TO WEB RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The previous edition of this manual — published in 1997 — included a two-page list of Sociology Resources on the World Wide Web (WWW). Since then the quantity of sociologically relevant web resources has greatly expanded, and so has the list. We agree with the previous editors that “the Internet can both provide quick access to sociological information and be used in the classroom as a powerful pedagogical tool.”

We chose the sites based on three primary criteria. First, and most important, we chose sites based on how much sociologically relevant information they provided. Many sites provide access to data. Second, we selected sites that linked to other sociology and social problems-related sites. Finally, mindful of how often web sites go down or URLs change, we tried to choose relatively stable sites. As of October 25, 2000 these links were all operating. We also tried to include provocative sites that might challenge our students’ thinking, or even our own, and we tried to provide some balance in the sites.

USING THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Controversy continues over the social implications of the web and its potential usefulness in education. Some commentators refer in glowing terms to the Information Superhighway and to the creation of an Information Society that will give people enhanced access to information and data. Others note that much of the information on the web is worthless and distorted, and may lead to information overload. Clifford Stoll, a leading critic of the Internet and a “high tech heretic,” asks in his *Silicon Snake Oil* (New York: Doubleday, 1995:2) whether too much emphasis on information technology might be “an ostrich hole to divert our attention and resources *from* social problems?” (Italics added). Although we take Stoll’s question seriously, we do think that web resources can help in teaching and learning about social problems.

Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, provides a sense of the design and vision that guided the creation and development of the World Wide Web in his *Weaving the Web* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999) (<http://www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/Weaving/>). Berners-Lee notes that “the Web is more of a social creation than a technical one” (p. 123). His history of the web is fascinating, his vision for the web is powerful, and his assessment of its current uses is troubling.

The amount of information on the web is enormous. In his “Internet Search Tips and Strategies,” (see URL below) Robert Harris (Vanguard University of Southern California) notes that “the two questions that face any information seeker are (1) How can I find what I want? and (2) How can I know that what I find is any is any good?” Therefore, searching for and evaluating web sources are crucial tasks. We have listed some of the most useful sources for helping carry out those tasks. Those who find Harris’s guides helpful may want to consult his book *WebQuester: A Guidebook to the Web* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999) (<http://www.dushkin.com/webquester/>). Harris’s *Guidebook to the Web* is also published with *WebQuester: Social Problems* by Joan M. Morris and Arlen D. Carey (Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1999) (<http://www.dushkin.com/webquester/>).

SEARCHING THE WEB

Berkman, Robert. 2000. “Searching for the Right Search Engine.” *Chronicle of Higher Education*. January 21, p. B6. <http://chronicle.com/free/v46/i20/20b00601.htm>

Harris, Robert. 2000. “Internet Search Tips and Strategies.” *Home Page*. Vanguard University. <http://www.vanguard.edu/rharris/howlook.htm>

Harris, Robert. 2000. “World Wide Web Research Tools.” *Home Page*. Vanguard University. <http://www.vanguard.edu/rharris/search.htm>

EVALUATING INFORMATION RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Auer, Nicole. 2000. “Bibliography on Evaluating Web Resources” *Virginia Tech University Libraries*. <http://www.lib.vt.edu/research/libinst/evalbiblio.html>

- Beck, Susan. "Evaluation Criteria." 1997. *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly: or, Why It's a Good Idea to Evaluate Web Sources*. <http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/evalcrit.html>
- Grassian, Esther. 1999. "Thinking Critically about World Wide Web Resources." *UCLA College Library Instruction*. <http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/critical/index.htm>
- Grassian, Esther. 1998. "Thinking Critically about Discipline-Based World Wide Web Resources." *UCLA College Library Instruction*. <http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/critical/discipline.htm>
- Harris, Robert. 1997. "Evaluating Internet Research Sources" *Home Page*. Vanguard University. <http://www.vanguard.edu/rharris/evalu8it.htm>
- Milner Library, Illinois State University. 1998 "Evaluating Internet Resources." *Milner Library Home Page*. <http://www.mlb.ilstu.edu/ressubj/subject/intrnt/evaluate.htm>
- Wienbroer, Diana Roberts. 2001. *Rules of Thumb for Online Research*. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. <http://www.mhhe.com/rulesonline>.

GENERAL SOCIOLOGY RESOURCES

Many publishers provide concise guides to Internet resources for various disciplines, including sociology. Some publishers package the guides with their textbooks. These guides often provide annotated lists of sites and may include exercises for students. The following are useful:

- Ferrante, Joan, and Angela Vaughn. 1997. *Let's Go Sociology: Travels on the Internet*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. <http://www.nku.edu/~soc/go.html>
- Fuhrman, Ellsworth R. 1998. *Sociology Surfing on the World Wide Web*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. <http://www.mhhe.com>
- Gongaware, Timothy B., Jennifer Campbell Koella, and Michael Keene. 2001. *Mayfield Quick View Guide to the Internet for Students of Sociology, Version 2.0*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. <http://www.mayfieldpub.com>
- Kurland, Daniel J., and Daphne John. 1997. *Internet Guide to Sociology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. <http://www.wadsworth.com>
- Morris, Joan M. and Arlen D. Carey. 1999. *WebQuester: Social Problems with Robert Harris A Guidebook to the Web*. Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill. <http://www.dushkin.com/webquester>.
- Steele, Stephen F., Teri Kepner, and Doug Gotthoffer. 1999. *Allyn and Bacon Quick Guide to the Internet: 1999 Edition*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. <http://www.abacon.com/internetguides>
- Stull, Andrew T. (Adapted for Sociology by Nijole V. Benokraitis.) 2000. *Sociology on the Internet 1999/2000: A Prentice Hall Guide*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. <http://www.prenhall.com>

Some publishers also provide useful web sites.

McGraw Hill Higher Education (MHHE) Sociology Supersite
<http://www.mhhe.com/catalogs/hss/sociology/online>

The General Sociology Web Resources on this site are aimed primarily at students.

Wadsworth Sociology Resource Center: Social Problems
<http://sociology.wadsworth.com/problems.html>

This is a useful but incomplete set of links. It should improve.

Sociology textbooks increasingly draw on the Internet and the web. These are useful examples:

Carter, Gregg Lee. 2001. *Analyzing Contemporary Social Issues: A Workbook with Student CHIP Software*. Second Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001. <http://www.abacon.com/carter/>
This workbook lists many useful sites.

Ferrante, Joan. 1997. *Sociology.net: Sociology on the Internet*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
This introductory text is based on using the Internet. <http://www.nku.edu/~ferrantej/>.

Kornblum, William, and Joseph Julian. 2001. *Social Problems*. Tenth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. <http://cw.prenhall.com/kornblum/>

Levin, Jack, Kim Mac Innis, Walter F. Carroll, and Richard Bourne. 2000. *Social Problems: Causes, Consequences, Interventions*. Second Edition. Los Angeles: Roxbury.
<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/wcarroll/socialproblems.htm>

WEB SITES

We have categorized the sites according to the standard outline of chapters in most social problems texts. You will find some exceptionally useful web sites listed several times. For example, we list U.S. Census sites and Michael Kears's (Trinity University, San Antonio) valuable *Sociological Tour of Cyberspace* several times each. For each site we give its name, URL, and a brief annotation, unless the annotation seems unnecessary. The URLs were correct and the sites active as of October 25, 2000.

1. General Resources

A. Associations

American Sociological Association (ASA)
www.asanet.org/

Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)
<http://itc.utk.edu/sssp/>

B. Basic References

College and University Home Pages: Alphabetical Listing
<http://www.mit.edu:8001/people/cdemello/univ.html>

Editor and Publisher (E & P): Media Links: Online Media Directory
<http://emedial.mediainfo.com/emedial/>

Scout Report for Social Sciences (Internet Scout Project, Computer Sciences Department, University of Wisconsin-Madison)
<http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

This exceptionally valuable biweekly report provides links to research reports, data sources, and working papers. You can access the Scout Report online or you can subscribe to it via email at <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/misc/lists/>.

C. Sociologist's Web Pages

Dead Sociologists' Society (James Madison University)
<http://raven.jmu.edu/~ridenelr/DSS/DEADSOC.HTML>

Larry Ridener created and maintains this valuable resource on the lives and ideas of important — dead — sociologists.

Social Problems Course Online (Anne Arundel Community College)

<http://www.aacc.cc.md.us/soc/soc122/start.htm>

Stephen Steele provides this web-based course. He also provides several other online courses. You can access his home page at <http://www.aacc.cc.md.us/soc/ssd/sociology/Steele.htm>

Sociological Tour Through Cyberspace (Trinity University, San Antonio)

<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl>

Michael Kearl created and maintains this site. This may be the single most valuable web site for sociology.

Robert E. Wood's Home Page (Rutgers University-Camden)

<http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/~wood/>

Robert Wood has been a leader in exploring "ways to use the Internet to increase student skills and to make learning more interesting and effective." Check out the Pedagogical Resources on his site.

D. Gateways and Guides to Resources

Haines, Annette. 1999. "Targeting Sociology on the Internet Using Gateway Directories." *Teaching Sociology*

Volume 27, Number 3, July. <http://www.asanet.org/pubs/haines.html>

This article discusses and rates five major sociology gateways.

Academic Info: Sociology

<http://www.academicinfo.net/soc.html>

This independent directory—compiled by Mike Madin—links to other indexes, general directories, data archives, and organizations and centers.

Milner Library, Illinois State University: Sociology Resources

<http://www.mlb.ilstu.edu/ressubj/subject/sociol.htm>

Penn Library: Sociology (University of Pennsylvania)

<http://www.library.upenn.edu/resources/subject/social/sociology/sociology.html>

Social Science Hub

<http://www2.dynamite.com.au/kiwisunf/ss.htm>

Sharyn Clarkson, who holds a BA in sociology & anthropology, maintains this site. It provides a directory of materials on the social sciences.

Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG)

<http://sosig.esrc.bris.ac.uk>

Based in the United Kingdom, this gateway provides access to useful information for social scientists.

Sociology Links (Princeton University)

<http://www.princeton.edu/~sociolog/links-contents.html>

This is probably the most extensive collection of links to sociology resources.

Sociosite (University of Amsterdam)

<http://www.pscw.uva.nl/sociosite/index.html>

Based in the Netherlands, this comprehensive gateway links to numerous useful sites.

The Socioweb: Your Independent Guide to Sociological Resources on the Internet

<http://www.socioweb.com/~markbl/socioweb/overview.html>

Mark Blair, a Sonoma State University graduate in sociology, constructed this guide to sociological resources on the web.

World Wide Web Virtual Library: Sociology

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/socscidocs/w3virtsoclib/index.htm>

This is a gateway to numerous sociological web resources.

WWW Resources for Sociology (Dept. of Sociology, University of Colorado at Boulder)

<http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/links.html>

This is a useful collection to sociology related resources.

E. DATA SOURCES

By the Numbers (*Scientific American*)

<http://www.sciam.com/>

Every month in his “By the Number” feature in *Scientific American*, Rodger Doyle provides and discusses a useful graphic – usually a map – on an important social issue. These can be accessed on the *Scientific American* website. Rodger Doyle requests that anyone using the materials indicate the source as *Scientific American* and include the note: “Copyright [year] Rodger Doyle.”

Child Welfare League of America, National Data Analysis System

<http://ndas.cwla.org/>

This is the most comprehensive collection of child welfare data available. The site provides access to all states' child abuse and neglect data for the most recent years available.

Data Resources for Sociologists (ASA)

<http://www.asanet.org/data.htm#1>

This is an exceptionally useful module on Data Resources for sociologists.

FedStats (Federal Interagency Council on Statistical Policy)

<http://www.fedstats.gov/>

FedStats provides a full range of statistics and information produced by Federal agencies, including Data Access Tools.

The Gallup Organization

<http://www.gallup.com>

Gallup provides extensive public opinion data. The Social Audits are especially useful.

Data Set News: Roper Center

<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>

The Roper Center bills itself as “most comprehensive resource of public opinion data.” It is also a source for the General Social Survey.

Penn Library-Interactive Statistical Datasets Online (University of Pennsylvania Library)

<http://www.library.upenn.edu/vanpelt/guides/data.html>

This site provides access to numerous statistical datasets.

Social Sciences Research and Instructional Council: Teaching Resources Depository Home Page (SSRIC)

<http://www.csubak.edu/ssric/>

The materials on this site are useful for teaching research methods, statistics, and substantive sociology courses.

Social Statistics Briefing Room: The White House

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/ssbr.html>

This site provides quick access to current Federal statistics on crime, demography, education, and health. The Economic Statistics Briefing Room (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/esbr.html>) provides access to current Federal statistics on topics such as production, employment, and income.

Statistical Abstract of the United States

<http://www.census.gov/statab/www>

Statistical Resources on the Web: Sociology (University of Michigan Documents Center)

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/libhome/Documents.center/stsoc.html#cabuse>

U.S. Bureau of the Census

<http://www.census.gov>

The Census Bureau provides much useful data and information. We list additional specific Census Bureau pages in this Guide.

2. Inequality and Poverty

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

<http://www.clasp.org>

CLASP focuses on efforts to improve the economic security of low-income families with children and secure access for low-income persons to our civil justice system.

Children's Defense Fund (CDF)

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/index.html>

CDF aims to provide "a strong and effective voice for all the children of America." On this site check on "What's New!" or the links to other child advocacy organizations.

@grass-roots.org

<http://www.grass-roots.org>

@GRASS-ROOTS.ORG provides information on innovative grassroots community-building programs. The site includes a clickable map showing grassroots programs in particular areas.

inequality.org

<http://www.inequality.org>

This network of journalists, writers, and researchers provides "news, information, and expertise on the divide in income, wealth, and health."

Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP), University of Wisconsin-Madison

<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/>

The IRP carries out research into the causes and consequences of poverty and social inequality in the U.S.

Joint Center for Poverty Research (JCPR) (Northwestern University/University of Chicago)

<http://www.jcpr.org>

The JCPR promotes policy-oriented research on poverty and poverty-related topics.

Journal of Poverty: Innovations on Social, Political, & Economic Inequalities

<http://www.csw.ohio-state.edu/~JPOV/index.htm>

This journal publishes progressive pieces to broaden the discussion of poverty and its solutions.

Left Business Observer (LBO)

http://www.panix.com/~dhenwood/LBO_home.html

LBO is a newsletter on economics and politics. From a left political perspective, LBO provides incisive analyses and explanations of data.

National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)

<http://cpmnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/>

NCCP identifies and promotes "strategies to reduce the incidence of the young child poverty rate and to improve the life chances of the young children still living in poverty."

National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH)

<http://nch.ari.net>

NCH is committed to “ending homelessness through public education, policy advocacy, grassroots organizing, and technical assistance.” This site provides useful fact sheets, guides to legislation, and links to other sites.

Social Stratification Virtual Tour: Exploring Social Inequality on the World Wide Web

<http://camden-www.rutgers.edu/~wood/332virtualtour.htm>

Robert Wood (Rutgers University-Camden) created this useful virtual tour.

U.S. Census, Housing and Household Economic Statistics

www.census.gov/ftp/pub/hhes/www/index.html

This is an excellent source of data on housing and household economic statistics.

University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty

<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/>

This website includes data, publications, and links to other web sites dealing with poverty. IRP affiliates have formulated and tested basic theories of poverty and inequality, developed and evaluated social policy alternatives, and analyzed trends in poverty and economic well being.

3. Racial Inequality

Changing America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin (Council of Economic Advisors [CEA])

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/eop/ca/index.html>

Prepared by the CEA for President Clinton’s Initiative on Race, this is an excellent source of data.

Gateway to African-American History (United States Information Agency)

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/blackhis/>

This State Department site links to numerous valuable resources.

The National Immigration Forum

<http://www.immigrationforum.org>

The Forum advocates public policies supporting immigrants and refugees. The site provides information on immigration and immigration policy, and an extensive list of links to other sites.

One America in the Twenty-First Century

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html>

The web site for President Clinton’s Initiative on Race provides information on numerous aspects of race and ethnic relations in the United States.

Patterns of Variability: The Concept of Race

<http://www.as.ua.edu/ant/bindon/ant101/syllabus/race/race1.htm>

This useful page is part of Dr. James R. Bindon’s syllabus for one of his anthropology courses at the University of Alabama.

Race: Perspectives on Race Relations in the United States (U.S. Department of State)

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/race/>

This site includes an online bibliography, links, and the Final Report of President Clinton’s Initiative on Race.

“Race Divides.” *Link: The College Magazine*

http://www.linkmag.com/Link/jan_feb_98/index.html

This article—focusing on race and affirmative action on college campuses—appeared in the January-February 1998 issue of the magazine. The article is useful, and the online version includes numerous links to other sites.

Race Traitor

<http://www.postfun.com/racetraitor/welcome.html>

Race Traitor emphasizes the social construction of the white race and the privileges of whiteness. This is a provocative, anti-racist site.

Sociological Tour through Cyberspace: Resources on Race

<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/race.html>

Michael Kearl's web site provides an excellent starting point for information on race and ethnicity. In addition to his own materials, Kearl provides links to other useful sites.

Southern Regional Council Home Page

<http://www.src.wl.com/>

The Southern Regional Council works to promote racial justice, protect democratic rights, and broaden civic participation in the southern United States.

The Two Nations of Black America

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/>

The website PBS Frontline special "The Two Nations of Black America" includes audio excerpts, economic and social data, interviews, and links to related sites.

4. Gender Inequality

American Association of University Women: Other Websites of Interest

<http://www.aauw.org/4000/extlinks.html>

This site provides links to other valuable sites.

Sociosite: Feminism and Women's Issues

<http://www.pscw.uva.nl/sociosite/TOPICS/Women.html>

This set of links to web sites on Feminism and women's issues.

FEMINIST.COM

<http://www.feminist.com>

This site provides articles, speeches, and information about women's health issues.

Feminist Activist Resources on the Net

<http://www.igc.apc.org/women/feminist.html>

This guide to resources links primarily to other sources of information.

The Feminist Majority Website

<http://www.feminist.com>

This site provides useful information on a variety of topics, including news and events, reproductive, and the Feminist Internet Gateway.

National Organization for Women (NOW)

<http://www.now.org/>

This site provides information such as violence against women, the Promise Keepers movement, economic equity, and reproductive rights.

U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau: Wage Gap

http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs/wagegap2.htm

This Wage Gap page provides a valuable overview of the earnings differences between men and women.

Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)

<http://www.iwpr.org>

This public policy research organization focuses on issues important to women and families, including poverty and welfare, work and family issues, and domestic violence.

Women of Color Web (Global Reproductive Health Forum)

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/grhf/WoC/>

This site focuses on issues related to feminisms, sexualities, and reproductive health and rights, of women of color.

5. Age Discrimination

Andrus Gerontology Library, University of Southern California

<http://www.usc.edu/isd/locations/science/gerontology/>

This site provides links to other web sources on aging and related topics. The links to sociology and psychology resources are especially valuable.

Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights

<http://phs.os.dhhs.gov/progorg/ocr/age.html>

The Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights provides information on the rights of the elderly under the Age Discrimination Act.

National Institute on Aging (NIA), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

<http://www.nih.gov/nia/>

The NIA supports and carries out research on aging and special problems and needs of the aged.

National Senior Citizens Law Center

<http://www.nsclc.org/>

The National Senior Citizens Law Center advocates, litigates, and publishes on low-income elderly and disability issues.

Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics)

<http://www.agingstats.gov/chartbook2000/default.htm>

From this web page, you can access a PDF version of the report.

Profile of Older Americans: 1999

<http://pr.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/stats/profile>

This page provides a statistical overview and profile of older Americans.

Sociological Tour of Cyberspace: Social Gerontology and the Aging Revolution

<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/geron.html>

This comprehensive source of information on gerontology and aging includes numerous links to other sites.

6. Sexual Orientation and Homophobia

AIDS Education and Research Trust (AVERT)

<http://www.avert.org/>

Aimed primarily at young people, this site focuses on education about HIV infection, information for HIV-positive people, and statistics and news about HIV/AIDS.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

<http://www.aclu.org/>

On the ACLU site check out the pages on issues such as HIV/AIDS (<http://www.aclu.org/issues/aids/hmaids.html>) and Lesbian and Gay Rights (<http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/hmg1.html>).

Campaign to End Homophobia Home Page

<http://www.endhomophobia.org/>

This site provides various resources, including educational materials aimed at ending homophobia and heterosexism.

Frontline: Viewers Guide: Assault on Gay America (PBS)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/diversity/assault/>

This viewers guide was developed to accompany the Frontline film "Assault on Gay America," which first aired on February 15, 2000.

Human Rights Campaign (HRC)

<http://www.hrc.org>

The HRC focuses on four main issues: renewing America's commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS; ending workplace discrimination; launching a rapid response to anti-gay and lesbian hatred, and focusing attention on lesbian health issues.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)

<http://www.nglft.org/>

The NGLTF supports grassroots organizing and advocacy for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights.

One Institute & Archives: The International Gay & Lesbian Heritage/Research Center

<http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla>

This is the world's largest research library on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered heritage and concerns.

7. Crime and Violence

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Criminal Justice Home Page

<http://aclu.org/issues/criminal/hmcj.html>

This page provides a valuable range of information and resources on criminal justice issues.

Amnesty International Facts and Figures on the Death Penalty (April 2000)

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/ACT500062000>

Amnesty International regularly updates Facts and Figures on the Death Penalty.

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ)

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

The BJS web site provides data, graphics, and links on crime and justice, including every BJS publication back to 1994. The *Guide to the BJS Website. Second Edition*, updated in May 2000, is useful (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/gbjsw2.htm>).

Children's Rights: Juvenile Justice, (Human Rights Watch [HRW])

www.hrw.org/hrw/worldreport99/children/child3.html

This site provides information on juvenile justice and children's rights around the world.

Community Policing Consortium

<http://www.communitypolicing.org/>

This site provides basic information and resources on community policing.

Community Policing Pages

<http://www.concentric.net/~dwoods/index.html>

This web site is published to stimulate research on community policing.

Facts about Children and the Law (American Bar Association)

www.abanet.org/media/factbooks/chtoc.html

Gun Control vs. Gun Rights

<http://www.opensecrets.org/news/guns/>

Juvenile Justice Reform Initiatives in the States, 1994-1996

www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/reform/contents.html

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice

<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>

The OJJDP Web site is designed to provide information and resources on juvenile justice and delinquency.

Smart Library on Crime

<http://crime.smartlibrary.org/>

The Smart Library on Crime provides a set of hierarchically organized short pieces on crime.

Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online (Utilization of Criminal Justice Statistics Project, Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Center, University of Albany/Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/>

Kathleen Maguire and Ann L. Pastore maintain this site, which includes over 600 tables from over 100 sources. This indispensable site is continually updated.

U.S. Sentencing Commission

<http://www.ussc.gov/>

This site gives access to a wide variety of information on sentencing.

Youth Risk Behavior and Surveillance System (Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Adolescent and School Health)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>

8. Substance Abuse

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

<http://ash.org>

The ASH site provides internal tobacco corporation documents.

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention

<http://www.edc.org/hec/>

This site offers much information, including the report on binge drinking on campus

(<http://www.edc.org/hec/pubs/binge.htm>).

Lindesmith Center

<http://www.lindesmith.org/>

Taking a “harm reduction” approach to substance abuse and prevention, the Lindesmith Center advocates “drug substitution and maintenance” approaches to substance abuse. Some scholars find this approach controversial. For a different approach see the CASA web site (<http://www.casacolumbia.org>).

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

<http://www.madd.org>

MADD focuses on “effective solutions to the drunk driving and underage drinking problems.” This site offers useful information and links.

National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), Columbia University

<http://www.casacolumbia.org/>

This high-profile center combines many disciplines to “study and combat all forms of substance abuse — illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco — as they affect all aspects of society.” CASA takes a “hard line”

approach to substance abuse and prevention. Scholars disagree on the soundness of the CASA approach. For a different approach see the Lindesmith Center web site (<http://www.lindesmith.org/>).

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
<http://www.health.org>

National Institute on Drug Abuse
<http://165.112.78.61/NIDAHome2.html>

National Institute on Drug Abuse: *Drug Abuse and Addiction Research: Report*
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/STRC/STRCindex.html>

This *Sixth Triennial Report to Congress on Drug Abuse and Addiction* provides extensive data on drug use.

National Substance Abuse Web Index, National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
<http://nsawi.health.org/>

This site provides quick access to information on substance abuse on both private and government web sites.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
<http://www.samhsa.gov/index.htm>

This comprehensive site is an excellent source of data and information on substance abuse.

9. Child Abuse and the Status of Children

Kids Count 2000 Data Online, Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)
<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc2000/>

Kids Count is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. It is available online at the website for the AECF (<http://www.aecf.org/>), along with other exceptionally useful resources.

Children's Bureau
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/>

The Children's Bureau, the oldest federal agency focusing on children, is part of the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.

Jim Hopper's Website
<http://www.jimhopper.com/>

On his website, psychologist Jim Hopper provides statistics, research, and resources on child abuse.

National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics Website
<http://childabuse.org/>

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect
<http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/>

The National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect is a project of the Family Life Development Project of the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University. The mission of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) is to facilitate the secondary analysis of research data relevant to the study of child abuse and neglect. By making data available to a larger number of researchers, NDACAN seeks to provide a relatively inexpensive and scientifically productive means for researchers to explore important issues in the child maltreatment field.

Prevent Child Abuse America
<http://www.childabuse.org/research.html>

This web site documents the effectiveness of specific child abuse prevention programs.

10. Battered Women

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/thematic.htm>

The Family Violence Prevention Fund
<http://www.fvpf.org/>

The Family Violence Prevention Fund collects, analyzes, and disseminates data on domestic violence.

National Center for Victims of Crime
<http://www.nvc.org/>

This site provides statistics on domestic violence, and information on spousal abuse, intimate homicide, and criminal justice system responses.

Office of Women's Health Report: Domestic Violence Facts
http://www.bphc.hrsa.dhhs.gov/omwh/omwh_8.htm

This fact sheet containing basic information and data on domestic violence is dated and has not been updated since September 1997.

“Outlawing Violence Against Women, A First Step” UNICEF, Progress of Nations Website
<http://www.unicef.org/pon97/p48a.htm>

This web page lists countries that have enacted legislation against domestic violence, marital rape, sexual harassment, and female genital mutilation.

Violence Against Women Office (VAWO), U.S. Department of Justice
<http://www.usdoj.gov/vawo/>

This site provides information about all aspects of violence against women, including selected speeches and articles, federal legislation and regulations, and ongoing research.

11. Divorce

American Sociological Association, Section on the Family
<http://www.asanet.org/sections/family.html>

This page includes references to sociologists doing research on families.

The Divorce Center
<http://www.divorcenter.org/>

The Divorce Center offers programs, calendars, and links to issues pertaining to divorce.

“Marital Status and Living Arrangements,” U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports
<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/ms-la.html>

This part of the Current Population Reports provides data on marital status and living arrangements.

U.S. Census Bureau
<http://www.census.gov/population.socdemo/>

This Census Bureau site provides statistical information on the estimated age at marriage, the number of marriages, and divorce in the U.S.

12. Health and Health Care Issues

Ethics Updates: Euthanasia and End-of-Life Decisions
<http://ethics.acusd.edu/euthanasia.html>

Professor Larry Hinman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of San Diego maintains this site, which includes links to resources on euthanasia.

Go Ask Alice!: Columbia University Health Services

<http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu>

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)

<http://www.nami.org>

This site provides extensive information on mental illness, including basic facts, information about pending legislation, and statistics.

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

This site is a wonderful source of information on health and related issues in the U.S.

National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH)

<http://nch.ari.net/>

NCH provides solidly researched and well-documented fact sheets on mental illness and homelessness and health care and homelessness.

National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness (Policy Research Associates)

<http://www.prainc.com/nrc>

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/>

13. Cities and Urban Decline

Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)

<http://www.cnt.org/>

By “promoting public policies, new resources and accountable authority which support sustainable, just and vital urban communities,” the CNT works to improve cities.

Smart Library on Urban Poverty

<http://poverty.smartlibrary.org/>

This site provides a hierarchically organized, clearly written set of pieces on urban poverty.

Social Life of Cities

<http://www.yale.edu/socdept/slc>

Professor Joseph Soars (Department of Sociology, Yale University) prepared this collection of photographs illustrating urban design and public spaces in various cities.

State of the Cities (National Urban Policy Report/HUD)

<http://www.huduser.org/publications/polleg/tsoc.html>

Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods, University of Louisville Center for Sustainable Neighborhoods

<http://www.louisville.edu/>

In addition to other resources, it includes materials on the collaboration between the University and West Louisville.

Urban Research Monitor (HUD)

<http://www.huduser.org/periodicals/urm.html>

Vermont Forum on Sprawl

<http://www.vtsprawl.org/>

Virtual Seminar in Global Political Economy/Global Cities & Social Movements

<http://csf.colorado.edu/gpe/gpe95b/resources.html>

14. Population, Food, and Development

American Studies Web

<http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asw>

AmeriSTAT

<http://www.ameristat.org/>

This site is a valuable source of demographic data on the U.S.

Bread for the World

<http://www.bread.org/>

BFW is a Christian movement seeking justice for the world's hungry people. It provides access to valuable resources, including fact sheets on domestic and international hunger.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations

The State of Food Insecurity in the World: 2000

<http://www.fao.org/FOCUS/E/SOFI00/sofi001-e.htm>

Food First (The Institute for Food and Development)

<http://www.foodfirst.org/>

Food First focuses on the root causes and solutions to world hunger and poverty. This site provides a wide variety of useful materials.

Global Exchange

<http://www.globalexchange.org/>

Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance

<http://info.pitt.edu/~ian/resource/human.htm>

The Hunger Project

<http://www.thp.org>

Hunger Web, World Hunger Program, Brown University

http://www.brown.edu/Departments/World_Hunger_Program/index.html

Hunger Web aims "to help prevent and eradicate hunger by facilitating the free exchange of ideas and information regarding the causes of, and solutions to world hunger." It includes an extraordinarily useful set of annotated links.

North-South Institute (ae/gi)

<http://www.nsi-ins.ca/>

An independent Canadian research institute focusing on international development.

PopNet

<http://www.popnet.org/>

Sponsored and maintained by the Population Reference Bureau, this site is "the source for global population information."

Population Reference Bureau (PRB)

<http://www.prb.org/>

Founded in 1929 to provide information on national and international population trends, the PRB provides exceptionally useful information.

Poverty Net: Data on Poverty (World Bank)

<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/data/index.htm>

This site provides statistical data on poverty.

Sociological Tour Through Cyberspace: Demographic Links

<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/demograp.html>

This section of Michael Kearl's website introduces demographic issues, provides useful graphics, and includes links to other sites.

United Nations Population Fund

<http://www.unfpa.org/>

U.S. Census Bureau International Data Base (IDB)

<http://www.census.gov/ftp/pub/ipc/www/idbnew.html>

The IDB is a computerized source of demographic and socio-economic statistics for all countries of the world.

U.S. Census Bureau International Data Base (IDB) Pyramids

<http://www.census.gov/ftp/pub/ipc/www/idbpyr.html>

This site provides dynamic population pyramids for each country in the IDB. This can be valuable teaching tool.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations)

<http://www.un.org/rights/50/decla.htm>

This important document can start important classroom discussions.

World Resources Institute (WRI)

<http://www.wri.org/>

The WRI provides an incredible range of useful information. Be sure to check out the latest *World Resources* report.

WWW Virtual Library: Demography & Population Studies

<http://demography.anu.edu.au/VirtualLibrary/>

This is a valuable gateway to demographic and population resources.

WWW Virtual Library: Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance

<http://info.pitt.edu/~ian/resource/human.htm>

This is another valuable gateway on the WWW Virtual Library.

15. Environmental Problems

Communications for a Sustainable Future

<http://csf.colorado.edu/>

This site provides access to a wide variety of resources related to the environment, peace and conflict, and other topics.

Earth Alert

www.discovery.com/news/earthalert/earthalert.html

Earth Alert provides daily updates on the health of the planet.

Envirolink: Communication, Ecology Connection

www.envirolink.com

This site provides useful information.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

www.epa.gov/

The EPA provides much information on a variety of environmental issues.

Friends of the Earth (FOE)

<http://www.foe.co.uk/index.html>

FOE is a network of environmental groups.

Greenpeace

<http://www.greenpeace.org/>

Greenpeace links to numerous resources.

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISDnet)

<http://iisd1.iisd.ca/>

IISD carries out research and advocates policy changes aimed at leading to a sustainable future.

Native Americans and the Environment

<http://conbio.rice.edu/nae/>

Created and maintained by anthropologist Alex Dark, this site promotes education and research on environmental issues that affect Native American communities

Overcoming Consumerism Website

<http://www.hooked.net/users/verdant/index.htm>

This website advocates radical anti-consumerism. It is a provocative site that includes interesting exercises and information.

Scorecard (Environmental Defense Fund)

<http://www.scorecard.org/>

Scorecard is an environmental information service of the Environmental Defense Fund. Among the useful resources provided are environmental maps keyed to specific environmental problems and the Find Your Community resource. Upon entering one's zip code, the site provides an overview of environmental threats in that community.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

<http://www.unep.ch/>

The UNEP site provides a wide range of environmentally relevant information and links.

16. Mass Media and Society

Center for Media Education (CME)

<http://www.cme.org/>

CME aims to improve the quality of electronic media, especially for children and families.

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)

www.fair.org/

This progressive media group studies and criticizes medial bias and censorship.

Media Research Center (MRC)

<http://www.mrc.org/>

This conservative media organization aims to provide political balance to media.

Project Censored

<http://censored.sonoma.edu/ProjectCensored>

Project Censored explores and publicizes media censorship by drawing attention to underreported news stories.

17. Computers, Technology, and Society

Americans in the Information Age: Falling Through the Net, National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide/>

Guide to Web Resources for Social Problems

This site provides information on the Digital Divide, the inequality in access to information resources and technology in the U.S.

Closing the Digital Divide Web Site (NTIA)

<http://www.digitaldivide.gov/>

This site is a clearinghouse for information and resources about the Digital Divide.

Social Issues of Computing

<http://www.engr.csulb.edu/~jewett/social/>

This page acts as an entry point into a set of resources dealing with social issues of computing.

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About the Editors

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Lutz Kaelber is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Vermont. His teaching interests include social theory, social problems, deviance, sociology of religion, and comparative historical sociology. He is the author of *Schools of Asceticism: Ideology and Organization in Medieval Religious Communities* (Penn State Press, 1998) and is currently working with his colleague Steve Berkowitz on a book about Max Weber's dissertation.