`Social Problems and Issues (SOC 206) Instructor: Arfa Aflatooni, PhD.

Spring 2020 Office: SSH 105

Online

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**Course Description**

This course examines how some social conditions come to be defined and labeled as “social problems”. In this class, we will be learning about the social construction of social problems, methods of analyzing their emergence and the reactions to social problems by the public, the media, advocacy groups and governmental institutions. The course provides an academic platform for discussion that encourages critical thinking and finding remedies to our social problems.  I strongly encourage the students in this class to participate in class discussions, present their views and experiences **politely** in relation to various issues that will be discussed in class.

**Prerequisite**

I**ntroduction to Sociology or Soc 204 is the prerequisite for this class.** If you have not taken Soc 204, then you need to have my permission to take this class. It is also highly recommended that you take **Writing 115 or Writing 121 before you take this class.**

**Course Outcomes**

1. Increase awareness of the existence of social problems in our community, country and world at large.
2. Understand the past, present and future trends (policies) within identified social problems.
3. Understand the importance of community involvement by both individuals and groups to achieve real remedies.

**Required Readings**

**Social Problems: Sociolgy In Action, by Atkinson, Korgen and Trautner, published by Sage. Please purchase the book from the bookstore. The book comes with a code to “Coursepack” which gives you access to all the course materials. Your course materials are integrated into your LBCC course Moodel shell.**

**You will find my lectures Powerpoint Slides on your Moodle course shell. Since we can not cover the entire book in ten weeks, I have selected 13 chapters that we will be covering in this class. Of those 13 chapters, eleven of them tackle social problems that will be examined in class.**

**Exams**

There will be **three in-class tests** for this class. The questions on each test come from chapters, lectures, videos, and class discussions. **Your three tests are NOT cumulative.**

**Sage Coursepack Exercises**

There are two types of activities that you will be doing on Moodle: **Chapter quizzes and Date Activities.**

**Grassroots Paper and Presentation**

Each student is also required to find a grassroots organization that addresses and tries to remedy a social problem. Please read the following article on the **Natural History of a Social Problem** before you start researching your chosen organization:

<https://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/reader/3064?e=barkansoc_1.0-ch01_s01>

**You will not receive full credit for your report if you do not present it to the class. You need to submit to me the name of your chosen organization by May 15. Two students cannot choose the same organization and if they do, one of them needs to pick a different organization. Your class presentation should not exceed 10 minutes.  You can make some PowerPoint slides for your presentation or just give an oral presentation. Your report should be typed and double spaced** (**3-4 pages**) and **turned in on the day of your presentation.**

**Here are the criteria for choosing a Grassroots Organization:**

* The organization must be a **non-governmental organization (NGO). Your chosen organization cannot be a lobbyist group or a Think Tank.**
* It has to be founded by an individual or a group of individuals who sought to define a condition as a social problem and remedy it. Make sure you discuss how the organization **frames** its cause as a social problem.
* It has to address **a very specific** social problem. (i.e., racial or gender discrimination, crime and drug problems, health and educational disparities, environmental issues, effects of war on society, etc.).
* It has to have a history of **nonviolent activism** at the local, national or international level and was able to foster some kind of social change. In addition, how has the organization used the media or other outlets (political, religious, etc.) to **legitimize** its cause?
* It has to offer some **realistic and workable and solutions** to the problem (history of some of its achievements). What has it accomplished?

**Final Grade Breakdown**

**Three Tests = 50%**

**Chapter Quizzes and Data Activties: 30 %**

**Grassroots Paper and Presentation = 20%**

**Absences and your grade (online discussion participation)**

I take attendance for every class and missing class will lower your grade. For each unexcused absence up to and including 3, your final grade will be lowered by 1% point. Here are some examples of unexcused absences: Car problems beyond one incident (after the first incident, I expect that you can arrange some other way to get to school); attending camp, family vacation or other social event; waking up late; working on school work (whether for our class or another class). I will judge other types of incidents on an individual basis. Unexcused absences 4 and 5 will each cost you 5% points off your final grade, and for every unexcused absence over 5, you will lose 1 letter grade. If you have over 5 unexcused absences, you probably won’t be able to pass, and you should drop the course.

**Class policy on Plagiarism**

Students who use someone else’s work as their own will receive an **“F”** for their work. **Do Your Own Work!  Please always have a pen and a pencil and notepad along with your textbook in class at all times. These are the tools of your trade as a student. Do not expect me to provide you with them!**

**Students with Disability**

Students who have some type of disability or medical condition that will require them to take their tests either at the **Student Assessment Center** **(RCH Room 111)** or the **Center for Accessibility Resources** (**RCH-105)** should contact me at the beginning of the term (the first week) and provide documentation from the **Center for Accessibility Resources** so that I can make the appropriate arrangements with them to take their tests there.

**Class Policies Regarding Missed Exams, Late Papers, Tardiness and Chatting**

Missed exams will be counted as zeros except for **extraordinary circumstances**. Acceptable reasons for missing an exam would include major health problems, a death in the family, etc. **Please note that the arrangements should be made with me before the exam**.

**Tardiness is not tolerated in my class, come to class on time and if you need to leave early you need to notify me at the beginning of class.**

**Talking and chit chatting in my class will also result in your dismal from the class.**

**Limited Use of Email and Electronic Devices in Class**

This is **not** an online class and therefore I expect that most of our communications will take place in person and in class. If there is something that you need to discuss with me please come and see me in my office before the class. On rare occasions where you are out of town or very ill and need to communicate with me you can send a short message or email you work to me. **Please turn off your cell phone before class. I reserve the right to dismiss you from the class if I see you using your cell phone or any other electronic devices for personal use.**

**Lecture Topics and Course Outline**

**Week 1**

**Understanding Social Problems**

**Reading: Chapter 1**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Analyzing Economic Inequalities**

**Reading: Chapter 2**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Week 2**

**Recognizing Racism and Racial Inequalties**

**Readings: Chapter 3**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Week 3**

**Examining Gender Inequalities**

**Reading: Chapter 4**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Foucusing on Sex and Sexualities**

**Chapter 5**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Test 1 April 26**

**Week 4**

**Preparing for Aging Societies**

**Reading: Chapter 6**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Making Sense of Migration and Immigration**

**Reading: Chapter 7**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Week 5**

**Researching Environmental Problems**

**Reading: Chapter 8**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

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**Week 6**

**Understanding War and Terrorism**

**Reading: Chapter 10**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Test 2 May 17**

**Week 7**

**Pursring Equity in Education**

**Reading: Chapter 13**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Week 8**

**Prioritizing Heath and Health Inequalities**

**Chapter 14**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Week 9**

**Realizing Power and Volnerablity of Institutions**

**Chapter 15**

**Moodle quiz and data activity**

**Week 10**

**Presentations of Grassroots Organizations**

**Test 3 June 10, 3pm**

**If you have a difficult time finding a grassroots organization, here is a list of some grassroots organizations (as suggestions) that you can choose from:**

Bread for the World

Food For The Hungry

Foods Not Bombs

Freedom From Hunger

The Hunger Project

National Center for Children in Poverty

National Coalition for the Homeless

Children’s Defense Fund

Sisters of the Road (Oregon based)

Oregon Rural Action

Southern Poverty Law center

Urban League

Catalyst Project

Anti-Racist Alliance

Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization

Urban Institute

National Organization for Women

Students Active for Ending Rape (SAFER)

The WAGE Project: Closing the Gender Wage Gap

Techbridge: Encouraging Girls to Pursue Science

Human Rights Campaign

GLAAD

Matthew Shepard Foundation

The Grassroots Education Movement

The Center for Education Reform

The Grassroots Education Project

Teachers without Borders

Environmental Defense Fund

Green Peace

Sierra Club

Doctors without Borders

Iraq Veterans against the WarMen’s Work: Violence Reduction

Peace One Day

Amnesty International

The Brady Campaign

Citizens for Tax Justice

Teach for America

The Women's Trust (microfinance organization)

Volunteers of America

Tahirih Justice Center

