

Sociology 206–Social Problems
Linn-Benton Community College
Winter, 2013
MWF 12-12:50 NSH 209

Instructor: Robert Griffin
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Course Text:

“Social Problems in a Diverse Society.” (2012). Kendall, Diana. Pearson.

Course Overview/goals:

While the number of topics that sociologists are interested in is beyond the ability of a single course to discuss, these topics can be grouped into categories. For example, many sociologists study what are called “social problems.” In essence, a social problem is a condition of society that is viewed as harmful. For example, many sociologists—including myself—study crime and deviant behavior. These sociologists study the prevalence, causes, and solutions to crime. During this course, we will focus on several different social problems and gain an understanding of them from the sociological perspective. Further, we will discuss possible approaches that might attempt to alleviate the harm caused by these problems.

Course Grading:

Your grade in this course will depend on 3 exams, 2 papers, and a presentation. Each exam will be worth 20% of your overall grade. The first paper will be worth 10 % of your overall grade while the presentation and second paper will total 30% of your overall grade. The presentation is worth 30% of your paper's value (10% of your overall grade).

Exams

The exams will be in class and a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay. The final will be comprehensive in nature.

Papers

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day due. A paper submitted after class has started will be considered late one day.

Grading Scale:

The final grading scale will be as follows:

90-100%: A 80-89%: B 70-79%: C
60-69%: D Below 60%: F

I do not curve grades. Your final grade will be calculated to the nearest whole percentage.

Pop Quizzes:

I reserve the right to administer pop quizzes at my discretion. If given, they will be considered part of the next administered exam in the course.

Extra Credit:

I don't give extra credit assignments, so please do not ask. If you are concerned about your grade in this course, I suggest spending extra time on the course material for future exams.

Late papers/missed exams:

While I will attempt to make alternative arrangements with students who contact me prior to the date regarding conflicts that may cause an exam to be missed, students who miss an exam without prior arrangements will receive a 0. There are no exceptions. Leaving an email or voice message for me does NOT constitute making prior arrangements. Late papers will receive a 10% per calendar day deduction. If I am not available, turn them in to the clerical staff to be put in my box with a date stamp. Late papers that have not been date stamped will be considered turned in when I pick them up, not when you turned them in.

Miscellaneous

Students with Disabilities

Linn-Benton Community College promotes equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. If you have a disability and need assistance please notify me and make an appointment immediately with the Office of Disability Services. It is your responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Services. Contact information: Disability Coordinator at Linn-Benton Community College, RCH-105, 6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, Phone (541)-917-4690 or via Oregon Telecommunications Relay TTD at 1-800-735-2900 or 1-800-735-1232.

Attendance and Classroom Etiquette

If you intend to be disruptive to the classroom environment, I would prefer that you not attend my class. If you would rather discuss weekend activities with your neighbor or read the newspapers, do so outside of the classroom. Students who engage in disruptive behavior (reading, talking, leaving early, arriving late, sleeping, passing notes) will be asked to leave as that behavior is not courteous to the other students and instructor. Finally, please mute or shut off your cell phone, pager, or other electronic device, and texting is prohibited. Laptops for educational purposes are fine.

Honest Scholarship

I believe that honest scholarship is essential to the academic enterprise. You must do your own work. Any representation of another's work or ideas as your own (plagiarism) is cheating. An explanation of plagiarism can be found in the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics. Any use of unauthorized materials (crib notes, advanced information, etc.) is cheating. Assisting another student to cheat (allowing him or her to read your exam) is cheating. Cheating will be penalized. Penalties will include failing the course and informing the college. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please consult with me as soon as possible. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not a valid excuse.

Questions

The only stupid question is one that's not asked. If you have a question, someone else probably has the same one. Both of these are cliches, but both are true. If you have a question, ask it—either in class (preferred) or over email. This helps me identify areas that I may need to clarify for the class as a whole.

Writing Assignment #1

Throughout our lives, we come into contact with social problems. In 3-4 pages describe a social problem that has entered your life. Use your sociological imagination and the three theoretical approaches to sociology to discuss what happened. For example, I might write about a time I was recently the victim of a racially motivated crime. Why was I a victim? What was the racial motivation? What would a conflict theorist, symbolic interactionist, or functionalist say about what happened?

Writing Assignment #2

This course is an introduction to what social problems are. Unfortunately, there are many more social problems that we have not discussed (or only discussed briefly) in this course. Your final paper for this course is to find a problem (be sure it fits our definition of a social problem) you're interested in and research it in more depth. Compose a 5-7 page paper showing me what you've learned and then prepare a 5 minute presentation where the full class can learn what you've learned. Plagiarism, particularly “cut and paste” will not be tolerated. Also, **each student is responsible for preparing one multiple choice question from their paper/presentation for possible use on the final exam.** This should be submitted on a separate piece of paper, the same day as the paper is due.

Course Schedule

I believe that an attempt to hold a course to a rigorous schedule is a mistake. Every class proceeds at a different rate so there is no “set in stone” schedule. However, tentative guidelines can be formulated. Generally, I do not move exam dates. They may cover different material, but will be on the dates described.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1 Course Overview, Sociological Perspectives

Kendall, Ch 1

Week 2 Perspectives and Methods

Kendall, Ch 1

No class 1/14

Week 3 Social Class and Stratification, Race and Ethnicity

Kendall, Ch 2, 3

No class 1/21

PAPER 1 DUE 1/25

Week 4 Gender, Review

Kendall, Ch 4 **EXAM 1—2/1**

Week 5 Sexuality

Kendall, Ch 6

Week 6 Deviance and Crime

Kendall, Ch 8, 9 (possibly 7)

Week 7 More deviance, catchup, review

No class 2/18

EXAM 2/22

Week 8 The Environment and Population

Kendall, Ch 13

Week 9 Presentations

PAPER 2 DUE—3/6

Week 10 Student Presentations, Review

Kendall, Ch 18

Week 11 **EXAM 3—Monday, 3/18--1300-1450**