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

MW 2:30-3:50 Office: SSH 105

Spring 2017 Office Hours: Weekdays

10-10:50 by

appointment

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**Course Description**

This course examines current social problems in America and the world. We explore the root-causes and consequence of social problems from a sociological perspective. The course provides an academic platform for discussion that encourages critical thinking and and finding remedies to our social problems. I have selected **Eight social problems** that need a closer examination from your textbook to study in this class. 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.

**Course Outcomes**

1. Increase awareness of the existence of social problems in our community, country and world at large.
2. Understand the past, persent 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 Book**

**Textbook:**  **Social Problems: Community, Policy and Social Action (Fifth ed.) by Anna Leon-Guerrero. Published by Sage Publications.**

[**https://edge.sagepub.com/node/26341/student-resources**](https://edge.sagepub.com/node/26341/student-resources)

**Exams and Grading**

There will be **two in-class tests** (**One midterm and one final)** for this class. The questions on each test come from chapters, lectures, videos, and class discussions. **Your final test is NOT cumulative.**

**Weekly Papers**

In each chapter that you have been assigned to read, there are three sections that deal with social problems and social action to remedy them: **“*Taking Worldview”,* *Voices in the Community” and “Sociology At Work”***. You have to read thesesections and then write a short commentary/opinion piece on each section. There is usually a question posed at the end of each section that you can answer as a starting point of your commentary. If there are no questions, then write your own impressions. **Your short opinion pieces should be typed/double spaced and not exceed two pages. You turn in one paper each week in class (Wednesday). I will NOT accept emailed papers.**

**Grass Roots Paper and Presentation**

Each student is also required to find a grassroots organization that addresses and tries to remedy a social problem (one of the problems we have covered in class). **Please read chapter 17 your textbook before you choose an organization.**

**You will not receive full credit for your report if you do not present it to class. You need to submit to me the name of your chosen organization by May 8. Your class presentation should not exceed 7 minutes.Your report should be typed and double spaced** (2-4 pages) and turned in on the day of your presentation **(tenth week of class)**

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

* The organization must be a **non-governmental organization (NGO).**
* 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.
* It has to address **a very specific** social problem that has been discussed in your textbook (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.
* It has to offer some **realistic and workable and solutions** to the problem ( history of some of its achievements)

**Class Participation and Attendance**

Sociology is an interactive discipline and therefore you will be an active participant during each class. **You are expected to attend the class having read the assigned chapters or any other reading for the week. Habitual absences and tardiness are distracting to others as well as to your own learning process.**

**Final Grade Breakdown:**

**Two Tests = 50% (25% each)**

**Grass Roots Paper and Presentation = 20%**

**Weekly Papers and class Activities=30%.**

**Class policy on Plagiarism**

Students who use someone else’s work as their own or copy information or ideas from outside sources without proper citations will receive an “F” for their work. Do Your Own Work!

**Have a pen and 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 at the Learning Center or the Office of Disability Services (917-4789) should contact me at the beginning of the term (the first week) and provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services so that I can make the appropriate arrangements with the ODS to take their tests there.

**Missed Exams and Late Papers**

Missed exams will be counted as zeros except for extraordinary circumstances. Acceptable reasons for missing an exam would include health problems, a death in the family, etc. **Please note that the arrangements should be made with me before the exam**. Make-up exams are taken at **Student Assessment Center** at Red Cedar Hall-111. **I will accept late papers but points will be deducted. All late work should be tuned in by June 7 . I will NOT accept late work during the finals week.**

**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 you miss class for any reason, you need not to email me about that unless there is a test scheduled on that day.** If there is something that you need to discuss with me please come and see me in my office during my office hours. 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. Also,

**Out of respect for your classmates and me, please turn off your cell phone before class.**

**Lecture Topics**

**Week 1**

**Sociology and Study of Social Problems: Chapters 1 and 17**

**Taking a World View: Page 11, Voices in the Community: Page 20, Sociology at Work: Page 25**

**OR, from chapter 17: Taking a World View:Page 499, Voices in the Community:Page 501 and Sociology at Work: Page 504.**

**Week 2**

**The Basis of Inequality: Socia Class: Chapter 2**

**Taking a World View: Page 40, Voices in the Community: Page 56, Sociology at Work: Page 58**

**Week 3**

**Race and Ethnicity: Chapter 3**

**Taking a World View: Page 81,Voices in the Community: Page 89, Sociology at Work: Page 94**

**Week 4**

**Gender and Sexual Orientation: Chapters 4and 5**

**Taking a World View: Page 114, Voices in the Community: Page 103, Sociology at Work: Page 118**

**Or**

**Taking a World View: Page 141, Voices in the Community: Page 139, Sociology at Work: Page 142**

**Week 5**

**Age and Aging: Chapter 6**

**Taking a World View: Page 151, Voices in the Community: Page 165, Sociology at Work: Page 166**

**Midterm May 8**

**Week 6**

**Education: Chapter 8**

**Taking a World View: Page 215, Voices in the Community: Page 230, Sociology at Work: Page 235**

**Week 7**

**Health and Medicine Care and Alcohol and Drug Abuse : Chapters 10 and 12**

**Taking a World View: Page 292, Voices in the Community: Page 293, Sociology at Work: Page 294**

**Or**

**Taking a World View: Page 338, Voices in the Community: Page 352, Sociology at Work: Page 353**

**Week 8**

**The Environment: Chapter 15**

**Taking a World View: Page 437, Voices in the Community: Page 448, Sociology at Work: Page 452**

**Week 9**

**War and Terrorism: Chapter 16**

**Takin a World View: Page 475, Voices in the Community: Page 480, Sociology at Work: Page 484**

**Weeks 9 and 10**

**Presentations of Grassroots Organizations**

**Final Exam: Monday June 12 at 3 pm**

**Here’s a list of some grassroots organizations (as suggestions) that you can choose from** :

Bread for the World

Food For The Hungry

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)

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

Men’s Work: Violence Reduction

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 War

Peace One Day

Amnesty International