SYG 2010 Syllabus, Spring 2020

Course Information

- Course Hours: (Asynchronous)
- Course Meeting Location: (Online)
- Credit Hours: 3 hours
- Prerequisites: None

Course Description

In this course, you will sharpen your critical thinking skills and apply sociological concepts as we consider six broad social issues: (1) political polarization, (2) trustworthiness of news media and science, (3) income inequality, (4) racial segregation, (5) access to quality education, and (6) issues related to globalization. All of these issues have played out large in terms of recent social protests surrounding racial inequality in the U.S. You will explore the social processes that lead some phenomena to be designated as important social problems, and examine how social problems come and go over time in terms of public opinion. You’ll also assess explanations that have been offered to explain the presence and persistence of social problems. The point of this course is to hone your critical thinking skills and engage with sociological perspectives on social issues, such that whatever position you take is well grounded and defensible. To accomplish these objectives, you will read research reports, policy briefs, opinion polls, book chapters, and assorted news articles and videos. Course requirements include discussion board posts and replies, short quizzes on assigned reading, research assignments, and a cumulative final exam.

Course Instructor

John Reynolds
Professor of Sociology
jrreynolds@fsu.edu
(850) 644-6416
Department of Sociology / Bellamy 427
Office Hours: Available upon request; contact instructor with Zoom invite or meet on Chat.

Course MENTORS

Taylor Clark
PhD Student in Sociology
tj16b@my.fsu.edu

Metin Güven
PhD Student in Sociology
mg18k@my.fsu.edu

Emails will be responded to within 24 to 48 hours.

Learning Objectives
At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate criteria for determining what counts as a social problem vs a personal concern.
2. Apply critical thinking skills and basic sociological concepts to contemporary social problems.
3. Differentiate between sociological and other social explanations of the causes of social problems.
4. Identify ways that organizations, institutions, and culture influence views of social problems and policy responses to them.
5. Discuss critically and respectfully the pros/cons of current policy solutions that have been proposed to deal with social problems.

Course Materials

All course materials are available online through our class Canvas site.

Student Responsibilities

- Students should log on to Canvas at least every other day to check for course updates.
- Students are expected to keep up with the class, engage with the course material, and submit assignments by the due dates.
- Assignments, quizzes, and exams are expected to be products of individual students per the FSU Academic Honor Policy. Students should not discuss any of the questions with each other before or during the actual assignments, activities, quizzes, or exams without instructor approval.
- To receive maximum points for questions, students need to follow the instructions carefully, follow word limits as instructed, and use spell and grammar checking.
- To be successful in this course, students need to complete all required assignments and tests.

Grading Policy

Short Quizzes on Assigned Readings = 14 @ 5 pts each = 60 pts (20% of grade)

In each week, Modules 1 through 7, students will take a short, repeatable quiz on the assigned course materials. You may take the quiz as many times as you like and Canvas will record your best score. Once we have completed a module you will no longer receive credit for taking the quiz, and missed quizzes cannot be made up. This should be your own work; DO NOT work together on the quizzes or share the questions with others; see "Academic Honor Policy" below.

Applied Research Assignments = 6 @ 20 pts each = 120 pts (40% of grade)

You will complete six research assignments throughout the semester, with each being worth 10 points. In the assignments you will apply concepts and figures from the assigned readings and videos to empirical on the module's social problem. For example, this may involve selecting a Florida public school that you would send your (hypothetical) child to using administrative data on school performance, funding, and student composition, and then reflecting on how those choices impact the economic and racial segregation of Florida's school districts. It is essential that you tie specific course content to the topics considered in the assignments, as this is one of the main ways to provide evidence that you engaged with that material and can apply it. Assignment write-ups will be 3-5 pages long, double-spaced, and should be written in a professional manner using appropriate grammar and punctuation -- not just bullet points.
Discussion Board Posts and Replies = 5 @ 10 pts each = 50 pts (17% of grade)

At four points in the semester, a discussion topic will be posted on Sunday. You will participate in a discussion with other members of the class concerning a prompt question related to the current Module topic or immediately past topic. Each student will be expected to post a 200-300 word response to the discussion topic by Sunday of the first week in the module and then to post one 100-150 word reply to another student's response by Sunday of the following week. Based on the quality of your posts, you can earn a possible 10 points for your contribution to each group discussion. No credit will be given for late postings on the discussion board or for "flaming" or other inappropriate responses.

Cumulative Final Exam = 70 pts (23% of grade)

The final exam is an open-book (i.e., assigned course materials) open-note exam comprised of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. The final will test your ability to think critically about social problems, to make informed arguments that are grounded in empirical evidence, and to apply appropriate sociological concepts and show knowledge of the current research. The final exam is timed for two hours and can be taken between 10am and 6pm (Eastern) on Wednesday of Finals Week. The final exam should be your own work; DO NOT work together or communicate about the final in person, over email/text, or in social media. Students who are found to have collaborated on or shared information about the final exam will receive a grade of 0 on the exam and will be reported to the university for an Academic Honor Code violation; see "Academic Honor Policy" below.

Late Policy (see also "Course Policies" below): Reading quizzes are only available until midnight of the Sunday in the week they are assigned. If you do not submit your quiz by that time, you will not receive credit. Similarly, discussion board posts and replies must be submitted on time to receive credit. Late discussion board posts or replies will not receive points, except in rare circumstances when the student has a documented excuse. Late applied research assignments will be penalized 50% for being late up to 24 hours, and will receive no credit if late more than 24 hours. Do not wait until the last minute to take quizzes, post on discussion boards, or submit your assignments—you are risking being late and getting no credit due to technical problems or interrupted WiFi access. Late final exams will not be graded unless you provide a documented excuse within 24 hours of the due date, and you will likely receive an "Incomplete" for your grade until the following semester once the makeup final can be graded and included.

Grading Scheme

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100% to 93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>&lt; 93% to 90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>&lt; 90% to 87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&lt; 87% to 83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>&lt; 83% to 80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>&lt; 80% to 77%</td>
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<td>Grade</td>
<td>Percentage Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>&lt; 77% to 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>&lt; 73% to 70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>&lt; 70% to 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt; 67% to 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>&lt; 63% to 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60% to 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proctored Exams-Tallahassee

REMOTE PROCTORING

You can find information for taking proctored online exams on the Distance Learning website and in the Honorlock Resources for Students reference. There is currently no need to pay a fee, select a proctor, or make an exam appointment. If you need accommodations for a disability during testing, please work with FSU’s Office of Accessibility Services and your instructor.

Please pay close attention to information in this Canvas course site regarding examination dates and student responsibilities.

ON-CAMPUS PROCTORING

If you are unable to use Honorlock to complete your exams, please contact the instructor of this course within the first 2 weeks of the semester. It will be at the discretion of your instructor and FSU’s Testing Center to determine whether you meet the criteria necessary to take an exam on campus. Signup slots will be created only for special cases where you are unable to have your exam proctored by Honorlock.

If you are approved to complete your exams at FSU’s Testing Center, please keep the following in mind:

- If you need accommodations for a disability during testing, please follow these instructions regarding accommodation during testing.
- You will be required to wear a mask while inside the testing facility. Be sure to closely read FSU’s other Testing Center Rules prior to your arrival so that there are no surprises.
- The testing center is located in Stadium Center C, near the Sportsmanship Statue. See Hours, Parking, and Directions for more details.
- You may not have access to an in-person, off-campus proctor due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have questions about your particular situation, please email testing@campus.fsu.edu.

Course Policies

Communications/Netiquette

For Discussions:

- Please use polite, respectful behavior when posting your responses to prompts in the Discussion Boards.
• Be mindful of how you express your emotions and humor, and be sensitive to cultural and ability differences of your online peers.
• Keep postings to the point, and make sure your comments are relevant to the topic of discussion.
• Avoid messages such as, "Wow," "Way to go," or "Ditto" and aim for comments that validate other members’ ideas through careful explanation of why.
• When replying, give a short description in the subject line of what you are replying to, and use correct punctuation and spelling throughout your post.

For Email Communication:

• For email, please respond to your instructor’s and peers’ messages within a 24-hour period.
• Use a brief description in the subject line that outlines the topic of discussion.
• Avoid using slang or profane words.
• Use your instructor’s correct title he or she prefers for communication.
• Avoid using emoticons, such as smiley faces, and maintain a professional demeanor.
• Sign your email messages using your full name.
• AVOID USING ALL CAPS. This makes the message visually difficult to read and is perceived by the reader as "shouting."
• Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, just as you would for any communication.
• Ask yourself whether you would be comfortable if someone other than the intended receiver were to read your message. Remember, email is not a completely secure form of communication.
• Refrain from "flaming," which is expressing a strongly held opinion without tact or regard for others. Don’t assume that recipients will know the intent of the message (e.g., "just kidding"). It reads differently when it’s in print (electronic or not).
• Report any inappropriate communication considered to be of a serious nature to your instructor, as it may be a violation of University policy.
• Treat others with respect by making messages clear and succinct.

Participation & Lateness Policy

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Policy for Missed EXAMS

If you do not complete the final exam by the deadline, you will receive an incomplete for the course IF you have a documented excused and you notify the instructor within 24 hours of the exam date. The instructor will coordinate with you on taking a makeup, and your course grade will be posted the following term. If you do not have a documented excuse or you do not contact the instructor within a reasonable time, you will not be allowed to make up a missed final exam.

Policy for late Research Assignments

Late applied research assignments will be penalized 50% for being late up to 24 hours, and will receive no credit if late more than 24 hours.
Policy for late reading quizzes

Reading quizzes are available to take for the duration of the module in which they occur, then can no longer be taken and there are no makeups.

Policy for late discussion board posts

Discussion board posts need to be submitted on time so that classmates have a chance to read your post and write a thoughtful, constructive response. Late discussion board posts or replies will not receive points, except in the case of a documented excuse.

Policy on Responding to Students

- Email responses typically within 24 to 48 hours.
- Graded assignments typically returned within 2 weeks after due date.

University Policies

University Attendance Policy

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Please note: Modifications to this policy have been made to accommodate the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, see this memo that has been distributed to all faculty and instructional staff regarding the 2020-2021 academic year.

Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (For more details see the FSU Academic Honor Policy and procedures for addressing alleged violations.)

Process for Resolving Academic Problems or Grievances

Please use this step-by-step guide to resolving academic problems to begin the process of communicating with your instructor to resolve any confusion or difficulty you may be having in the course. Detailed information on FSU’s grievance procedure, including special instructions for students enrolled in an FSU branch campus, is maintained on the General Bulletin's Academic Integrity & Grievances webpage. Out-of-state distance learning students should review the Office of Distance Learning Complaint Resolution page for additional procedures.
**Americans With Disabilities Act**

Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

To receive academic accommodations, a student:

- (1) must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS);
- (2) must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and,
- (3) should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the

**Office of Accessibility Services (Tallahassee Campus)**
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
oas@fsu.edu
https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas

**Student Disability Services (Panama City Campus)**
Office of Student Affairs
4750 Collegiate Drive
2nd Floor Barron Building (Room 215)
Florida State University Panama City
Panama City, FL 32405
(866) 693-7872 (toll free)
Email: sds@pc.fsu.edu
https://pc.fsu.edu/students/student-disability-services

**Free Tutoring from FSU (Tallahassee Campus)**

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance are available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services'
comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' website or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Syllabus Change Policy

"Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice."

Technology Requirements

Course content is accessible through Canvas. Students will need to be able to view videos, write and upload assignments, post to discussion boards, and take assessments. Students should have access to high-speed internet and updated software. Mobile devices may be used to view course content, upload assignments, and take assessments as determined by the instructor. To view the most current technology requirements, visit the FSU Canvas support site.

Canvas Support

Need help with Canvas? Contact FSU Canvas Support:

Email: canvas@fsu.edu

Phone: (850) 644-8004

Website: support.canvas.fsu.edu

Hours: 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday