SYG2010: 1-3 Syllabus

Course Information

- **Course Hours**: Online Asynchronous
- **Credit Hours**: 3 hours
- **Prerequisites**: None
- **Office Hours**: TBA

Course Description

In a world oversaturated with loud 24/7 media outlets, we all assume that we know what the social problems are. This course aims to challenge that assumption. It starts with the premise that social problems do not simply exist in the way that air or gravity exists; rather, they exist because we have created them. Social problems, like most social objects, are socially constructed. This course not only will introduce you to the most pressing and persistent problems faced by contemporary society but also will prompt you to ask how we know that they are indeed social problems. Before we rush to solve social problems, we should first try to understand what they are.

Course Instructor

Sourabh Singh
Assistant Professor
ssingh2@fsu.edu
(850) 644-1234
Sociology / 431B

Emails will be responded to within 24 to 48 hours.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to perform the following tasks:

1. Describe how major sociological theories explain social problems.
2. Explain various ways in which social inequality relates to social problems.
3. Identify causes and consequences of major social problems.
4. Explain the labeling process of social problems.
5. Explain recent findings regarding each of the major social problems covered in the course.

Course Materials

Required Text Book

Social Problems: Continuity and Change.

This is an open textbook that can be downloaded for free from the Open Textbook Library web site: https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=141.

Follow the link, click “Read Multiple Formats” and choose a format for fits your need. For many people, pdf will work the best.

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

Memos:

Each week of the course is divided into two parts. You are required to write a 250 words memo for each part of the course week. So in a week you will write two memos. These memos must be submitted by every Friday of the week. Your memos will count for 40% of your total grade for the course.

In the memo you are expected to briefly summarize the main points of the readings, and discuss your opinion on them. Your opinion could be in the form of appreciation or criticism of the reading; it could also be in the form of the relevance or irrelevance of the reading with respect to current social problems. Your opinions must be supported by logical reasoning and/or arguments.

In general my advise is that you should try to write your memo as you are doing your readings; do not wait to write it later.
The purpose of memo writing exercise is to ensure that you keep up with the readings and carefully think through them.

**Exams:**

There will be three non-cumulative essay-type exams during the entire semester. This is a 15 weeks semester; you will get exams almost every five weeks. These exams will provide you with opportunity to more deeply engage with topics of your interest. Each paper will be 20% of the total grade. Details regarding each exam - number of questions, word count, due date and so on - will be provided when exams will be announced.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism will result in zero points. Case referred to Office of Faculty Development and Advancement. For more details see Academic Honor Policy below.

**Grading**

Memos: 40 points

Exam 1: 20 points

Exam 2: 20 points

Exam 3: 20 points

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent, creative and superb command of the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Creative and outstanding command of the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Above average level but not outstanding grasp of the material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Above average but thin understanding of some readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Above average but misses some parts of the readings and thus is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
unable to apply subject matter at all levels

77-79  C+  Average level of achievement with some mastering yet narrow application of the material

74-76  C    Average level of achievement; refers to the readings in a superficial way suggesting spotty understanding of the material

70-73  C-   Close to average due to spotty understanding of the material and inability to apply readings

67-69  D+   Below average understanding, showing little knowledge of the material

64-66  D    Below average level with multiple contradictory arguments

60-63  D-   Below average understanding thus failure to apply readings

59 and below  F  Fails to understand and address the readings on the subject matter

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
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.

You must get in touch with the “Case Management Services” provided by the Dean of Student Office in case you are facing health or personal or any other kind of issue because of which you are not able to keep up with your work. Below is the contact information of the Case Management services.

- **Location**: University Center A, Suite 4100, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2440
- **Case Management**: 850.644.9555
- **Dean of Students**: 850.644.2428
- **Fax**: 850.644.0687
- **https://dos.fsu.edu/cms/Links to an external site.**
- Please get in touch with them while contacting us to excuse your late submissions.

**Policy for Missed Memos and Exams**

- Four absences in the semester are excused.
- You can skip memos for the two absences.
- Unexcused absence will result in loss of attendance points.
- Late submission of memos will lead to loss of 20% of total points.
- Late submission of exams will lead to loss of 25% of total points.
- Late memos and exams should be submitted before the last class of the semester on April 23. Work submitted after that will receive 0 points.

**Policy on Responding to Students**

- Email responses typically within 24 to 48 hours. Emails after 4:00 pm on Fridays and on weekends will be responded by Monday.
- 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
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."

COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE

Jan 7: Chapter 1: Understanding Social Problems

Introduction to the syllabus

1.1 What Is a Social Problem?

Jan 9: Chapter 1: Understanding Social Problems
1.2 Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

**Jan 14: Chapter 2: Poverty**

2.1 The Measurement and Extent of Poverty
2.2 Who the Poor Are: Social Patterns of Poverty
2.3 Explaining Poverty

**Jan 16: Chapter 2: Poverty**

2.4 The Consequences of Poverty
2.5 Global Poverty
2.6 Reducing Poverty

**Jan 21: Chapter 3: Racial and Ethnic Inequality**

3.1 Racial and Ethnic Inequality: A Historical Prelude
3.2 The Meaning of Race and Ethnicity
3.3 Prejudice
3.4 Discrimination

**Jan 23: Chapter 3: Racial and Ethnic Inequality**

3.5 Dimensions of Racial and Ethnic Inequality
3.6 Explaining Racial and Ethnic Inequality
3.7 Reducing Racial and Ethnic Inequality
Jan 28: Chapter 4: Gender Inequality

4.1 Understanding Sex and Gender
4.2 Feminism and Sexism
4.3 Dimensions of Gender Inequality

Jan 30: Chapter 4: Gender Inequality

4.4 Violence against Women: Rape and Sexual Assault
4.5 The Benefits and Costs of Being Male
4.6 Reducing Gender Inequality

Feb 4: Chapter 5: Sexual Orientation and Inequality

5.1 Understanding Sexual Orientation
5.2 Public Attitudes about Sexual Orientation

Exam 1 TBA

Feb 6: Chapter 5: Sexual Orientation and Inequality

5.3 Inequality Based on Sexual Orientation
5.4 Improving the Lives of the LGBT Community

Feb 11: Chapter 6: Aging and Ageism

6.1 The Concept and Experience of Aging
6.2 Perspectives on Aging
6.3 Life Expectancy and the Graying of Society
Exam 1 Due

Feb 13: Chapter 6: Aging and Ageism

6.4 Biological and Psychological Aspects of Aging
6.5 Problems Facing Older Americans
6.6 Reducing Ageism and Helping Older Americans

Feb 18: Chapter 7: Alcohol and Other Drugs

7.1 Drug Use in History
7.2 Drugs and Drug Use Today
7.3 Social Patterning of Drug Use

Feb 20: Chapter 7: Alcohol and Other Drugs

7.4 Explaining Drug Use
7.5 Drug Policy and the War on Illegal Drugs
7.6 Addressing the Drug Problem and Reducing Drug Use

Feb 25: Chapter 8: Crime and Criminal Justice

8.1 The Problem of Crime
8.2 Types of Crime
8.3 Who Commits Crime?

Feb 27: Chapter 8: Crime and Criminal Justice
8.4 Explaining Crime
8.5 The Criminal Justice System
8.6 Reducing Crime

**March 3: Chapter 9: Sexual Behavior**

9.1 An Overview of Heterosexuality
9.2 Teenage Sex and Pregnancy
9.3 Abortion

**March 5: Chapter 9: Sexual Behavior**

9.4 Prostitution
9.5 Pornography

**March 10: Chapter 10: The Changing Family**

10.1 Overview of the Family
10.2 Sociological Perspectives on the Family

*Exam 2 TBA*

**March 12: Chapter 10: The Changing Family**

10.3 Changes and Problems in American Families
10.4 Families in the Future

**March 16-20: Spring Break**
March 24: Chapter 11: Schools and Education

11.1 An Overview of Education in the United States

11.2 Sociological Perspectives on Education

11.3 Issues and Problems in Elementary and Secondary Education

Exam 2 Due

March 26: Chapter 11: Schools and Education

11.4 Issues and Problems in Higher Education

11.5 Improving Schools and Education

March 31: Chapter 12: Work and the Economy

12.1 Overview of the Economy

12.2 Sociological Perspectives on Work and the Economy

April 2: Chapter 12: Work and the Economy

12.3 Problems in Work and the Economy

12.4 Improving Work and the Economy

April 7: Chapter 13: Health and Health Care

13.1 Sociological Perspectives on Health and Health Care

13.2 Global Aspects of Health and Health Care
April 9: Chapter 13: Health and Health Care
13.3 Problems of Health in the United States
13.4 Problems of Health Care in the United States
13.5 Improving Health and Health Care

April 14: Chapter 14: Urbanization
14.1 A Brief History of Urbanization
14.2 Sociological Perspectives on Urbanization
14.3 Problems of Urban Life

April 16: Chapter 14: Urbanization
14.4 Problems of Rural Life
14.5 Improving Urban and Rural Life

April 21: Chapter 15: Population and the Environment
15.1 Sociological Perspectives on Population and the Environment
15.2 Population

April 23: Chapter 15: Population and the Environment
15.3 The Environment
15.4 Addressing Population Problems and Improving the Environment

Exam 3 TBA