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## Department of Sociology

## Contemporary Social Problems (SOCI 1520)

**Spring 2022, 5W1**

**Instructor: Marisa Gonzales**

**IMPORTANT UNT DATES**

Classes Begin: January 18th

Census Day: January 21st

Last Day to Drop: April8th

Spring Break: March 14-18

Last Day of Class: May 12th

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Contact with Professor: Have a question? Email me at Marisa.Gonzales@my.unt.edu. I will check email multiple times a day. You can also message me in Canvas, these messages link to my email address and either of these are the best way to get ahold of me. If more than 24 hours has gone by and I have not responded to your message, check to make sure your email sent. I will also monitor your progress in the course and correspond with you through grading comments. You are all welcome to refer to me as Marisa in communications either in Canvas or via email.

**Office Hours:** This course is entirely online. I will **not** hold office hours on campus. This does not mean I am not available for help. If you need help or need to discuss the course, please send a message in the Inbox in Canvas, or email me at address listed above. We can also set up a ZOOM appointment or meet on campus.

**Inclusive Learning Statement:**

Your success in this class is important to me. Each of us learns in our own way, and to facilitate this we all may need different supports. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or excludes you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

**Important Communications:**

I will communicate with you via emails and announcements. **Please be sure to check these regularly for correspondence from me and your other instructors**. Read this document and the course schedule very carefully Save the schedule to your desktop or print it off. This will allow you to always know what is coming up. Things can go wrong in Canvas, and I highly recommend you not rely entirely on the due date function. It is better to have a general idea of what is due than to have missing work!

**Catalog Description**

SOCI 1520 (1306). Contemporary Social Problems. 3 hours. Conditions disruptive to society today, both those seen as problematic as a whole and those that violate the norms of special groups in society; includes population, poverty, minorities, crime, drugs, sexual deviance, mental illness, changing family patterns and violence. Satisfies arts and sciences core social science requirements. Advised for students planning sociology graduate work. Satisfies the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement of the University Core Curriculum.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Recall and discuss how sociologists approach the study of social problems in society.

2. Recall and discuss the different societal problems related to inequality.

3. Recall and discuss the different societal problems related to deviance, conformity, and well-being.

4. Recall and discuss the different societal problems related to social institutions in society.

5. Recall terminology and theories related to the sociological study of social problems.

**Textbook:**

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

By John Macionis

Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated

EDITION: 8TH

PUBLISHER: Pearson

ISBN: 9780135247044

**REQUIRED**

You must acquire this book ASAP! If you are enrolled in this course, you should have received an email from me with information on accessing the textbook. Everyone must have all of the course materials by end of week one.

**Assignments and Grading:**

This course has three basic aspects—a testing aspect, a short paper, and a participation/discussion aspect. All content will be done (and all grades will be posted) on the CANVAS site for this course via weekly modules.

LYRIC ASSIGNMENT:

**Paper Option**: This is an essay assignment in which you will find song that deal with (at least) one specific social problem; racial/gender prejudice/discrimination, poverty, domestic violence/abuse, pollution, drug/alcohol abuse, war, environmental issues, and analyze the lyrics. The original author/song writer and the title of the lyric must be mentioned in the paper. Additionally, the artist who recorded or preformed the song may be mentioned if they differ from the song writer. The essay will be 3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced, and should explain the relevance of the song to our study of social problems. You are required to analyze a minimum of three lyrics for your paper (three lines of the song). Think carefully about the mood, tone and message of the lyrics. Be sure your discussion includes the following: 1. When was the piece written? Who was it written for? (audience) 2. Historical context. Were there any political, social, environmental or economic influences on the author that led to the creation of this piece? 3. What is the specific problem being addressed? 4. How does the piece treat the problem? With protest? An attitude of “it is what it is?” 5. Is the voice of the lyric that of someone experiencing the problem or from the perspective of an outsider? 6. What is the mood? Angry? Optimistic? 7. Why did you choose this lyric? How or why did it speak to you? Do not forget to give me the title of the lyric.

**If you choose a song that has a music video do not reference the video in your paper**. This is someone else’s interpretation of the lyric. I am interested in your interpretation. Be cautious of lyrics with a great deal of profanity. You are looking for songs with plenty to analyze. Sexual references and four-letters words are straight forward.

***Assignment limitations:*** Read this carefully. You may not analyze the song “Where is the Love” by the Black-eyed Peas or “Imagine” by John Lennon. These are great songs, I’m just tired of reading papers about them. If more than a few cases, the exact same paper submitted by different students. So do us both a favor and avoid plagiarism and these songs.

**Lyric Option**: Not a fan of writing an essay? Do you write lyrics/want to try to write lyrics? This is your option. Write the lyrics to a song that addresses a ***specific*** social problem. Your lyrics should look like the actual lyrics to a song; there should be a hook and a minimum of four stanzas. It should all be cohesive and clearly articulate the point you are making about a social problem. Try to set a specific mood, tone and message to the lyric. Use profanity carefully, there needs to be substance to the lyrics (so you can be graded). In addition to your lyrics, write a short 1-2 paragraph summary of your piece; tell me the social problem you discuss, the approach you took to addressing it in, and how effective you feel your lyrics are at discussing the problem.

On you assignment submission please include the option you selected.

**Exams:** There are 13 weekly quizzes and one final in this class. Each must be completed by the due date specified in the syllabus and on the CANVAS course site. Quizzes can be taken at any time throughout the week (up until **Sunday by 11:59 pm** on the week they are due) the final exam is due by THURSDAY May 12th by11:59 pm Central Time). Each quiz is worth 30 points for a total of 390 points possible and the final is worth 110 points.

**More Exam Details**

* Each quiz is worth 30 Points
* Each student will be presented with a random set of questions drawn from a test bank. All of the answers can be found in assigned readings.
* Students are allowed 35 minutes to complete each Exam. After 35 minutes, your Exam will automatically submit, and your grade will be recorded in the grade book.
* You are only permitted **one** attempt on each quiz/exam.
* Students **should not** work with others to complete the quizzes/exam.
* The final is worth 110 points and will not be accessible until two weeks before it is due.
* The FINAL EXAM IS DUE BY THURSDAY, May12th 11:59 PM Central Time.

**Discussion/Participation**: We will have weekly discussions of the assigned material. Your contributions on the message board must be interactive and engaging: consider the topic from different points of view, ask questions of your fellow students and comment reflectively on the posts of others. These weekly discussions are worth 350 points in total (25 points per week). Each discussion will be based on an additional short reading or video that will be posted under the discussion link. You will watch/read the assigned material and then create a discussion post that both responds to the prompt questions and incorporates the text readings. Feel free to connect this discussion to current events or related issues you see in the media as well. You will be assessed a grade for these discussions, but I would like for you all to see these as an opportunity to engage with the weekly content of the course and as a means of creating a sense of community in the class.

**More Discussion/Participation Details**

* You can access these discussions in each week’s module. Because this is how we will build community in this class, you may **NOT** work ahead in this area.
* Your discussion posts will be graded based on how well they meet the following criteria:
* Full engagement
* Respond to at least the discussion prompt with 5-10 complete sentences each week
* Respond to two other classmates each week.
* Make sure your posts are relevant to the topic(s) of the assigned chapters each week
* Make sure to incorporate/make specific references to material from the text. When drawing directly from text material, put passages in quotations and cite text page numbers.
* You may also incorporate outside sources like an image, song, video, poem, news article, etc.
* Emphasize your thoughtfulness and curiosity (this makes you look engaged in the course)
* Watch spelling, grammar, and organization.
* Feel free to give your thoughts and opinions, ask your classmates questions, and be ready to explain your point of view.
* Are respectful of the views of your classmates when responding to their posts.
* Congratulations, and thank you for reading all of this document! Email me at [marisa.gonzales@myunt.edu](mailto:marisa.gonzales@myunt.edu) and tell me the date this class ends for 5 points of extra credit. Include a picture of a shark and I’ll make it 7.

**ASSIGNMENTS & TECHNICAL ISSUES**

All assignments should be submitted by the indicated dates and times embedded in the syllabus. There will be no extensions, except in cases of documented emergencies.

* Students are to contact me to discuss their situation **BEFORE** missing the assignment in the event of a legitimate emergency.

Students are responsible for knowing the Canvas environment. This means that students are responsible for their training in Canvas. Technical problems with Canvas software are to be directed to the **Help Desk**.

[**UNT Help Desk**](mailto:UNT Help%20Desk) - 940-565-2324 / Sage Hall 330 / helpdesk@unt.edu  
Monday - Thursday 8:00 am-midnight  
Friday 8:00 am - 8:00 pm  
Saturday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Sunday noon-midnight

Technical problems with computers or Canvas **ARE NOT** satisfactory excuses for missing assignment deadlines. I suggest that you **DO NOT** wait until the last minute to submit assignments. If you experience trouble with your computer or your home Internet access, you are expected to use the computer clusters on campus to complete your work on time. If the campus is closed for some reason (e.g., due to COVID-19), you are expected to find some other means to complete your work.

**GRADING SCALE:**

A = 90 to 100% of possible points (1,000 possible points)

B = 80 to 89%

C = 70 to 79%

D = 60 to 69%

F = Below 60%

**UNT ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**UNT Code of Student Conduct**

Click here to see the expectations regarding your conduct as a student of UNT. <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>

**UNT Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. For more information, see: <https://vpaa.unt.edu/fs/resources/academic/integrity>

**UNT Participation/Attendance**

The University of North Texas recognizes that student success is promoted by regular attendance and participation in class. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to notify students in writing of any special attendance requirements for the class. This policy applies to all modes of course delivery. For more information see: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039>

**UNT Covid-19 Attendance Statement:**

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

**Office of Disability Access**

UNT is committed to providing equal access to higher education for academically qualified students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Access assists students with disabilities in achieving their academic potential by coordinating a variety of services. The office acts as a liaison between the student, instructors, and other university resources and community agencies.

To be eligible for services, you must register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) and provide current documentation of the disability. ODA recommends that students contact the office at least eight weeks before enrolling at UNT to ensure sufficient time to plan for individualized academic modifications and services. While every effort is made to accommodate students with disabilities, it is the student’s responsibility to make needs known, provide proper documentation, and request services in a timely manner. See: <https://disability.unt.edu>

**UNT Writing Center**

The Writing Center at the University of North Texas provides support for undergraduate and graduate writers across the disciplines. Their mission is to help students improve as writers at all levels, and they support a culture of teaching and learning at UNT through peer tutoring, interactive workshops, classroom support, and consultation with faculty and staff. For more information, see: <https://writingcenter.unt.edu/our-mission>

**UNT Title IX Information**

The University of North Texas is committed to providing a safe environment for all community members. Dating violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, sexual exploitation, sexual violence, and stalking are prohibited. Please see their page on reporting sexual violence for more information. UNT is here to help. Find more information about sexual violence, including campus and community resources at <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct?utm_medium=deanofstudents&utm_source=web&utm_campaign=dsa-home-page>.

**COURSE CALENDAR SOCI 1520: Contemporary Social Problems: Spring 2022**

Tentative Calendar of Readings, Examinations, Activities, and Assignments

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Date | Topic | Reading/Assignments |
| 1 | 1/18-1/23 | Introduction | **Read/Review:**  The syllabus and Chapter 1  **Complete:**   * Introduction Discussion * Discussion **1** * Quiz 1   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm**). |
| 2 | 1/24-1/30 | Economic Problems | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 2  *Your Brain on Poverty*  **Complete:**   * Discussion 2 * Quiz 2   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm**) |
| 3 | 1/31-2/6 | Race/Ethnicity | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 3  *Does Ignoring Race Fix Racism?* (video)  **Complete:**   * Discussion 3 * Quiz 3   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm**) |
| 4 | 2/7-2/13 | Gender | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 4  *Gender, Parenting, and the Rise of Remote Work During the Pandemic: Implications of Domestic Inequality in the US*  **Complete:**   * Discussion 4 * Quiz 4   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm**) |
| 5 | 2/14-2/20 | Sexuality | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 5  *How Does Society Shape People’s Gender?*  **Complete:**   * Discussion 5 * Quiz 5   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm**) |
| 6 | 2/21-2/27 | Aging and Inequality | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 6  **Complete:**   * Lyric Paper * Quiz 6   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 7 | 2/28-3/6 | Crime, Drugs and Criminal Justice | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 7  **Complete:**   * Discussion 7 * Quiz 7   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 8 | 3/7-3/13 | Alcohol and Other Drugs | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 8  **Complete:**   * Discussion 8 * Quiz 8   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 9 | 3/14-3/20-**SPRING BREAK** |  | **Read/Review:**  **No Assigned Readings or Assignments** |
| 10 | 3/21-3/27 | Physical and Mental Health/social media | **Read/Review:**  Chapters 9& 10  *Mental Health Co-Response Teams*  **Complete:**   * Discussion 9 * Quiz 9   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 11 | 3/28-4/3 | Education | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 14  **Complete:**   * Education Assignment * *Waiting for Superman or The Hunting Ground* (extra credit see weekly announcement)   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 12 | 4/4-4/10 | Economy and Politics/Work and the Workplace | **Read/Review:**  Chapters 11&12  *Does the Gig Economy Work for Workers?* (video)  **Complete:**   * Discussion 10 * Quiz 10   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 13 | 4/11-4/17 | Family Life | **Read/Review:**  Chapters 13  *The Symbolic Meaning of Food*  *Why Poor Parents Say “Yes” to Junk Food*  **Complete:**   * Discussion 11 * Quiz 11   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 14 | 4/18-4/24 | Urbanization, Population and Environment. | **Read/Review:**  Chapters 15&16  **Complete:**   * Discussion 12 * Quiz 12   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 15 | 4/25-5/1 | Technology and the Environment | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 17  *How Could Slavery Still Exist?*  **Complete:**   * Discussion 13 * Quiz 13 * Slaveryfootprint.org (extra credit)   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 16 | 5/2-5/8 | War & Terrorism | **Read/Review:**  Chapter 18  **Complete:**   * Discussion 14 * No Quiz this week!   **(Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm)** |
| 17 | 5/9-5/12 | **Finals Week**  **Final and Discussion 15 due 5/12/22** | **No Readings this week!**  **Complete:**   * Final * Discussion 15   **(Due by Thursday before 11:59 pm)** |