

## Department of Sociology

## Contemporary Social Problems (SOCI 1520)

**Spring 2024**

**Instructor: Marisa Gonzales, M.A.**

**IMPORTANT UNT DATES**

Classes Begin: January 16th

Census Day: January 29th

Spring Break March 11th-17th

Last Day to Drop: April 5th

Last Day of Class: May 10th

**Instructor:**

Marisa Gonzales, M.A.

Email: [marisagonzales@my.unt.edu](mailto:marisagonzales@my.unt.edu)

**Office Hours:** Mondays 1:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m.

I will absolutely be in my office at the time listed above, but I will be around most Mondays and Wednesdays for most of the day. Feel free to stop in any time. Posted office hours will also be available via ZOOM. Offices hours are your time to ask questions about class, Sociology, or UNT. If I do not know the answer, I can help you find someone who does. I am also available via email or the Inbox in Canvas. If you email, please include SOCI 1520 or Social Problems in the subject line. Sometimes I serve as a teaching assistant, and I work with students from multiple classes. Identifying your course helps me respond faster. 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. If that feels too informal, Ms. Gonzales (my preference is Marisa).

**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. Consider saving the schedule to your desktop or printing it. 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, and when, than to miss turning in 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**

The book is 100% necessary for this class. Acquire this book ASAP! 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-short paper (200 points):

For this assignment you will have the opportunity to analyze the lyrics of a song from a sociological perspective. You will select a song from the playlist linked under the assignment tab. You must use one of the songs from the playlist, not any song from Spotify. The playlist consists of songs related to problems of gender/sexuality/sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and poverty. I recommend listening to a few of the songs to find one that speaks to you. Once you have selected a song, you will write a 3-4 page typed, double-spaced paper that explains 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). This will serve as your interpretation of the piece; choose lyrics/lines that support the argument you are making. Think carefully about the mood, tone, and message of the lyrics. Be sure your discussion touches on some of 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? This is an essay assignment. Do not submit in a question and answer format, ie., copy and pasting questions from the assignment into documenting and then answering. If you state something in your paper that requires a citation, be sure to give the source. 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.

***Self-plagiarism:*** Reusing a paper from a previous class or using the same paper for two classes without permission from the instructor is plagiarism. If you have a paper that you have previously written and would like to discuss using for this class, email me so we can discuss if this would be appropriate for this assignment. Typically, this will involve reworking your paper and not just resubmitting as is, you will need to be careful that it meets the requirements for this course.

***ChatGPT:*** Just don’t do this. Papers that appear to be written using AI will be graded according to the rubric and then lowered to the next letter grade. These may also be reported to the university.

**Exams:** There are 15 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 Friday May 10th by11:59 pm Central Time. Each quiz is worth 30 points for a total of 450 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 150 points and will not be accessible May 4, 2024.
* The FINAL EXAM IS DUE BY FRIDAY, May 10th 11:59 PM Central Time.

**Discussion/Participation**: We will have four discussions of the assigned material in this class. 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 discussions are worth 400 points in total (100 points per week). Each discussion will be based on the assigned content cover up to and including the week the discussion is due. The specific weeks included will be posted in each of the four discussions. You will have the opportunity to pick what you would like to discuss for your posts; consider what you found to be important or most significant. Feel free to connect this discussion to current events or related issues you see in the media as well. 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.

***Discussion Requirements:***

* Identify the chapter/reading/video you are discussing.
* In about 3-5 sentences describe the one thing that stands out as important to you. (The WHAT)
* In another 3-5 sentences explain why learning this was personally important to you. (The WHY)
* Finally, end your post with a relevant question that you want to know from others in the course. Your question should pertain to what you thought was important. Ending with a question will make it easy for others to respond to your post. (The ASK)
* The last thing you should do is read other students’ posts and choose at least one to respond to. Try to answer the question they posed at the end of their post. (The RESPONSE)

***More Discussion/Participation Details***

* You can access these discussions in each assigned module. Because this is how we will build community in this class, you cannot work ahead in this area. I will not grade in advance of the due date for these assignments.
* There will be a rubric included in Canvas.
* Emphasize your thoughtfulness and curiosity (this makes you look engaged in the course)
* Watch spelling, grammar, and organization. Be sure to proofread your work.
* 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 this document! Email me at [marisagonzales@myunt.edu](mailto:marisa.gonzales@myunt.edu) and tell me the date this class ends for 3 points of extra credit. Include a picture of a shark and I’ll make it 5.

**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:**

**There are 1,185 points possible in this class.**

A = 90 to 100%

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 2024**

Tentative Calendar of Readings, Examinations, Activities, and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction

01/16-01/21

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**   * Welcome Video * The syllabus and Chapter 1 * What is Sociology (video) | **Complete:**   * Introduction Discussion (20 points) * Quiz 1 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm. |

Week 2: Economic Problems

01/22-01/28

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| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 2 * Your Brain on Poverty (reading in Canvas) | **Complete:**   * Quiz 2 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm. |

Week 3: Race& Ethnicity

01/29-02/04

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 3 * Dangerous Street Fashion (Reading in Canvas) * Does Ignoring Race Fix Racism? (video) | **Complete:**   * Quiz 3 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm.  reminder: discussion 1 due next week |

Week 4: Gender

02/5-02/11

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| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 4 * Why Do Women Have So Many Clothes? | **Complete:**   * Discussion 1 (100 points) * Quiz 4 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm. |

Week 5: Sexuality

02/12-02/18

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| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 5 * How Does Society Shape People’s Gender?(video) | **Complete:**   * Quiz 5(30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm.  Reminder: Lyric paper due next week |

Week 6: Aging & Inequality

02/19-02/25

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| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 6 | **Complete:**   * Lyric Paper (200 points) * Quiz 6 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm |

Week 7: Crime & Justice

02/26-03/03

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| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 7 | **Complete:**   * Quiz 7 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm.  reminder: discussion 2 due next week |

Week 8: alcohol & other drugs

03/04-03/10

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| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 8 * I’m a Marijuana User and a Good Person: Marijuana Use and Race in Sport (Reading in Canvas) | **Complete:**   * Discussion 2(100 points) * Quiz 8 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm. |

week 9: **Spring Break**

No assigned work

Week 10: physical & Mental Health/Social Media

03/18-03/24

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**   * Chapters 9& 10 * Mental Health Co-Response Teams | **Complete:**   * Quiz 9 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm |

week 11: Family

03/25-03/31

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**  Chapter 13   * The Symbolic Meaning of Food (Reading in Canvas) * Why Poor Parents Say “Yes” to Junk Food (Reading in Canvas) | **Complete:**   * Quiz 11 (30 Points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm.  reminder: discussion 3 due next week |

Week 12: Education

04/01-04/07

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 14 | **Complete:**   * Discussion 3 (100 points) * Quiz 12 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm |

Week 13: ECONOMICS & POLOTICS/WORK & THE WORKPLACE

04/08-04/14

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**  Chapters 11&12   * Doe the Gig Economy Work for Workers? (video) | **Complete:**   * Quiz 13 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm. |

WEEK 14: URBANIZATION, POPULATION & GLOBAL INEQUALITY

04/15-04/21

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**   * Chapters 15&16 | **Complete:**   * Quiz 14 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm.  reminder: discussion 4 due next week |

WEEK 15: TECHNOLOGY & THE ENVIRONMENT

04/22-04/28

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| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 17 | **Complete:**   * Discussion 4 (100 points) * Quiz 15 (30 points)   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm. |

WEEK 16: WAR& TERRORISM

04/29-05/05

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| --- | --- |
| **Read/Review:**   * Chapter 18 * Why is it so hard to stop gun violence in the U.S.? (video) | **Complete:**   * No Quiz this week!   Due by Sunday before 11:59 pm. |

WEEK 17: FINALS WEEK

05/06-05/10

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| --- |
| **Final Due May10th at 11:59 P.M.** |