

## **COURSE INFORMATION**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

SOCI 1520-900,950

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

FALL 2020

Credit Hours 3

Internet Class

mandatory online meeting times to be announced

## **Professor / Instructor Contact Information**

Milan Zafirovski, Professor

SYCAMORE 288G

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Office hours face to face Tuesday 2:5PM

online every day 9AM-

9PM

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Teaching Assistant information to be announced

## **About the Professor / Instructor**

Milan Zafirovski is professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of North Texas. He received his doctoral degree in sociology from Florida International University, Miami in 1999. He teaches CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS for undergraduate students and Sociological Theory for graduate students.



## **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

Pre-requisites None

Instructor permissions Not required

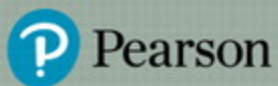
## **Materials – Text, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

Required materials Stanley Eitzen, Maxine Zinn, and Kelly Smith. Social Problems. Pearson. 14<sup>th</sup> edition ISBN 9780134631905

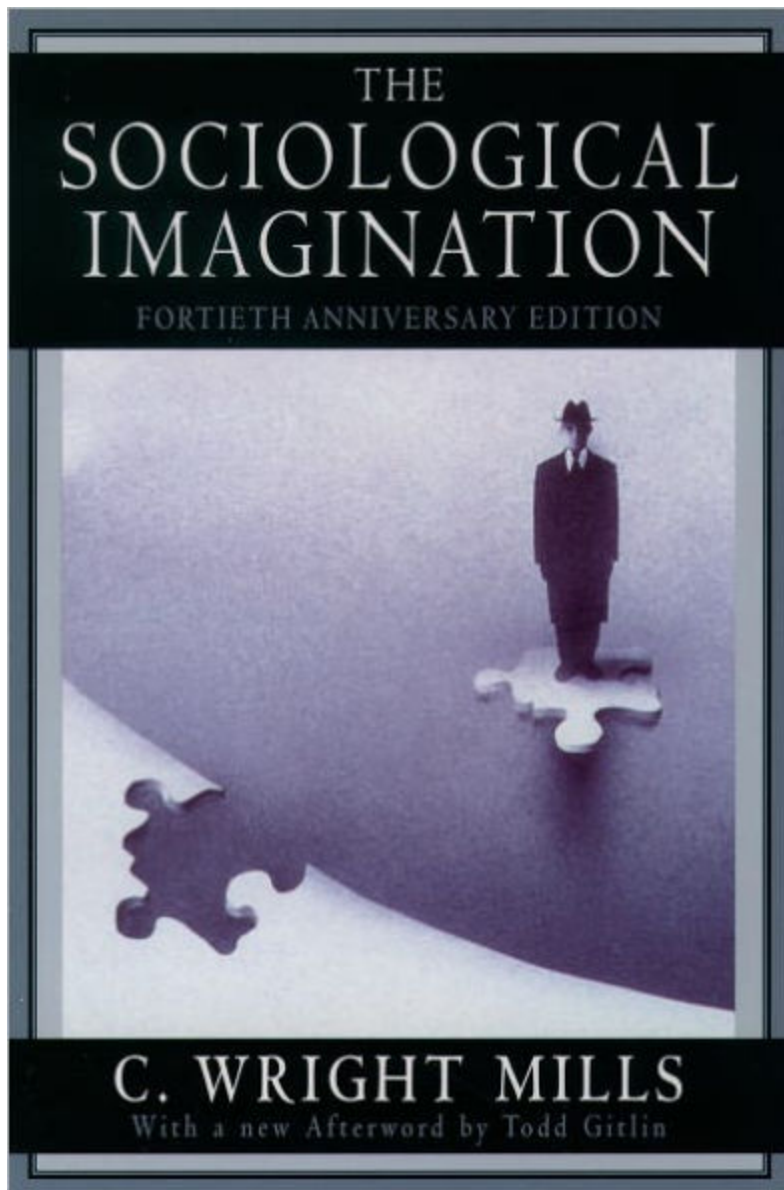
# SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Fourteenth Edition

D. Stanley Eitzen | Maxine Baca Zinn | Kelly Eitzen Smith



**Supplementary Readings** Mills, C. Wright. *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford University Press, any edition, ISBN 9780195133738.



### **Course Description**

Description of general content of the course. This course is designed to provide students with conceptual frameworks and tools necessary to analyze and understand social problems. The class will analyze the nature and interconnections between the functioning and non-functioning social institutions, the problems of social problems, the problems of deviance and crime, the problems of social change, and so forth. The course strongly emphasizes the sociological perspective and imagination. There are no prerequisites for this course. The main purpose of this course is to make students familiar with a sociological, i.e., systematic and critical, perspective on modern post-industrial societies, with an emphasis on American society and culture. The hope is in doing so the course will help students in evolving and applying their original view of social problems and generally their own vision of life in society.

Instructional methods. In general, the course combines sociological methods and concepts with empirical observations and facts to objectively examine social problems, including wealth and power, world population, threats to the environment, problems of place, racial and ethnic inequality, poverty, crime and justice, economy and work, families, and healthcare. Sociological methods, concepts, and data are used for the sake of a better understanding and explaining social problems in contemporary communities and larger societies. Specific instructional methods include online lectures presenting main sociological concepts and empirical facts of social problems through course outlines, online discussions, and the like. The profile and perspective of this course is mostly sociological. Nonetheless, this sociological perspective on social problems will often be combined with those of other social sciences, especially anthropology, political science and history. In this regard, the course will have a thorough inter-disciplinary orientation, which is necessitated by the (multi-disciplinary) character—economic, political, historical, and cultural—of the subject of social problems. Given this orientation, the course can be interesting and challenging both for students with majors/minors in sociology and for those majoring in such social sciences as anthropology, history, political science, as well as psychology, economics, business, etc. However, the course is not limited to social-science students, but can also be of interest and use for those in the physical and other sciences, especially biology (e.g. the issue of the role of biological determinants in social problems and human behavior overall). Preferably, students should possess some elementary preparation in sociology and related social sciences at the introductory level, such as introduction to sociology, but this is not required. Given its introductory character, the course can serve as a stepping-stone for further studies of social problems on undergraduate as well as graduate levels.

Goals / Rationale of the course. The content of the course will benefit students by helping them better understand and make sense of social problems in America and other contemporary societies, including real-life, topical, and publicized issues of wealth and power, environment, racial and ethnic inequality, poverty, crime and justice, work, family healthcare, and others. The course closely relates to the content, primary concepts and principles of sociology which has a long-standing tradition of studying social problems and related issues. The course will emphasize acquiring and applying a basic scientific and inter-disciplinary type of knowledge by providing the main sociological and related concepts, objective facts (including statistical data), and explanations of social problems in America and comparable societies. It will also emphasize a specific type of abilities such as comprehending, learn, applying, and connecting (rather than merely memorizing) concepts and facts. The course is organized in a specific sequence through learning modules because these are seen as the most appropriate ways to reach the goals and learning objectives of the course. Each particular course subject or lesson is presented by a learning module. A learning module includes learning objectives to be reached for that particular lesson, lesson content with sub-contents, summary, and assignments for students.

Learning objectives/outcomes. The learning objectives/outcomes for the overall course (also provided for each learning module) are the following.

- students will learn, comprehend, and connect principles, concepts, and empirical facts about social problems in contemporary society;
- students will be able to analyze, understand, and explain how and why social problems exist, persist, or change in society;
- students will be able to relate and compare social problems to society as a whole, including economy, politics, civil society, and culture;
- students will be able to place and analyze social problems within a larger comparative-historical and global context by comparing the United States with other contemporary societies;
- students will be able to apply sociological concepts, principles, and methods to better understanding and addressing current tendencies in social problems;
- students will be able to increase their capacities and motivations or interests in further studying social problems and related sociological subjects at undergraduate and graduate levels.

### **Teaching Philosophy**

I emphasize that teaching and education overall is based on science and research such as sociological and other scientific studies, as complementary in relation to each other. Therefore I emphasize and reiterate that scientific knowledge represents the basis of teaching and education and really 'power' for students and society as a whole. I stress practical applications of concepts and principles to understanding, analyzing and helping resolve contemporary social issues. I use a variety of teaching methods, including both traditional and modern ones. I strive for maximum student-teacher communication, interaction and cooperation. I pursue justice in evaluating students through an equality between performance/merit and grades.

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS / ASSISTANCE**

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparation for the technological aspect of the course.

UIT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

Hardware and software necessary to use CANVAS:

<https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas>

Browser requirements: <https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>

Computer and Internet Literacy:

[http://clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=pe\\_comp\\_lit](http://clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=pe_comp_lit)

Headset/Microphone (if required for synchronous chats)

Word Processor

Other related hardware or software necessary for the course

### **Minimum Technical Skills Needed:**

Examples include:

Using the learning management system  
Using email with attachments  
Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing program formats  
Copying and pasting  
Downloading and installing software  
Using spreadsheet programs

## **ACCESS & NAVIGATION**

### **Access and Log in Information**

This course was developed and will be facilitated utilizing the University of North Texas' Learning Management System, CANVAS. To get started with the course, please go to: <https://clear.unt.edu/home>

You will need your EUID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your EUID or have forgotten your password, please go to: <http://ams.unt.edu>.

### **Student Resources**

As a student, you will have access to:

- Student Orientation via CANVAS. It is recommended that you become familiar with the tools and tutorials within the Orientation to better equip you in navigating the course.
- CANVAS's On Demand Learning Center for Students. It is recommended that you become familiar with the tools and tutorials to better equip you to navigate the course.
- From within CANVAS, you will have access to the "UNT Helpdesk" tab which provides student resources and Help Desk Information.

### **How the Course is Organized**

The course information is organized by using learning modules consisting of learning objectives to be reached, content and sub-contents, summary, and assignments (see above). It is structured by week or part of it such that for each week or part of it a learning module is used.

### **What Should Students Do First?**

Students should first, once they have accessed the course, read carefully the syllabus. Also, they need to complete an introductory assignment, and discussion post. In addition, they need to send contact information to the instructor via the email tool and introduce themselves to each other.

### **How Students Should Proceed Each Week for Class Activities**

Students will be able to access the materials each week in order to successfully complete the course activities, including exams, participation in discussions, and other assignments. Necessary files such as lecture materials are located in Course Content, exams in Assignments, and discussion topics in the Discussion Forum. A class activity schedule has been created to track student activities, including participation in discussions and other assignments.

## **Student Technical Support**

The University of North Texas provides student technical support in the use of CANVAS and supported resources. The student help desk may be reached at:

Email: [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

Phone: 940.565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Regular hours are maintained to provide support to students. Please refer to the website (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/hours.htm>) for updated hours.

## **Exam Requirements**

This course has simple exam requirements, namely objective exams that make the grading process as simply and objective as possible. In this course there will be three exams, including the first, midterm and final examination (see course schedule). The format of the exams will have short, clear multiple-choice questions (usually 50). The exams will be objective such to evaluate students' reading, knowledge, and grasp of the readings. Exam scores will be computer-generated and so will be the final grade. Therefore, there will be no subjective elements in how exam scores and the final grade are determined. The worth of each exam will be 100 points (maximum). Exams will be given and taken only online (UNT CANVAS) during the specified time period and with specific time limits (e.g., 1 hour minimum).

Failure to take an online exam, without proper documented justification, during the specified time period (see below) will result in a zero (0) score for the missed exam. If an online exam is missed with documented justification during the specified period, make-up exams can be taken either online or in person (closed books and notes) in the UNT Department Of Sociology no later than 2 days after the specified exam period. This applies only to the first two exams, but no final make-up exams will be given after the specified time period. Therefore, no incompletes will be given in case of a failure to take an exam during the specified time period without documented justification.

Exams cannot be retaken or continued either online or in person because of 'bad' Internet connection and other computer 'problems'. It is student responsibility to have a proper Internet connection and computer. Online computer-generated exam scores are final and cannot be changed under any circumstances (just as SAT or GRE scores cannot be changed). Each exam may be taken only once (in one attempt), and any attempts to take the exam again will be an act of academic dishonesty and pursued accordingly. Exams must be taken by each student individually and independently of other students, and not in groups and collaboratively; if it is determined that an online exam is taken in groups and collaboratively, this will be treated as academic dishonesty and pursued accordingly. There is no 'curving' of exam scores. The only basis for dispensing credits/grades is objective performance and merit. This ensures maximum fairness in grading. It is students' own responsibility for class notes, outlines, announcements, etc. The professor will be always and maximally available to students online and in office to address their queries and concerns.

Technical instructions (from UNT CLEAR). Avoid using a wireless connection for exams unless one is certain of its reliability. Take exams using a supported web browser on a computer or laptop rather than using an iPad. If using an iPad, the Chrome browser is recommended. Contact the UIT Helpdesk at 940-565-2324 for assistance in the event of technical problems affecting the ability to access or complete a test.

### **Additional Course Requirements**

Additional course requirements include quizzes, participation in discussions, and a semester assignment consisting of an extensive review of supplementary readings.

#### *Quizzes*

Quizzes are given every week as feasible (see the weekly schedule in the last part of the syllabus) and cover the reading assignment for that week. Quizzes are required and provide additional points that will be added to and thus increase total exam scores. The format of quizzes will be short, clear multiple-choice questions (usually 4). Quizzes test students' reading, knowledge, and recall of the readings. Quiz scores will be computer-generated and there will be no subjective elements in how they are determined. The worth of each quiz will be 4 points (maximum) with a correct answer being worth 1 point. Quizzes will be given and taken only online (UNT CANVAS) during the specified time and with specific time limits (e.g., 5 minutes minimum).

#### *Discussions*

Discussions are also on a weekly basis, required and provide additional points that will be added to and increase total exam and quiz scores. Discussions are worth between 1 and 4 points each per 1 weekly discussion topic as follows.

Discussions under 100 words but more than 60 words and without any textbook support such as citations or data are worth 1 point each.

Discussions with 100 or more words but less than 200 words and without any textbook support such as citations or data are worth 2 points each.

Discussions with 100 or more words but less than 200 words and with textbook support such as several citations or data are worth 3 points each.

Discussions with 200 or more words and with textbook support such as several citations or data are worth 4 points each.

Discussions can be very useful in preparing for the first, midterm and the final exam.

The discussion forums are primarily related to the textbook readings, as well as other readings and resources and activities as available. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, students are expected to engage in an ongoing discussion/debate with your learning community peers. As specified above, student contributions to discussion forums will be graded for quality, timeliness, linking together readings to real-life activities, and above all being grounded in readings.

Discussions close a week after the last discussion topic. In order for students to receive proper scores higher than zero, their discussions should be original posts so that students initiate and write them first, as different from replies to others, which normally do not receive positive scores. In addition, student discussions should follow additional instructions as specified for discussion forums. In sum, these instructions are that



discussions should be (1) original posts, (2) follow the above guidelines for scoring, (3) are preferably based on the textbook overall, and (4) give specific textbook support such as citations or data for receiving better scores.

### **Optional Activities for Extra-Credits**

#### *Semester Assignment*

A semester optional (not required) assignment or project consists of an extensive and in-depth review of supplementary reading Mills, C. Wright. *The Sociological Imagination*. Instructions for the review are writing between 4 and 10 full pages, double-spaced, font 12, margin 1, covering the entire reading, minus tables, numbers, and notes, extensively cite the reading, though the review should not be a full literal copy of the book. The completed review should be submitted by the due date specified below. The review of supplementary reading is worth between 1 and 10 points depending on its quantity and quality as specified below.

A review that is long less than 4 pages and without any book support such as citations or data is worth between 1 point.

A review that is long less than 4 pages and with book support such as citations or data is worth between 2 points.

A review that is long 4 pages and without any book support such as citations or data is worth 3 points.

A review that is long 4 pages and with book support such as multiple citations or data is worth 4 points.

A review that is long between 5-9 pages and without any book support such as citations or data is worth between 4 and 8 points depending on length.

A review that is long between 5-9 pages and with book support such as multiple citations or data is worth between 5 and 9 points depending on length.

A review that is long 10 pages and without any book support such as multiple citations or data is worth 9 points.

A review that is long 10 pages and with book support such as multiple citations or data is worth 10 points.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The communication tools in the course are:

- Announcements at least weekly and more frequently as needed
- Email / Messages
- Discussions by week on a particular topic

**Interaction with Instructor Statement.** The primary tool to communicate directly with students is Email / Messages. Students should send personal concerns or questions to the email tool. Students can expect to receive a response to course e-mail and discussion board postings the same day (if they sent and posted by 9PM), at the latest following day. The time frame in receiving feedback on assignments will be 2 days. Grades will be posted 1 day after the exam is over. For student behavior online see 'netiquette.'

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

**Exams:** 100 points each

Course Objective/Learning Outcomes: students will demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and explanation of basic concepts and facts of community organization. The exams are closed-book and taken individually. The exams will cover the required textbook reading and the content of the online lectures. Complete the exams online by accessing the CANVAS exam tool in Modules. The exams will be timed and grades made available to students following the submission of the exam. If you lose Internet connectivity during the exam, log back in immediately and continue on with the exam. Save your answers often (every 5-10 minutes). If you experience any issues while taking the exam, you must contact the CANVAS Helpdesk immediately so that your issue is documented with a helpdesk ticket number. Considerations regarding exam issues will be made by the instructor on an individual basis based on the documentation.

Assignments Method: Multiple Choice

**Quizzes:** 4 points each

Maximum points for each quiz are 4, with 1 point @ 1 question/correct answer. The number of quizzes for a semester is 13, therefore total possible quiz points are 52. This is an additional required activity whose scores can substantially increase exam scores and thus improve the final grade.

Assignments Method: Multiple Choice and/or Essay Exam.

**Discussion Forums:** 1-4 points variable each

Maximum points for discussions are equal to the number of weekly discussion forums 12, multiplied by 1-4 = 12-48 points, with 1-4 point @ discussion forum as specified above. This is an additional required activity points for which will added to and increase exam and quiz scores. The discussion forums are primarily related to the textbook readings, as well as other readings and resources and activities as provided.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcome. Students will be active and engaged participants in discussion forums within their learning community by analyzing, creating, and evaluating information presented in the textbook, other readings and resources, student research or observations, and class and other activities.

**Semester Assignment:** 1-10 points variable (optional)

Maximum points for the semester assignment such as the review of supplementary reading are from 1 to 10 points maximum if the review meets the guidelines specified above. This is an optional assignment for gaining extra-credits that will be added to points from exams, quizzes and discussions.

The review of supplementary readings is due on December 03, 2020, the last class day (see below).

Assignments Method: comparison of the review with the reviewed reading and instructions.

## Grading

Grades will be determined as follows:

Maximum Points From Exams = 300 (required)

Maximum Points From Quizzes = 52 (required)

Maximum Points From Discussions = 48 (required)

Total Points Possible From Course Requirements = 400

Maximum Extra-Points From Review Of Supplementary Reading = 10 (Optional)

Total Points Possible for Semester From All Class Activities = 410

Grades will be determined as follows:

Total Points 400-360 = A
Total Points 359-320 = B
Total Points 319-280 = C
Total Points 279-240 = D
Total Points 239-0 = F

Grading Scale by total points/4 for easier understanding	
Average Points 90-100	A
Average Points 80-89	B
Average Points 70-79	C
Average Points 60-69	D
Average Points Below 60	F

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation Statement. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is

verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at [disability.unt.edu](http://disability.unt.edu).

### **Tentative Assignments by Weeks**

(Please note that course schedule is subject to change if necessary)

WEEK 1 August 24-August 31, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 1 The Sociological Approach to Social Problems, in Eitzen, pp. 1-19.
August 28, 2020	Discussions 1 (required for grade) Quiz 1 (required for grade)
WEEK 2 August 31-September 07, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 2 Wealth and Power, in Eitzen, pp. 20-45.
September 04, 2020	Discussions 2 (required for grade) Quiz 2 (required for grade)
WEEK 3 September 07-14, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 3 World Population and Global Inequality, in Eitzen, pp. 46-67.
September 11, 2020	Discussions 3 (required for grade) Quiz 3 (required for grade)
WEEK 4 September 14-21, 2020	Review and study for EXAM 1
September 19-20, 2020	EXAM 1--covers previous chapters, CANVAS from September 19, 12.00AM to September 20, 11.59PM mandatory activity for grade
WEEK 5 September 21-28, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 5 Problems of Place, in Eitzen, pp. 94-121.
September 25, 2020	Discussions 4 (required for grade) Quiz 4 (required for grade)
WEEK 6 September 28-October 05, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 6 Threats to the Environment, in Eitzen, pp. 122-144.
October 02, 2020	Discussions 5 (required for grade) Quiz 5 (required for grade)

WEEK 7 October 05-12, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 7 Poverty, in Eitzen, pp. 145-170.
October 09, 2020	Discussions 6 (required for grade) Quiz 6 (required for grade)
WEEK 8 October 12-19, 2020 EXAM	Review and study for the MIDTERM
October 17-18, 2020	MIDTERM EXAM—covers chapters after EXAM 1, CANVAS from October 17, 12.00AM to October 18, 11.59PM mandatory activity for grade
WEEK 9 October 19-26, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 8 Racial and Ethnic Inequality, in Eitzen, pp. 171-196.
October 23, 2020	Discussions 7 (required for grade) Quiz 7 (required for grade)
WEEK 10 October 26- November 02, 2020 Crime and Justice, in Eitzen, pp. 244-270.	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 11
October 30, 2020	Discussions 8 (required for grade) Quiz 8 (required for grade)
WEEK 11 November 02-09, 2020 Economy and Work, in Eitzen, pp. 299-321.	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 13 The
November 06, 2020	Discussions 9 (required for grade) Quiz 9 (required for grade)
WEEK 12 November 09-16, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 14 Families, in Eitzen, pp. 322-345.
November 13, 2020	Discussions 10 (required for grade) Quiz 10 (required for grade)
WEEK 13 November 16-23, 2020 Health Care System, in Eitzen, pp. 375-398.	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 16 The
November 20, 2020	Discussions 11 (required for grade) Quiz 11 (required for grade)
WEEK 14 November 23-30, 2020	Reading Assignment: CHAPTER 18 Progressive Plan to Solve Social Problems, in Eitzen, pp. 424-437.
November 30, 2020	Discussions 12 (required for grade) Quiz 12 (required for grade)
November 26-27, 2020	Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 15 November 30-December 06, 2020    Last Quiz, Review and study for the  
FINAL EXAM

December 02-03, 2020

Pre-finals Days

December 03, 2020

Last Class Day

Quiz 13 (required for grade)

Review of supplementary reading due—  
optional activity for extra-points.

December 04, 2020

Reading day (no classes)

December 05-06, 2020

FINAL EXAM---covers chapters after the  
MIDTERM EXAM, CANVAS from December 05, 12.00AM to  
December 06, 11.59PM

mandatory activity for grade

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.deanofstudents.unt.edu](http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu)