

I cannot overstate the importance of reading this syllabus very carefully. Please be sure to do so!

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Goals: To understand why we have social problems and what we can do about them. To learn about selected social problems.

Content: Poverty, racism, sexism, urban issues, alcohol, and drug abuse. The social problems selected will vary with the instructor.

This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to the discipline of sociology by focusing on the study of social problems. Through reading and online discussions, you will gain an understanding of how sociologists define, identify, and – in some instances – try to “solve” social problems. In addition to learning about social problems, you will be required to give some thought to *your* role, as a member of society, in the definition, identification, and solution of social problems. This course is intended for first year and sophomore students who desire an introduction to sociology and/or the social sciences. Upper division undergraduates and post-baccalaureate students are most welcome to enroll in this course, but are reminded that it *is* an introductory level course.

HAMLIN PLAN DESIGNATION

This course fulfills the Disciplinary Breadth/Social Science (S) and Computer Utilization (C) requirements of the Hamline Plan. As a Disciplinary Breadth course, you are introduced to the discipline of sociology, broadly, and should develop an understanding of how sociology can be compared and contrasted with other social science disciplines. As a Computer Utilization course, you are provided with the opportunity to develop your skills with effective online communication and use of the course management software, Blackboard.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a part of the College’s fulfillment of the University Strategic Plan, our curriculum is intended to insure that, as a graduate of Hamline University, you will be able to:

1. Serve, collaborate, and lead in a community.
2. Solve problems in innovative, integrative, analytical, and ethical ways.
3. Work and create understanding across cultural differences locally, nationally, and internationally.
4. Use information and technology competently and responsibly.
5. Communicate effectively in writing and in speaking.
6. Apply the theories and methods of a field of expertise.
7. Engage independently and reflectively in lifelong learning.¹

The following describes how this course addresses each of the above learning outcomes.

1. Although this course does not require that you actively engage in your community, your learning with regard to social problems - and the roles that individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and institutions play with regard to social organization - serves as an important foundation to future opportunities that you will pursue, both during and after your tenure at Hamline. See also number seven, below.
2. Your learning with regard to the diverse range of social problems that exist across society will inform your ability to respond – whether as a private citizen or worker – to the social problems you may encounter in the future. This course provides a foundation for considering how we solve problems through innovation, by integrating various approaches and theories, through analysis of the information available, and by acting in an ethical fashion.
3. This course, while focused on the United States, will provide the opportunity to consider how difference – be it at the local, national, or international level – impacts individuals and society. Your reading about and discussion of these issues will contribute to a greater understanding of cultural differences and will contribute to the development of an appreciation for the role that culture plays across communities and society.

¹ Source: Hamline University Strategic Plan, 2007-2012, available online, password protected

4. As a participant in an online course, you will develop increased expertise with the use of the Internet, online audio and video resources, and the learning management system, Blackboard. See also number five, below.

5. As a participant in an online course, you will increase your expertise in communicating via the written word, with a particular appreciation for the difference in communicating via twitter v. email v. a facebook status update v. an online essay.

6. This course will introduce you to several key sociological theories and, upon completion of the course, you will be able to apply these theories to an understanding of critical social problems.

7. The majority of students who enroll in this course will not graduate with a degree in sociology. However, a major feature of this course is to provide you with the information and skills to employ a sociological lens across the life course. Whether it is in your work, with a family situation, in community activities, or simply in reading the news, the key sociological concepts to which you are introduced will provide you with tools to serve, collaborate, and lead in the community of which you are a part.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course objectives, below, are specific, measurable objectives aimed at insuring that the above learning outcomes are achieved by each student who successfully completes the course.

Acquire and/or demonstrate, via reading, discussion, quizzes, and a final examination:

- an understanding of how social problems are defined and identified;
- an understanding of key sociological theories;
- an understanding of a range of social problems;
- an understanding of key sociological concepts; and
- an understanding of the role of sociology in addressing social problems.

TEXTS AND REQUIRED MATERIALS

Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action, 3rd Ed. Anna Leon-Guerrero. 2011. Pine Forge.

Additional required reading, viewing, or listening may be made available online or via email.

Should you choose to obtain your text from someone other than the Hamline University bookstore, be certain that you obtain the correct edition of the primary text and not a different edition or the reader!

COURSE FEES OR ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

None

GRADING PROCEDURES

Online Discussion Board Participation	30%
Quizzes	40%
Cumulative Final Examination	30%

LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR PAPERS

While late work is generally not accepted, situations do arise in which this cannot be avoided (e.g., a death in the family). Situations in which you are unable to complete your work on time will be handled on a case by case basis and may result in a grade penalty.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Please visit this site: <http://www.hamline.edu/Content.aspx?id=2147487457> for information regarding the Academic Honor Code of the College of Liberal Arts.

ATTENDANCE

In the online environment, Discussion Board participation functions as attendance. Please revisit the information regarding *Online Discussion Board Participation*, above.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Hamline University provides reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities. If you believe you require accommodation, you must provide documentation and schedule an appointment with the Director of Disability Services (523.2521) at least two weeks before services are required. As a faculty member I can make no provisions regarding disability accommodations without proper authorization. I am more than willing to assist you as needed, but you must be proactive in addressing your needs. If you are unsure of your status, please contact the Director of Disability Services.

CRITICAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE ONLINE COURSE – READ CLOSELY

Although you are required to read the entire syllabus carefully, please pay particular attention to the material in this section. Because of the accelerated nature of summer term, you will have to be highly organized to complete this course. Incompletes will not be available to those who simply let themselves get behind. To be successful, you should get a clean calendar page(s) for period of the term and schedule the time each day that you will complete your work for this course. Do this just as if you had to write, “Class, 9-12” on each M-F because you were required to be in the classroom during that time and allocate reading time as well. Scheduling the block(s) of time that you are completing the work for the online course is the first step toward successful completion of the course.

Please do not confuse the fact that this course is conducted in an online environment with courses that are “self-paced.” As explained below, you are required to complete the requirements for this course within a very specific time frame. You will not be able to rush through the course, completing it within the first couple of days/weeks. Neither will you be able to procrastinate and complete the course in the last couple of days/weeks. If you were attracted to the online environment because you think it will be less work and you can do it all in an hour or at the last minute, I strongly recommend that you reconsider your enrollment in the course. To be successful, you must have several hours each day to devote to the course.

I strongly encourage students who have not yet taken an online course to visit complete a self-evaluation of your potential for success in an online teaching/learning environment. Visit: <http://www.elearners.com/advisor/> Click on “Start the Advisor.” For this course, depending upon how quickly you read, compose, and type, you will likely need to spend 2-5 hours a day on the course, just like a short-term classroom course.

Content

A Blackboard area labeled “Content” contains folders, each of which is labeled for a given chapter (e.g., Chapter 1). Within each folder are sub-folders, discussed below, with information relevant to that chapter (i.e., Instructor’s Remarks, Summary, etc.). Each folder will become available at 6:00 pm on the evening before the day of the week for which material has been assigned; i.e., material for chapter one, assigned for Tuesday, 10 July, will become available through Bb at 6:00 pm on Monday, 9 July. Note: All times are Central Daylight Time!

Instructor’s Remarks

The “Instructor’s Remarks” are required reading and, unless you’ve chosen to read ahead, should be the first task you complete for each chapter’s work. Information contained in these remarks is subject to inclusion in quizzes.

Summary

The “Summary” folder contains a publisher-provided summary of the chapter. You are strongly cautioned not to rely on this material alone. It is provided so that you might either read an overview before reading the chapter or use it as a tool for review.

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PowerPoint

The “PowerPoint” folder contains a PowerPoint presentation that highlights material from the chapter. While you might find it useful to read through the PowerPoint in advance of your reading, it is provided primarily for you to use as chapter review *after* you’ve engaged in a thorough reading of the chapter itself. The online material alone will not suffice as your reading for a given chapter. Please note that while I have reviewed the PowerPoints for accuracy, they are provided by the publisher and may, on occasion, contain errors. If you find something that you believe to be in error, I would very much appreciate you bringing it to my attention. If you are suspicious about something, do not assume that you must be the one who is mistaken. Authors and publishers have been known to make mistakes! The PowerPoint is not required reading, but is to supplement your reading, as you desire.

Discussion Board Prompt

Each chapter requires that you post your response to the “Discussion Board Prompt.” You have until 2:00 pm of the day a given chapter is assigned to post your response to the Discussion Board prompt. This timing is because you are required to engage in discussion with each other. If you post too late in the day, those who prefer to complete a chapter’s work on the day it is assigned will not be able to engage with you. You may continue to submit *other* posts until the discussion board closes at 11:30 pm on the Friday of the week in which that chapter’s material became available.

Example: The chapter three board becomes available at 6:00 am on Thursday, 12 July. It will remain available until 11:30 pm on Friday, 13 July. The chapter four board becomes available at 6:00 am on Friday, 13 June. It, too, will remain available until that evening at 11:30 pm. Please note that during the last week of the course, when we cover the last chapter on Wednesday, quizzes and Discussion Board posting must be completed by 11:30 pm on Wednesday of that week.

A Note Regarding Discussion Board Participation

Learning is best accomplished when you actively engage in the understanding of new ideas, many of which may challenge the way you currently think about the world. To help you achieve an appropriate level of engagement with the material, participation in discussion with other students via the discussion board (DB) component is required. Each forum includes at least one “prompt,” but the burden is upon you to generate discussion relevant to the material. Responding *only* to the prompts is insufficient. Some of the students enrolled in previous offerings of the course chose to ignore this fact. You cannot do well in this course without appropriate engagement on the DB. While quantity is good, quality is more important. Your postings will be evaluated with regard to how well they illustrate your thoughtful reflection on the material and how well you engage with your colleagues regarding their postings. Although you can, arithmetically, “pass” the course with a zero for this component, failure to participate in a meaningful way will result in an “F” for the course. I must see that you are making what I perceive to be a genuine attempt to engage with the material via the DB. If you have concerns about your ability to make meaningful contributions, please contact me via email so that we can discuss this. Be certain to read carefully the “Discussion Board Instructions” forum in the Discussion Board. Please note that you are *not* being evaluated with regard to how “right” you are, but simply around the degree and quality of your engagement with the material and each other. I will post additional guidance as necessary. Please note that mention of any relevant material “counts.” That is, you might direct others to or post a link to a newspaper article, a YouTube video, a website, etc. As long as you make clear how it is relevant to the material, all is well. On the other hand, simply posting a lot of, “Yeah, I thought so too” or “Hey, you are so right” comments will not suffice. As above, please be aware that the discussion board forum for each chapter will only be open during a set period of time. You will not be able to go back and post regarding material that we have moved beyond.

Quizzes/Final Exam

There will be an online quiz for each chapter. You have 20 minutes to complete each 10-item quiz. If you run out of time, keep going. I will monitor those who go over and contact you if I am concerned about repeated quizzes that exceed the time limit. All reading and Bb material is subject to inclusion in the quizzes. Again, as a participant in a course conducted in an online environment, it is critically important that you take responsibility for managing your time, pacing your completion of work, etc. Please note that you must have a reliable computer and Internet connection. Wherever you do your work, know that we will deal with any access issues, etc. as they arise. If you run into trouble, send me an email right away and do not panic! Do. Not. Panic.

Each quiz may be accessed only once. Thus, it is *very* important that you do not open a quiz unless you plan to complete it at that time. Quizzes are to be completed without the assistance of any materials, persons, text messages, etc. That is, no notes, no books, no online materials, nothing but your brain. You are on your honor to follow these instructions and to not discuss a quiz with *anyone* until it is no longer available on Bb. Failure to do so will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will be handled in accordance with the Hamline University College of Liberal Arts Honor Code. Questionable circumstances will be reported to the Office of the Dean of the College.

Each quiz will become available at 6:00 am on the day for which the corresponding chapter is assigned. You have until 11:30 on Friday of that week to complete the quiz except for the last week of the course when that week's quizzes will close on Wednesday at 11:30 pm.

Example: The quiz for chapter two becomes available at 6:00 am, Wednesday, 11 July. It will remain available until 11:30 pm on Friday, 13 July. The quiz for chapter three becomes available at 6:00 am on Thursday, 12 July. It, too, will remain available until Friday evening at 11:30 pm. And so on...

There will be NO opportunity for making up quizzes. You MUST complete the quiz within the time frame allotted for a given quiz. If you end up with a documented emergency (e.g., hospitalization or a death in the immediate family), we will make necessary arrangements for a make-up. Forgetting about the quiz, being busy at work, attending a wedding, etc. do not constitute emergencies.

As with the quizzes, a window of time for completion of the final exam is noted below under "Course Organization." The exam will consist of three essay questions. You have two hours to complete the exam. As with the quizzes, the examination is to be completed without the assistance of any materials, persons, text messages, etc. All material from the course is subject to inclusion in the examination.

Grades

Grades are calculated in a non-competitive manner. That is, you may each earn an A if your work is A caliber. I follow a grading scale where 94-100=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, etc. Grades are defined as follows: "A" represents work that is outstanding, far above the minimum requirements necessary for completing the course/assignment. "B" represents work that is significantly above the minimum requirements necessary for completing the course/assignment. "C" represents work that meets the basic course/assignments requirements. That is, a "C" grade reflects average work. "D" represents work that is worthy of credit, but does not meet the basic course/assignment requirements. There will be no individual extra credit options in this course. However, anyone who does not feel adequately challenged by the assigned material and wishes additional reading, exercises, etc., please see me and we will create other opportunities for your learning.

Other

I strongly advise that assess your other obligations (i.e., other classes, employment, family, athletics, volunteering, etc.) and that, as noted above, you then create a schedule of when you plan to complete your work for this course. It is very easy to procrastinate, thinking that it's more important to be prepared for things in which you must appear in person. Do not make that mistake. You've got to work this course into your personal schedule just as you do a course where you must "show up" in person. Although this may seem complicated, once you get into a "rhythm" you will, I think, find it quite easy to complete your work within the required window of time. If you feel that you need some assistance in thinking about how best to organize your work, please let me know.

If you encounter technical difficulties (e.g., You lose your connection during a quiz), I will resolve it as soon as I am able. Just continue with your other work, knowing that there is no penalty to you for my inability to resolve it immediately. Send me an email to let me know of the issue and I'll respond as soon as I am able. Aside from unexpected problems, I will be available via email throughout the course. Rather than holding specific "virtual office hours," send me an email at any time and, barring the unexpected, I will respond well within 24 hours, and often within an hour. When contacting me via email, you *must* use your Hamline email account and you must enter something in the subject line, even if only "Soc Problems or "1120." I will not open messages from non-Hamline accounts, nor those without a subject line. Thanks!

A word about virtual communication... Please do not misinterpret my emails, which may be reminders or feedback about your work, etc. as hostile or “not nice.” Also, there has, apparently, been some confusion over why I would point out to students that blog posts must have proper capitalization, punctuation, etc. Any writing for the class (e.g., email, blog posts, and exam answers) is expected to conform to university level work. They are not text messages. Grammar “counts”. Complete sentences are expected. For most, if not all, of you, doing all of your coursework in an online environment is new. Please understand that normative expectations for university level work apply. Finally, if you email me with a question or concern, please extend me the courtesy of acknowledging receipt of my response or I’ll be left wondering if you ever received it. Thanks!

Blackboard (Bb)

I strongly recommend that you *not* plan to rely on a computer at your place of employment. A Hamline lab is fine, but having access to a computer in your residence hall or off-campus living space is ideal. If you have questions or concerns about your computer and/or software, please visit the Help Desk in the basement of Bush Library. Failure to have a reliable connection is not an acceptable excuse for late work. Information on accessing Blackboard can be found here: <http://hamline.blackboard.com/>. Once you have successfully logged in you should see, “Welcome, <yourname>” and at least this class listed on the right side of the page. Click on our course link and you are “in.” I encourage you to “play around” with Bb as soon as you have a chance, just to make sure that you can access it without difficulty. Problems? Let me know as soon as possible!

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Monday, 7.9.12 – First Day of Classes

“Zero Day” – Read and re-read (and read again!) the syllabus, get your book, familiarize yourself with Blackboard, etc. Get a jump-start on reading. You can *always* choose to read ahead, even without the course materials being available to you on Bb. Go to Bb and read the “Start Here,” and “Faculty Info” sections in the left sidebar. Go to the “Discussions” section and post your introduction. Hit the ground running!

Tuesday, 7.10.12

Chapter 1, Sociology and the Study of Social Problems
Quizzes and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am
Discussion Board Prompt responses must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Wednesday, 7.11.12

Chapter 2, Social Class and Poverty
Quizzes and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am
Discussion Board Prompt responses must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Thursday, 7.12.12

Chapter 3, Race and Ethnicity
Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am
Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Friday, 7.13.12

Chapter 4, Gender
Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am
Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today
Quizzes 1-4 and Discussion Board forums for chapters 1-4 close at 11:30 pm tonight!

Monday, 7.16.12

Chapter 5, Sexual Orientation
Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am
Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Tuesday, 7.17.12

Chapter 6, Age and Aging

Quizzes and Discussion Board forums open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt responses must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Wednesday, 7.18.12

Chapter 7, Families

Quizzes and Discussion Board forums open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt responses must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Thursday, 7.19.12

Chapter 8, Education

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Friday, 7.20.12

Chapter 9, Work and the Economy

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Quizzes 5-9 and Discussion Board forums for chapters 5-9 close at 11:30 pm tonight

Monday, 7.23.12

Chapter 10, Health and Medicine

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Tuesday, 7.24.12

Chapter 11, The Media

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Wednesday, 7.25.12

Chapter 12, Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Thursday, 7.26.12

Chapter 13, Crime and Criminal Justice

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Friday, 7.27.12

Chapter 14, Cities and Suburbs

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Quizzes 11-14 and Discussion Board forums for chapters 11-14 close at 11:30 pm tonight!

Monday, 7.30.12

Chapter 15, The Environment

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Tuesday, 7.31.12

Chapter 16, War and Terrorism

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Wednesday, 8.1.12

Chapter 17, Social Problems and Social Action

Quiz and Discussion Board forum open at 6:00 am

Discussion Board Prompt response must be posted by 2:00 pm today

Quizzes 15-17 and Discussion Board forums for chapters 15-17 close at 11:30 pm tonight

Thursday, 8.2.12 – Final Examination

Available electronically at 6:00 am. Your exam must be completed no later than 6:00 p.m.

Be sure to leave time on your calendar for completion of the final examination!

Questions? Something look amiss? Please contact me immediately! Thanks!

ONE LAST WORD...

When you have carefully read the entire syllabus, cut and paste the following and send me an email from your Hamline email account containing this text:

1. As a student registered in Sociology 1120 – Online, I understand that I am required to have read the syllabus closely and carefully. I acknowledge having done so.
2. I understand that if I have any questions regarding the “operation” of the course (e.g., dates, deadlines, procedures), I must first consult the syllabus and determine whether the answer to my question appears therein. If it does not, I will then – in a timely manner – contact the instructor with any and all questions or concerns.
3. I understand that the windows of time for completing quizzes/the final exam and posting blog assignments are firm and I take full responsibility for managing my time such that I can complete my work accordingly.
4. I understand that, as an adult, I bear primary responsibility for insuring that I pay attention to details, manage my time, and complete the work that is required of this course. I understand that the instructor’s role is to create opportunities that facilitate my learning and to provide assistance as needed. ///

When I receive the above message, I will acknowledge it via reply.

Have fun!