**Sociology 300: Social Problems**

Winter 2020

**(12/20- 1/9/22)**

Class Meeting Information:

Fully Online – (Asynchronous/\*Synchronous)

**Professor Information:**

Professor: Dr. Isais Wellington Smith

Email: [isasmit@siue.edu](mailto:isasmit@siue.edu)

Office Hours: Via Zoom by appointment (please email me for a time)

Office: Peck Hall 1227

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed and taught from a sociological perspective and addresses major social problems in society, such as: Race & Ethnicity, Sex and Gender, Sexual Orientation, Problems of Health/Mental Illness and Treatment, Social Class/Wealth Distribution in America, Crime and Violence (Deviance), Problems with Education, Population and Immigration, and The changing family unit in modern America. In this course you are expected to examine and analyze some of the interactions, behaviors, social constructions, and studies of what has been classified, labeled, and constructed as “social problems.” This course is three credit hours.

Keep in mind, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE TO STAY UP TO DATE ON THE SYLLABUS FOR THIS CLASS. YOU ARE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, LECTURES, OR EXTRA CREDIT BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE SYLLABUS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS. In other words, do NOT approach me if you missed an assignment or exam because you didn’t **“know.”** This is a very quick course, so any missed assignments can and will be detrimental to your overall score.

DISCLAIMER: Due to the nature of the course and discussion on the various aspects of sociology, I will be covering topics such as: violence, mental health, race/racism/discrimination, gender, and other discussions. I encourage each student to engage in discussions about their feelings/reactions of particular subjects, but be respectful of each other’s well-being and opinions. I understand that there may be topics that can be debated and that some people may feel strongly about specific things, but keep in mind that my classroom is a **safe zone**. Therefore, any sort of judgment, bullying, name calling, or disrespect will NOT be tolerated. **Zero Tolerance-** *If you get out of line, I will immediately kick you out of the classroom*. You can disagree with someone without being disrespectful, and if you can’t gauge that correctly, then maybe it’s best that you drop the course now. This classroom is not the UN or a political platform for you to represent democrat or republican perspectives (or whatever you believe)- So let’s keep our political agendas to ourselves. Otherwise, it is my hope that we learn from one another and maintain a fun course, sharing our perspectives about what we know or have learned.

\*PDFs will be provided to you on Blackboard

**Learning Objectives:**

Upon Completion of this course, students should be able to…

* Identify how particular classical theorists view sociology and how it pertains to their findings/arguments.
* Identify and interpret many different sociological concepts (Concepts are important in this course).
* Identify sociology in the realm of life experiences. The good, bad, and ugly.
* Be able to compare and contrast different experiences of sociology in society from various fields.
* Examine the cultural identities of various individuals that are labeled as deviant.
* Demonstrate the link between concepts, arguments, and perspectives and how this is reflected in society.
* Enhance writing, research, social, and critical thinking skills.

**Course Organization:**

1. **Class Discussion Posts (20%)**

Since our class meets online we must interact together via Blackboard. ***Approximately 2 times a week (preferably Mondays & Fridays) you will make a discussion post based on the readings or topics that I provide via what we have discussed as a course. On Mondays and Fridays you will see the prompt and you will have until Sunday by 11:59pm to post and have replies to 2 other threads***. On Mondays, you will have till Thursdays by 11:59pm to have a thread AND reply to 2 students. On Fridays, you will have till Sundays by 11:59pm to have the thread and replies. ***You MUST comment on at least 2 other students’ posts. Keep in mind, you will not be able to see posts, until you post your own thread first***.

**Make sure that you comment on other students’ posts that have made similar and different points than you did in your post**. Throughout the weeks you need to incorporate some materials from some of the previous weeks in the course. This can be done in different ways. It can be compare and contrast and/or you can draw connections from the readings together, etc. I will also respond to posts.

Here are the main points to consider on your Blackboard post:

1. Highlights of the readings/lecture – I want you to provide some key points on the readings that you enjoyed and why you enjoyed it. Does the reading fit into your experiences around sport? Why or Why not? What is enlightening about the readings and does it impact any new information?

 2. Making the Connection - Make a connection between the readings and what is currently going on in sports today. I am also open to other aspects/outside of the readings such as: YouTube videos, movies, Facebook/Instagram posts. BUT, I want it to relate back to your readings. A YouTube video on puppies and kittens may be cute, but it’s unrelated to the course. Be mindful here because you can lose points for not following directions.

**Total number of points: 15**

**\*\*Do not get hung up in writing a full-length essay on posts, 2-3 paragraphs will work just fine. The purpose is for you to have fun with the posts, but also think critically while doing so. You may also incorporate some photos/memes to back up your argument. Be creative here.**

\*\*\*For all posts you must cite which reading/article you are discussing. (ex: “Pearson (1990) stated”; “Smith (2014) discussed”). You also need to have page numbers when referring to concepts and issues discussed in the readings. You must be as specific as possible.

**Participation Points:**

**You must respond to at least two classmates after your original post.**

When you comment on classmates post this is what you need to write:

* Whether you agree or disagree with the comment they made? Why or why not?
* What did you find interesting about their post? What are some interesting ideas you can add to the post?
* Incorporate course materials from readings to your response.

**Total number of points for response: 10**

You will not receive a weekly grade for your responses. However, I will check every week to make sure that you are responding to your classmates. I will also respond and give feedback to the posts. Remember you must respond to at least two classmates. The participation points for this course will mainly be based off of the responses you give to other students. Those who make weekly posts, consistently respond to classmates each week and hit all of the respond points (whether you agree or disagree with the points they made? why or why not?, what you find interesting about their, incorporate course materials to your) will receive the highest points possible. Points will be deducted when work is not quality and when students do not respond by addressing the necessary points. Students will also not receive participation points if they do not write responses every week. These participation points are important since this class only meets online.

**Respectful communication is also required when communicating online.**

Oftentimes, due to the ANONYMITY of communicating online, people are not always as thoughtful or respectful in communicating, as they would be if they were actually talking to someone face-to-face. I strongly encourage you all to keep that in mind that respectful communication, as in face-to-face communication, is important in this class.

Patience is also particularly important in online learning because just like people, technology is not perfect and can sometimes fail or let us down as well. Also, please keep in mind that you are one of many students that the instructor is in communication with this semester. It is important to respect the different opinions, perspectives, and lifestyles of your classmates, so that everyone is able to optimize their learning experiences.

\*\*\*While it is okay to agree or disagree with a classmates views/opinions, responses of “No, I do not agree” or “Yes, I agree” are NOT full responses and will receive NO credit! Please make sure you provide examples and prove your standpoint.

**Discussion Board Postings/Responses must be thorough and meaningful with explanations to support your viewpoints.**

\*The due dates and course policies are very firm; however, in extenuating circumstances, please consult with me on an individual basis

1. **Quizzes (15%)**

There will be a total of 3 Quizzes throughout the course. Quizzes will be multiple choice and/or True/False. Typically, Quizzes will look like 8 multiple choice & 2 True/False, but this could change.

Each Quiz will occur on Wednesday and will be due by Thursdays @ 11:59pm. Each is worth 10 points.

1. **Course Essay (15%)**

There are two options for the final:

* **Option 1 – Movie Analysis Paper: Students will choose a movie or documentary that can be critically analyzed sociologically. Why this movie/documentary? What makes your movie/documentary sociological? What kind of sociological theory would fit in discussing this subject? Provide a brief description of the movie’s premise and then analyze the work.**
* **Option 2 – Discuss A Current Event that we are currently facing in this country today. What is going on? What should the reader understand about this current event? How is it sociological? Who does it affect? Is this controversial? If so, How? What were some of the reactions from people/media?**

The essay is worth 100 points and is designed for students to practice their writing analytical/critical thinking skills and how the topic relates to the class. This essay should demonstrate why your movie or current event is relevant to the field, while also **drawing upon a minimum of 3 “key concepts” discussed in this course**. **Be sure to define concepts, preferably in your own words. Although students must define all concepts, the evaluation will primarily center upon the analysis of these concepts, as they relate to the given research topic**. I suggest providing approx. 1 page of the movie or current event synopsis and then dedicating a page a concept from all of the readings in the previous weeks and what you learned. **Underline and Bold the concepts in your paper**. If you do not do this, I will automatically deduct 10-15 points. For example, if you are discussing race, the concept should be visible as: **Race** in your paper. You can do this once. I do not need to see it underlined and bolded every time I see the concept.

Students are encouraged to consult with me about their movie or current event ideas in advance, as well as provide me with their rough drafts of the research essay a week and a half prior to the final due date.

## Final Essay Formatting

Students will write **2-3 full-page** typed essay, and will utilize the American Sociological Association (ASA) style. This essay should be double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman with 1-inch margins, and the page count excludes the title page and reference page. **No Title Page or Abstracts are necessary**. Papers must have an introduction, thesis statement, multiple paragraphs and a conclusion. Points will be deducted for failing to meet the minimum page requirements. I am going to stress this. It is **2-3 FULL** pages. Not 1 ¼ or 1 1/2 —Just because you made it to the 2nd page does not mean that equates to a full page. A full page is reading all the way down to the bottom of the page.

Essays must show evidence of research by using a minimum of two “outside the classroom” or “inside the classroom” scholarly sources. Thus, students will have a minimum of 2 sources cited on their reference page. All sources need to be ACADEMIC and/or PEER REVIEWED. If you have any questions regarding your outside sources, please email me at least a week before the final is due so that I can review it.

**Essays will be due to Blackboard on Friday 11:59pm on 1/8/21**. **Please make sure to have a references page.** Late papers will not be accepted- They will become an automatic 0 and NO excuses will be considered. You would have had PLENTY of time to complete the assignment. If you have any questions, please contact me before the due date.

1. **Exams (50%)-** 50 Questions; 100 points each exam

There will be a total of 2 Exams in this course. Exam I/Midterm will be worth (25%), Exam II/Final will be worth (25%) of your grade.

\*There may be some opportunities for extra credit. This will be announced later.

Disruptive Behavior:My biggest pet peeve is individuals that are disrupting the learning environment for others. So, here are a few things that may constitute as disruptive behavior:

* Eating. Eating is not allowed in the classroom, but I will allow it if you are quiet and clean up after yourself. The first person to screw up and leave their trash on the desk or anywhere else will result in no one being able to eat in the classroom again.
* Side discussions and conversations that distract the learning process, or impede, hinder, or inhibit the ability of other students to obtain full benefit of the education process. (**I suggest you don’t do it**)
* Cell phones, iPads, and other personal electronic devices should not be used in the classroom. Please turn all cell phones on vibrate so as not to disturb the class. If you need to take a call, please leave the class to answer.

\*Keep in mind, if you are being disruptive I WILL call you out on it and put you on blast. If it gets out of line, I will kick you out. Point blank.

Cheating: Do not test me on this. If I find out that you are cheating in any way (This includes copy and paste, plagiarism, or getting answers during test times), there will be no warning. I will automatically write it up and send it to the proper department to deal with it. If you want to discuss or give an explanation, you can give it to the Dean or whoever is in charge. Keep in mind, this goes in your student file. Not a good look.

**Course Materials:**

* Stombler, Mindy and Jungels, Amanda M. 2021. *Focus on Social Problems: A Contemporary Reader.*  (**Required**)
* \*Heiner, Robert. 2016. *Social Problems: An Introduction to Critical Constructionism*. (**Required**)

\*Supplemental readings will also be placed on Blackboard

**Course Schedule:**

\*Instructor reserves the right to modify the course schedule as needed. We sometimes may go over days due to the content and discussions, but here is the schedule I am hoping to cover week by week.

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| **Topics** | | | **Readings**  **\*Canvas: This means the reading can be found on Canvas** | | | | **Assignment** | | |
| **WEEK 1 – THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION/SOCIOLOGY & SOCIETY/ SOCIAL PROBLEMS/Socialization** | | | | | | | | | |
| **MONDAY (12/20)**  -Introduction to the course, each other, and syllabus.  - What to expect. Knowing Dr. Smith |  | | | Read the Syllabus! | | | Discussion Board # 1  “Introductions!!” | | |
| **TUESDAY (12/21)** |  | | |  | | |  | | |
| - What is sociology?  What is the Sociological Imagination? How does it apply to Society? What is a social problem? |  | | | Canavs: “The Promise” (p.3-13) - C. Wright Mills, 1959  Stombler & Jungles (pg. 1-13); Heiner (pg. 1-11) | | |  | | |
| **WEDNESDAY (12/22)**  Sociological Theory/Methodology  How do we study Sociology/Social Problems?  Media? |  | | | Heiner (pg. 13-22) | | | **Quiz # 1 due by midnight** | | |
| **THURSDAY (12/23)**    How Are we Socialized? Socialization in Society  **FRIDAY (12/24)**  How Are we Socialized? Socialization in Society  **SATURDAY/SUNDAY (12/25 & 12/26)**  Christmas Weekend |  | | | N/A    N/A  **NO CLASS** | | | Discussion Board # 2  “How are YOU socialized?”  **NO CLASS** | | |
| **WEEK 2 – Crime and Violence/ Deviance vs. Social Problems/ Race, Racism, Prejudice/ Social Class** | | | | | | | | | |
| **MONDAY (12/27)**  Crime and Violence? Deviance vs. Social Problem | |  | | | Canvas: Rios, Victor. 2011. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. “The Labeling Hype.” |  | | | Discussion Post # 3  “Driving While Black” | | |
| **TUESDAY (12/28)**  Crime and violence?  Deviance vs. Social Problems (Cont.) | |  | | | Stombler & Jungles (pg. 558-566); Heiner (pg. 136-185) |  | | |  | | |
| **WEDNESDAY (12/29)** | |  | | | Canvas: Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the Street*, “Campaigning For Respect” |  | | |  | | |
| Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination | |  | | |  |  | | | Quiz #2 | | |
| **THURSDAY (12/30)**  Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination (Cont.)  **FRIDAY (12/31)**  NEW YEARS EVE  Review for Midterm/Midterm  **SATURDAY/SUNDAY (1/1 & 1/2)** | |  | | | Stombler & Jungles (pg. 99-105;113-134)  NO CLASS  **MIDTERM EXAM due on 1/2/21 by midnight** |  | | | Discussion Board # 4  “Race in Academia?”  NO CLASS | | |
| **WEEK 3 –Gender and Sexuality/Social Inequalities in Sport/Exiting Social Problems** | | | | | | | | | |
| **MONDAY (1/3)**  Social Class & Poverty amid Affluence | |  | | | Stombler & Jungles (pg. 14-25;37- 43); | | | Discussion Post # 5  “Gender Equality?” | | |
| **TUESDAY (1/4)** | |  | | |  | | |  | | |
| Social Class & Poverty amid Affluence  +  Gender and Sexuality | |  | | | Heiner (Pg. 67-100) | | | Video: “Saving Capitalism”  Discussion After Movie | | |
| **WEDNESDAY (1/5)**  Gender and Sexuality | |  | | | Pascoe, C. J. 2005. “‘Dude, you’re a fag’: Adolescent masculinity and the fag discourse.” *Sexualities*, *8*(3), 329-346.  *Social Problems* (pg. 258- 275) | | | Quiz # 3 | | |
| **THURSDAY (1/6)**  Social Inequalities in Sport  **FRIDAY (1/7)**  Exiting Social Problems/Final Thoughts/Review For Final  **SATURDAY/SUNDAY (1/8 & 1/9)** | |  | | | Chambliss, William. 1973. “Saints & Roughnecks.”  N/A  **FINAL EXAM due on 1/8/21 by midnight** | | | Discussion Post #6  “Final Thoughts”  Final Papers Due | | |

This course utilizes the following learning evaluation scale: A+/-, B+/-, C+/-, D+/-, and F.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A+  97-100% | B+  87-89% | C+  77-79% | D+  67-69% | F  59.9% and below |
| A  93-96.9% | B  83-86% | C  73-76% | D  63-66% |
| A-  90-92% | B-  80-82% | C-  70-72% | D-  60-62% |

## **Online class behavior:**

* + **Reflect** before you post an emotional response and reread what you have written to be sure it is professional. Communicate as if your comments are printed in a newspaper.
  + **Communicate** effectively**.**
  + Do not use all caps or multiple punctuation marks (!!!, ???, etc.).
  + Be sure to define or explain acronyms, jargon or uncommon terms so everyone can understand and participate in the discussion.
  + **Sign your name.** Take responsibility for your comments in order to build a strong classroom community.
  + **Foster community.** Share your ideas and contribute to ongoing discussions. Make comments that add to, not detract from, a positive learning environment for the course.
  + **Be constructive.** Challenge ideas and the course content, but do so in positive ways. It’s fine to disagree, but when done politely you stimulate and encourage helpful discussion, and you maintain positive relationships with fellow students.
  + **Keep the conversation** **on topic**. Online dialogue is like conversation. If there is a particular dialogue going on, please add to it, but if you have something new to say, start a new thread.

**Resources on Campus**

1. Academic Advising and Counseling: 650-3701 – Student Success Center 1220 http://www.siue.edu/advising/
2. SIUE’s Writing Center: 650-2045 – Student Success Center 1254 http://www.siue.edu/IS/WRITING/
3. SIUE Counseling Services: 650-2197 http://www.siue.edu/counseling/
4. Lovejoy Library is an excellent resource, familiarize yourself with our library <http://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/>
5. Information Technology Services: 650-5500 – email: [ftc\_help@siue.edu](mailto:ftc_help@siue.edu) <http://www.siue.edu/its/>

*Students needing accommodations because of medical diagnosis or major life impairment will need to register with* ***Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS)*** *and complete an intake process before accommodations will be given. The ACCESS office is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1270. You can also reach the office by e-mail at myaccess@siue.edu or by calling 618.650.3726. For more information on policies, procedures, or necessary forms, please visit the ACCESS website at www.siue.edu/access.*

Helpful Websites:

* https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/ (ASA Style)
*    <https://www.siue.edu/lovejoy-library/> (SIUE Library)

**Accommodations of Disability:**

**Support Services:** Students needing accommodations because of medical diagnosis or major life impairment will need to register with **Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS)** and complete an intake process before accommodations will be given. The ACCESS office is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1270. You can also reach the office by e-mail at [myaccess@siue.edu](mailto:myaccess@siue.edu) or by calling 618.650.3726. For more information on policies, procedures, or necessary forms, please visit the ACCESS website at [www.siue.edu/access](http://www.siue.edu/access).

If you feel you would need additional help in the event of an emergency situation, please notify your instructor to be shown the evacuation route and discuss specific needs for assistance.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

**Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university**. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

**Diversity Initiative Statement:**

SIUE is committed to respecting everyone’s dignity at all times. In order to learn, exchange ideas, and support one another, our virtual and physical classrooms must be places where students and teachers feel safe and supported. Systems of oppression permeate our institutions and our classrooms. All students and faculty have the responsibility to co-create a classroom that affirms inclusion, equity, and social justice, where racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, xenophobia, and other social pathologies are not tolerated. Violations of this policy will be enforced in line with the SIUE Student Conduct Code.

The Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion https://www.siue.edu/csdi is an excellent resource for students for support and community. Any person who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment can contact Ms. Jamie Ball, Director in the Office of Equal Opportunity, Access and Title IX Coordination at (618) 650-2333 or [jball@siue.edu](mailto:jball@siue.edu). There is also an online form for reporting bias incidents at <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SIUEdwardsville&layout_id=10>.

This course is designed to discuss controversial issues revolving around topics such as: race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class as it pertains to social inequalities around the world. This course will also outline historical and modern day current events that will involve some critical analysis of diverse social groups, helping us to understand the initial reasons behind the society we live in everyday. Because we have had a diverse set of experiences, we must explore the similarities and differences of social inequalities around the world.

## Academic and Other Student Services

As an enrolled SIUE student, you have a variety of support available to you, including:

* [Lovejoy Library Resources](http://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/)
* [Academic Success Sessions](http://www.siue.edu/retention/sass/index.shtml)
* [Tutoring Resource Center](https://www.siue.edu/soar/tutoring.shtml)
* [The Writing Center](http://www.siue.edu/lss/writing/index.shtml)
* [Academic Advising](http://www.siue.edu/advising/)
* [Financial Aid](https://www.siue.edu/financialaid/)
* [Campus Events](http://www.siue.edu/events/)
* [Counseling Services](https://www.siue.edu/counseling/)

If you find that you need additional support, please reach out to me and let me know.

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Lastly, I look forward to working with all of you. If you have any questions, Please do not hesitate to ask. I will be around during office hours or via email anytime you need and will do my best to give you a quick turnaround, presumably within 24 hours. I want each student to have fun this semester and have fun in this course as well. Good luck.

