

SOCY
102.001
Contemporary Social
Issues College of
Charleston b Fall 2011

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Course Description

This course addresses current social problems and contemporary social issues in the United States in a globalized era. Our focus will be on the social context of these problems and issues. Students should gain a sociological perspective in understanding social problem. Major research findings on social problems and their theoretical interpretations will be presented and discussed. Potential social solutions to these problems will be discussed and assessed.

Course Objectives

The objectives of the course include familiarizing students with crucial social issues of our time and stimulating students to think about these in a critical and scientific way. Upon completion of the course, students should be able to 1) understand the relative nature of social problems and issues and use sociological perspectives in forming perceptions of current social problems 2) understand the relationship between social policies and social issues 3) demonstrate critical thinking through in-depth examination of a social problem.

Social Science General Education Requirement: SOCY 102 is one of the approved courses that will satisfy 3 of the 6 credits of social science that you are required to complete for the General Education curriculum.

Learning Outcome for the Social Sciences in the General Education

Curriculum: Students can apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions.

How and When this Learning Outcome will be Assessed: Near the end of class, you will be asked to complete a take-home writing assignment (an op-ed piece) that challenges you to demonstrate your ability to apply a sociological concept or

theory to better understand some kind of human behavior, social interaction and/or social institution as it relates to a specific social issue that we have discussed this semester.

Required Reading and Materials

Sullivan, Thomas J. 2011. **Introduction to Social Problems**, Ninth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. **Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets**. New York: Penguin.

Additional readings will be posted on OAKS (see posted reading schedule)

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Grading

Exams-70 percent

You will have three tests which will count for 80 percent of your grade. These tests will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. The first two tests will each be worth 25% of your grade while the final exam will be worth 30 percent. The theory based questions on the final exam represent the only cumulative portion of the exam.

Editorial (Op-Ed) Assignment – 10 percent

You will select a topic from the course that has captured your attention and write an op-ed which draws on relevant sociological theory and research. Op-Ed pieces are meant to be persuasive so your thesis should be clear and backed with sociological evidence. I have several examples posted on our class OAKS page.

Gang Leader for a Day -15 percent

You will have a reading quiz based on the book, *Gang Leader for a Day*.

Participation-5 percent

Every student will be asked to contribute four articles throughout the semester that are relevant to what we are studying as a class. These will be uploaded in OAKS. We will discuss good sources in class. I will have days through the semester that these are due (see schedule). Each article is worth 1 percent of your grade. The final 1 percent is based on an office visit during my office hours before Fall Break. You need not make an appointment; just show up!

Calculating Your Grade

In the grade column, fill in your grades as you receive them. Multiply each grade by the number in the middle column and write the product in the final column. Add the final column.

	Grade			
Test One	_____	X .20	=	_____
Test Two	_____	X .20	=	_____
Final Exam	_____	X .30	=	_____
Editorial (Op-Ed) Assignment	_____	X .10	=	_____
Gang Leader Quiz	_____	X .15	=	_____
Participation (Article 1)	_____	X .01	=	_____
Participation (Article 2)	_____	X .01	=	_____
Participation (Article 3)	_____	X .01	=	_____
Participation (Article 4)	_____	X .01	=	_____
Participation (Office Visit)	_____	X .01	=	_____
			=	_____
				Course grade

Grading Scale

A	93-100%	A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%	B	83-87%
B-	80-82%	C+	78-79%
C	73-77%	C-	70-72%
D+	68-69%	D	63-67%
D-	60-61%	F	59% and below

Class Policies

Civility

This is a course which should generate much discussion. As we come from diverse backgrounds, there will be times that we will disagree with one another. While debate should be interesting and enhance the learning environment, students are required to demonstrate courtesy and civility toward their classmates and their professor.

Classroom Etiquette

Cell phones and other electronic devices that may cause disruption should be silenced before class begins. Text messaging during class is rude and

unacceptable. I do not mind the use of computers, but if you are using your computer for reasons other than note-taking and you disturb classmates, I will ask you to stop bring yours to class. Arriving to class late and leaving class early are disruptive.

Make-up Work

If you miss a test for any reason, you should contact me immediately. I strongly urge you to make every effort to take tests when scheduled, but I will accept college-approved absence memos.

Attendance

I will take attendance daily. Students are responsible for all assignments and lecture materials whether they are present or not. Please plan accordingly.

Special Needs

If you have a documented disability and have been approved to receive accommodations through SNAP, please feel free to come and discuss this with me during my office hours.

Honor Code

I take the College of Charleston Honor Code and Code of Conduct quite seriously. The Honor Code specifically forbids lying, cheating, attempted cheating, stealing, attempted stealing and plagiarism. The Code of Conduct states that as members of the College community, students are expected to evidence a high standard of personal conduct and to respect the rights of other students, faculty, staff members, community neighbors, and visitors on campus. Students are also expected to adhere to all federal, state, and local laws. Faculty members are required to report violations of the Honor Code or Code of Conduct to the Office of Student Affairs. For more information, please visit the College of Charleston student web page: www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/HonorBoard.htm.

Scheduled Readings

A calendar of scheduled readings can be found on our course OAKS page. Please read what is assigned prior to that day's class. In addition to the text and Gang Leader for a Day, I will frequently post timely articles and news clips that are relevant to what we are covering. I will bring any such additions to your attention in class.