

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Department of Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology**

**Course Syllabus: Social Problems**

**SOC 1020— CRN# 23345**

**Spring 2016**

**Instructor:**

Curtis Smith

Office: Old Main 226

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 12:00pm-12:30 and by appointment  
Tuesday and Thursday: 5pm-6pm, and by appointment

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**Meeting Time and Place:**

Mon., Wed., and Fri. 10:30-11:20

Old Main 304

**Teaching Assistants:**

Grant Holyoak: [grant.holyoak@aggiemail.usu.edu](mailto:grant.holyoak@aggiemail.usu.edu)

**Required Texts and Materials:**

Macionis, John J. 2015 (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). *Social Problems*. Pearson. New York City.

ISBN13: 978-013-390959-3

(It is imperative that you have the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of text for this course.)

**Course Description:**

This course provides an acquaintance with basic concepts and major figures of the discipline. We will focus on social processes and institutions and look at the relationship of the individual to social structures. We will explore how and why people of different cultures control their societies, evaluate their behavior, and organize as they do. In short, we will examine how people become human through the use of illustrious sociological perspectives.

## **Course Objectives:**

### *USU's IDEA Essential Course Objectives*

In Social Problems (SOC 1020) , we will focus on 3 broad learning objectives; These 3 objectives are:

1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories
3. Learning to apply course materials (to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decisions)

### *Sociology Program Objectives*

Upon completion of the course students should be able to:

- 1) Understand and apply concepts and theories used in sociology.
- 2) Develop and use their "sociological imagination" and see how individuals, even themselves, are influenced by other people and by society.
- 3) See that although they are shaped by society they also can change society.

Sociology classes collectively contribute to form the major goals of the Sociology Program. Students will learn to:

- Communicate effectively.
- Think critically, analytically, and reason logically about social issues and/or social problems.
- Understand and use sociological principles, concepts, and theories to examine social behavior and issues.
- Understand and evaluate the application of sociological methods to social behavior and issues.

Specific assignments in this course will assess student's learning in one or more of the above objectives.

## **Classroom Policies and Procedures:**

### *Attendance*

Since much of what students will learn in this course occurs during lectures, class discussion, class activities, and video presentations, regular attendance is expected. Students who miss class are responsible for getting notes and handouts. Neither I nor my teaching assistants will lend our notes or handouts to students. In the case of a student's unexcused absence from class, no make-up exams, quizzes, or class discussion assignments will be given to the student. Only those students who miss class with an excused absence will be allowed to make-up an exam, quiz, or class discussion assignment. Make-up exams and quizzes/activities will be given only to those students who have filled out a note card regarding the excused absence and, unless there is schedule change, will occur Wednesday, April 27, 2016 during the regular class period. All make-up quizzes/activities will consist of a written assignment. If the student's participation in organized University activities should require missing a class, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in advance and to arrange to make-up the work missed. Likewise, students who miss class for any other legitimate reason should notify the instructor in advance of their absence if possible. No make-up quizzes/activities or exams will be given to a student who fails to notify the instructor in advance of an absence unless some form of documentation of an emergency is produced by the student. Only under the most extreme emergencies will I accept a late extra credit service project paper or give a make-up exam or quiz/activity without written notification of an excused absence from the University. There will be at least ten quizzes/activities given throughout the course of the semester to encourage students to attend class and to keep up with course materials. Students have one week from the time of their return to class to make arrangements to show documentation of any excused absence from class. I strongly prefer handling attendance issues in my office during my office hours. **Students must fill out an index card to arrange any make-up work. An index card must be filled out by the student for each day there is an excused absence. Only those students who fill out an index card(s) with excused absences will be allowed to complete any missed class assignments. All excused make-up work is scheduled to occur on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 during the regular class period.**

### *Classroom Behavior*

I will follow University guidelines and policies regarding student behavior in this course. In general, I expect students to respect other students and help maintain the proper learning environment needed for students to succeed in this course. Please do not disrupt the class by walking in late, leaving early, holding a conversation or answering your cell phone during a lecture or a video presentation. Students will not be permitted to take exams or quizzes/ activities if they walk in after the start of the assignment or leave prematurely unless prior arrangements have been made by the student. No cell phone use of any kind is allowed during an exam or quiz/activity. As per University policy, I will not hesitate in failing and removing a disruptive student from this course.

### *Reading Assignments*

Readings will be assigned from *Society: The Basics* by Macionis. Students are expected to follow the reading schedule provided in the tentative class schedule. Please read the assignment prior to the class period for which it is assigned. By following the reading schedule students will benefit

by not only being able to ask better questions, discuss ideas more often, and do better on the pop quizzes, but also students who follow the reading schedule will not be faced with reading the approximate 100+ pages covered by each exam the night before the exam. Short additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be made available to students through electronic reserve.

### ***Video Presentations***

During the course of the semester numerous videos will be shown. Students are expected to take careful notes during these presentations. Test items will be taken from the information that is presented in the videos. No videos will be loaned to students who miss class. Students who miss class will assume the responsibility of getting the notes from the video presentation.

### ***Exams***

There will be 4 comprehensive exams in this course that are worth 100 points each. This includes the final. All exams will be “objective” and can include true/false, multiple choice, essay, and matching questions. Students will be expected to take exams as scheduled, especially the final exam. Students will not be permitted to take exams or quizzes if they walk in after the start of the assignment unless prior arrangements have been made by the student. All make-up examinations are scheduled to be given on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 during the regular class period and only will be allowed if the absence was excused and an index card was filled out by the student.

### ***Quizzes/Activities***

There will be weekly quizzes to be taken online throughout the course of the semester. Each quiz will be worth 20 points. All make-up quizzes/activities will consist of a thorough written assignment, and are scheduled to be given on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 during the regular class period and only will be allowed if the absence was excused and an index card was filled out by the student.

### ***Group Presentation***

There will be at least one Group Presentation during the course of the semester. Each group presentation will be worth 50 points (per person). Groups are to be made with three or four students. Each group will present for no more than 15 minutes (3-4 minutes per person) during class one week during the semester. Starting on the second week, group one will present during week two, group two will present during week three and so on. When choosing a topic to present on, make sure it is a topic we have already discussed in class and not a topic that has not been covered yet. Each group will find and download an article from an academic journal (just like the instructor showed you in class at the beginning of the semester) and share it with the rest of the group. You may use the links below marked “links” for help. Make sure to also forward a copy to the instructor on Monday night of the week you present for full credit. Groups will present at the

beginning of class on Wednesday of their assigned week. Each student will present under one of the following roles within the group: (Person1) Describe a) the topic of the study and b) reason for the study; (Person2) Briefly describe some of the past literature that the study refers to; (Person3) describe the methods that the study used. How did the study measure things? What were the variables (independent and dependent)? Were there any control variables? (Person4) Describe what implications this study has for the larger audience and how society benefits from this study, i.e., how are we better off now that we found these things? This is a group assignment for a reason, so share your ideas with each other, i.e., email each other, talk during class, etc. After the 15 minute presentation, we will discuss the article in class for another 5-10 minutes. Group members should be able to answer any questions about the article. Please ask me if you have questions during class, by email, or by making an appointment with me. All make-up group presentations will consist of a thorough written assignment, and are scheduled to be administered on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 during the regular class period and only will be allowed if the absence was excused and an index card was filled out by the student.

### **Links:**

[http://apps.webofknowledge.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/WOS\\_GeneralSearch\\_input.do?product=WOS&search\\_mode=GeneralSearch&SID=2DOjzYPksriEjXGBMEj&preferencesSaved=&editions=S](http://apps.webofknowledge.com/dist.lib.usu.edu/WOS_GeneralSearch_input.do?product=WOS&search_mode=GeneralSearch&SID=2DOjzYPksriEjXGBMEj&preferencesSaved=&editions=S)  
SCI (Links to an external site.)

&

<https://scholar.google.com/> (Links to an external site.)

### ***Class Activities/Assignments***

Students will be given periodic assignments during class throughout the semester. These class activities/assignments are meant to be completed in class or by the due date, depending on the type of assignment. All make-up class activities/assignments will consist of a thorough written assignment, and are scheduled to be given during the regular class period on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 and only will be allowed if the absence was excused and an index card was filled out by the student.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444 voice, (435)797-0740 TTY, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice. Please let me know how I can assist you in succeeding in this course.

### ***Academic Dishonesty***

Acts of academic dishonesty (i.e. cheating, falsification, plagiarism) will not be tolerated in this class. I will follow University guidelines regarding my academic dishonesty policy. Students who

participate in academically dishonest activities will receive an F for the course at the minimum. Thus, if you are caught cheating even on a 5 point quiz/activity, you will flunk this course and may face stiffer penalties depending upon the nature of the offense.

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[Additional USU stipulations can be found here \(click here\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

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### ***Grades***

Grades will be determined on a total points basis. Neither my teaching assistant nor I will discuss grades over the phone. Students have 10 days from posting of scores for an exam or quiz/activity to review and question the number of points they have received for the activity. Grades will be assigned as follows:

Journal Responses:	20%
Weekly Quizzes:	30%
Class Activities/Assignments	20%
Exams:	<u>30%</u>
	100%

A (94-100%)

A- (90-93%)

B+ (87-89%)

B (83-86%)

B- (80-82%)

C+ (77-79%)

C (73-76%)

C- (70-72%)

D+ (67-69%)

D (60-66%)

F (59-0%)

### **Tentative Class Schedule:**

Changes in the schedule may occur and will be announced in class. Please make a habit of checking the updated syllabus online (at least weekly). Students are responsible for being aware of any changes in the schedule. All “Chapter” readings below refer to *Society: The Basics* by Macionis. The tentative schedule is as follows:

#### **Week #1**

Mon. Jan.11 Introduction and Course Syllabus Ch. 1 Sociology: Studying Social Problems  
[READ pages 1-15 for next class]

Wed. Jan.13 Ch. 1 continued

Fri. Jan.15 Ch. 1 continued [Start looking for academic articles by searching a topic of your choice online. Use the outline from class to make sure the article is optimal for your Group Presentation]

#### **Week #2**

Mon. Jan.18 *No Class—MLK day*

Wed. Jan.20 Chapter 2 Poverty & Wealth [Read pages 31-46 for next class]

Fri. Jan.22 Ch. 2 continued and Group #1 presentation [Read pages 47-60 for next class]

#### **Week #3**

Mon. Jan.25 Ch. 2 continued

Wed. Jan.27 Homelessness

Fri. Jan.29 Ch. 2 continued and Group #2 presentation

#### **Week #4**

Mon. Feb.1 Ch 2 and Review for Exam #1

Wed. Feb.3 **EXAM #1**

Fri. Feb.5 Chapter 3 Race

#### **Week #5**

Mon. Feb.8 Chapter 3 continued

Wed. Feb.10 Chapter 4 Gender Inequality Aging and Inequality

Fri. Feb. 12 Chapter 4 continued

**Week #6**

- Mon. Feb.15 *No Class—Presidents day*  
Tues. Feb.16 Chapter 6 Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice  
Wed. Feb.17 Chapter 6 continued  
Fri. Feb.19 Chapter 6 continued

**Week #7**

- Mon. Feb.22 Chapter 7 Sexuality  
Wed. Feb.24 Chapter 7 continued  
Fri. Feb.26 Chapter 9 Physical & Mental Health

**Week #8**

- Mon. Feb.29 Chapter 9 continued  
Wed. Mar.2 **EXAM #2**  
Fri. Mar.4 Documentary

Mar.7-11 *Spring Break*

**Week #9**

- Mon. Mar.14 Chapter 10 Economy & Politics  
Wed. Mar.16 Chapter 10 continued  
Fri. Mar.18 Chapter 10 continued

**Week #10**

- Mon. Mar.21 Chapter 12 Family Life  
Wed. Mar.23 Chapter 12 continued  
Fri. Mar.25 Chapter 13 Education

**Week #11**

- Mon. Mar.28 Chapter 13 continued  
Wed. Mar.30 Chapter 14 Urban Life  
Fri. Apr.1 Chapter 14 continued

**Week #12**

Mon. Apr.4 Chapter 14 continued

Wed. Apr.6 **EXAM #3**

Fri. Apr.8 Chapter 15 Population and Global Inequality

**Week #13**

Mon. Apr.11 Chapter 15 continued

Wed. Apr.13 Chapter 16 Technology and the Environment

Fri. Apr.15 Chapter 16 continued

**Week #14**

Mon. Apr.18 Chapter 17 War on Terrorism

Wed. Apr.20 Chapter 17 continued

Fri. Apr.22 Chapter 17 continued

Wed. Apr.27 Make up work day

**Finals Week**

Wed. May4 **Final EXAM #4**

**10:30 A.M. Old Main 304**

