

SOC 218
Introduction to Social Problems (3 units)
MWF 10:30-11:20am Webster Hall 103
Fall 2012

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Nicholas Gibson

Office: Saunders Hall 217
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3pm-5pm, Wednesdays 2pm-3pm,
Or email/appointment
Phone: (808) 956-8462 (If you leave a message, leave your name and callback number
clearly and slowly)
E-mail: gibsonn@hawaii.edu (Preferred Contact Method)
Prerequisite: N/A

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Theoretical and substantive survey of the nature and causes of social problems; selected types: poverty, inequality, deviance, etc.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course we will address a broad range of social issues through the readings, discussions, and online activities. The topics covered are intended to give each student an opportunity to understand the principles and theoretical perspectives used in sociology to address social and political concerns. This technology-assisted course will provide students an opportunity to work independently on weekly projects, and engage in responsible and informed academic discussion outside of class. **Each student will be responsible for weekly assignments, weekly participation in class discussions and in-class projects, and class attendance.**

3. LEARNING GOALS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

This course meets the University of Hawaii Diversification Requirements in the Social Sciences (DS) for the Core Competency standards for each of the following areas: Critical Thought, Communication, Civic Engagement, Ethical and Moral Development, Cultural Respect and Tolerance, and Global Awareness.

4. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Describe, connect and evaluate racial, religious, political, and environmental issues relevant to greater social concerns
- Illustrate and discuss through written assignments the application of social theory to the understanding of social issues
- Develop and refine clear, succinct and thorough writing skills
- Identify and demonstrate working understanding of sociological theories pertaining to research on social problems

- Demonstrate ability to critically analyze, critique and evaluate scholarly work on large-scale social issues
- Successfully engage in respectful and substantive debate with colleagues

5. REQUIRED TEXTS

Social Problems: Second Edition – Joel Best
2012. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
ISBN: 9780393918632

Social Problems: Readings – Edited by Ira Silver
2008. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
ISBN: 9780393929324

We will sometimes explore certain concepts with outside readings, videos, or presentations.

6. GRADING POLICY

Grading Criteria:

Reading Responses 12 x 5 each:	60 points	60%
Reflective Essay:	20 points	20%
Class Meeting Attendance:	20 points	20%
Total available points:	100 points	

Grading percentiles:

95 – 100%	A	90-94%	A-	
88 – 89%	B+	83-87%	B	80-82% B-
78 – 79%	C+	73-77%	C	70-72% C-
68 – 69%	D+	63-67%	D	60-62% D-
59% or lower			F	

Any late assignments will be marked down by 10% for every calendar day they are submitted past the due date.

Reading Responses: These assignments will include a summary of the main points of each assigned reading in a given week, an analysis of the topic based on the readings, and a response from the student to the author(s) regarding the author(s) work and the topic itself. Each response should be no less than 3/4 of a page, and no more than one and one-half (1 ½) pages long, single-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font. It is recommended that students complete each reading response, since the total responses make up a significant portion of the student's course grade.

Reflective Essay: The reflective essay should address the student's progress throughout the course. Did the student have any assumptions about certain social problems that have changed? Did the student have a shift in self-identity or self-concept? Did the student discuss any course material outside of class? If so, with whom, and what was/were the

outcome(s) of those discussions? Did taking this course change the student's perspective on policy and social change? This essay should be no more than one (1) page long, single spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font.

Class Meeting Attendance: Attendance will be taken at selected class meetings in order to ensure students are able to receive the full benefit of being enrolled in the course. Attendance will also be measured through in-class group assignments and other participation exercises throughout the semester.

Missed Assignments

Any assignment that is not submitted by the student will not be counted toward the student's final grade. Assignments submitted late will not be eligible for full credit. Each calendar day an assignment is submitted late, a loss of 10% of the total points for the assignment is assessed.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities **may** present themselves over the duration of the session, and will be clarified when the opportunities are presented to the class. Any extra credit opportunity will be accompanied by secondary options, and not turning in extra credit will not negatively impact a course grade.

Academic Dishonesty

The University of Hawai'i explicitly prohibits cheating or plagiarism of any kind in the academic environment. The UH Code of Student Conduct, Section 1D. Academic Dishonesty states:

“Cheating includes but is not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination; obtaining unauthorized information about an examination before it is given; submitting another's work as one's own; using prohibited sources of information during an examination; fabricating or falsifying data in experiments and other research; altering the record of any grade; altering answers after an examination has been submitted; falsifying any official University record; or misrepresenting of facts in order to obtain exemptions from course requirements.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or "drylabbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.”

Grading Disputes

Be sure to print out copies of the receipt of all assignments turned in electronically, copies of extra credit work with grades, and any other communication between instructor and student in case of grade recording errors, which will be corrected if substantiated by the student. If there are any further concerns, academic affairs personnel are always available to support students.

7. ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you and with the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.

8. CLASS MEETING ETIQUETTE

- **Cell phones will be turned off during class meeting times, except with prior approval from the instructor.**
- Computers will be used for academic purposes only during meeting times
- Discussion topics will sometimes be controversial. Therefore, we will respect the confidentiality of the classroom, the diversity of the student body, and the importance of engaging in substantive discussions of social inequality and political/societal issues.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week/Meeting Dates	Reading	Topics/Assignments
Week 1 Week of: August 20	Readings: R# Social Problems: S#	Introductions, overview, course schedule
Week 2 Week of: August 27	S1 R15, R25	The Study of Social Problems Reading Response 09/1/12
Week 3 Week of: September 3 Campus Holiday 09/03/12	R4, R11, R26,	Race/Ethnicity as a Social Problem Reading Response 09/8/12
Week 4 Week of: September 10	R8, R14, R24, R29	Homelessness and Poverty Reading Response 09/15/12
Week 5 Week of: September 17	R13, R17, R28	Gender and Gendered Privilege Reading Response 09/22/12
Week 6 Week of: September 24	R12 S3	Sexuality and Sexual Stigmatization Reading Response 09/29/12
Week 7 Week of: October 1	R7, R10, R22, R23	Youth, Teens, and Social Problems Reading Response 10/6/12
Week 8 Week of: October 8	R5, R19,	The Spacial Environmental Reading Response 10/13/12
Week 9 Week of: October 15	R1, R2, R27, R30	Politics and Media
Week 10 Week of: October 22	S5, S6	Politics and Media Reading Response 10/27/12

Week 11 Week of: October 29	R3, R6,	Body Image and Health Reading Response 11/3/12
Week 12 Week of: November 5 Campus Holiday: 11/06/12	R20	Sports and Performance
Week 13 Week of: November 12 Campus Holiday: 11/12/12	R9, R16	Violence and Perception Reading Response 11/17/12
Week 14 Week of: November 19 Campus Closed 11/22-23/12	R21, R32	Social Control and Incarceration
Week 15 Week of: November 26	S7, S9	Policy and Social Problems Reading Response 12/1/12
Week 16 Week of: December 3 Last Day of Class 12/06/12	R31, R33 S8	Labor, Work, and Victimization Reading Response 12/8/12
Finals Week Week of: December 10		Reflective Essay due 12/12/12