

SOC 218
Introduction to Social Problems (3 units)
Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:45pm Kuykendal Hall 213
Spring 2013

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Nicholas Gibson

Office: Saunders Hall 217
Office Hours: Thursdays 12-2pm, Fridays 12pm-2pm
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 in-class 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 course is further designed to give students a language to use when addressing, evaluating, and analyzing social problems, and the impact they have on society. The nature of this course requires students to engage with each other and the instructor in order to meet the student learning goals. **Each student will be responsible for weekly written assignments, weekly participation in class discussions and in-class projects, and a final reflexive project.**

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 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:

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

Grading percentiles:

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|--------------|----|--------|----|--------|----|
| 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. In short, these responses should be more than just a summary of the readings; they should engage the topics and concepts. 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 three (3) pages long, double-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. For example, around week ten of the course, students in small groups will design a social problem project focusing on a topic of each group's choosing. This project will focus on the specific aspects of creating a social problem movement, and the presentation of the work to the greater class.

Missed Assignments

Any assignment that is not submitted by the student will receive a grade of zero (0) and 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: January 7 | Readings Social Problems | Introductions, overview, course schedule |
| Week 2 Week of: January 14 | Social Problems 1 Readings 15, Readings 25 | The Study of Social Problems Reading Response 01/19/13 |
| Week 3 Week of: January 21 Campus Holiday 01/21/13 | Readings 4, Readings 11, Readings 26, | Race/Ethnicity as a Social Problem Reading Response 01/26/13 |
| Week 4 Week of: January 28 | Readings 8, Readings 14, Readings 24, Readings 29 | Homelessness and Poverty Reading Response 02/02/13 |
| Week 5 Week of: February 4 | Readings 13, Readings 17, Readings 28 | Gender and Gendered Privilege Reading Response 02/09/13 |
| Week 6 Week of: February 11 | Readings 12 Social Problems 3 | Sexuality and Sexual Stigmatization Reading Response 02/16/13 |
| Week 7 Week of: February 18 Campus Holiday 02/18/13 | Readings 7, Readings 10, Readings 22, Readings 23 | Youth, Teens, and Social Problems Reading Response 02/23/13 |
| Week 8 Week of: February 25 | Readings 5, Readings 19, | The Spatial Environmental Reading Response 03/03/13 |
| Week 9 Week of: March 4 | Readings 1, Readings 2, Readings 27, Readings 30 | Politics and Media |
| Week 10 Week of: March 11 | Social Problems 5, Social Problems 6 | Politics and Media Reading Response 03/16/13 |

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| Week 11 Week of: March 18 | Readings 3, Readings 6, | Body Image and Health Reading Response 03/23/13 |
| Week of: March 25 | No class – Spring Break | |
| Week 12 Week of: April 1 | Readings 20 | Sports and Performance |
| Week 13 Week of: April 8 | Readings 9, Readings 16 | Violence and Perception Reading Response 04/13/13 |
| Week 14 Week of: April 15 | Readings 21, Readings 32 | Social Control and Incarceration |
| Week 15 Week of: April 22 | Social Problems 7, Social Problems 9 | Policy and Social Problems Reading Response 04/27/13 |
| Week 16 Week of: April 29 Last Day of Class 05/01/13 | Readings 31, Readings 33 Social Problems 8 | Labor, Work, and Victimization Reading Response 05/04/13 |
| Finals Week Week of: May 6 | | Reflective Essay due 05/08/13 |