

SOC 218
Introduction to Social Problems (3 units)
M 3-4:15pm/Technology Assisted
Spring 2012

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Nicholas Gibson

Office: Saunders Hall 217
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3pm-6pm, Wednesdays 11am-1pm,
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
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 online discussions, 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 TEXT

Social Problems of the Modern World: A Reader – Edited by Frances V. Moulder
2000. Canada: Wadsworth

ISBN: 9780534566821

(This collection of articles and chapters is very well put together and is a thorough resource regarding the conceptualization of social problems.)

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

6. GRADING POLICY

Grading Criteria:

Reading Responses 13 x 10 each:	130 points	65%
Online Discussion Participation:	40 points	20%
Class Meeting Attendance:	30 points	15%

Total available points: 200 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	

The ability to retain knowledge will be measured in the classroom, and the skills of critical thinking and deeper theoretical synthesis will be assessed in the written assignments. 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, and a response from the student to the author(s). Each response per article should be no less than 3/4 of a page, and no more than one (1) page 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.

Online Discussion Participation: Every student in the course is required to participate in the weekly discussion boards on a regular basis. The overall grade for online discussion participation will evaluate consistency of posts, thoughtfulness of posts, and attempts to use social theory and/or research to support claims made.

Class Meeting Attendance: Attendance will be taken at each class meeting in order to ensure students are able to receive the full benefit of being enrolled in the course. Because of the nature of the face-to-face/technology-assisted course design, attendance is vital to each student's development as a student over the course of the semester. Each class meeting is worth approximately 1% of the student's course grade, and absences must be cleared with the instructor in advance.

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: January 9		Introductions, overview, course schedule
Week 2 Week of: January 16	Chapter 1: 1, 2, 3, 4	The Study of Global Social Problems Reading Response 01/19/12
Week 3 Week of: January 23	Chapter 2: 5, 6, 7, 8	The World Economy and World Poverty Reading Response 01/26/12
Week 4 Week of: January 30	Chapter 3: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14	Democracy and Human Rights Reading Response 02/02/12
Week 5 Week of: February 6	Chapter 4: 15, 16, 17	Gender and Sexual Orientation
Week 6 Week of: February 13	Chapter 4: 18, 19, 20	Gender and Sexual Orientation Reading Response 02/16/12
Week 7 Week of: February 20	Chapter 5: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25	Population Growth Reading Response 02/23/12
Week 8 Week of: February 27	Chapter 6: 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	Environmental Destruction Reading Response 03/01/12
Week 9 Week of: March 5	Chapter 7: 31, 32, 33, 34	War and Militarism Reading Response 03/08/12
Week 10 Week of: March 12	Chapter 8: 35, 36, 37, 38	The Global Media
Week 11 Week of: March 19	Chapter 8: 39, 40, 41	The Global Media Reading Response 03/22/12

Spring Break Week of: March 26	No assignments	
Week 12 Week of: April 2	Chapter 9: 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47	The Cultural Survival of Indigenous Peoples Reading Response 04/05/12
Week 13 Week of: April 9	Chapter 10: 48, 49, 50, 51	Racial/Ethnic Conflicts and the Danger of Genocide Reading Response 04/12/12
Week 14 Week of: April 16	Chapter 11: 52, 53, 54, 55, 56	Global Crime Reading Response 04/19/12
Week 15 Week of: April 23	Chapter 12: 57, 58, 59, 60	World Health Reading Response 04/26/12
Week 16 Week of: April 30 Last Day of Class May 2	Chapter 13: 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66	Prospects for the Future Reading Response 05/05/12
Finals Week Week of: May 7		Final discussion board participation due 05/09/12