

**□SOC 218: Introduction to Social Problems**, Section 1, CRN 89249, 3 Units, Spring 2014-2015

Tuesday and Thursday, 9-10:15am, Saunders 244

Professor: Sun-Ki Chai, Office Hours TTh 10:15-11:15am, Saunders Hall 237, 956-7234, [sunki@hawaii.edu](mailto:sunki@hawaii.edu)

Social Problems is the branch of Sociology that seeks to connect broad sociological theories with the concrete issues that affect our everyday lives. The great sociologist C. Wright Mills once famously described sociology as the analysis of the relationship between the private problems that we as individuals face in our lives, and the broader problems that are faced by large social groups and society as a whole. Human beings naturally tend to think of life in terms of our own experiences, as well as those of our family and friends, since these are the events that are of the greatest direct importance to us. However, as sociological theorists, we must try to look at life from a much broader theoretical viewpoint, providing answers to questions that relate not just to ourselves, but to people around the world and throughout history. However, if we keep the two things separate, then it will be hard to make sociological theories relevant to the everyday lives of ordinary people. So we need to find ways to analyze the everyday problems of "real people" in a way that has meaning for all of society. Research in Social Problems seeks to start us on the way towards achieving this goal.

We will try to accomplish this purpose in the course by covering a number of different types of problems, such as poverty, crime, race, and aging, looking at them in a specifically sociological way, and trying to apply theoretical concepts to explain them. The course text is John D. Carl, *THINK: Social Problems, 2/E*, (Pearson, 2013). It is available at the University bookstore, and can be purchased there either as a [hard copy](#) or an [e-book](#). It can also be rented from [Amazon](#) or other online sites, and can be rented in e-book form from [Coursesmart](#). However, if you do order a hard copy through a site other than the University bookstore, please make sure the book will arrive within the next week or so, as we will start using it right away.

Other than this syllabus, all of the course materials will be placed only on the [Laulima](#) course site. The course should appear automatically on your homepage at Laulima once you are registered for the course.

Grades in the course are based on point totals, with the total for assignments adding up to 100 points. There will be three short assignments interspersed through the semester, that will ask you to discuss a current event or trend relating to class readings *and* lecture. Advice will be given on how to use online and/or library materials to accomplish this task. Together, these assignments will count for 45 points (15 points apiece).

You will be given a take-home final examination that will require you to develop a fuller picture of the your ethnic group based upon a larger set of theoretical concepts from the lecture and readings. You may draw upon your earlier research assignments, but the assignment will require you to do additional research, as well as to consolidate the analysis you have already done. This will count for 25 points. They will be due at the end of the exam time assigned for the course on the University [final exam schedule](#).

Attendance will be taken in the course, and will count for 25 points maximum. One point will be subtracted your attendance grade for each class missed. Students who arrive after class begins or who leave before class ends, without an excused absence, will receive at most half-credit for attendance on that day. Excused absences can be given if there are outside events for which your participation is a University requirement or crucial for your or others' well-being, your role cannot be adequately filled by another person, and whose occurrence and timing are outside of your control. You must provide some sort of official documentation that describes how these conditions are filled. Class participation is important in ensuring that we learn as much as possible in this course. Therefore, 5 points will be given for group discussions in the course, and additional points beyond this be given for those who make particularly strong individual contributions to course discussion.

Plagiarism is a violation of [campus policies](#) and is strictly prohibited. Students who plagiarize or otherwise violate student integrity policies on an assignment for any reason will be subject to a failing grade, and further discipline will be administered for significant, deliberate violations. It is students' responsibility to be familiar with rules on plagiarism and other aspects of the [Student Conduct Code](#); ignorance of the rules is not a valid excuse. It is becoming increasingly easy to detect plagiarism electronically, and it cheats the other students in the class who are following the rules.

Efforts will be made to provide reasonable accommodation for students who are registered with the [KOKUA Program](#), the UH Manoa office for students with disabilities. For more information on KOKUA, please contact them at Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services 013, phone 956-7511, or email [kokua@hawaii.edu](mailto:kokua@hawaii.edu).