

Sociology 1020, Social Problems
Fall 2009
Thursday 5:15-7:45pm
Dixie State College of Utah

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Office
Hours: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 11am-12pm
Tuesday & Thursday 4-5pm
Or by appointment

The Course:

This course examines the "problems" of our world as social constructions. We will investigate the processes by which activists, experts, and the media make claims about what they perceive as injustices and inequalities in their worlds. We will examine the roles of the public, policymakers, and social problems workers in the social problems process. In examining the social problems process we will use the "problems" of sexuality, drug use, crime, violence, racism, sexism, economic inequality, and the family, to name just a few, as real life examples. By the end of the course you will understand that what are popularly considered problems are culturally relative. The only thing that all social problems have in common is that people claim them to be.

Course Objectives:

Students completing Social Problems should:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas, people, and events that are generally thought to be important by sociologists of social problems;
- demonstrate an understanding of the sociology of social problems as a scientific discipline (i.e. the gathering and analyzing of empirical data in a systematic fashion);
- demonstrate an understanding of the constructionist model of social problems;
- demonstrate an understanding of the natural history of social problems and its concomitant parts.

Texts:

Joel Best. 2008. *Social Problems*. W. W. Norton.

Ira Silver. 2008. *Social Problems Readings*. W. W. Norton.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

- Three exams each worth twenty-five percent of your final grade.
- A term paper worth twenty-five percent of your final grade.

Exams :

You will take three exams. Each will be a mix of multiple choice and essay questions. Exam dates are September 24, November 5, and December 17.

Paper:

You will write a paper that applies the concepts we learn in class to a social problem of your choice. I will hand out the paper assignment on September 24, the paper is due on December 3. LATE PAPERS WILL BE GRADED DOWN ONE FULL GRADE.

Attendance:

Attendance is NOT mandatory. However, I lecture on material that is not in the text. There will be exam questions from my lectures that are not from the text. If you miss class you risk missing information that will be on the exam.

NOTE: Your final grade is based on your letter grades, not on your accumulation of points.

ANOTHER NOTE: You must complete all exams and assignments to pass this class.

FINAL NOTE: I reserve the right to (a) adjust individual grades based on my evaluation of your participation and enthusiasm in the course and (b) make changes to the syllabus during the course if I feel it will benefit the class.

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE POLICY: Academic dishonesty in any form, including, but not limited to, plagiarism on written assignments, submitting other person's work as one's own, and cheating on exams or quizzes will not be tolerated at Dixie State College of Utah.

Teachers at Dixie State College have the right to manage their classroom environments to ensure a good learning climate.

Students eligible for and requesting reasonable academic accommodations due to a disability must provide a letter of accommodation to their professors from the Disability Resources Center within the first two weeks of the beginning of classes. Proper documentation of a disability is required in order to receive services or accommodations. Please contact the Center on the main campus to follow through with the documentation process. It is located in the Student Services Center Room #201, or call for an appointment and further information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at 652-7516.

Important class and college information will be sent to your dmail email account. This information includes your DSC bill, financial aid/scholarship notices, notification of dropped classes, reminders of important dates and events, and other information critical to your success in this class and at DSC. All DSC students are automatically assigned a dmail email account. If you do not know your user name and password, go to www.dixie.edu and select "dmail" for complete instructions. You will be held responsible for information sent to your dmail email, so please check it often.

Course Schedule

<u>Week & Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
<u>Week #1</u> August 27 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY	
<u>Week #2</u> September 3 THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS PROCESS	Best: Chapter 1 Silver: 5 & 26
<u>Week #3</u> September 10 CLAIMS	Best: Chapter 2 Silver: 20
<u>Week #4</u> September 17 ACTIVISTS AS CLAIMSMAKERS	Best: Chapter 3 Silver: 9 & 12
<u>Week #5</u> September 24 Exam #1 Hand out Term Paper Assignment	
<u>Week #6</u> October 1 EXPERTS AS CLAIMSMAKERS	Best: Chapter 4 Silver: 6 & 13
<u>Week #7</u> October 8 THE MEDIA AND CLAIMS	Best: Chapter 5 Silver: 1 & 11
<u>Week X</u> October 15 No Class	
<u>Week #8</u> October 22 PUBLIC REACTION	Best: Chapter 6 Silver: 16 & 21
<u>Week #9</u> October 29 POLICYMAKING	Best: Chapter 7 Silver: 2 & 24
<u>Week #10</u> November 5 Exam #2	
<u>Week #11</u> November 12 SOCIAL PROBLEMS WORK	Best: Chapter 8 Silver: 15 & 25
<u>Week #12</u> November 19 POLICY OUTCOMES	Best: Chapter 9

Silver: 30 & 33

Week XX
November 26
No Class

Week #13
December 3
CLAIMS ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

Best: Chapter 10
Silver: 17

Term Paper Due

Week #14
December 10
USING THE CONSTRUCTIONIST STANCE

Best: Chapter 11

Exam #3
Thursday, December 17, 5:00-7:00pm