

Sociology 1020, Social Problems
Fall 2011
Tuesday & Thursday 1:00 - 2:15pm
Dixie State College of Utah

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Office
Hours: Monday-Friday 11:00am - 12:00pm
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. 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 27, November 3, and December 13.

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 29, the paper is due on December 1. 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 with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring reasonable academic adjustment, accommodations, or auxiliary aids to be successful in this class will need to contact the DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER Coordinator (Baako Wahabu) for eligibility determination. Proper documentation of impairment is required in order to receive services or accommodations. DRC is located at the ground floor of the Financial Aid Office. Visit or call 652-7516 to schedule appointment to discuss the process. DRC Coordinator determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of services.

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

Week & Topics

Readings

Week #1

August 23 & 25

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Week #2

August 30 & September 1

THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS PROCESS

Best: Chapter 1

Silver: 5 & 26

Week #3

September 6 & 8

CLAIMS

Best: Chapter 2

Silver: 20

Week #4

September 13 & 15

ACTIVISTS AS CLAIMSMAKERS

Best: Chapter 3

Silver: 9 & 12

Week #5

September 20 & 22

Week #6

September 27 & 29

Exam #1, Tuesday, September 27

Hand out Term Paper Assignment, Thursday, September 29

Week #7

October 4 & 6

EXPERTS AS CLAIMSMAKERS

Best: Chapter 4

Silver: 6 & 13

Week #8

October 11 & 13

THE MEDIA AND CLAIMS

Best: Chapter 5

Silver: 1 & 11

No Class, Thursday, October 13

Week #9

October 18 & 20

PUBLIC REACTION

Best: Chapter 6

Silver: 16 & 21

Week #10

October 25 & 27

POLICYMAKING

Best: Chapter 7

Silver: 2 & 24

Week #11

November 1 & 3

SOCIAL PROBLEMS WORK

Exam #2, Thursday, November 3

Week #12

November 8 & 10

POLICY OUTCOMES

Best: Chapter 8

Silver: 15 & 25

Week #13

November 15 & 17

CLAIMS ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

Best: Chapter 9

Silver: 30 & 33

Week #14

November 22 & 24

USING THE CONSTRUCTIONIST STANCE

Best: Chapter 10

Silver: 17

No Class, Thursday, November 24

Week #15

November 29 & December 1

Term Paper Due, Thursday, December 1

Best: Chapter 11

Week #16

December 6 & 8

Last Class, Thursday, December 8

Exam #3

Tuesday, December 13, 12:30 - 2:30pm