

Social Problems

SOCI 2300 | MayTerm 2017

Mon-Fri 10:00-2:00

Location TBD

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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the sociological study of social problems. The course is designed to enable students to develop the analytical skills to critically examine the causes, consequences, and interconnections among key social problems in society as well as their potential solutions. We will learn basic sociological theories, concepts, and methods useful for studying social problems as well as a thorough examination of how social problems are defined and constructed. We will then apply these analytical tools to the examination of the array of social problems that emerge from two important social phenomena in particular: immigration and criminal justice. We will investigate how they are intertwined, namely, the criminalization of immigration, a phenomenon referred to as *crimmigration*. This course will be highly experiential, involving several field trips around the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, guest speakers, group work, and service learning through community engagement service hours.

Course Objectives

After this course you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of the discipline of sociology and its relevance to contemporary social issues and problems.
2. Use the basic concepts of sociology, major theories, methodologies, and important research to critically understand and evaluate contemporary social problems and their potential solutions.
3. Analyze situations from multiple perspectives and become more aware of your own assumptions about the world.
4. Communicate more effectively in writing, reading, speaking and listening and convey to others ideas and arguments in a way that engages critical thinking.
5. Engage in experiential learning through community engagement service hours.

University Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes

Pillars: Individuals, Institutions and Cultures Level 2 (IIC 2)

1. Students will be able to analyze different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences.
2. Students will be able to evaluate critically the research outcomes and theoretical applications in the study of individual, social, cultural, political, or economic experiences.

Proficiencies and Experiences: Community Engagement (CE)

1. Students will be able to apply academic learning to address specific need(s) in a community through a community engagement activity.
2. Students will gain an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility through a community engagement experience addressing a community's specific need(s)

Proficiencies and Experiences: Human Diversity (HD)

1. With respect to issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, or societies in the developing world, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.

Course Format

This course will combine class lectures and discussions. I will introduce important issues and help review the major points discussed in the assigned readings. Students are required to attend all lectures and complete all reading assignments prior to the class period for which they are assigned. Students are expected to participate in a series of diverse class activities and discussions aimed at enhancing individual and group learning. The course is largely based on class participation; therefore, doing well in this class will require your commitment to regular class attendance and participation.

Required Texts

1. Linda A. Mooney, David Knox, and Caroline Schacht. 2017. *Understanding Social Problems, 10th Edition*. Boston: Cengage Learning. (ISBN: 9781305576513)
2. Julie A. Dowling and Jonathan Xavier Inda, Editors. 2013. *Governing Immigration Through Crime: A Reader*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (ISBN: 9780804778817)
3. Remainder of readings available on Canvas.

This course is organized around a set of readings that will be used to guide lectures and class discussion. The readings will also be used as a basis for the quizzes, exams, writing assignments and group projects. Not all reading topics will be discussed in class, but you are still responsible for all of the material covered in the required readings.

Evaluation

Quizzes	15 points
Social Problems Journal	20 points
Group Research Project	20 points
Mid-Term Exam	20 points
Final Exam	<u>25 points</u>
	100 points

Quizzes (15 points): Short quizzes based on the assigned reading will be given at the beginning of each class period.

Social Problems Journal (10 points): Students will maintain a daily journal throughout the course to reflect on, analyze, and synthesize course content and connect the material to their everyday lives.

Group Research Project (15 points): Students will form groups and conduct and present secondary research together on a particular social problem (and corresponding potential solution) of their choosing. There will be designated time for students to work on their project together in class.

Mid-Term Exam (20 points): The mid-term exam will contain short answer and essay questions. Make-up examinations will be given only to those absent for university-approved reasons. You must make arrangements for a make-up exam prior to the test date.

Final Exam (25 points): The final exam will be comprehensive and contain short answer and essay questions. Make-up examinations will be given only to those absent for university-approved reasons. You must make arrangements for a make-up exam prior to the test date.

Course Policies

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

Academic Integrity: During the course, you should maintain a high standard of individual honor and integrity in your scholastic work. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the university. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on an exam or other assignments, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. For more information, please see:

<https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentLife/StudentHandbook/HonorCode>

Course Schedule

The syllabus is subject to change in order to meet the needs of the course. I will announce changes in class, and it is your responsibility to remain up to date on course assignments, requirements, and announcements.

Part I: Introduction to Social Problems (May 18-19)

Part II: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration (May 22-24)

Part III: Criminal Justice (May 25, 26, 30)

Part IV: Crimmigration: The Criminalization of Immigration (May 31-June 1)

Part V: Course Wrap Up (June 2)

- Student presentations
- Final Exam