

Fall 2015

## **SOC 2962**

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*University of New Orleans*

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Current Social Problems  
University of New Orleans  
Fall 2015  
SOC 2962-001

MWF 11-11:50

Location: Milenburg 318

Instructor: Sara Herndon

Email:

Office Hours/Location: MWF 10AM-11AM in Milenberg 168

### **Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes**

In this course, we will explore questions including: what does it mean to study social problems from a sociological perspective? How are the individual experiences of people connected to broader social and historical forces? How do social inequalities get organized? How do race, class, gender, and sexuality shape our experiences and social life more generally? Who and/or what defines what is or is not a social problem? What are the differing and interconnected dimensions of culture and social structure which produce or shape social problems? Are there ways to solve social problems? If so, what is the responsibility of the individual and/or the responsibility of the group to address a given social problem?

### **Course Structure**

This course will explore problems in society and how they shape individuals' lives. There are a great number of social problems that have likely influenced your own life that you'd like to learn more about, so in that spirit, I have designed this course to include lots of direction and feedback from students, particularly in the area of directing classroom discussion. There will be daily discussion in this course, in a larger class setting as well as in smaller groups. In order to properly lead and participate in these discussions, you are going to be doing a fair amount of reading for this course each time it meets. I will do some lectures throughout the course that will require some note taking. We will watch a number of films in this course, too.

### **Texts**

"Understanding Social Problems", Linda A. Mooney, David Knox, Caroline Schacht, Ninth Edition, ISBN-13: 978-1285746500, ISBN-10: 1285746503.

### **Contacting Me**

If you have any questions about anything in the course, don't hesitate to email me. I check my email once every 24 hours except for weekends and holidays. My office hours are before this class, and I am also available to meet after class if you'd like to set up a meeting.

### **Classroom Policies/Student Conduct**

My goal is to make all class policies in a way that is fair to everyone and also creates a classroom that is conducive to learning. Arriving to class late, leaving class early, excessively talking, texting, eating loudly, and working on a computer/tablet/iPad(or other device) on things that are not class related are all disruptive behaviors that interfere with other students' ability to learn. I do realize, however, that there are certain emergencies when a student **MUST** take a call—in that case, please step outside for that conversation. I also expect each and every student to treat each other(and their perspectives) with respect all the time, no matter what.

### **Moodle**

This course will be "web-enhanced" with the use of Moodle, an online learning tool sponsored by University of New Orleans which is available at <http://uno.mrooms3.net/>. Using Moodle is absolutely a requirement for this class. Although none of your assignments will be submitted online and you will not

be required to turn in assignments that way, much of the important information in the class will be accessible through Moodle. I expect you will log on for about 10 minutes every week or so to download important readings/documents and check your grade. I will provide you with instructions on how to access this tool if you are unfamiliar with it. With the exception of the textbook listed under “required texts”, all of your other readings will be available to you on Moodle under “course readings”. Your grades will be posted in the grade book on Moodle, making them available to you at any time. The class syllabus, assignment requirements, as well as many other documents vital to this course will be available on Moodle as well. If you have trouble accessing your Moodle account, contact the Office of Instructional Technology at 504-280-5512, or email [moodle@uno.edu](mailto:moodle@uno.edu) for assistance.

### **Attendance Policy/Withdrawals**

We will cover something important in class every day through discussion, presentation, or in-class activity, so attendance is mandatory. I will take attendance every day! You are also expected to arrive to class on time. You cannot earn your participation grade if you are not here. For fall 2015, missing more than 4 classes will result in negative effects on your participation grade. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed in class. In the event that you should miss an excessive amount of absences(25% of the class or more), you can be automatically withdrawn from this course. If you come in class after roll is called or passed around, it is your responsibility to stop me after class and let me know you were here.

### **Make-up Policies/Late Assignments**

In the case of exams, there is no make-up if you do not contact me prior to the exam. If you know in advance that you will be absolutely unavailable on a scheduled exam date, please let me know as soon as possible. It will be your responsibility to schedule a make-up exam time. All of the test dates are listed here, so please make arrangements to be here those days. In the case of the film reviews, they are due one week after the last day the film was shown. There will be no late assignments accepted on film reviews, if you miss the due date you will just have to write about the next film. In the case of your exploratory project, you will lose 10% for each class meeting it is turned in late. In the case of the social media project, you will present this during the last week of class, so there is absolutely no make-up

### **Course Requirements**

Exams(Midterm is 150 points, Final Exam is 200 points): 35% 350 points

Film Review(1): 10% 100 points

Current Event Presentation(2 @ 100 points each): 20% 200 points

Exploratory Project: 15% 150 points

Social Media Project: 15% 150 points

Participation 5% 50 points

Total-1000 points

### **Grading**

It will be very easy for you to keep up with and calculate your final grade in this course. Your final grade is out of 1000 points, so you simply move the decimal point in your total number of points to the left by one number—for instance, if you have a total point value of 850.0 points, your grade is an 85.0(B). Each writing assignment and project has its own specific grading rubric, which will be handed out when they are assigned and also made available to you any time on Moodle.

### **General Guidelines for Assignments**

I do require that you type and print every assignment you turn in to me. I'm warning you now that I am particular about word count, if I include one in the assignment. I absolutely **DO NOT ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS VIA EMAIL**. In the rare event that you do need to email me an assignment, I require that you send me your files in an .docx or .doc file. Please be sure to save your file in the correct format. If you don't have a word processing program on your computer, there are many (often free)

alternatives to MS Word.

### **Exams**

There will be two exams in this class: a midterm and a final. The midterm will be 150 points, the final exam will be worth 200 points.

### **Film Review**

In this paper, you will analyze issues within one of the films that we watch in this class. We will watch at least three, so you will be able to choose which film you choose to write about. This will be worth 100 points or 10% of your final grade.

### **Current Event Presentation**

Social problems are happening all around us, every day. In order to keep this class (extremely) current and relevant, there will be a couple of times throughout the semester where you will be responsible for bringing an article or video about a current event that relates to some of the social problems discussed in the course and briefly talking for 1-2 minutes about it. You will also do a short write up about it. There are five different "Current Event Days" scheduled into the course, and each student will be responsible for contributing to two of these days which you will sign up for in advance. There will also be a short written assignment you will have to turn in along with your presentation. Each current event presentation will be worth 100 points.

### **Exploratory Project/Social Media Project/Presentation**

Unfortunately, we can't cover every single social problem in society in the span of this course. I know that there are problems that each of you would like to further explore, so your project in this class will be to do some research on a social problem of your choosing and present it to the class. There are two components to the project as well as a presentation. In the exploratory part, you will explore a social problem on your own through an experience, participation in a suggested solution, or research. In the social media part, you will share your findings with others through social media.

### **Participation**

This class is heavily based on discussion, so your participation is vital to this course. I will give you two participation grades—one at midterm and one at the end of the course, each worth 25 points. Ideally, every student will contribute to the classroom discussion twice a week. Your participation grade will not only be based on active talking, but active listening as well (behaviors such as constantly checking your phone, texting, or having side conversations don't constitute "active listening"). You will be deducted 10 points for each absence over 4. Four tardies will equal an absence.

### **Academic Integrity/Cheating**

**I take academic integrity very seriously.** I expect that every single bit of work you do is 100% your original effort. That means you cannot have anyone else help you/do it for you, that your paper has not been "recycled" from another class, and that you have not copied from other sources. That also means you must correctly cite your sources. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask me! Any academic dishonesty in this course could result in a failing grade for the assignment or entire class, and could possibly result in further disciplinary action by the University of New Orleans.

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

### **Special Needs**

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet

course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

### **Additional Resources**

All students are encouraged to take advantage of the many free and helpful services offered by the University of New Orleans. There is the Learning Resource Center located in the Liberal Arts Building, room 334, which offers free tutoring in math, science, and other subjects([lrc@uno.edu](mailto:lrc@uno.edu)). The Learning Resource Center also houses the Writing Center, which can help you with written assignments. Help with personal concerns(as well as help with career testing and counseling) is available in our Counseling Department, located in 226 University Center(<http://www.uno.edu/counseling-services/index.aspx>). The Earl K. Long Library is another helpful resource. The library's website and electronic resources, located at <http://library.uno.edu/> is likely to come in handy at some point. Additionally, there are a number of computer labs on campus for students to use(the list with locations and hours is available at <http://www.uno.edu/ucc/student-computer-labs.aspx>).

### **How to Be Prepared for Class**

I expect you to be prepared for class each day. That means you're here, and you're on time. You have already read the chapter that is being discussed in class, and have some sort of reaction to it. Even if you didn't "get" a reading or chapter, come to class prepared to ask questions about what you didn't understand. Chances are, there are other students who didn't "get it" either, so you help yourself as well as your classmates when you speak up and ask!

### **Tentative Schedule**

(This schedule is subject to change. I will notify you immediately if it does)

Aug 19/W Welcome/Introduction

Aug 21/F Welcome/Introduction

Aug 24/M Chapter 1: Thinking About Social Problems

Aug 26/W Chapter 1: Thinking About Social Problems

Aug 28/F Chapter 1: Thinking About Social Problems

Aug 31/MChapter 2: Physical and Mental Health Care

Sept 2/WChapter 2: Physical and Mental Health Care

Sept 4/F Current Event Day

Sept 7/M NO CLASS

Sept 9/WChapter 3: Alcohol and Other Drugs

Sept 11/FChapter 3: Alcohol and Other Drugs

Sept 14/MChapter 3: Alcohol and Other Drugs

Film: The Drug War: America's Last White Hope

Sept 16/WChapter 3: Alcohol and Other Drugs

Film: The Drug War: America's Last White Hope

Sept 18/F Current Event Day

Sept 21/M Chapter 4: Crime and Social Control

Sept 23/W Chapter 4: Crime and Social Control

Sept 25/F Chapter 4: Crime and Social Control

Sept 28/M Chapter 6: Economic Inequality, Wealth, and Poverty

Sept 30/W Chapter 6: Economic Inequality, Wealth, and Poverty

Oct 2/F Current Event Day

Oct 5/M Chapter 6: Economic Inequality, Wealth, and Poverty

Oct 7/W Chapter 8: Problems in Education

Oct 9/F Chapter 8: Problems in Education

Oct 12/M Midterm Exam Review

Oct 14/W Midterm Exam

Oct 16/F NO CLASS

Oct 19/M Chapter 10: Gender Inequality

Oct 21/W Chapter 10: Gender Inequality

Oct 23/F Current Event Day

Oct 26/M Chapter 10: Gender Inequality

Film: Miss Representation

Oct 28/W Chapter 10: Gender Inequality

Film: Miss Representation

Oct 30/F Chapter 10: Gender Inequality

Nov 2/M Chapter 11: Sexual Orientation and the Struggle for Equality

Nov 4/W Chapter 11: Sexual Orientation and the Struggle for Equality

Nov 6/F Current Event Day

Nov 9/M Chapter 9: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

Nov 11/W Chapter 9: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

Nov 13/F Chapter 9: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

Nov 16/M Chapter 14: Science and Technology

Nov 18/W Chapter 14: Science and Technology

Nov 20/F Current Event Day

Nov 23/M Chapter 14: Science and Technology

Film: We Are Legion

Nov 25/W Chapter 14: Science and Technology

Film: We Are Legion

Nov 27/F NO CLASS

Nov 30/M Chapter 15: Conflict, War, and Terrorism

Dec 2/W Chapter 15: Conflict, War, and Terrorism

Dec 4/F Final Exam Review