SOC 185: Analysis Soc Problems
Instructor: Marianne Ryan Go
Office Hours: 11:10 to 12:10, Friday
Email: mgo@occ.cccd.edu
CRN# 21971 Dates: 08/31 to 12/20 Time: 8AM to 11:10 AM / Room: C & L 110

DESCRIPTION:
The course explores the current social problems in the United States and draws on parallel issues faced internationally. Understanding the nuances in defining what society considers as a “social problem”, students will develop an objective perspective in analyzing contemporary issues. Using sociological theory to interpret issues such as poverty, racial inequality, consumerism, crime, urbanization, and terrorism, students will acquire a dynamic and critical understanding of society, social relations, the economy, and politics.

COURSE GOALS AND SLOs:
1) Utilize the sociological imagination in understanding current social problems.
2) Identify and interpret the various arguments concerning social issues.
3) Compare and contrast how issues affect various social groups depending on race and economic stratification.
4) Evaluate and question governmental policies.
5) Demonstrate knowledge of current events, both domestically and internationally.
6) Formulate and examine prescriptions to social problems.
7) Apply social theory in assessing social problems.
8) Critically read newspaper articles, journals, and other texts.
9) Relate social problems to individual choices, problems, and concerns.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
The student will:
1. Evaluate and present a current social problem integrating theoretical analysis.
2. Defend their individual viewpoints regarding social issues in class discussions and papers.
3. Identify current solutions to problems and assess their impact.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Readings will be supplemented with handouts, online readings, and podcasts.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:
1) ATTENDANCE (15%): Students are expected to attend lectures and participate in discussions. To get an “A” in attendance, student should have less than 2 unexcused absence and pays attention in class (no talking on the cell phone, text messaging, chatting with classmates etc.), actively participate, and show knowledge of the readings. A “B” in attendance would constitute at most 2 unexcused absences and attentiveness in class. A “C” means at most 3 unexcused absences and a somewhat disruptive behavior in class. A “D” means 4 or more unexcused absences and disruptive behavior. An “F” is 5 or more absences and disruptive behavior. I encourage everyone to participate in the in-class discussions, but I also understand that some people are too nervous to talk in front of people. If this is the case, in-class discussions can be SUPPLEMENTED using the online discussion board. Keep in mind that this does not replace the in-class discussion.
2) PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY (15%): Students will choose a chapter from Chomsky’s Hegemony or Survival and will present the chapter in class (excluding the introduction). Since there are only 9
chapters in the book, students will present as a group. Aside from the oral presentation, the group is required to submit a 2-3 page report of their presentation. Students must not only give a brief summary of the chapter, but also analyze the arguments made by the author. Students can submit their work via email the day they present.

a. **Grading:** Since this is a group project, I will give the group a grade, but each member is responsible for grading their peers. The overall grade (mine and the groups), will be then averaged. When giving grades to your group mates, use the 20-point scale provided.

b. Your group grade will be based on the clarity and quality of the presentation, the summary, and also how you answer the Q&A portion at the end of the presentation.

3) **Questions for Discussions (15%):** Write down AT LEAST 4 questions generated from the assigned readings that you want to discuss during our class meetings. These questions can be handwritten. Students can either hand in their questions to me before class starts, or students can email me the question BEFORE class starts. Late questions will not be accepted. Questions should show some understanding of the readings. Do not write down questions that have very little relevance to the reading material assigned for that day. Also, you will not get full credit if there are 4 readings for the day, and your questions are concentrated on ONE reading.

4) **Research Paper (30%):** Due 11/6, students have 2 options:

**FIRST OPTION:**
Write a paper analyzing a social problem in the US and to assess its global relevance. This problem does not have to be current or unresolved. Here is a possible outline for the paper:

a. Briefly provide a summary of the event (½ to ¾ of a page)

b. Explain the the arguments as to WHY the problem occurred (½ to 1 page)

c. What are some concepts discussed in class that can be used to assess the problem (social class, race, gender etc.) 1 page.

d. What are the global implications of the problem? (¼ to 1 page)

e. What are the proposed solutions to the problem? (½ to ¾ page)

**SECOND OPTION:**
A part of being a sociologists is understanding the interconnectedness in society. For the paper, choose an object or a service that you purchase and conduct a proper research paper on how that thing is produced or how the service is achieved. For example, you like coffee and you particularly like Starbucks. Do an analysis of the social problems associated with the production of coffee. Here is a possible outline for the paper:

f. Briefly give a historical background of coffee (Where did coffee originate? Etc.) (½ to ¾ of a page)

g. How does coffee get produced? What does it take to get the coffee bean to your Starbucks in Souther California. How much do farmers get paid? Where do most coffee beans come from? Are there wars, economic depression, or some tragedy that was started because of coffee production? Is coffee production dominated by a few corporations? (2 pages).

h. Compare and contrast the societies that produce the coffee beans for Starbucks to those that consume it. (1 page)

i. What are the social problems evident in the story? (½ to ¾ page)

a. Are there groups that are addressing these problems? (¼ page)

Here are the guidelines in writing the paper:
1. Minimum pages: 4
2. 11 to 12 pt. ft. with 1-inch margins all around
3. Submission: Via email (if you do not have access to email, please talk to me).

2) **Final Exam (25%):** Taken the last day of class, the final exam will be cumulative. Students are allowed to bring their a page of notes in the class. The exam will consist of short and long essays and will include lectures, readings, discussions, and other materials discussed in class.

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**Grading Policy:** All work will be graded on a 20 point scale
a. **Letter Grade: A (20-19 points)**: 1) Shows knowledge and understanding of the required readings. 2) Presents a clear and concise response incorporating lecture and reading material. 3) Proposes unique topic or unique treatment of topic and takes risks with content providing a fresh approach 4) Confidence in use of Standard English, language reflects a practiced and/or refined understanding of syntax and usage 5) Very few, if any grammatical errors.

b. **Letter Grade: B (18-16 points)**: 1) Shows knowledge of the readings 2) Provides a clear response incorporating some reading and lecture 3) Commendable achievement, exceeds standards for course 4) Significance of content is clearly conveyed 5) Good use of examples; sufficient support exists in all key areas. 6) May have a few minor mechanical errors (misplaced commas, pronoun disagreement, etc.), but no serious mechanical errors (fragments, run-ons, comma-splices, etc.)

c. **Letter Grade: C (15-13 points)**: 1) Acceptable achievement, meets standards for course, but does not show mastery of the reading and lecture 2) Occasional minor mechanical errors may occur, but do not impede clear understanding of material 3) Structure is solid, but an occasional sentence or paragraph may lack focus

d. **Letter Grade: D (12-10 points)**: 1) Marginal achievement; only meets minimum standards 2) Failure to incorporate lesson from the text and lecture 3) Significance of content is unclear 4) Some ideas may lack support, elaboration 5) Lacks sufficient examples or relevance of examples may be unclear 6) Support material may not be clearly incorporated into argument

e. **Letter Grade: F (9-0 points)**: 1) Ignores assignment 2) Lacks significance and coherence 3) Includes plagiarized material (intentional or unintentional) 4) Lacks focus 5) Difficult to follow due to awkward sentence or paragraph development 6) Mechanical errors impede understanding 7) Problems with writing at the college level

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**Final Grade Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 - 90%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 - 80%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>79 - 70%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>69 – 60%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>59% - below</td>
<td>F</td>
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**How to Calculate Your Grade**

For example, a student gets the following grade. Keep in mind that all work is out of 20 points:

- **a) Attendance:** 17/20
- **b) Presentation/Summary:** 15/20
- **c) Questions for Discussions:** 200/240 (12*20 = 240) There are 12 questions to hand in.
- **d) Research Paper:** 19/20
- **e) Final Exam:** 20/20

\[(17/20)*.15 + (15/20)*.15 + (200/240)*.15 + (19/20)*.3 + (20/20)*.25 = 0.9\] or 90%. The student gets an A.

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**Course Policies**

There will be no make-up for missed exams, assessments, discussions, presentation, and other requirements except for medical emergency, and other legal or familial reasons with documentation. Late papers will be accepted, but for each week a paper is late, your score will go down by 3 points. Since the paper is worth 20 points, 3 points is quite substantial.

**Classroom Behavior and Etiquette:** No cell phones, no texting, no listening to music during class times. All electronic devices are to be TURNED OFF during class. Since discussion and class participation is an integral part of the course, students are required to respect each other during discussions.

**Plagiarism**

Students are also reminded that all work must be generated independently and solely for this course. Any act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty (intentional or unintentional borrowing of another person's published or unpublished material without proper attribution, having someone fix writing or other errors, or any other attempt to defraud the academic process) will meet with reprimand and possible failure of the course. To avoid plagiarism, students should do their own work and submit work that is original to this course. Students are required to cite the use of materials written by others in all written communications for courses. Remember, the
use of ideas, words, or phrasing without proper attribution constitutes plagiarism. The burden of proof rests on
the student, not the instructor; in other words, the student will be required to prove that plagiarism has not
occurred. Please use the APA or MLA guidelines/procedures for citing work. Use the standard you choose
consistently.

### Extra Credit

I encourage students to focus on the required work rather than do extra credit, but if an opportunity for extra
credit arises, I will let the class know.

### Course Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Reading: Sociological Imagination by Mills (to be read in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Economy</strong></td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>Readings: Chapters 1 &amp; 2 (Kloby)</td>
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<td>Questions for Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questions for Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inequality</strong></td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>Reading: Chapter 3 (Kloby)</td>
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<td>Questions for Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate America</strong></td>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Reading: Chapter 4 (Kloby)</td>
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<td>Video: “The Yes Men Fix the World” (to be shown in class)</td>
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<td>Questions for Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Politics and Technology</strong></td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>Readings: Chapter 5 (Kloby) and Zakaria, “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy” in <em>Foreign Affairs</em> (1997). Discuss Paper Topics: Update the class on your paper topic (3-5 minutes per student). Questions for Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Globalization</strong></td>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>Readings: Chapter 6 &amp; 7 (Kloby) and Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of <em>World Poverty: Global Inequality and the Modern World System</em> by Kerbo (2006). Questions for Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health Care</strong></td>
<td>11/6</td>
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Research Papers Due

Listen to the following podcasts or read the transcripts from NPR:

1) France's Model Health Care For New Mothers
2) MS Patient Falls Into American Insurance Gap
3) Keeping German Doctors On A Budget Lowers Costs
4) Taiwan Takes Fast Track to Universal Health Care
5) Japan Pay Less for More Health Care

Questions for Discussions

Deviance, Terrorism, and Immigration (11/13)

Readings: Chapter 9 (Kloby), Eqbal Ahmad's Terrorism Theirs and Ours and

Questions for Discussions

Presentations (11/20)

Students will present their Chapters from Hegemony or Survival.

Addressing the Issues: Law and Social Movements

US Immigration Policy (12/4)


Video: Scarred Lands and Wounded Lives

Questions for Discussions

Passive Resistance (12/11)

Reading: You have the choice of either watching the movie Ghandi (warning, movie is very long), or reading about his life and solutions to problem here: Gandhi Read the following links:

a) Pages 1 to 5 (Gandhi’s biography)

b) “Dandi March”, “Quit India” and “Hind Swaraj”

Final Exam Review

Questions for Discussions

(12/18) Final Exam

Bring a piece of paper and you can write/type (front and back) any information that you think might be useful for the exam.

*Please note that this schedule may change depending on how much we are able to cover in one class session.*