

Course Title: **CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES**
Course Number & Section: **SOC 102, Section 101**
Semester & Year: **Fall 2008**
Day(s) and Times: **TR – 9:30 – 10:50 am**
Location: **C117**
Instructor: **Pattie Thomas, Ph.D.**
Email Address: pattie.thomas@csn.edu
Department Phone: **702-651-5700**
Office Hours: **By appointment**

Required Text: Eitzen, D. Stanley and Zinn, Maxine Baca. *Social Problems*, 11th Edition, Allyn & Bacon (2008)

Course Description

An introduction to sociological theory of social problems and an examination of selected social issues and problems, their causes and proposed solutions.

Course Objectives:

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of how social problems have been identified, perceived and resolved, including how social problems claims are made, who makes social problems claims and how claims become successful.
2. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the "Sociological Imagination" in the tradition of C. Wright Mills.
3. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of the dominant theoretical paradigms used in Sociology, i.e., *Functionalist*, *Conflict*, and *Symbolic-Interaction*.
4. The student will develop the tools necessary to critically examine their society.
5. The student will be able to distinguish between the *system-blame* and *person-blame* approaches to societal problems.
6. The student will develop a knowledge of how political and economic institutions contribute to social problems.
7. The student will demonstrate an awareness of how the issues of class, race and gender influence the definitions and solutions of social problems.
8. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of social science research methods, data interpretation, and the various ethical issues related to the research process.
9. The student will demonstrate a knowledge of behavior necessary to becoming an effective citizen in contemporary society

If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the Disability Resource Center located in the Student Service Center on each campus. Cheyenne phone number is 651-4045, Henderson, 651-3086 and West Charleston is 651-5089.

DATES AND DEADLINES

Schedule:

August 26 to October 2 – Theories, Principles & Approaches to Social Issues (Chapters 1-3, 8-10, 19)

- Sociological Imagination
- Dominant Paradigms in Sociology
- Constructing Social Problems Claims
- Questions of Power, Stigma, Inequality, Threats
- Public Policy Decisions
- Measuring Success

October 2 – Theory Paper Due, Consensus on Debate Questions

October 7 – Mid-term Review

October 9 – Mid-term Exam

October 14 – Papers returned/Mid-term Postview – Assignment of debates

October 16-November 25 – Debates on social issues

- Families, Chapter 15
- Work, Chapter 14
- Education, Chapter 16
- Health Care, Chapter 17
- Disability/Abelism, Chapter 11
- Immigration, Chapter 5 (first half)
- Housing, Chapter 6
- Crime, Chapters 12-13
- Ageing, Chapter 5 (second half)
- Globalization, Chapter 18
- Environment, Chapter 4
- Poverty, Chapter 7

December 2 – Final Exam Review – Issues

December 4 – Final Exam Review – Theory

December 9 – Final Exam

December 11 – Papers returned/Final Exam Postview (optional)

Schedule is subject to change; all changes will be announced in class

Grading

There are a total of 500 points for the course. The grade breakdown will be as follows:

- A = 451-500
- B = 401-450
- C = 351-400
- D = 301-350
- F = 300 or less

Exceptional class participation can result in extra credit, adding up to 25 points.

Breakdown of Grading Points:

100 points: 750-Word Theory Paper, due October 7

Must demonstrate a "sociological eye" on how social problems are constructed. Will be graded on grammar, use of sociological concepts and how well thought or argument is presented. Can be a case study, a rant about an issue, development of a social problems claim or other appropriate ways of demonstration application of the theoretical concepts covered. What is NOT acceptable is a summary of the course, the book or somebody else's work. No citations are required, but plagiarism will not be tolerated.

100 points: Midterm – October 14

Will cover first half of course. 50 multiple choice questions worth 2pts each.

NOTE: Only those students attending the "Post View" on October 16 will be given extra points if a question is thrown out or more than one answer is accepted.

200 points: Debates: Students will sign up to debate two issues, each worth 100 points

Will be graded on three things:

1. Knowledge of the issue as demonstrated in presentation
2. Clarity and form of presentation (must be interesting & clear)
3. Exam Question—write a 4 option, multiple choice questions that can be used on the final exam. (Instructor reserves right to reword questions, substitute questions and/or not use questions submitted by students)

100 points: Final – December 9

Will cover entire course. 50 multiple choice questions worth 2pts each. 25 will be on theory, 25 will be taken from the debates. Postview (on December 11) will be offered as optional (any questions thrown out will be credited to all students).

You will be provided with a hard copy of the syllabus. The last page is a signature sheet stating that you have received that copy, read it and understand what is expected of you in this class. If you do not return that signature sheet to the instructor, you will receive an "I" in the class until you do.

Student's Responsibilities:

- To keep up with course materials through reading homework assignments and attending classes regularly. Attendance will not be taken formally. However, class participation in discussions and in-class exercises will be noted and exceptional participation will be rewarded with extra credit.
- To respect others in the class. We will be conducting academic debates on issues that can become emotional for some. Name-calling, verbal or physical threats, jeering or other forms of disrespect will have zero tolerance. Passionate discussion about a topic is allowed as long as it stays on the topic and does not become personal attacks on an individual or group of individuals.
- To help maintain a mutually respectful atmosphere in the classroom. Cell phones, texting, surfing the net on the lab computers or mobile devices, talking out of turn or interrupting others who are speaking can result in your being asked to leave the classroom.
- To identify issues and problems as directly as possible in a timely manner. If you have any issues that affects your course grade including problems with text, class work, projects, papers, other students or personal challenges, it is your responsibility to make the instructor aware of this early enough that it can be addressed. Coming to the instructor at the end of the semester will make addressing these issues difficult, if not impossible.

Instructor's Responsibilities:

- To make instructions and assignment expectation clear and concise
- To keep accurate and timely records of student performance and to provide that feedback to the student and only the student (grades can only be discussed in person or provided in writing either in class or by the college – please do not email me about your grade)
- To provide accurate information that help student achieve the objectives of the class
- To maintain a mutually respectful atmosphere in the classroom even if it requires the removal of a student from the classroom to achieve this
- To be available to answer questions and resolve issues involved with the class that directly affect the success of the course and its students
- To treat each individual student with respect
- To follow the regulations and policies of the college and the department and enforce those regulations and policies as required

Academic dishonesty/cheating:

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

As stated in the In the event that cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty on the part of students are discovered, each incident should be handled on an individual basis as deemed appropriate.

Please note, use of cell phones, texting or mobile units during an exam will be investigated as cheating. Please turn off all devices during exams and leave them in your backpack or pockets. Station computer monitors must be off during exams as well.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs may institute action against a student according to the UCCSN Code, Title 2, Chapter 6 (Rules and Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the University Community).

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I have read the syllabus and understand what is expected to complete this course.

Print Name: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

Email (optional): _____

Please note: You must submit this form to the instructor. Failure to do so will result in an "I" for the course until you turn it in.