

# Bellevue College

## SOC& 20I, Social Problems, 5 Credits

Fully Online Course  
Sara Sutler-Cohen, Ph.D.  
Winter Term : January 5<sup>th</sup> – March 25<sup>th</sup>  
Office Hours – By appt, online only (No On-Campus office)

[Email](#)  
[Website](#)  
[Facebook](#)

**\*\*Please always email me through the Canvas site first. If you don't hear from me within 24 hours, then email at the above address or call\*\***

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course acquaints you with basic sociological concepts and perspectives as you become aware of and explore the importance of social problems in the United States. We will look at social problems with a social justice framework are controversial and timely to U.S. culture today and discuss these issues from a thoughtful, sociological perspective. You will also learn about the field of Sociology and become familiar with various “subfields” of the area. Through discussion, film and other media, as well as assigned readings, this course will take you on an exploration of the many dimensions of contemporary social problems in the U.S. We

will make broad use of popular culture to understand the many complexities of our world. By the end of this course, I hope to have all of you thinking critically about the way things work, why things work the way they do, and who we are within the social fabric of the global entity in which we live. You will be asked, over the course of the term, to confront the things you take for granted. Everyday occurrences will be challenged and critically re-imagined. Think of Neo from “The Matrix” when he decides to take the Red Pill or Alice when she decides to explore the rabbit hole as she ventures forth into Wonderland. Both must deal with what’s at the end of their adventures. What will *you* find at the end of *this* adventure?



**A NOTE ABOUT COURSE CONTENT:** Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we talk about provocative material. Please be advised that when we explore controversial topics, they will always be framed within an academic context. Keeping in mind that when we find ourselves in a space outside of our comfort zone, it's an opportunity for learning, and you may be confronted with subject matter that is difficult to watch, see, discuss, or

listen to. Please note, however, that you will be responsible for any course material you miss if you choose not to participate. If you have any questions or concerns about content or climate, feel free to speak with me about it right away.

**READING REQUIREMENTS:**

- Carl, John D. *Think: Social Problems*. Pearson Higher Education, 2013.
- Handouts and articles
  - *ALL* handouts are available on the Canvas website.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- Oxford Dictionary of the English Language
- Any current Sociology Dictionary
- *A Writer's Reference, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.* By Diana Hacker. See the companion website [here](#)

**LEARNING AND COURSE OUTCOMES:**

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- be able to describe the “sociological perspective”;
- be able to explain what a “social problem” is;
- understand the ways in which social problems are created and perpetuated by culture and social institutions (such as the economy, government, the media, and the family);
- understand how social problems affect all of us, regardless of our social position;
- be able to offer several social solutions to contemporary social problems;
- be able to critically reflect on popular culture’s representation of contemporary social problems;
- know how power is distributed among groups and individuals in our society;
- develop a critical awareness of social problems in your own life; and
- have a better understanding of perspectives different from your own.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have medical information to share with me in the event of an emergency, please contact me via email. Emergency preparedness is important! If you need course modifications, adaptations, or accommodations because of a disability, please let me know. I do not require that students go through the DRC for accommodations but I recommend you do this for your other classes. I can refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). If you prefer, you may contact them directly by going to B132 or by calling 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110. Information is also available on their [website](#). Please note that ***I do not require proof of need***. If you have learning struggles you’re aware of, please communicate that with me. I make any and all necessary accommodations for students with or without paperwork.

**EXPLORE THE LMC!** The Library Media Center is at your fingertips! I *strongly* encourage you to visit the LMC at least once a week if you can, but you can also access it via the web. Talk to a Reference Librarian at the Library (D-126), by calling (425) 564-6161, or by [email](#).

- [Main Library Media Center](#)

- [Article databases](#)

**GENERAL RULES & EXPECTATIONS:**

- Check in to our online classroom no less than *four times per week* (yes – I do keep track!). This means you log on and surf around the site. No need to check in with me. Make this work for you on your own time.
- Complete readings and homework assignments ***on time***.
- Late homework assignments ***are accepted***.
  1. Late homework is docked 10% for every day the work is late, including Sundays and Sundays.
  2. Discussion Board Assignments are graded in two parts – half your grade is the initial post and half the grade is the response to colleagues. Late Discussion Boards that go beyond the date for responses can only be made up for up to half credit. Responses are due three days after the Initial Posts are due (see schedule for details). If you make up an initial post past the deadline for responses, you'll get credit for that post, with late points assessed, but the ***base grade*** will be half of its original worth, regardless of the days you're late. Otherwise, your post will be assessed late points within the first three days and your response will be accepted.
- I expect that your behavior in our virtual classroom be respectful. Continued disrespectful behavior in my class will result in your grade lowering. Please keep your postings to discussion boards (DBs) thoughtful and polite. One-on-one conversations should be taken off-board and onto email so our DBs don't get clogged. If you find at any point that you are uncomfortable with anything posted to a DB, please email me right away. Be wary of soap boxing in this class; you may be tempted to present your opinion and editorialize, but refrain from doing this.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

<b>Attendance and Participation*:</b>	200
points	
<b>Key Terms Assignments (5):</b>	100
points	
<b>Flex Your Head Assignments (5):</b>	200 points
<b>Main Discussion Boards (3):</b>	300
points	
<b>Course Exams, Overall:</b>	200
points	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	1000 points

**\*Participation points accrue with various short assignments in the Discussion Area, such as your Introductory DB. These are labeled **PARTICIPATION DBs**. The Main DB assignments are labeled **MAIN DBs**.\***

*The Fine Print (or, what I really mean by that table above):*

**Attendance & Participation:** Check in no less than four times per week, be engaged with all of your discussion board assignments, provoke energetic and polite discussion, listen actively, work

respectfully with your colleagues in class, take loads of notes from your readings, look up words you don't understand, ask questions, think critically about the world around you, etc.

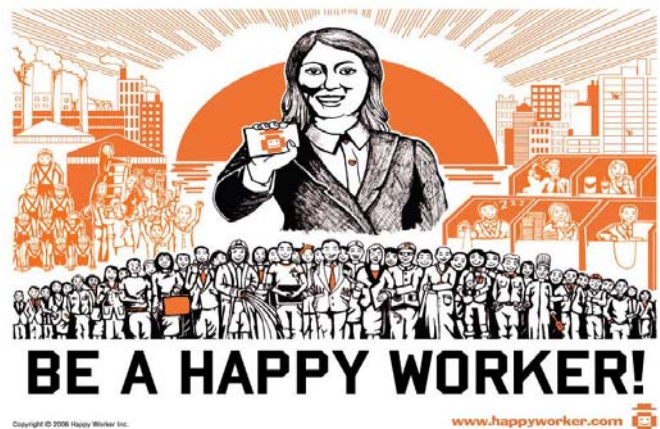
**Key Terms Assignments:** You will be expected to understand certain terms used in the field of Sociology. For these assignments, you will need to write a definition in your own words and demonstrate your understanding by explaining by a real-world example.

**Flex Your Head Assignments:** These short assignments are an opportunity to put your learning to use as you explore the world around you using the themes and theories we examine in this course. Be aware that some of these require a few days, or even a week, of preparatory work. Make sure you look ahead at your homework!

**Main Discussion Board Assignments:** The work done in the Discussion Board area will have you engage course material and work closely together. You are expected to participate in these assignments in order to generate critical discussion amongst one another. These assignments are always due on Thursdays and Sundays (your initial post goes up Thursday and your responses to one another are due Sundays). Your DBs are graded on two things: your original post and your responses (two of them) to colleagues of yours in the class. You must do both to earn full credit. A submission with no responses posted earns ½ credit at most, and responses without an original submission receive zero credit.

**Participation Discussion Board Assignments:** These are meant to support you throughout the course. They are required and the grades get folded into your overall Participation Grade.

**Midterm and Final:** Your Exams cover everything up through the week they're scheduled; the midterm is made up of short-answer questions that engage a documentary film. The Final Exam is a series of short answer questions. Your responses should be clear and concise. You will never be asked a question out of "left field". Questions are based on readings, Main discussion boards, Prezi, and Power Point material. Point distribution info will be on the exams.



**For all of your work:** Submit proofread work **only**. Work not proofread will be returned **once** for a rewrite, expected to be handed in within 48 hours. If you need help with your writing, please make use of the following student support services:

- [Academic Success Center](#)
- [TRiO Student Support Services](#)
- [Writing Lab @ BC](#)

### **Writing Guidelines**

- Twelve-point sized Times font, double-spaced
- 1" margins all around

- APA Citations (you do not need to format your paper in APA Style) where appropriate – credit must be given even where any *ideas* presented in the paper are not your own (see notes below about avoiding plagiarism)
- Title pages and bibliographies are not counted as pages due
  - Title pages are not required
  - Bibliographies *are* required
- Student information is at the top left of the page, *single spaced*
- There are no extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Paragraphs contain no less than four sentences.
- Magazines, newspapers, journals, and books are *italicized*. Movie titles, article titles, song titles, etc. are “in quotation marks.” Quotes inside of a quotation use ‘single quotation marks.’
- Avoid the universal “we”, “our”, “us” – ask yourself: Can I speak for everyone? If you cannot, do not write it. Also avoid phrasing such as “nowadays...” and “since the beginning of time.” Be accurate. Know what you’re writing and why.
- Do not ever use Wikipedia, CliffNotes, or other such encyclopedic references. Wikipedia is not peer-reviewed and therefore unreliable. Do your own research. If you’re going to research online (which is absolutely encouraged and totally legit), make sure you understand what you’re looking for. Do a deep dive into the internet to find your stuff.
- Be sure that no more than 20% of your papers are outside sources. You must be providing your own analysis while you draw from material presented to you in class.

**Your written work is evaluated on:**

1) Content

- a. Fulfilling the assignment.
- b. Developing your argument and making use of examples and evidence to support your argument.
- c. Flow of thought throughout the paper, with strong analyses and conclusions.

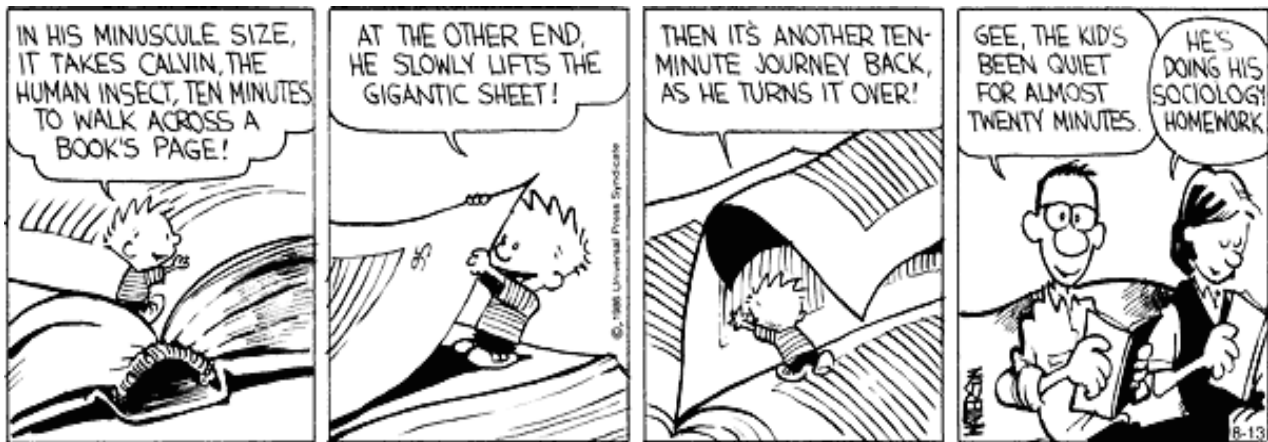
2) Writing Style

- a. Excellent command of the written English language. In other words, most excellent grammar. **NOTE: If you struggle with grammar and spelling or are an ESL student, please let me know! I’m happy to work with you and point you in the right direction.**
- b. Clarity of thought.
- c. Good organization and attention to detail.
- d. Persuasiveness of your argument/s.
- e. Creativity. Make it an interesting read!
- f. PROOFREAD your work. Please do a spell/grammar check before you hand it in.
- g. Dude, like totally don’t write **colloquially**. A conversation is a conversation. A paper is an entirely different set of discussions. ☺

Preventing Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that occurs when a student uses information or material from outside sources without proper citation and is grounds for disciplinary action. It is your responsibility to understand plagiarism and its consequences. Plagiarism occurs if:

- h. You do not cite quotations and/or attribute borrowed ideas.

- i. You fail to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks.
- j. You do not write summaries and paraphrases in his/her own words and/or doesn't document his/her source.
- k. You turn in work created by another person (e.g., another student, downloaded from the internet, etc.).
- l. You submit or use your own prior work for a current or past course, or work from one current course in another course *without express permission* from your professors. This may also be considered academic dishonesty.
- m. Consequences: If it is determined that you have plagiarized or engaged in other forms of academic dishonesty, you will likely fail the assignment and possibly the course, despite points earned through other work. Acts of academic dishonesty are reviewed for disciplinary action.



**Grading:** Please use the following rubric to help explain the grade you're given for a given assignment. You will receive a Numerical Grade from me, with little-to-no commentary. This is only because I've found that most students do not read written comments from their professors. Please do not hesitate to come to me with any questions you ever have on a grade you receive. There is no limit to how many times you email me! My email door is *always* open and I'm always happy to go over grades with you.

**A: 94-100**  
**A-: 90-93**  
**B+: 87-89**  
**B: 84-86**  
**B-: 80-83**  
**C+: 77-79**  
**C: 74-76**  
**C-: 70-73**  
**D+: 67-69**  
**D: 64-66**  
**D-: 60-63**  
**F: 59 and below**

**90-100 = A.** The A paper shows me you're engaged with the readings, the media, and the lectures in class by utilizing quotes and ideas. It's a paper *completely free* from grammar and

spelling errors, and demonstrates your command not only of the English language, but of the form and flow of a solid piece of written work. I also like to see/read/hear your “writing voice.” That is, I want your style to come through! Your arguments should be solid and backed up with intellectual ammunition. You should demonstrate a strong understanding of our readings and the in-class media and how they intersect with one another. Your ideas should be “fleshed out” and not just a series of statements, in other words.

**80-89 = B.** The B tells me you’re doing very good work. You may have a couple of grammar issues, but your paper is still tidy and the writing is still strong. You have a firm grasp on the themes in the course but you may not be as well-versed in the readings and/or media and/or lecture material as you could be. I should see that you’re being challenged and that you’re struggling with the course issues and themes, and what they represent to you in an interconnected way. Your understandings of some of the course materials are stronger than others.

**70-79 = C.** The C paper means that you’re not as invested in the material as I would like to see. Your writing is relatively weaker than it could be and you’re not thinking as critically as I would like you to. Some of what you point out I may not follow logically, and your use of the course materials may not be as solid as it could be. You omit some of the important points raised in class.

**60-69 = D.** Ah, the D. D is for “Don’t be Discouraged.” A D paper is not proofread, nor does it deal critically with the themes in the course. It responds, perhaps, to one part of one of the readings but there is no integration of material and you’re not responding to the questions raised in class. Demonstrated understanding of the course materials is not presented clearly, or at all. (NOTE: A D and below may be rewritten **once** if you choose to do so. It must be turned in within 72 hours, and I enter the better grade.)

### **COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

**ASSIGNMENTS ARE ALWAYS DUE BY MIDNIGHT**

**DO NOT WORK AHEAD MORE THAN TWO WEEKS**

**THE SYLLABUS SCHEDULE IS MIRRORED IN THE MODULES SECTION OF THE COURSE.**

#### **Week One: January 5**

##### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 01: The Study of Social Problems

##### **Assignments:**

- Participation I: Personal Introduction due Sunday, 1/11
- Participation II: What is a Social Problem? Due Sunday, 1/11

#### **Week Two: January 12**

##### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 02: Inequality: Poverty & Wealth
  - Chapter 03: Race & Immigration

##### **Assignments:**



- Key Terms Assignment I due Sunday, 1/18

### **Week Three: January 19**

#### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 04: Gender
- Power Point Presentation: *What Makes A Man, A Man?*
- Film: The links below direct you to the YouTube version of this film and the website for the film. It is also available in our library (Call Number: ML3531.H57).
  - [Byron Hurt website](#)
  - [Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes full film](#)

#### **Assignments:**

- Flex Your Head Assignment I due Sunday, 1/25

### **Week Four: January 26**

#### **Midterm Film Options delivered via Announcements this week!**

#### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 05: Aging: Social Problems of Growing Old
  - Chapter 06: Media & Technology
  - Chapter 07: Politics & Economy

#### **Film:**

- [The Lightbulb Conspiracy](#). Watch fully online.

#### **Assignments:**

- Key Terms II due 2/1
- Discussion Board I, Initial post due Thursday, 1/29. Responses due Sunday, 2/1
- Mid-Quarter Check-in Discussion Board, Due Sunday, 2/1

### **Week Five: February 2**

#### **Midterm Week**

#### **Submit your Midterm Request via Canvas Email by Monday 2/2!**

#### **Assignments:**

- Midterm Examination due Sunday, 2/8. Covers Weeks 1-5. Late exams are not accepted.

### **Week Six: February 9**

#### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 08: Problems in Education
  - Chapter 09: Physical & Mental Health
- Film: [Food, Inc.](#) – The film is also available in our library (HD9005.F66), on Netflix streaming if you have trouble with the link.

#### **Assignments:**

- Flex Your Head Assignment II due Sunday, 2/15

### **Week Seven: February 16**

#### **Readings:**



- *Think: Social Problems* (Note Chapters are not being read in order for W6/W7)
  - Chapter 11: Sex & Sexuality
  - Chapter 12: Sexual Deviance
  - Review the following on Laverne Cox's [website](#).
    - [Free CeCe](#)
    - [Everybody's Trans: Gender Oppression Hurts All of Us](#)

**Assignments:**

- Key Terms Assignment III, Due Sunday, 2/22

**Week Eight: February 23**

**Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 10: Drug & Alcohol Abuse
  - Chapter 13: Crime
  - Chapter 14: Criminal Justice

**Film:**

- Film: [The Business of Getting High](#)

**Assignments:**

- Flex Your Head Assignment III, Due Sunday, 3/1
- Discussion Board II, Initial Post due Thursday, 2/26. Responses due Sunday, 3/1

**Week Nine: March 2**

**Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 15: Social Problems of Marriage & Family
  - Chapter 16: Urbanization: Social Problems From The Growth of Cities
  - Chapter 18: Population Problems
- [More on violence against women](#) by Consuelo Crow

**Film:**

- [Crossing The Line at The Border](#)

**Assignments:**

- Key Terms Assignment IV due Sunday, 3/8
- Flex Your Head Assignment IV due Sunday, 3/8

**Week Ten: March 9**

**Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 17: Globalization & Inequality
  - Chapter 19: Environment
  - Chapter 20: War & Terrorism

**Film:**

- [Operation Hollywood](#) Watch the film in full online.

**Assignments:**

- Key Terms Assignment V, due Sunday, 3/15
- Your Turn Assignment V, due Sunday, 3/15

**Week Eleven: March 16**

- No readings – catch up and study for your final! Final Exam study guide distributed this week.

**Assignments:**

- Discussion Board III, Initial post due Thursday, 3/19. Responses due Sunday, 3/22
- Participation DB, Quarter Reflection, due Sunday, 3/22

**Finals Week: March 23-25**

**Your Final will be taken on our Canvas course site and consists of short answer questions.**

**The Exam will be open from 8am 3/23 through midnight 3/25.**

**It is set for double-time to accommodate all students and will time out after four hours. Because of this timing out, do not start the exam unless you intend to finish it during your chosen time period.**

*Thank you for a wonderful term!*