

**Sociology 170**  
**Social Problems of Contemporary Society**  
**Winter Quarter 2007 – Room L126**  
**Mon-Fri 10:30-11:20**

**Instructor:** Carolyn Gates  
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**Office Hours:** By Appointment  
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**Required Textbook:** 1. *Social Problems and the Quality of Life*, Laurer and Laurer, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw Hill

### **Course Introduction**

Violence, crime, drugs, racism, poverty, sexism, illness, teenage pregnancy, divorce, terrorism, and war – these are just a few of the social problems that affect everyone, regardless of our positions in American society. Some of us, for example, may face unfair treatment due to our races, religions, or sexual orientations. Some people battle drug or alcohol addictions. Some struggle with divorce or other family-related challenges. Some lives are directly touched by crime, violence, war, or terrorism, and still others are indirectly influenced by these acts, altering their lives out of fear. For better or worse, social problems are a characteristic of contemporary societies; we all must deal with them in one way or another on a nearly daily basis - even if we are not consciously aware.

Over the course of the quarter, we are going to explore social problems using a sociological perspective. We will begin by learning what exactly makes a social problem “social.” You will learn how sociologists identify and study social problems, and you will discover how the sociological approach differs from everyday, “common sense” explanations. The remainder of the quarter will be devoted to studying several specific social problems facing us today. We will discuss the causes of social problems, and we will consider solutions. This course is designed for the beginning sociology student and thus serves as a broad introduction to the science of sociology.

I look forward to working with you and sharing my passion for sociology.

### **LEARNING ATMOSPHERE**

I believe that students learn best when they are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this is an *active, interactive* course where you are expected to read, write, discuss, participate, and solve problems. I think of our class as a “collaborative learning community” where we all teach and learn from each other. Every time you make a comment or ask a question, you teach something to the rest of us. I challenge you to abandon the traditional passive student role and to get involved with teaching and learning – I think you’ll enjoy it and learn a lot in the process!

## Course Learning Outcomes:

After completing the course, the successful student will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze major social forces and structures contributing to poverty, racism and inequality.
2. Relate poverty to a society's overall distribution of wealth and inequality in a society.
3. Delineate and interrelate social pathways and barriers to education, especially for low income and minority populations.
4. Connect the barriers to equal education to attaining the American Dream.
5. Extrapolate common social pathways and barriers to health care, especially for low income and minority populations.
6. Connect such pathways and barriers to the provision of health care or the health outcomes for low income and minority populations.
7. Evaluate the success of social agencies and organizations in helping to solve social problems.

**NOTE:** This course's General Education ratings for this course are as follows: 3 in Critical Thinking, 2 in Reading, 2 in Ethics, 2 in Historical and Intellectual Perspectives, and 3 in Cultural Diversity.

## Grading (in percent):

<b>A</b>	<b>94 – 100</b>	<b>C +</b>	<b>76 – 79.9</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90 – 93.9</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>73 – 75.9</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>86 – 89.9</b>	<b>C -</b>	<b>70 – 72.9</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>83 – 85.9</b>	<b>D +</b>	<b>66 – 69.9</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80 – 82.9</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>60 – 65.9</b>
		<b>F</b>	<b>Less than 60</b>

Please understand .. Instructors do not give you a grade – **YOU EARN A GRADE** based upon your **performance and participation**. **You** are responsible for your own success!

### **Point Distribution by Assignments (see Attachment for details):**

<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>300 points</b>
<b>Quizzes (15) 25</b>	<b>375 points</b>
<b>Role Adoptions (15) 50</b>	<b>750 points</b>
<b>Mid-Term Tests (1) 100</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Final Test (1) 100</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Movie Reflections (5) 50</b>	<b>250 points</b>
<b>In class Assignments</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Final Presentation /Service Learning</b>	<b>200 points</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2175 <u>points</u></b>

### **Academic Integrity:**

You, the student, are expected to conduct yourself with integrity. If you cheat, or aid someone else in cheating, you violate a trust. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying answers on tests, glancing at nearby test papers, swapping papers, stealing, plagiarizing, and illicitly giving or receiving help on exams or assignments. The exception is where a specific directive is given for group study through an examination or quiz process by the Instructor.

If you cheat, the following actions will be taken: 1. You will receive a grade of "0" on the work (exam, speech, etc.) where the cheating occurred. This grade cannot be dropped. 2. A report of the incident will be sent to the Dean of students. The Dean may file the report in your permanent record or take further disciplinary action such as suspension or expulsion from the college. If you feel you have been unfairly accused of cheating, you may appeal. (For a description of due process, see WAC 132H-120.)

Intentional **plagiarism** is also cheating. Plagiarism is defined as "The appropriation ... of the language, ideas and thoughts of another..., and representation of them as one's original work." Random House Dictionary of the English Language

### **Attendance:**

Your attendance in class is **essential** for both your success and that of your classmates. Attendance is required. Please communicate to your Instructor regarding any absences.

## **Expectations:**

### **My Expectations of You:**

1. You are required to speak up in class and share your ideas with the whole class, but **please do not talk to other students during class lecture.** (Everyone has a pet peeve, this is mine!) Sarcasm and looking excessively bored are close seconds. Please turn off your cell phone before coming to our classroom.
2. Please be on time and attend class regularly throughout the quarter. Excessive absences and tardiness disrupt the entire class. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you do not get marked as attending class. If you can not attend faithfully and on time, you should not take this class. **Significant, unexcused absences/tardiness will result in a failing grade.**
3. Please respect due-dates for written assignments and delivery of presentations. An alternative may be negotiated **before** the actual due date. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. 25% will be the minimum deducted for late assignments and 50% will be deducted for each full day an assignment is late.
4. Read each chapter prior to class, including Review and Discussion Questions
5. **No late tests, quizzes or presentations will be accepted!**
6. Follow all guidelines for all assignments and make every effort to turn in your best work at all times.
7. You are in charge of your learning. Make every effort to put forth your best attitude and effort in each class!!!

## **Policy on Student Disabilities:**

“Students with disabilities who have accommodation needs are required to meet with the Director of Disability Support Services, Room B-233-G (telephone 425-564-2498 or TTY 425-603-4110), to establish their eligibility for accommodation. In addition, students who require accommodation in classes must review those requirements with each instructor during the first week of the quarter.”