

# **Bellevue College**

## **SOC& 201, Social Problems, 5 Credits**

Fully Online Course

Winter Quarter, 2012 - January 3<sup>rd</sup> - March 22<sup>nd</sup>

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 11:30 – 12:30

### **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, 2011.
- There are films to watch during the quarter. All are available through the Library Media Center, Netflix streaming, YouTube, or at your local video store. The films in the Library Media Center will be on reserve

behind the media desk under my name. Please prepare yourself for film screenings on your own time by checking out what films you're watching and when.

- Handouts and articles
  - *ALL* handouts are available on the course 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:  
<http://www.dianahacker.com/>

#### **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 or come to see me during office hours. Emergency preparedness is important! If you need course modifications, adaptations, or accommodations because of a disability, 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](#).

**EXPLORE THE LMC!** The Library Media Center is at your fingertips! I *strongly* encourage you to visit the LMC at least once a week, 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](#)
- [For the LMC online catalog](#)
- [For article databases](#)

**GENERAL RULES & EXPECTATIONS:**

- Check in to our online classroom no less than *four times per week* (yes – I do keep track!).
- Complete readings and homework assignments *on time*.
- Late homework assignments *are accepted*, but make-up exams *are not permitted*.
  1. Late homework is docked 10% for every day the work is late, including Saturdays and Sundays.
- 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.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

<b>Attendance and Participation*:</b>	200 points
<b>Key Terms Assignments (5):</b>	100 points
<b>Your Turn Assignments (5):</b>	200 points
<b>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 on the DB, such as your Introductory DB. These are labeled **PARTICIPATION DBs**. These may get added as the course goes along. The Graded DB assignments are labeled **GRADED DBs**. Please be aware of this difference.\**

*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. Additionally, several of your discussion boards also double as participation points.

**Key Terms Assignments:** You will be expected to understand certain terms used in the Sociology of Popular Culture. 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.

**Your Turn Assignments:** These short assignments are an opportunity to put your learning to use as you explore the world of popular culture around you using the Sociological Imagination.

**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. This method of learning gets you going socially! These assignments are always due on Wednesdays and Fridays (your initial post goes up Wednesday and your responses to one another are due Fridays). Your DBs are graded on two things: your original post and your responses (usually 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 and will include things like Introductions, Quiz Study Sessions & General Q&A. They are required and the grades get folded into your overall Participation Grade.

**Exams:** Your Exams cover everything up through the week they're given, and may include multiple choice and/or short-answer questions (either or both). Your responses should be clear and concise. Your short-answer responses will range from no less than **one full paragraph**, to three **full paragraphs**. In lieu of study guides for our short exams, you can rely solely on the material presented in class and the Newman text.

**For all of your written 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](#)
- [Academic Tutoring Center](#)
- [TRiO Student Support Services](#)
- [Writing Lab @ BCC](#)

**Below is a checklist for you to go over before you hand in each written assignment.**

- ☐ Twelve-point sized Times font, double-spaced
- ☐ 1" margins all around
- ☐ MLA Citations where appropriate – you need to give credit to the author/s even where any *ideas* presented in the paper are not your own
- ☐ Title pages and bibliographies are not counted in final page count
- ☐ 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.’

**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. ☺
- 3) 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:
- You do not cite quotations and/or attribute borrowed ideas.
  - You fail to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks.
  - You do not write summaries and paraphrases in his/her own words and/or doesn't document his/her source.
  - You turn in work created by another person (e.g., another student, downloaded from the internet, etc.).
  - 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.
  - 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.

**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)**

**READINGS DUE MONDAYS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS HAVE A MIDNIGHT DUE DATE**

### **Week One – January 2-6**

#### **Thematic Overview:**

- Introduction to this course
- Understanding Social Problems

#### **Readings (please have your readings done by Friday this week only):**

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

#### **Assignments:**

- Participation I: Personal Introduction Initial Posting due Wednesday, January 4. Respond by Saturday, January 7.

### **Week Two – January 9-13**

#### **Thematic Overview:**

- Stratification: Inequalities and Identities

#### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 02: Inequality: Poverty & Wealth
  - Chapter 03: Race & Immigration
- Film: [\*Dying To Get In: Illegal Immigration Documentary\*](#)

#### **Assignments:**

- Key Terms Assignment I due Friday, January 13.

### Week Three – January 16-20

#### Thematic Overview:

- Rules of the game: Gender in the U.S.

#### Readings:

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 04: Gender
- Power Point Presentation: *What Makes A Man, A Man?*
- Film: [Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes](#) The link directs you to the YouTube version of this film. It is also available in our library (Call Number: ML3531.H57).
  - [Part One](#)
  - [Part Two](#)
  - [Part Three](#)
  - [Part Four](#)
  - [Part Five](#)
  - [Part Six](#)

#### Assignments:

- Your Turn Assignment I due Friday, January 20

### Week Four – January 23-27

#### Thematic Overview:

- Elders, Media, and the Economy: Where do you fit in?

#### 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:

- Discussion Board I Initial Posting due Wednesday, January 25. Response due Saturday, 28.
- Key Terms II due Friday, January 27.

### Week Five – January 30 – February 3

#### Thematic Overview:

- Public Education and Public Health

#### Readings:

- *Think: Social Problems*
  - Chapter 08: Problems in Education
  - Chapter 09: Physical & Mental Health
- Film: [Food, Inc.](#) – the film is available in our library (HD9005.F66), on Netflix streaming, in bits and pieces on YouTube (I do *not* recommend this, as the parts are garbled and confusing in terms of how they're presented in pieces), and in video rental stores.

#### Assignments:

- Midterm Examination Friday. Covers Weeks 1-5. Midterm open Friday, February 3 8am, through Sunday, February 5, noon. Midterm open for two hours once you begin. You may only open it once.
- Your Turn Assignment II due Friday, February 3.

### **Week Six – February 6-10**

#### **Thematic Overview:**

- Social Deviance

#### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems* (Note Chapters are not being read in order for W6/W7)
  - Chapter 11: Sex & Sexuality
  - Chapter 12: Sexual Deviance

#### **Assignments:**

- Key Terms Assignment III due Friday, February 10.
- Participation II: Mid-Term Check-In due Friday, February 10.

### **Week Seven – February 13-17**

#### **Thematic Overview:**

- Social Deviance, con't

#### **Readings:**

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

#### **Assignments:**

- Discussion Board II Initial Posting due Wednesday, February 15. Respond to two people you don't know by Saturday, February 18.
- Your Turn Assignment III due Friday, February 17.

### **Week Eight – February 20-24**

#### **Thematic Overview:**

- Family and Urban Sprawl

#### **Readings:**

- *Think: Social Problems* (Note Chapters are out of order for W8/W9)
  - Chapter 15: Social Problems of Marriage & Family
  - Chapter 16: Urbanization: Social Problems From The Growth of Cities
  - Chapter 18: Population Problems

#### **Assignments:**

- Key Terms Assignment IV due Friday, February 24.
- Your Turn Assignment IV due Friday, February 24.



**Week Nine – February 27 – March 2**

**Thematic Overview:**

- Your Future, Our future

**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 Friday, March 2.
- Your Turn Assignment V due Friday, March 2.

**Week Ten – March 5-9**

**Thematic Overview:**

- Making sense of it all!

**Readings:**

- *No Reading This Week – prep for final exam*

**Assignments:**

- Discussion Board III Initial Posting due Wednesday, March 7. Respond to one person by Saturday, March 10.

**Week Eleven: March 12 - 16**

**Thematic Overview:**

- Wrapping it up!

**Readings:**

- *None – catch up.*

**Assignments:**

- Participation DB, Quarter Reflection due Friday, March 16

**FINAL EXAM**

**Available online from March 20, 8:00am through March 22, 5:00pm**

**Dates Available are nonnegotiable.**

**You may only open to begin the exam once. Exam will be open for four hours.**

*Thank you for a wonderful term!*