

SOCIAL PROBLEMS of CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

SOC 170A - 5825

Spring 2008

12:30 – 1:20 M-F in N204

5 credits

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“What ordinary men are directly aware of and what they try to do are bounded by the private orbits in which they live; their visions and their powers are limited.”

~C. Wright Mills

TEXTS

Our America by Jones, Newman and Isay (isbn # 0671004646)

Shame of the Nation by Jonathon Kozol (isbn # 1400052440)

Other readings will be given in class.

COURSE OVERVIEW

We often don't see social problems as something that affects us or we don't see a possible solution because we are trapped in our individual mindsets. One of the goals of this class is to free you from your private orbit (see the Mills quotation above) by helping you see the broader social constructs affecting the issue. The outcome of this is a better understanding of how the problem affects you and how change on the societal level can go a long way towards rectifying the problem. On a more personal and immediate level you will learn what you as an individual can do to ameliorate the problem.

Since sociology is a science, we will be looking at the problems and the solutions from an objective, scientific perspective. A purported cause that sounds good from a “common sense” perspective may or may not be true when researched objectively. The same thing applies to solutions. A proposed solution may seem to make logical sense, but until it is tested, one cannot know its efficacy.

Much of what we do in this class is based on input from you. As the instructor, I bring the structure, relevant sociological principles, and information on the problems we are discussing. As students, you bring insights, information and connections that lead all of us further down the path to understanding. In other words, we are co-learners together. Therefore, your participation is both welcome and needed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course you should:

- be able to describe the “sociological imagination”
- be able to explain what a “social problem” is
- understand the ways in which social problems are influenced by culture and social institutions
- understand how social problems affect all of us, regardless of our social position
- be able to offer (partial) social solutions to contemporary social problems

GENERAL EDUCATION RATINGS

3 in Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Cultural Diversity

2 in Reading, Ethics, Historical and Intellectual Perspectives

EXPECTATIONS

OF ME:

- *A genuine desire to help you learn the material:* My ultimate goal is for you to finish this class with both an understanding of and an excitement about sociology. However, the primary goal is your comprehension of the material and I will do my best to facilitate that.
- *Accessibility.* I am available to you outside of class for questions, comments or help with assignments. I encourage you to contact me via email, phone, or office visit whenever you have a question or concern.
- *Learning.* You can expect me to be a learner with you. While I know sociology and it is my job and my goal to teach you the subject matter, you bring things to the class (perspective and experience) which contribute to the learning for us all.

OF YOU:

- *Preparation.* You should come to class having done the assigned readings and homework, and you should always bring the proper supplies with you. That includes the readings and supplies for note taking. Note that the BCC guideline for homework is two hours outside of class for each hour spent in class.
- *Promptness:* Late assignments (late means any time after class starting time on the due date) other than reading role assignments will be graded down 10% per day. Late reading roles will receive a score of zero. If something prevents you from coming to class, you may email assignments to me or turn them into my mailbox, but keep in mind the time due is the same (by the start of class on the due date). Turning in reading roles ahead of time will earn you half credit if you are not able to be in class for the discussion. If there is a true emergency (computer problems do not qualify as emergencies) and you cannot get your assignment in, call or email to let me know the situation as soon as possible. Doing this, along with providing relevant documentation, will allow me to work out a reasonable accommodation with you.

- *Currency:* It is your responsibility to keep current in class. This means attending class sessions and taking notes. If you have to miss class for any reason you must find out what was done and get notes from a classmate. You can find any handouts on the MyBCC site.
- *Respect:* We will have many discussions in which you are expected to participate by asking questions, answering questions, and making relevant comments and observations. During a discussion (planned or spontaneous) it is important that we all respect each other's right to participate. That means no side talking, no interrupting, no monopolizing the conversation, and no offensive language. Disagreement is fine, healthy, and makes life more interesting, but be sure that when you disagree you are disagreeing with the ideas and not the other person. People who are disrespectful, either to fellow students or to the instructor, will be asked to leave the class. Serious violations will be reported to the Dean of Student Services.
- *Honesty:* If you cheat, you fail. No excuses will be taken into account. Your work must be your own, except when asked to work with other students. Furthermore, you are required to acknowledge in your papers if you have borrowed any ideas, terms, or phrases, even if you have borrowed from a classmate. Working together is fine and even encouraged. Just be sure to turn in work that is clearly original. Be careful to cite your sources properly as plagiarism will result in a score of zero for the assignment, and possibly an F for the class depending on the severity of the offense. If you would like information on how to avoid plagiarism, the writing lab (<http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/> or D-204D) is an excellent resource online and in person.
- *Communication:* If an issue arises that will impact your class work, let me know as soon as possible so that we can work out a solution together. After assignments have been missed may be too late. If you don't understand a concept or the expectations of an assignment, please ask. I want you to succeed in this class. If you need course adaptations or special accommodations because of a disability, or if you have medical information that needs to be shared with me in the event that the building needs to be evacuated, please contact me during the first week of the quarter. If you require accommodations due to a diagnosed disability, please contact the Disability Resource Center in B132. Phone: 425-564-2498 (Voice) TTY: 425-564-4110.
- *Willingness to listen:* Essential to a liberal arts education is an open-minded willingness to listen to ideas and modes of expression which might conflict with one's personal ideas and/or values. No one is expected to endorse or adopt any idea, concept or value, whether it is from the instructor or from a classmate. Rather all are expected to make an effort to genuinely listen to various perspectives.

WRITTEN WORK

- All written work, with the exception of work done in groups, must be **typed** and **stapled** with your **name** and the **date** at the top
- Reading roles also need the role next to the name and date.
- All sources must be cited in **APA format**. Any information gathered from outside sources, and this includes the text books, must be cited and referenced. For information on citations and references see the writing lab online at <http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/APA.html> or in person in D-204D.
- Since this is a social science class, written work should consist of analysis rather than opinion. This means connecting the information, whether it is from a movie, a text or a speaker, to sociological concepts and themes presented in class. This does not mean you cannot connect things from class to your own life and experiences, but does mean the sociological context is also included and your ideas are backed up by the appropriate source(s).

GRADING

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	(subject to minor redistribution)		
Internet assignments	3	50	150
Reading roles	9	50	450
SL journals			
1		10	10
2		30	30
3		30	30
4		30	30
SL presentation		100	100
SL hours		100	100
Mid-term assessment		25	25
Final assessment		50	50
Movie/speaker reflections	4	25	100
Rough draft		25	25
Course essay		150	150
Participation		100	100
<i>TOTAL</i>		<i>1350</i>	

grading scale

note: The grading scale is calculated on percentages translated into points.

If the total for the quarter changes, identical percentages will be used to compute grades.

A: 1269 – 1350	B+: 1174 – 1214	C+: 1039 – 1079	D+: 864 – 944
A-: 1215 – 1268	B: 1120 – 1173	C: 985 – 1038	D: 810 – 863
	B-: 1080 – 1119	C-: 945 – 984	F: <810

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION
Revised Fall 2007

Cheating, Stealing and Plagiarizing*

Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue Community College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue Community College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Dean of Student Services.

Incomplete

If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete ("I"). The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade (usually an "F").

F Grade

Students who fail a course will receive a letter grade of "F."

Final Examination Schedule

The Social Science Division will adhere to the final examination schedule as stated in the BCC Schedule. Final examinations will be held at the end of each quarter at fixed times. Instructors will not give examinations in advance of the regular schedule. A student who is absent from any examination held at any time during the quarter may forfeit the right to make up the examination. If, for illness or some other circumstance beyond the student's control, the student is unable to be present at any scheduled examination and has contacted the instructor on a timely basis, the student may be permitted to take such examination at a time designated by the instructor.

Withdrawal From Class

College policy states that students must formally withdraw from a class by the end of the seventh week of the quarter (Registration Office, B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course.

Hardship Withdrawal

Instructors may assign the grade of "HW" (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional circumstances. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.

Students Who Require Disability Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who have accommodation needs are encouraged to meet with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office located in B132 (telephone 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110), to establish their eligibility for accommodation. The DSS office will provide each eligible student with an accommodation letter. Students who require accommodation in class should review the DSS accommodation letter with each instructor during the first week of the quarter.

Students with mobility challenges who may need assistance in case of an emergency situation or evacuation should register with Disability Support Services, and review those needs with the instructor as well.

Distribution of Grades

Grades will not be posted in the Social Science Division or in faculty offices, and secretaries will not give out grades. Students should access their grades through the BCC Web site.

Return of Papers and Tests

Paper and/or Scantron score sheet returns will be arranged in the following ways ONLY: by mail, if student supplies the instructor with stamped, self-addressed envelope (with appropriate postage); or by the instructor designating a time and place whereby the student may retrieve his/her papers. Unclaimed papers and/or Scantron score sheets must be kept by the instructor for a minimum of sixty (60) instructional days following the end of the quarter.

**If you are accused of cheating, stealing exams and/or plagiarism, there is a Bellevue Community College Student Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the office of Division Chair (D110), the Dean of Student Services (B231A) or the Associated Student Body (C212) for information regarding the appeals process.*