

Sociology 302: Contemporary Social Problems

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Kretschmer

Course Time: Tues/Thurs 11am-12:15pm

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Location: WHAM 0203

Office Location: Faner 3424

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30-5pm, Wednesday 10am -1pm, Thursday 3:30-5pm,

Course Description

This class is designed to help students understand why some conditions and issues get defined as problems and others remain largely ignored. Students will be asked to think through key questions regarding the creation, management, and solutions of social problems. How do problems get defined? How can the same conditions, defined as a problem, be considered differently? How does social location affect the solutions people come up with for social problems?

In this course, we will focus on the specifics of a few social problems, and on the process by which social conditions get defined as social problems. We will focus on the construction of social problems in the United States, but will include comparisons to other nations to understand the ways other societies are approaching the same problems (population growth and decline, poverty, inequality, etc.). We will also pay attention to the ways that social problems and their solutions change over time.

Course Philosophy and Requirements

Our course is organized around “interteaching sessions.”¹ Rather than listening passively to lectures, students will outline and present reading assignments in partners during our class time. According to the provided schedule, you or your partner will come to class having outlined the readings assigned and will present this material to the other partner. These in-class discussions will form the backbone of the class and your performance during these exercises will be the main basis for your course grade.

¹Tsui, Ming. 2010. “Interteaching: Students as Teachers in Lower-Division Sociology Courses” *Teaching Sociology* 38: 28-34.

Course Requirements

- Interteaching attendance, performance, and outlines: Both partners are graded on showing up to class every day having completed the assigned reading. On your scheduled days, you will come to class with a completed outline of the day's assigned reading. You will also need to understand the material well enough to explain it to your partner. Students who do not come prepared or do not do an adequate job of explaining the material to their partner will not receive credit. Being off topic, playing on your phone and/or computer, or sleeping are also grounds for losing credit for the day, regardless of having completed an outline for the day. Interteaching sessions are worth 50% of your final grade.
- Quizzes: Every Tuesday students will complete a short 10-15 minute quiz based on the readings from the previous week. Quizzes are worth 10% of your final grade.
- Examinations: Students will take a mid-term and final examination, as scheduled below. I will provide additional information on these exams as they get closer. **Exams must be completed on the scheduled days; no make-up tests will be given.** Each exam is worth 20% of your final grade.

Final grades will be based on the percentages listed below. **There is no extra credit offered in this course.**

Reading Outline Attendance and Participation:	50%
Weekly Quizzes:	10%
Midterm Exam:	20%
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

Policies, Procedures, and Expectations

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to abide by the University's policies for academic honesty. You can find them here: <http://web.coehs.siu.edu/public/her/AcHonPol.php>. Students are expected to submit work that is properly cited and that comes from their own interpretation and understanding of the course material. Students who engage in academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade in the course and will face University disciplinary action. It is never worth taking this risk. Please come see me if you are having trouble in the course and we can work out a solution.

Classroom Demeanor: You are expected to behave in appropriate and professional ways in the classroom. If you fail to do so, I will ask you to leave and you will lose all credit for that day. As a community of scholars, we will respect the perspectives, experiences, and opinions of all other members. You should come to class prepared to engage with the assigned reading material. If you choose to bring in a phone or a computer, you should not let it become a distraction to yourself or to others (including email, Facebook, shopping, etc.). Should this become a problem, I will ask you to leave or I will ban computers from our class.

Emergency Procedures: Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus and is available on the BERT website at <http://www.bert.siu.edu/>, Department of Public Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu/ (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Required Texts: You must have these books by the first week of class. No excuses.

Best, Joel. 2008. Social Problems. W.W. Norton. & Company

Silver, Ira. 2008. Social Problems Readings. New York: W.W. Norton & Company

Interteaching Guidelines

1. I will assign you a number 1 or 2. These numbers will allow you to pair up with someone each course to form groups of 2.
2. The week prior, I will post an outline for the next week's material. You will fill out these outlines as you read the assigned material.
3. Each Tuesday, reader 1 will get 30 minutes to present your material to your partner. You will work in partners for the entire semester but your partner assignments may change.
 - a. You will need to show me your outline to get credit for the day at the BEGINNING of class.
4. At the end of Tuesday's class, we will review the material from reader 1 and I will ask you if there is any material you did not understand or on which you need clarification.
5. Each Thursday, reader 2 will get 30 minutes to present your material to your partner. You will work in partners for the entire semester but your dyad assignments may change.
 - a. You will need to show me your outline to get credit for the day at the BEGINNING of class.
6. At the end of Thursday's class, we will review the material from reader 2 and I will ask you if there is any material you did not understand or on which you need clarification.
7. Every Tuesday, I will pass out a quiz that covers the material from the previous week. Studying the outlines you and your partner have put together from the previous week will be the primary way to study for these quizzes.

NOTE: You are responsible for reading ALL of the assigned readings, not just the ones you will present on!!!

Course Schedule for Outline Presentations

Week 1

Tuesday August 21: Introduction and course overview

Thursday August 23: Definitions and examples of reading outlines from Kretschmer

Week 2

Tuesday Aug 28: Both readers 1 and 2 will present outlines

Thursday Aug 30. Class Cancelled

Week 3

Tuesday Sep 4: Reader 1

Thursday Sep: Reader 2

Week 4

Tuesday Sep 11: Reader 1

Thursday Sep 13: Reader 2

Week 5

Tuesday Sep 18: Reader 1

Thursday Sep 20: Reader 2

Week 6

Tuesday Sep 25: Reader 1

Thursday Sep 27: Reader 2

Week 7

Tuesday Oct 2: Reader 1

Thursday Oct 4: Reader 2

Week 8

Tuesday Fall Break

Thursday Oct 11: Midterm

Week 9

Tuesday Oct 16: Reader 1

Thursday Oct 18: Reader 2

Week 10

Tuesday Oct 23: Reader 1

Thursday Oct 25: Reader 2

Week 11

Tuesday Oct 30: Reader 1

Thursday Nov 1: Reader 2

Week 12

Tuesday Nov 6: Reader 1

Thursday Nov 8: Reader 2

Week 13

Tuesday Nov 13: Reader 1

Thursday Nov 15: Reader 2

Week 14

Tuesday Nov 20: Both readers 1 and 2 will present outlines

Thursday Nov 22 Thanksgiving Break

Week 15

Tuesday Nov 27: Reader 1

Thursday Nov 29: Reader 2

Week 16

Tuesday Dec 4: Reader 1

Thursday Dec 6: Reader 2

Final Exam: Monday, Dec 10 12:50-02:50p.m.

Reading Outline Assignments

	Reader 1	Reader 2
Week 1		
Week 2 (Both 1 &2 on Tuesday)	Best Ch 2: 3 0-46	Best Ch 2: 47-62
Week 3	Silver ch 3	Silver ch 22
Week 4	Best ch 3: 64-80	Best ch 3: 80-95
Week 5	Silver Ch 9	Silver ch 12
Week 6	Best ch 4: 97-114	Best ch 4: 114-124
Week 7	Silver ch 10	Silver ch 27
Week 8 Fall break & Midterm		
Week 9	Best Ch 5: 129-144	Best ch 5: 145-162
Week 10	Silver 1:7-19	Silver 1:19-30
Week 11	Best Ch 6: 163-174	Best Ch 6: 174-193
Week 12	Silver ch 21	Silver ch 16
Week 13	Best ch 7: 194-212	Best Ch 7: 212-225
Week 14 Thanksgiving week (Both 1 &2 on Tuesday)	Silver ch 2: 32-41	Silver ch 2: 41-50
Week 15	Best Ch 9: 260-276	Best Ch 9: 276-291
Week 16	Silver Ch 29	Silver Ch 33