

Sociology 302: Contemporary Social Problems

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Kretschmer

Course Time: Tues/Thurs 12:35-1:50

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Location: Quig 208

Office Location: Faner 3424

Office Hours: Wednesday 10am -1pm; Friday 10am – 1pm

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

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

discussions will form the backbone of the class and your performance during these exercises will be the main basis for your course grade.

Course Requirements

- Interteaching outlines and performance: 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 and typed 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. You will not get credit for outlines that you have not presented to your partner in class. 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. You also receive attendance points for the days you are not presenting an outline. In other words, you must attend all classes, whether or not you are presenting an outline. **If you are significantly late to class (more than five minutes) or if you leave class early, you will not receive attendance credit.** Interteaching sessions are worth 50% of your final grade.
- Quizzes: During the first ten minutes of every Tuesday there will 10 minute quiz based on the readings from the previous week. Quizzes are worth 10% of your final grade. If you are late to class, you will miss the quiz. No make-up quizzes will be given
- 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.

Disabilities and Classroom Support: If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way I teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Disability Support Services Office to help us determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

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 on D2L. You will fill out these outlines as you read the assigned material. **Outlines need to be typed and printed before class for you to get credit for them.**
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, we will take 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 Jan 15: Introduction and course overview

Thursday Jan 17: Definitions and examples of reading outlines from Kretschmer

Week 2

Tuesday Jan 22: Reader 1

Thursday Jan 24: Reader 2

Week 3

Tuesday Jan 29 Reader 1

Thursday Jan 31: Reader 2

Week 4

Tuesday Feb 5: Reader 1

Thursday Feb 7: Reader 2

Week 5

Tuesday Feb 12: Reader 1

Thursday Feb 14: Reader 2

Week 6

Tuesday Feb 19: Reader 1

Thursday Feb 21: Reader 2

Week 7

Tuesday Feb 26: Reader 1

Thursday Feb 28: Reader 2

Week 8

Tuesday Mar 5: Midterm

Thursday Mar 7: Reader 1 and Reader 2

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10

Tuesday Mar 19: Reader 1

Thursday Mar 21: Reader 2

Week 11

Tuesday Mar 26: Reader 1

Thursday Mar 28: Reader 2

Week 12

Tuesday Apr 2: Reader 1

Thursday Apr 4: Reader 2

Week 13

Tuesday Apr 9: Reader 1

Thursday Apr 11: Reader 2

Week 14

Tuesday Apr 16: Reader 1

Thursday Apr 18: Reader 2

Week 15

Tuesday Apr 23: Reader 1

Thursday Apr 25: Reader 2

Week 16

Tuesday Apr 30: Reader 1

Thursday May 2: Reader 2

Final Exam: Fri., May 10 10:10a.m.-12:10p.m.

Reading Outline Assignments

	Reader 1	Reader 2
Week 1	None	None
Week 2	Best Ch 2: 29-47	Best Ch 2: 48-63
Week 3	Silver ch 3	Silver ch 22
Week 4	Best ch 3: 64-80	Best ch 3: 81-95
Week 5	Silver Ch 9	Silver ch 12
Week 6	Best ch 4: 96-112	Best ch 4: 112-126
Week 7	Silver ch 10	Silver ch 27
Week 8: Midterm on Tuesday; both readers present on Thursday	Silver 1:7-19	Silver 1:19-30
Week 9: Spring Break		
Week 10	Best Ch 5: 127-144	Best ch 5: 144-159
Week 11	Best Ch 6: 160-172	Best Ch 6: 172-189
Week 12	Silver ch 21	Silver ch 16
Week 13	Best ch 7: 190-208	Best Ch 7: 208-220
Week 14	Silver ch 2: 32-41	Silver ch 2: 41-50
Week 15	Best Ch 9: 255-271	Best Ch 9: 271-285
Week 16	Silver Ch 29	Silver Ch 33