

COURSE OUTLINE: SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Course #:	SOC 3301	Section :	
Day:	Saturday	Room:	
Semester	TBA	Time:	1:30-4:40PM
Lecturer:	Odek Antony Wando	Office:	Staff Launch
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Office Hours: Monday and Friday 1-2:30PM, or by Appt.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To learn about social problems from a sociological perspective: what are social problems; what causes social problems; who defines social problems; and how are societies – on the individual and the institutional levels, attempting to deal with or solve social problems?
- To learn different sociological theories and approaches to social problems, and how these theories and approaches may affect our understanding of, and our answers to, the questions listed above.
- To learn about and critically examine efforts to solve some of society's most persistent social problems.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is divided into four units. The first will introduce you to the major concepts and theories used to understand social problems from a sociological perspective. You will learn about the relationship of social problems to various forms of social inequality including social class, ethnicity and race, gender and sexual orientation, and age.

The next three units will use the foundations from Unit I to look more closely at specific social problems. In Unit II, you will explore social problems related to three major institutions of socialization: the family; the educational system; and the mass media. Unit III offers sociological perspectives on the social problems of poverty, crime, and the city. Finally, the course concludes with an exploration of environmental problems and war and

an in-depth look at social movements in society that are aimed at “solving” the kinds of social problems you will have learned about throughout the semester.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Readings: The book for this course is available in the Library:

Anna Leon-Guerrero’s Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action.

Preparation for Class: All students are expected to arrive to each class having already read the assigned readings for that class day as listed in the Course Schedule below. Coming to class having – at minimum – read the material is key to quality class discussions.

Doing the Reading: You will quickly find that just reading the material will not prepare you adequately for the exams or for classroom discussions. Completing the review questions at the end of each chapter and/or visiting the book’s study site to explore additional materials for each chapter will further enhance your understanding of the assigned readings.

I also recommend that you budget an hour or more of time *after* each reading to reflect on what you have learned, what you didn’t understand, what was surprising to learn, how what you read might have made you re-think something you thought you “knew” about society, etc. I would suggest that you write down these reflections in your course notebook or perhaps keep a reading journal for this class. Doing so will mean that you will not only have something to help refresh your memory during class discussions, but you will also have good notes for when it comes time to study for the exams.

I will not collect or grade these reflections. However, I am certain that spending this extra time thinking about and digesting the assigned readings will greatly improve your chances for earning a good grade in this course.

Class Participation: I fully expect everyone to participate in classroom discussions.

Classroom Environment: I expect everyone to be courteous to each other. While I want everyone to contribute to class discussions, I will not tolerate abusive language, unkind statements, or ridicule of anyone who you may think asks a “stupid” or “basic” question. If everyone follows these basic rules of conversation, it will ensure a comfortable environment for everyone to speak within. Compromising this learning environment will not be tolerated.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Attendance will be taken and, as per the University regulations. Five absences, **excused or otherwise, will earn you an automatic F grade**. It is in your best interest to attend all classes; there exists a correlation between class attendance and marks earned by students. You are expected to keep up with the reading assignments and also encouraged to consult the many other sources of information available in the University Library that are relevant to the subject matter of this course. All students are encouraged to participate in lectures as well as discussion sessions and/ or debates; these are critical for learning.

To pass this course, you must complete two written assignments, two tests, a mid-term examination and a final examination. **The instructor reserves the right to administer impromptu quizzes, as he may deem necessary. These will go towards your grade point.** Students bear sole responsibility for any announcements made during class. No lap tops are permitted in class and all cell phones must be turned off during class. No electronic devices will be allowed during tests/quizzes and exams.

Written Assignments

Every student will complete one **individual** and one **group** written assignments for the purpose of continuous assessment. The main aim of written assignments will be to teach learners to express their ideas clearly and concisely. Completed assignments must be submitted to the course instructor on or before the stipulated deadline.

Assignment

The effects of infertility on marriages in Western Kenya, Central Kenya, Muslim World, North America, Europe etc

- How the rate of infertility is growing/ becoming increasing common in discussion in Kenya etc
- How despite the fact that male infertility counts for almost 40% of all cases of infertility, women continue to bear the brunt of fertility (in the form of failing marriages or spousal abuse).
- Contribution of this study: need for change in attitude towards infertility in marriages
- Limited existing research in this area.

NB:

- Use Latest and referenced Literature or materials
- Minimum of 3 pages
- Avoid plagiarisms
- Email soft copy by Friday 18th January

Tests

For the purpose of continuous assessment you will be required to complete **two** in class tests. Test I will be completed before the mid-term examination while test two will be administered at least two weeks to the final examination week. Structurally, the tests will incorporate concepts, multiple choice type questions. However, the specific structure of each test may be altered following consultations with the class members. Each test will contribute 10% toward the final course grade. **Absolutely** no make-up tests will be allowed. Consistent with University regulations, students experiencing any difficulties must consult the office of the Dean of the school of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Examinations

There will be one in class mid-term and a final examination. Both examinations will combine concepts, multiple choice and essay type questions and will contribute 30% and 30% toward the final grade, respectively. However, the final exam will be a comprehensive one spanning all topics covered by the course. In both cases, students will be examined for comprehension of course matter, interpretation of the course matter, and application of course knowledge. **Absolutely** no make-up examinations will be allowed. Students experiencing any difficulties must consult the office of the Dean of the school of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Grading

The final course grade will be based on the students' performance in continuous assessment and in the final test/exam as follows:

Item	Score
Individual (written) Assignment	15%
Group (Written) Assignment	15%
Mid-term Examination	30%
Final Examination	30%
Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Letter grades will be awarded as follows:

90	-	100	A
87	-	89	A-
84	-	86	B+
80	-	83	B
77	-	79	B-
74	-	76	C+
70	-	73	C
67	-	69	C-
64	-	66	D+
62	-	63	D

60 - 61 D-
Below 59 F

I **DO NOT** negotiate final grades or assign extra credit work. Please see me about your progress during the semester if you are concerned, not after the class is over.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

A lecture-discussion/debate format will be used in this course. Learners will be welcome and encouraged to ask questions and to interject with comments. Those who will have done the assigned readings will find the lecture-discussion format useful because they will be able to ask and answer questions effectively as we build the day's lecture/discussion together.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. *Acquaintance with course outline:*

The course outline is a binding contract between you (the learner) and me (the instructor). You should read it carefully and ensure that you understand all course requirements, policies, assignments and your responsibilities as a student. This is important because requirements are **not** up for re-negotiation at the end of the semester. Ask questions if you are confused about anything on the syllabus.

2. *Responsibilities:*

In terms of my teaching philosophy, I believe that a good course is the function of the serious efforts of the instructor as well as of the students. In this regard, you can expect me to do my job as much as I expect you to do yours. Remember that at the University level, 75 percent of all learning should take place outside of the classroom. As your instructor, I will:

- Meet with you during the allotted time in timely and consistent basis, devoting each class period to fulfilling the course objectives and extending your knowledge of sociology.
- Be available during my office hours, keep appointments you have made with me, and return your emails or phone calls within the minimum time possible.
- Adhere to the course syllabus and schedule of assignments, and announce any changes in class, on blackboard or by email.
- Grade and return your work in a timely manner with appropriate feedback, and make myself available for any questions, clarifications, and suggestions for improvement that you have concerning your evaluation.
- Conduct myself in a mature and civil manner at all times.

In return, I expect that you will:

- Attend all lectures and any other sessions that are necessary for you to successfully complete this course, arriving on time and remaining for the duration of the class. No technical appearances will be allowed and lateness beyond a certain point will not be entrained as it disrupts learning. **I reserve the right to lock out students who are late beyond 10 minutes.**
- Read all assigned chapters in your text and any other assigned materials before class, be prepared to discuss them during class and contribute meaningfully to class discussion. In this regard, you are reminded that the course text remains your responsibility as it is my policy is not to teach it.
- Complete all required work and evaluations, adhering to mandated deadlines listed in the syllabus.
- Display a willingness to perform within the parameters of the course.
- Conduct yourself in a mature, civil manner according to the class policies and avoid disruptive behaviors (such as talking out of turn, beeping electronics, being disrespectful toward others) that interrupt the flow of our activities, discussions and the learning process in general.

3. *Grades Policy:*

- Grades reflect the individual's level of knowledge and not vice versa; meaning that knowledge should take precedence over grades. A learner who is knowledgeable (i.e., has a good command of the his/her course matter) will normally score good grades. On the other hand, good grades without supporting knowledge do not add value to your mental growth; if anything, they will most likely destroy rather than make you.
- *Grades are earned not awarded.* Those who work hard for a passing grade will reap the fruits of their sweat and so will those who work tirelessly for a failing grade.
- At the USIU passing grades range from A to D while F is the official failing grade. It is your responsibility to work for the kind of grade you desire during assignments, tests, and examinations.
- Anyone who registered for this course in search of an easy (cheap) grade is in the wrong place and is strongly advised to drop the course as soon as possible before the USIU add and drop doors are slammed shut.

5. *Academic dishonesty:*

Plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This is consistent with the USIU Academic Code of Conduct and Ethics. If you are unsure

about what constitutes cheating, I'll be glad to clarify it for you. **Anyone found to be engaging in plagiarism and other forms of cheating with respect to assignments and tests will receive a failing grade for the course. Those who engage in plagiarism and related forms of cheating in the final examination will not only receive a failing grade for the course but will also earn a one year suspension from the University.**

6. *Ethics:*

I will strive to nurture a free and tolerant environment for stimulating discussion. All students will be treated equally and absolutely no discrimination against any perceived "other" will be tolerated at any time. Although participation in class discussions is required, no student will be forced to share any personal information with the class involuntarily.

7. *E-mail Communication:*

You are free to communicate with me by e-mail. However, note that I am not available round the clock and may not check my work e-mail especially over the weekends or on holidays. Also, I do not monitor incoming e-mail throughout the day.

8. *Consultation:*

If you have questions or need help, please come and see me or e-mail me. Do not wait until the last week of the semester if you are having trouble. There is little either of us can do at that point. You can also see me any other time **but** by appointment only.

In general terms, when grading written work such as the reaction papers and the short answer questions on your exams, I use the following guidelines in assessing your grades:

A. Not only a complete grasp, but fluency with the course concepts, including independent thought. Fluency means an understanding that allows you to appropriately apply the course material to your personal life and observations of the world around you with original examples.

B. A good grasp of the concepts and an ability to apply them. B work is a very good, though not thorough understanding of course material, including attempts that mostly succeed in applying concepts.

C. A middling grasp of the course material demonstrated by an ability to repeat the material. C work is being able to mimic the course material, without a demonstration of a good understanding. This would include repetition of already provided examples.

D. An incomplete or tenuous understanding of the course material. D work has noticeable to significant gaps in the understanding of the material. This might be demonstrated by confusing terms, lack of clarity in explanations, or inappropriate examples.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I will take attendance in each class. Sociology is about social life, and the variety of experiences with society that each of you bring with you into this classroom can help shape rich, informative discussions for everyone. Therefore, my hope is that you will not only come to class, but use your own experiences living in society, to help illustrate and understand, or challenge and debate the issues and concepts you will encounter throughout this semester. The more of you that are here each day, the better the chance that everyone else can benefit from the diversity of perspectives you all bring with you.

Excused Absences: If you miss class due to an emergency or an illness, please do your best to notify me ahead of time, and also you must bring me documentation of the reason for your absence (Doctor's note, etc) or I will count you absent.

COURSE SCHEDULE

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR AND ASSIGNMENTS

	TOPIC	DURATION
I.	<p><u>INTRODUCTION:</u> Welcome and Introduction</p> <p><u>Unit One: Social Problems & Social Inequalities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociology and the Study of Social Problems • Seeing Problems Sociologically-page 2 to 4 • Sociology and the Study of Problems • Using our Sociological Imagination • Definition of Social Problems • Social Construction of Social Problems • List of Social Problems • The Bases of Inequality: Social Class, Ethnicity, and Race • The Bases of Inequality: Sex Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Age • Reading Anna Leon-Guerrero's <u>Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action.</u> 	Weeks 1 - 2

II	<p><u>Unit Two: Social Problems and Institutions of Socialization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociological Perspectives on the American Family • The “Mommy Tax” and Family Policy • Sociological Perspectives on American Education • Education Policy, Education Choices • Sociological Perspectives on the Media • Media as a Power Institution and Exam Review • Readings: <p>Anna Leon-Guerrero’s <u>Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action.</u></p>	Week 3-5
III	<p><u>Unit Three: Poverty, Crime, and the City</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Problem of Poverty • Sociological Perspectives on Crime; “Street” Perspectives on Crack • Crime and Inequality; Crime Policy • Sociological Perspectives on Cities and Suburbs • Urban Decay, Urban Policy • Exam Review • Reading: <p>Anna Leon-Guerrero’s <u>Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action.</u></p> <p>EXAM THREE</p>	Week 6-8
III	<p><u>Unit Four: The Environment, War, and Social Movements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociological Perspectives on Environmental Problems • The Social Reproduction of Elite Power • War and Terrorism • State Policy and Terrorism • Social Problems, Social Movements • Re-Cap and Exam Review • Reading: <p>Anna Leon-Guerrero’s <u>Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action.</u></p>	Week 9-13
1V	<p><u>EXAMINATION</u></p>	Week 14

SOME TIPS FOR READING

Students often find it difficult to complete and digest all the reading they have to do – whether in this or other sociology courses, or in any of their classes during college. The following guidelines are intended to help you develop strategies for getting the most out of your assigned readings.

1. Don't just read the article

Many students approach academic reading assignments as they would reading a novel; trying to read and understand each word. As a result, they often get frustrated, confused, or just plain bored. Skim the assignment first so that you can recognize and focus on the relevant sections when you get to them.

2. Put the article in context

Think about who the author is, why s/he wrote the article, when it was written, how it contributes to other articles of similar topics, how it is useful, etc.

3. Read actively

Don't read lying down. If the article is putting you to sleep, you won't get anything out of it. Rather, read in a place where you can think about what you are reading. Be prepared to take notes (see below).

4. Don't highlight

Using a highlighter encourages passive reading. Rather than using a highlighter, try using a pen or marker (in a color that stands out) to underline key phrases, make notations in the margins, and to note any questions or ideas that come to you.

5. Summarize

Finally, after finishing an article take a few moments to summarize the article. Using a single sheet of paper, write on the top half of the paper what the author said. Use the bottom half of the paper to write what you think about what the author said, including any questions or ideas that came to mind. This is a great habit to develop for all your courses.

Student Contract

SOC3301: Social Problems

Read the following statements carefully then fill in your name, your student identification number and append your signature on the space provided if you agree to abide by these statements.

If you do not feel you are able to abide by this contract, you should consider dropping the course before the time for add and drop elapses.

1. I have read and understood the guidelines, requirements and course policies as stipulated in the course outline.
2. I understand what my duties and responsibilities are and will discharge them accordingly.
3. I have read and understood USIU's Academic Code of Conduct and Ethics, including the policy on plagiarism and other forms of cheating.
4. I am conversant with USIU's class attendance policy and will abide by it.
5. I understand that attendance does not equal technical appearances. That is, lateness beyond 10 minutes after the commencement of learning will be treated as non-attendance.
6. I understand that I am to maintain contact with my instructor through observing the provided office hours, by appointments or via the email system.
7. I understand that in addition to the typical 3 hours of contact time per week, to perform well in the course requires at least 5 additional hours of study time per week. This means I should expect to spend a minimum of 8 hours per week on this course.
8. I understand that active reading and participation are required for this course.
9. I will be civil at all times with my classmates and my instructor and expect civility from others.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ ID No: _____