

Peru State College
Peru, Nebraska
College of Professional Studies

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Number: SOC 300 (8-week session on-line)
Course Title: Contemporary Social Problems
Prerequisite: None
Credit Hours: 3.0 semester hours

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the causes, treatment, and prevention of selected social problems with particular emphasis on the problems of conflict and inequality.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course students should demonstrate competence in:

1. The theoretical frameworks through which sociologists study social problems.
2. The methodological approaches sociologists employ to research social problems.
3. The possible solutions to social problems.
4. The ability to be critically engaged with the social issues of the day.

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Introduction

Week 1 Sociology: Studying Social Problems (1)

Problems of Social Inequality

Weeks 2 & 3 Poverty & Wealth (2), Racial & Ethnic Inequality (3), Gender Inequality (4), Aging & Inequality (5)

Problems of Deviance, Conformity, and Well-Being

Weeks 4 & 5 Crime & Criminal Justice (6), Violence (7), Sexuality (8), Alcohol & Other Drugs (9), Physical and Mental Health (10)

Problems of Social Institutions

Weeks 6 & 7 Economy & Politics (11), Work & the Workplace (12), Family Life (13), Education (14), Urban Life (15)

Global Problems

Week 8 Population & Global Inequality (16), Technology & the Environment (17), War & Terrorism (18)

REQUIRED TEXT and Readings

The required text for this class comes with a supplemental reader comprised of relevant and timely articles published in the New York Times. You must purchase the text with this supplement.

- Macionis, J. (2008). *Social Problems* (3rd ed.). NY: Pearson.
- New York Times Supplement that accompanies Social Problems, 3rd edition

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Weekly problem review, weekly discussion board, course project

GRADING SCALE

A = 90-100

B+ = 85-89

B = 80-84

C+ = 75-79

C = 70-74

D+ = 65-69

D = 60-64

F = 0-59

Americans with Disabilities Act – Reasonable Accommodations

If you have a disabling condition that may substantially limit your ability to participate in this class, please let me know of your concerns, then contact the Department of Student Support Services for additional information and assistance.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the basic principles of a college community. Peru encourages and expects the highest standards of academic honesty from all students. Please note that cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are monitored and subject to disciplinary action.

Academic Dishonesty: This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Cheating on an examination, quiz or other required work
- Handing in any assignment or project that is not your own work
- Plagiarism: the use of any material without giving credit to the source and/or direct copying without indicating so with direct quotation marks and appropriate citation. Please ask the instructor if you need clarification.
- Falsifying information, signatures, etc. on any course related form

Engaging in academic dishonesty can result in an automatic failure in the course!

I approach each student as a person of worth and ability, as a capable adult in a college course. I want you to get the most out of your educational experience in this class. I invite you to ask questions, request help or just discuss the material and relevant information at any time.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Chapter readings. Keeping up with the weekly readings is especially important since we do not meet in person for lectures, etc. Reading the required text and supplemental readings for this class are imperative to grasping the concepts, completing the weekly assignments, and participating in the discussion board.

2. Discussion Board. This requirement provides you with the opportunity to interact with your classmates to discuss the material and share understanding, experiences, and ask questions. Every week, in addition to posting your problem review in the required assignment link, you will be expected to post it in the discussion board as well. You will then be required to complete an additional post in response to a fellow student—something reflective and substantive. Posting your chapter response is worth 5 points; your response to a fellow student is worth 10.

3. Problem review, analysis & response. These assignments provide an opportunity for you to interact with the material and apply the concepts.

Each week you will need to select one of the assigned problems for your focus. Your review, analysis, and response must include:

- A brief explanation of the problem including research defense for its classification as a problem
- A review of the theoretical explanation you feel best defines this problem
- Discussion of a social policy addressing the problem
- Discussion of the solution you feel to be the most plausible
- Inclusion of a NYT article highlighting this particular issue

Additional explanation of this assignment is located in the Assignments folder.

4. Course project. This project may be completed on your own, or in small groups of 2-3. I prefer this project to be completed and submitted as a PowerPoint presentation; however, do not require it. This project consists of an in-depth look into one specific problem you are passionate about. You will be required to

- Define the problem
- Explain the societal implications of the problem
- Identify groups or programs (governmental or private) already involved with the problem
- Suggest an additional or alternative solution
- Identify how others can get involved and/or what we can do to help.

Additional discussion of this assignment is located in the folder titled “Course Project” found under the Assignments tab.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

Completing your own work is imperative in this course. I realize many students may work and study together; however, you must complete and write your own answers. If you submit work that matches someone else’s work, closely enough that it is obvious you both turned in the same assignment, you will both earn a zero for that assignment, and depending on the situation, fail the course.

Grading: I will grade all your work and have your results posted within one week of when it was due. To review my comments regarding your assignments, simply click on the individual grade of the assignment. Also, be sure to check your grade book regularly! If you do not agree with a grade or do not have a grade for an assignment (and it’s been over a week since you submitted it), be sure to email me right away.

Late work is NOT tolerated! If your assignments are not posted by the assigned due date, they will automatically drop down to 1/2 credit. I strongly suggest you talk with me ahead of time if you believe your work may be late. For example, if you have a death in your family, are going out of town, are having computer problems, etc., e-mail or call me ASAP to work something out.

Late work will NOT be accepted after week 6.

Withdrawing: You may withdraw from the class for any reason during the first week of class only. After the “drop” deadline, a student may request a withdrawal. This “W” grade does not count on your GPA. If you quit attending, you will receive an “F” for the course. Another option (only at the request of the student and permission granted by the instructor) is an incomplete (“I” grade); a contract is signed, and work is completed within a reasonable time period. Refer to Peru’s college catalog regarding stipulations for an incomplete grade.

On a final note: The items discussed in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. You will be notified of any changes.