**SOC& 201 SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

**5 CREDITS**

**QUARTER/YEAR**

Instructor: Kayleen U. Oka, Ph.D.

Office Hours:

Office Phone:

Email:

**Contacting the Instructor:**

I am available during my office hours or by individual appointment. You can reach me by email or leave a message on my office phone.

**My commitment regarding our communication:**

Our shared communication is vital for your success in this class. I am available online throughout the work day on weekdays and at least once per day during the weekend. I am committed to returning your e-mail within 24 hours on a weekday. On the weekend, I usually check at least once in the morning. If you do not hear from me within this time frame, it may mean that I didn’t receive your email in which case please resend it or call me directly.

**My expectation of YOUR commitment to our communication:**

Students who ask questions or seek advice early are often the most successful academically. Please feel free to ask questions about the assignments, readings or other course materials at any time during the course. Should you fall behind in your performance, it is in your best interest to talk to me early. Email or call me to schedule a time that works for you.

You are responsible for getting missed notes, announcements and assignments given in class from your classmates or our CANVAS site.

You should have updated contact information (phone and email) on file with the college. It is highly recommended that you check your email (CANVAS and other email addresses) frequently to be apprised of any course changes.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Every society faces problems that are more than just individual troubles. In this course we will use a sociological perspective to critically examine the bases of social inequality and the resultant problems in society. We will explore concerns related to families, education, the workplace, the media, poverty, crime, drug abuse, health issues, cities and suburbs, the environment and global problems. We will also look at social action and possible solutions to these problems through both individual and community efforts.

This class is “web-enhanced” which means we will have a CANVAS site to supplement our learning. It will house the syllabus, assignment guidelines and powerpoint lectures (posted after the lectures). We can also hold discussions on this site and you can check your grade. If you have never used CANVAS before, please give yourself time to familiarize yourself with it. Each student should have an alternate email address in CANVAS.

Our course content is divided into four overall units that each have several weekly topics. Each week you are expected to complete the weekly readings and participate in in-class discussions as well as complete any assignments. Written assignments should be submitted in-class as a hard copy unless otherwise noted.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Apply some of the major sociological theories and their critiques to the understanding of social problems and the social change/action emerging from them.
2. Assess patterns and causes of social problems in social institutions in light of research findings.
3. Identify how social issues are impacted by local and global conditions.
4. Analyze the intersections of race, class , gender and other social dynamics to social problems.
5. Identify social policies and social changes/actions arising from social problems.

**REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS:**

All course materials will be made available online.

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS/ASSESSMENTS:**

**Participation Activities**

DUE: Throughout the quarter

WEIGHT: 15% of total grade

These activities would include: small and large group discussions, seminars, film discussions, reading comprehension questions, topical free writing, in-class worksheets on theories and concepts and other student-centered activities.

Assessment of satisfactory completion of these activities is dependent upon the objective being assessed and at the discretion of the instructor. The criteria of the assignment of participation points should be clear to students prior to or during the activity.

An example of this could be the showing of a film and a corresponding question worksheet. The instructor would provide objectives for the activity and the expectations for completing along with the point value.

**Connected Knower**

DUE: Weeks 3, 6 and 10

WEIGHT: 30% (10% each)

This assignment (done 3 times throughout the quarter) contains 3 sections. In section one, students will identify main arguments and claims from select lectures, readings, statistical data, films and guest speakers. In section two they will connect some of the claims through an overarching theme, explaining the significance of the theme in society. In the last section they will reflect upon how the theme has significance to their own lives and lived experience.quarter)

**Concept Map**

DUE: Week 4

WEIGHT: 10%

Using a specific social problem discussed in this unit, students create a concept map that displays the connections between the local and global influences of this social problem. In this assignment, students should use the concept mapping technique to visually identify at least 6 (total) relevant local and global influences connected to a social problem.

**Media Analysis**

DUE: Week 7

WEIGHT: 20%

From their concept mapping assignment, students will choose a particular social problem that interests them and then research related news articles from three different countries (one being the U.S.). After analyzing the content (words, images) in the different media, students will write a 4-5 page paper highlighting the sociological theory(ies) through which the problem and action/solution are framed and identify local and global social conditions to investigate further.

**Final Project & Presentation**

DUE: Week 10

WEIGHT: 30%

In the final project, students will use the knowledge gained over the quarter to demonstrate their understanding of a social problem and the real life organizations that attempt to address the issue. In small groups, students will first choose a social problem they are interested in; and then through scholarly research identify the causes, scope, and consequences. They then will choose and research an organization that attempts to address this social problem, examining through Internet research the organization’s mission, approach, resources, and effectiveness. The final project will synthesize student learning in the course through a mini paper with bibliography, poster and oral presentation.

**COURSE GRADING POLICY:**

Participation = 15% (due throughout the quarter)

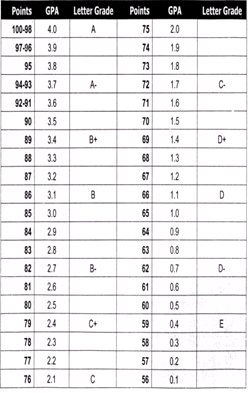
Connected Knower = 30% (3 x 10% each; due Weeks 3, 6 and 10)

Concept Map = 10% (due Week 4)

Media Analysis= 15% (due Week 7)

Final Project & Presentation = 30% (due Week 11)

I make it a goal to return graded assignments within a week, allowing for a bit more time for larger assignments. I am happy to meet with you regarding any assignment either before it is due or after it is graded.



**SAMPLE ADA STATEMENT**

The ADA is designed to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to access academic programs and successfully complete their studies. Students with documented disabilities who need course accommodations, have emergency medical information, or require special arrangements for building evacuation should contact me within the first two weeks of class. For further consideration contact Disability Support Services at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or go to [location].

SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULE

**Course Schedule\***

**WK# TOPIC REQ. READING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Introduction to the course and each other. What is a social problem? Social action and change | Wade. Lisa [The Social Construction of Social Problems](http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2009/09/30/the-social-construction-of-social-problems/)  Putnam, Robert D. Thinking about Social Change in America  VIDEO –[The Story of Change](http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-change/) | “Story of Change” quiz and discussion |
|  | Using Theory to Understand Social Problems | Barkan, Chap. 1  Dunn, Ruth [Sociological Paradigms](http://cnx.org/content/m33962/1.2/) | Understanding Theory participation assignment |
| 2 | Patterns of Inequality – Poverty | Barkan, Chap. 2  Ehrenreich, Barbara [How America Criminalised Poverty](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/aug/10/america-poverty-criminalised/print) |  |
|  | Patterns of Inequality – Race and Ethnicity | Barkan, Chap. 3  Kaba, Amadu Jacky [Explaining the Causes of the Black-White Wealth Gap in the United States](http://www.scirp.org/journal/PaperInformation.aspx?paperID=5802) | Participation assignment |
| 3 | Patterns of Inequality – Gender, Sexual Orientation and Sexual Behavior | Barkan, Chap. 4  Dunn, Ruth [Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation](http://cnx.org/content/m33864/latest/?collection=col11183/1.13) | Library visit |
|  | Sexual Orientation and Behavior (cont’d) | Barkan, Chaps. 5, 9 | **CONNECTED KNOWER #1 due** |
| 4 | ISSUES IN INSTITUTIONS – The Changing Family | Barkan, Chap. 10  Bianchi, Suzanne M. and Casper, Lynn M. [“Population Bulletin: American Families.”](http://www.prb.org/Publications/PopulationBulletins/2000/AmericanFamiliesPDF458KB.aspx)  [US Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Children and Families. Child Maltreatment 2010.](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm10/index.htm) | **CONCEPT MAPPING – IN CLASS** |
|  | Schools and Education | Barkan, Chap. 11  McNamee and Miller [The Meritocracy Myth](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url?hl=en&q=http://digilib.bc.edu/reserves/ed435/jeff/ed43509.pdf&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm3LD91Yp1g8zZzL7fOeJZnxqM64kg&oi=scholarr) | Participation assignment |
| 5 | Schools and Education | VIDEO –Robinson, Sir Ken [Changing Education Paradigms](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html)  VIDEO - 60 Minutes [The SEED School](http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6837821n&tag=mncol;lst;2) |  |
|  | Media | Parenti, Michael. ["Monopoly Media Manipulation"](http://www.michaelparenti.org/MonopolyMedia.html)  [Beckerman, Gail. "Tripping Up Big Media"](http://www.alternet.org/story/17178/tripping_up_big_media/)  Hetsroni, Amir. ["Violent Crime on American Television: A Critical Interpretation of Empirical Studies](http://www.scirp.org/journal/PaperInformation.aspx?paperID=18431)” | Participation assignment |
| 6 | Work and the Economy | Barkan, Chap. 12  Keel, Robert. [“The McDonaldization of Society.”](http://www.umsl.edu/%7Ekeelr/010/mcdonsoc.html)  AAUW [Simple Truth About the Pay Gap](http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/simpleTruth.cfm) | Participation assignment |
|  | Work and the Economy (cont’d) | VIDEO Excerpts from “The Corporation”  VIDEO –Neuwirth, Robert  [The Power of the Informal Economy](http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_neuwirth_the_power_of_the_informal_economy.html) | **CONNECTED KNOWER #2 due** |
| 7 | Health and Healthcare | Barkan, Chap. 13  Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). [“Disparities Report Highlights Healthcare Challenges for Racial and Ethnic Minorities.”](http://www.ahrq.gov/news/press/pr2012/qrdr11pr.htm)  Bezruchka, Stephen [Health Equity in the USA](http://depts.washington.edu/eqhlth/pages/BezruchkaUSHealthInequality10Cor.pdf)  VIDEO - [Unnatural Causes 1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INc1a6u8yP4&feature=BFa&list=UUt1Df8qkClmfBpctQMoFFfA), [Unnatural Causes 2](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8fuzh4d544&feature=BFa&list=UUt1Df8qkClmfBpctQMoFFfA) | MEDIA ANALYSIS due |
|  | SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE SOCIAL AND NATURAL WORLD – Alcohol and other Drugs | Barkan, Chap. 7  Rogers, Thomas [Why College Students Love to get Wasted](http://www.salon.com/2011/08/28/college_drinking_interview/)  Drug Policy Alliance [New Solutions for Drug Policy](http://www.drugpolicy.org/facts/new-solutions-drug-policy) | Participation assignment |
| 8 | Crime and Criminal Justice | Barkan, Chap. 8  Olson, Dan [Racial Disparities: An Overview](http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/200111/12_newsroom_colorofjustice/overview.shtml) |  |
|  | Crime and Criminal Justice | VIDEO - Dow, David [Lessons from Death Row Inmates](http://www.ted.com/talks/david_r_dow_lessons_from_death_row_inmates.html) | Participation assignment |
| 9 | Population and the Environment | Barkan, Chap. 15  Sachs, Jeffrey. ["The End of Poverty"](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1034738,00.html)  VIDEO - Gapminder, [Population Explained with IKEA Boxes](http://www.gapminder.org/videos/population-growth-explained-with-ikea-boxes/) |  |
|  | Population and the Environment | Slavery Footprint, [How Many Slaves Work for You?](http://slaveryfootprint.org/)  VIDEO - [Landfill Harmonic](http://youtu.be/fXynrsrTKbI) | Participation assignment |
| 10 | GROUP PRESENTATIONS |  | **CONNECTED KNOWER #3 due** |
|  | GROUP PRESENTATIONS |  |  |
| 11 | PRESENTATION DEBRIEFING/FINAL PAPERS DUE |  |  |

\*This schedule is subject to change.