**Social Problems (SOCY 2013-002)**

Fall 2013, MWF 1-1:50pm

Classroom: MUEN E113

**Instructor**: Cristen Dalessandro **Contact Information:**

**Office Hours: Email:** crda9581@colorado.edu

Wednesday 2-4pm or by appointment **Office location**: Ketchum 414

**Course Description**: Sociology is the scientific study of society, social relationships, and social institutions. In this course, we will examine the interconnectedness of macro social forces and individual lives in the context of “social problems” in U.S. society. In this course, we will focus on understanding the facets of social inequality in our society.

Throughout the course you will work on developing your *sociological imagination*—that is, we will work together as a class on developing the conceptual tools that will allow you to critically re-examine the world and gain a better understanding of the social world beyond your own personal experiences.

**Required Texts:** You are responsible for obtaining a copy of *Social Problems Readings*, edited by Ira Silver (available in the book store). All additional readings will be available online through the learning portal. All readings listed on the schedule for a specific week should be completed by Monday of that week (with the exception of the first week of class- have those done by Friday, please!). The reading in this class is moderate and I expect you to complete it and participate in discussion. The difficulty of any reading quizzes will be directly related to how diligent you are about completing the readings. Be smart- be prepared to participate in class!

**Grading**:

Grading for the class will be determined by the following breakdown:

In-Class Activities/Quizzes 10%

Exam 1 20%

Exam 2 20%

Exam 3 30%

Action and Solutions paper 20%

TOTAL 100%

**In-Class Activities/Quizzes (10%)**: From time to time, I will provide you with in-class activities, group work assignments, or quizzes. YOU MUST BE PRESENT FOR THESE ACTIVITIES AND THERE IS NO MAKE-UP WORK. Since there is no grade for attendance in this class, these activities will benefit the grades of those students who attend class regularly.

**Exams (70% of total grade)**: There will be three exams in this class. These exams are not cumulative and will cover the material in one of the three sections that break down the class. Testable material includes lecture, readings, and movies falling under the appropriate section. The format of exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Please refer to the schedule for which weeks we will have our exams. Exams are always on Fridays.

**Action and Solutions Paper (20%)**: This research and reflection paper will be divided into 3 parts. First, you will choose a social problem and provide a short overview on the history of your social problem. Then you will research an organization that is taking steps to reduce the negative consequences of your chosen problem. The organization of your choice must be taking ACTION to reduce the problem (not just preaching or blogging about it being “bad”). Lastly, you will reflect on the problem and the organization you found and you will tell me what you think of their tactics and what your suggestions would be for reducing your chosen problem. This paper will be worth 20% of your final grade. You will be provided with further instructions for the paper in early October. This paper will be your “final” and will be due during finals week.

**Grading Scale:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | **Percentage** | **Description** |
| A  A- | 93-100  90-92 | Exceptional: Exceeds all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably greater than what is required. The quality of the work is considerably above the class average and impressive to the evaluator. |
| B+  B  B- | 88-89  83-87  80-82 | Good: Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required. |
| C+  C  C- | 78-79  73-77  70-72 | Average: Meets all required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work. |
| D+  D  D- | 68-69  63-67  60-62 | Below average: Does not meet all the required elements of the assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is considerably lower than satisfactory. |
| F | 59 and below | Failing: Almost none of the requirements of the assignment are met and/or the quality of the assignment is well below basic standards of writing, comprehension, and/or ability to follow instructions. |

**General Class Policies:**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and [http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/). If you have an undocumented disability that impacts you in your student role, please see me during the first two weeks of class to discuss options.

**Academic Honesty**: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, lying, bribery, threatening behavior, and aid of academic dishonesty. Those found to be in violation of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Code Council. Please refer to [www.colorado.edu/honorcode](http://www.colorado.edu/honorcode) to view the specific guidelines. If you have any questions related to this policy, please contact the Honor Code Council at [honor@colorado.edu](mailto:www.colorado.edu/honorcode). I don’t have a soft spot for cheaters.

**My Policies**:

1. No laptops or cell phones are allowed in this course. Unfortunately for you, a history of student laptop privilege abuse has caused me to ban laptops in class! If you have a disability that requires you use a laptop, please see me immediately so we can discuss accommodations.

2. There are no make-ups for in-class work.

3. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. For in-class notes, please contact one of your classmates (see “class contacts” at the end of this syllabus)

4. In this class, as in many sociology classes, our discussions will often focus on controversial issues that may arouse intense feelings and disagreement. While enthusiastic discussion and debate of these issues is wholeheartedly encouraged, insensitive or mean-spirited comments targeted towards anyone in the class based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, ideas or beliefs will not be tolerated.

5. As the instructor, I reserve the right to ask you to leave if I believe your words and/or actions are contributing to a classroom environment where not all individuals (myself included) feel respected and safe.

**Schedule** (All readings marked with an asterisk\* are available online; for all films, you will receive a viewing guide)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Topic | Readings | Events? |
| 8/26-8/30 | The Sociological Imagination & What is a Social Problem? | Collins\*, Mills\* |  |
| 9/4-9/6 | Understanding Social Problems | Schwalbe\*, Gamson\* | NO CLASS- MON |
| 9/9-9/13 | Bodies and Health | Silver, chs. 3, 6  Berkman\* |  |
| 9/16-9/20 | Bodies and Health | Schlosser, pgs. 128-201\* (quick read) | **Film: “Supersize Me”** |
| 9/23-9/27 | Bodies and Health | Schlosser, pgs. 202-233\* | **Exam 1- 9/27** |
| 9/30-10/4 | Family- Adolescent Sexuality | Risman and Schwartz\*, Schalet\* | **Film: “The Education of Shelby Knox”** |
| 10/7-10/11 | Family- Parenthood | Silver 22, 28  Edin & Kefalas\*, Cherlin\*, Avishai\* | Distribution of detailed final paper instructions |
| 10/14-10/18 | Racial Inequality & Racism | Bernasconi\*, Farley\*, Zhou\*, Leung\* |  |
| 10/21-10/25 | Racial Inequality & Racism | Silver 4, 11, 26 | **Film: “Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes”** |
| 10/28-11/1 | Racial Inequality & Racism | Rios\* | **Exam 2- 11/1** |

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| Week | Topic | Readings | Events? |
| 11/4- 11/8 | Racial Inequality & Poverty | Urrea\*, Silver 14 |  |
| 11/11- 11/15 | Poverty/Economic Inequality | Silver 8, 28, Rank\*, Block\* |  |
| 11/18-11/22 | Poverty/Economic Inequality | Ehrenreich\* | **Film: “Class Dismissed”** |
| 11/25-11/29 | N/A | N/A | FALL BREAK |
| 12/2-12/6 | Gender- Feminist Viewpoints | Hobson\*, King\*, Jacobs\*, Harris\* |  |
| 12/9-12/13 | Policy & Outcomes | Silver 29, 30, 33 | **Exam 3- 12/13** |
| 12/16-12/19 | N/A | N/A | **FINAL PAPER- Due Date TBA** |

**I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus if need be throughout the semester. However, should any part of it change, you will be notified accordingly**

Peer Contact Info (your source for getting missed material)

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_email\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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