

SOCI 2105
Social Issues: Perspectives in Sociology
Kennesaw State University (Marietta Campus)
Fall 2015
M/W 2:00-3:15pm
Atrium Building Room 152

Instructor: Blair Yates

Office: Room 4005, Social Science Building

Office hours: Monday & Wednesday: 4:00-5:00pm or by appointment

Email: byates3@kennesaw.edu (Email is the best way to reach me. I check email frequently, but please allow 24 hours for a response. In the subject line of the email, please write "SOCI 2105.")

Course Description:

This is one of four disciplinary options (Anthropology 2105, Sociology 2105, Geography 2105, Psychology 2105) that can be taken to satisfy the Social Issues requirement in the general education curriculum. A common set of world social issues is critically examined from one of four social science perspectives. The discipline of sociology focuses on how culture and social structure combine to shape the way human beings live their lives and define and solve their problems.

This course provides students with the knowledge and tools necessary to critically examine world social issues from the social science perspective of Sociology. The discipline of Sociology focuses on how culture and social structure combine to shape the way humans live and how they define and solve their problems.

Prerequisites: ENGL 0099 and READ 0099, if required

Student Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives:

1. Students will engage and interpret course content and themes by participating in discussion, class activities, and writing assignments, focusing on separating myths from facts and making distinctions between personal issues and social problems.
2. Students will apply sociological perspectives to social issues and translate the primary sociological theories, methods and themes into their real life by expressing how these relate to themselves and others.
3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of course content through examinations, quizzes, and various assignments.
4. Students will analyze, interpret, and articulate facts and ideas in writing and develop their critical thinking skills by actively participating in discussions, class activities, and writing assignments.
5. Students will reflect on each topic, concentrating on the varied social structural factors that facilitate and help perpetuate social issues.

Required Textbook:

Leon-Guerrero, Anna. 2015. Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action, 5th edition. Sage Publications (ISBN: 9781483369372)

Course Requirements and Expectations:

Attendance:

Regular class attendance and participation in discussions are expected. Lectures and PowerPoints will not be posted on D2L, therefore it is necessary for you to be in class to obtain the information presented.

Readings:

There is one required textbook for this class. You are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings for that day and be prepared to discuss them.

Reading Quizzes:

In lieu of taking attendance, I will give a short reading quiz every 2-3 classes at the beginning of class. Quizzes will consist of one or two short answer questions about the readings for that day. Each quiz will be worth 5 points. You will not be able to make up reading quizzes. Quizzes will be 5% of your final grade.

Social Issues Assignments:

You will have two social issues assignments throughout the semester that require you to *use a sociological perspective to critically analyze* a news report or article, video, magazine article (or other media source) that covers a current social issue/problem. Your paper should **not** merely be a summary of your article/report/video, but should address **at least three** of the following questions:

- What makes the issue/problem a *social* issue/problem?
- What social factors (location, inequality, policy, the media, etc.) might impact this social issue?
- What theoretical perspective(s) can you apply to this particular social issue? How so?
- What are the consequences of the social issue? What are some policy implications?
- If it is an empirical piece, do you think the methods and data are appropriate for addressing the research questions?

In your paper, you should:

1. Address the major problem that you will critique.
2. Provide a thoughtful response using the above questions as guidelines. Make sure to develop your thoughts into supported arguments. For example, instead of telling me that you disagree with the author, tell me why you disagree.
3. Use course material (i.e. lecture, discussions, readings, videos, etc.) to support your arguments (i.e. avoid too much personal opinion)!!!

Each assignment should cover a social issue we have discussed in class thus far (you may only select a topic once). Each assignment will be due one class period before the exam for that section (for example, if you have an exam on Wednesday, your assignment will be due the Monday of the same week). You will turn in the article (or link to video or other media source

if it is not an article) with your paper. Social issues assignments count for 15% of your final grade.

Formatting Guidelines:

Papers must be 2 – 3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, using APA or ASA formatting. Be sure to cite all of your sources in a separate reference page. Plagiarism is NOT acceptable and will result in a ZERO. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.

Assignments will be graded based on:

1. Ability to think critically
2. Analysis of social issues through a sociological lens
3. Ability to apply your knowledge of the topic (based on the textbook, lecture, etc.) to your media topic
4. Organization—introduction, body, conclusion—(in other words your paper should not be one big paragraph), clarity, grammar, etc.

Exams:

There are three exams during the semester, including the **final exam on 10/21** (during normal class time). Exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Exams will cover lecture and discussion material, assigned readings, and videos. There will be no make-up exams unless you notify me at least 24 hours in advance and provide written documentation of your excused absence. You will need to bring a pencil and small (4 ¼ x 11) scantron to each exam. Each exam will be 20% of your final grade.

Group Project:

During the second or third week of class, you will choose groups for your project based on topic of interest. In this project, you will address the following: What is the social problem that you have chosen? Describe the nature of the social problem. What are the current efforts to alleviate the social problem? Choose one effort to focus on in detail. Your group will sign up for a general social problem and then choose a subtopic within that area. For example, if you choose the topic of urbanization and suburbanization, you can choose the problem of homelessness. Your presentation will describe the problem in general, and then focus on one specific way the problem is being solved. I encourage you to get even more specific when talking about efforts to alleviate the problem, such as an innovative affordable housing program in Chicago.

Your presentation should be about ten minutes long. In addition to the presentation, your group will turn in a **3-5 page paper** with the information that you covered during the presentation, and any additional information that may be needed. This paper is due at the beginning of class on the day that you present. About two weeks before your presentation, your group will turn in a **short paragraph** describing the topic on which your group will present. The group project, including the short topic paragraph, presentation, and 3-5 page paper, is 20% of your final grade. Further instructions and details can be found on D2L.

Grading:

Activity	Points	Percentage
Exam 1	200	20%
Exam 2	200	20%
Exam 3	200	20%
Reading Quizzes	50	5%
Social Issues Assignments	150	15%
Group Project	200	20%
TOTAL	1000	100%

- A 90 and above
- B 80 - 89
- C 70 - 79
- D 60 - 69
- F 59 and below

Classroom Policies:

Electronic Devices:

Cell phone use will not be tolerated during class—I do not want to see or hear them. Laptops, iPads, etc. are a distraction to you and your classmates, and are not permitted in the classroom unless it is deemed necessary for your learning, which must be determined by the Office for disabled Student Support Services (documentation is required).

Respect:

Please do not pack up your books before class ends. Doing so is disrespectful and will result in added class time. Please be respectful during class discussion; remember this is a college classroom and you should respect everyone’s opinions, even if you do not agree with them.

Arriving Late/Leaving Early:

Students who are more than 10 minutes late to class or who leave class more than 10 minutes early will be counted as absent. If you know you will be late for class or need to leave early, please notify me beforehand.

Extra Credit:

The professor may provide extra credit opportunities throughout the semester for the entire class. There will be no extra credit assignments offered to individual students.

Academic Integrity:

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduates Catalogs. Section III of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional of computer facilities and/or

services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

Services for Students with Disabilities:

Support services, program accessibility and reasonable accommodations are available to persons with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Support Services. The student must visit this office to begin the process for accessing services and assistance. In most cases, certification of disability is required. Please contact them for more information: Carmichael Student Center Addition, Second Floor, Suite 267; 770-423-6443

Violence and Harassment:

Kennesaw State University ("KSU" or the "University") does not condone and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or sexually exploitative or harassing behavior of any kind. KSU is committed to providing programs, activities, and an educational environment free from sex discrimination. The University has implemented this policy and affirms its responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to sex discrimination, especially sexual harassment and sexual violence; take immediate steps to eliminate the sexual harassment or sexual violence, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects; and support all students with appropriate resources regardless of their status as complainant or accused. Questions about this policy should be directed to the KSU Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Title IX officer by telephone at (678) 797-2904. You may also visit the University’s EEO website <http://www.kennesaw.edu/eo/index.html> for more information.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit as part of a course (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged.

Writing Center:

The Writing Center is more than a free service available to all members of the university community; it is a place where anyone who writes—those who love it, those who struggle with it, and everyone in between—can come for help in becoming a better writer. In fact, that is the goal of the Writing Center: to produce not just better writing but better writers. Please visit it at: <http://www.kennesaw.edu/english/WritingCenter/index.shtml>

Tentative Semester Schedule

(***NOTE: The schedule and content of the course outline are tentative and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Deviations from the schedule will be announced in class or on D2L. Students are responsible for keeping up with all schedule changes***)

Dates	Topic(s)	Assignments (DUE on the indicated date)
8/17 & 8/19	Course Introduction; Intro to Sociology and Social Problems	8/17: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 1 8/19: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 1
8/24 & 8/26	Social Class and Poverty; Racial & Ethnic Inequality	8/24: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 2 8/26: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 3
8/31 & 9/2	Gender & Sexual Orientation Inequality 9/2: EXAM 1	8/31: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 4 & 5; SOCIAL ISSUES ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE 9/2: STUDY!
9/7 & 9/9	9/7: LABOR DAY—NO CLASS 9/9: Family; Education	9/9: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 7 & 8
9/14 & 9/16	Work and the Economy; Health and Health Care	9/14: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 9 9/16: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 10
9/21 & 9/23	Media 9/23: EXAM 2	9/21: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 11; SOCIAL ISSUES ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE 9/23: STUDY!

9/28 & 9/30	Alcohol & Other Drugs; Crime	9/28: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 12 9/30: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 13; TOPIC PARAGRAPH DUE
10/5 & 10/7	Urbanization & Suburbanization; The Environment	10/5: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 14 10/7: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 15
10/12 & 10/14	War & Terrorism 10/14: Group Presentations	10/12: Leon-Guerrero, Ch. 16 10/14: FINAL PAPER DUE ON D2L
10/19 & 10/21	10/19: Review/Catch-up 10/21: FINAL EXAM	STUDY!!

*Last day to add/drop: 8/24

** Last day to withdraw without academic penalty: 10/7