

# SOCI 2251: SOCIAL PROBLEMS

SOC 2251 Section 1  
Social Problems  
Social Sciences Bldg 2021 (TR 11:00AM-12:15PM)  
Fall (First Semester) 2015

Instructor: Dr. Brian Starks  
Pilcher Bldg. 136  
Phone: (470) 578-6710  
Office Hours: TR 9:30-10:30 AM,  
or by appointment  
E-mail: [bstarks3@kennesaw.edu](mailto:bstarks3@kennesaw.edu)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Understanding contemporary social problems requires a *sociological imagination*. In this course, we will investigate topics ranging from the social construction of race and gender to the social reproduction of social class and inequality and in the process, we will develop your sociological imagination. We will examine claims about the changing American family and study contemporary social conflict within religious faith traditions. Finally, there will be active class discussions examining how the sociological imagination can speak to relevant current events and politics (e.g. globalization, military conflict and democratization in the Middle East, Africa, and South East Asia, global warming, etc).

## Readings for the Course:

The following required books have been ordered through the University and area bookstores:

Lafeber, Walter. Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism. W.W. Norton and Company, 2002.

**ISBN:** 0393323692

Gedicks, Al. Resource Rebels: Native Challenges to Mining and Oil Corporations. South End Press, 2000. **ISBN:** 0896086402

Additional Supplemental Readings will be available online

## OFFICE HOURS:

My office is in the Pilcher Public Services Building in room 136 (the College of Human and Social Sciences Wing). My office hours are on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 to 10:30 AM. If the listed hours are inconvenient, we can set up another time to meet. I am most easily reached by e-mail at [bstarks3@kennesaw.edu](mailto:bstarks3@kennesaw.edu).

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, Section II 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 misuse 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. **The full policy is published at the following link:** (<https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct>)

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance will be taken for class. Every student is expected to participate in class. This means contributing to class discussions as well as active participation in class exercises, which will be held at announced and unannounced times throughout the course. Examples of in-class exercises include short writing assignments, small group discussions, and in-class projects. **You cannot get credit for class participation unless you are in class and are contributing.**

### **ENROLLMENT STATUS:**

**Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a class; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal. Please refer to the official KSU policy for potential reimbursement if you withdraw from classes.**

### **CLASS CONDUCT:**

As a sign of respect to me and to your fellow classmates, please get to class on time. Do your best to avoid walking in late, stepping out, or leaving early. Put away laptops and cell-phones when class begins – neither is allowed during class time. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about kids or other family members, keep it on vibrate. Please don't read newspapers, talk to your friends, sleep, or pass notes during class. Not only are those things disrespectful and disruptive to me and your classmates, but they also limit your ability to participate in class and understand the material. If you must enter late or leave early, please inform me before class begins and take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade (see below). Class discussions of the issues we study can stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussions must be scholarly. **Failure to abide by these principles can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.**

#### **Scholarly comments are:**

Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement; related to the class and course material; advance the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs; are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

#### **Unacceptable behaviors are:**

(a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or religious and political beliefs. (b) Interrupting your instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be called on by the discussion leader or myself to prevent this problem. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors (see above). (d) Using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students, and being physically aggressive. (e) Ignoring your instructor's authority to protect the integrity of the classroom. Anyone who violates these guidelines will be asked to cease and desist and may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

### **GRADES:**

Grades will be based upon your percentage of the total number of points on exams, written work, and attendance. A= 90-100%; B= 89.99-80%; C= 79.99-70%; D= 69.99-60%; F= Below 60%.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Because each person in a class contributes to its ultimate success or failure, I expect everyone to attend our class meetings, read and think about the day's readings beforehand, work on the in-class projects, and participate in the give and take of class discussion. Not meeting this expectation is grounds for a lowered grade. Over the course of the semester, there will be (a) three exams covering the substantive topics and readings in that section of the course, (b) six diagnostic quizzes over the readings (the two lowest quiz grades will be dropped), and (c) a journal with at least 10 entries applying course material to everyday situations and a 2-page summary essay reflecting on these observations.

Exams will each count 20% toward your final grade (for 60% total), the 4 highest quizzes will each count 5% (for 20% total), and the journaling assignment will count for 15% (obviously, the service learning alternative, if chosen, will replace this 15%). Participation and in-class work will account for the final 5%. The dates on which you will take the exams are shown below.

First Exam: Sep 22

Second Exam: Oct 22

Third Exam: Dec 10

Exams: Exams will have two parts: (1) Objective: This section will include multiple choice, true false, and matching items. (2) Essay: There will also be one long essay question on each test. Failure to be present for an exam will result in a grade of zero for that exam and this grade will be included in determining final grades. If you are unable to take an exam, you must call me with a valid excuse prior to the time of the exam.

## COURSE OUTLINE:

This outline will give you an idea of how the course will unfold. Please complete the readings by class time on the day that they are listed in the syllabus. This will make information presented in class clearer and will give us as a class the chance to talk about and react to the readings in a more thoughtful way. (This is only a tentative outline and is subject to revision at any time during the semester)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic and Readings</u> (Readings are to be completed by the class date)
Tuesday Aug 18	Introduction to the Course
Thursday Aug 20	The Sociological Imagination I: Imagining Society  Reading: <b>C. Wright Mills</b> , "The Promise" in <i>The Sociological Imagination</i>
Tuesday Aug 25	The Sociological Perspective  Reading: <b>Hilliard</b> , "Televised Sport and the (anti) sociological imagination"; <b>Tobin, Wu, and Davidson</b> , "Socialization in Three Cultures: A Difficult Child in a Japanese Preschool"

**Be Prepared for QUIZ 1**

Thursday Aug 27	Sociology and Culture  Reading: <b>Harris</b> , "The Cannibal Kingdom"; <b>Reingold and Wike</b> , "Confederate Symbols, Southern Identity, and Racial Attitudes."
Tuesday Sep 1	The Social Construction and Meaning of Race  Reading: Hughes, "Reality as a Collective Hunch: That Powerful Drop;" Staples, "Just Walk on By;" Kramer, "A Rescue without Cheers" (listed online as <b>Three Short Readings on Race</b> )
Thursday Sep 3	Racism and Science (Did racism originate in bad science?)  Reading: <b>Gould</b> , "The Finagle Factor;" <b>Szasz</b> , "The Sane Slave"
Tuesday Sep 8	The Sociological Imagination II: Consequences of Racism  Reading: <b>Brandt</b> , "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study"
Thursday Sep 10	"Considering Sources and Shifts in Racism" (or How can we change?)  Reading: <b>Sacks</b> , "How Did Jews Become White Folks?"
Tuesday Sep 15	Educational Expectations, Race, and Educational Performance  Reading: <b>Steel</b> , "Thin Ice: 'Stereotype Threat' and Black College Students"
Thursday Sep 17	Wrap-up Institutions, Race, and Stereotyping
Tuesday Sep 22	<b>FIRST EXAM</b>
Thursday Sep 24	A Sociologist Reflects on the American Dream  Reading: Young, Jr., " <b>Navigating Race</b> : Getting Ahead in the Lives of 'Rags to Riches' Young Black Men"
Tuesday Sep 29	Wealth and Income Inequality: Are We Becoming a Less Equal Nation?  Reading: Pref. and Chpt. 1 of <i>Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism</i>
Thursday Oct 1	Poverty and Welfare Myths  Reading: Chpts. 2 and 3 of <i>Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism</i>
Tuesday Oct 6	The Other America

Reading: Chapters 4 and 5 of *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*

**ASSIGNMENT: At least 5 journal entries due before beginning of class (submit via dropbox on D2L)**

**Oct 7**

Last Day to Withdraw Without Academic Penalty

Thursday Oct 8

The Sociological Imagination III: Examining the Emergence of a McWorld  
Wrap-up and review of “Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism”

Reading: Chapters 6 and 7 of *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*

Tuesday Oct 13

Demography and Growth

Reading: **Jones**, “The Pig and the Python”; **Pollan** “Farmer in Chief” (& handouts)

Thursday Oct 15

Social Movements and Social Change

Reading: **Chapters 1 and 2 of *Resource Rebels***

Tuesday Oct 20

Wrap-up of Resource Rebels

Reading: **Chapters 3 and 4 of *Resource Rebels***

Thursday Oct 22

**SECOND EXAM**

Tuesday Oct 27

Growing Up Male and Female in America

Reading: **Hall**, “Bully in the Mirror”

Thursday Oct 29

“Doing Gender”

Reading: **Berkowitz and Padavic**, “Getting Ahead or Getting a Man”

Tuesday Nov 3

Trends in Family Life

Reading: **Stephanie Coontz**, “The Way We Wish We Were”

Thursday Nov 5

Divorce and Its Consequences for Adults and Children

Reading: **Furstenberg**, “The Future of the Family”

Tuesday Nov 10

Explaining Crime and Deviance: Biological vs. Social Psychological Theories

Reading: **Murphy, Waldorf, and Reinerman**, “Drifting into Dealing: Becoming a Cocaine Seller”; **Jankowski**, "Islands in the Street: Urban Gangs as Economic Organizations"

Thursday Nov 12      Crime, Corporations, and the State: Street and Suite Crime

Reading: **Dowie**, “Pinto Madness”

Tuesday Nov 17      Explorations in the Social Psychology of Work

Reading: **Marx**, “The Unintended Consequences of Undercover Work”; **Hochschild**, “The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling”

Thursday Nov 19      Religion and Parental Values

Reading: **Starks**, “Who Values the Obedient Child Now?”

**ASSIGNMENT: Complete Journaling Assignment due beginning of class**

Nov 23-29            Fall Break (Happy Thanksgiving!)

Tuesday Dec 1      Religion, Values, and Politics

Reading: **Starks**, “Two Approaches to Religion and Politics”

Thursday Dec 3      Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time: Can You Make a Difference?

Reading: **Schneider**, “Saving Konrad Latte”

**Thursday Dec 10      FINAL EXAM, 10:30am – 12:30 pm**

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**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to notify the instructor as early in the semester as possible. Verification from KSU Student Disability Services is required. All discussions will remain confidential. ([http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu\\_dev/dsss/welcome.html](http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/welcome.html))

### **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Students will be allowed to miss class due to observance of religious holidays but they are still responsible for all materials assigned outside and covered in class on the day(s) missed. Note: You must talk with your instructor in advance of missing a class for religious holiday observance reasons.

### **INCOMPLETE GRADES**

*Missing work is insufficient reason for a grade of Incomplete (I).* An **I** will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. Note that College of Humanities and Social Sciences guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.

**SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:** This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.