# SOCIAL PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soc230-02</th>
<th>Dr. Ali Kamali</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom: Popplewell 205</td>
<td>Office Hours: MWF 8:00-8:50</td>
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<td>Office Location: 212 E Popplewell</td>
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## DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to examine some of the problems (as outlined below) associated with American society. The course aims to give the students a sociological perspective by understanding the causes and consequences of some pressing issues that affect the lives of millions of people.

The main objective of the course is to critically analyze certain abnormalities in social life in America. It is the nature of this course to allow for an exploration of the dark side of our society—hence the title, “Social Problems”. The topics and their contents discussed in this course are highly sensitive. Analyzing sensitive social issues requires open-mindedness and must be devoid of bias or ethnocentrism. Therefore, any critical analysis should **NOT** be misconstrued as “America bashing”.

The course follows the sociological tradition that puts to the test popular myths, misconceptions, and commonsense notions in contemporary society. In addition to being issue oriented, the course attempts to incorporate major theoretical perspectives in Sociology. The orientation of this course diverts from that of psychology or social work in terms of its group or societal level analysis.

Overall, the course looks at the sources of social problems and the reasons for the failure of the system in alleviating these problems in society. While the focus is on the United States, a comparison with other societies will be presented whenever appropriate. Such attempts will provoke in students a talent for comparative and critical analysis. It is hoped that the knowledge gained in this course will help you understand your everyday experiences since the course material challenges what you already know; and the way in which they fit into what you already know.
THEMATIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

1. To be able to define social problems and distinguish them from other types of problems.
2. To identify various social problems such as
   a. the effects of power, wealth, social class on society; the consequences of capitalism as a global economic system
   b. the mutual effects between humans and the environment
   c. the effects of social status, inequality and poverty on individuals
   d. the impacts that cultural diversity and racism have on society
   e. the way sexism and ageism shape social trends
   f. the problems associated with intimate relationships and the future of the family
   g. the crisis in the educational institution
   h. crime and justice in America

REQUIRED READINGS:

Other resources to be handed out throughout the semester.

FORMAT:
An outline regarding the weekly assigned readings is presented below. Additional materials will be communicated to you electronically ONLY through Moodle.

There are several instructional formats in this course:
1. Formal lectures and discussions
2. Accompanying videos.
3. PowerPoint slides for each chapter are presented in the respective weekly block.
4. Each block may contain additional handouts that complement the text chapters.
5. in class activities.
6. Your participation in individual or group discussions is mandatory (this is where absenteeism counts the most). You are responsible for knowing what was said and done in the course.

You will not be able to pass the course by simply doing the reading assignments and taking the quizzes.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR
You should maintain “etiquette” at all time while in class or posting something online. Read your statements before sending them to me or someone else in this class. Your
behavior and enthusiasm are **THE MOST** encouraging factors for an instructor to be attentive to the subject matter in the course. Behavior disrupting this virtual environment, or interfering with other students' ability to learn, may be grounds or justification for dismissal from the course. Using vulgar and deliberately offensive language while communicating with others in the course, conducting private messaging, or anything unrelated to the course are some examples that can damage the learning environment.

**Title IX: A Note on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct**

Consistent with its mission, Missouri Western seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and University policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Missouri Western encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the Student Handbook (https://www.missouriwestern.edu/studentaffairs/wp.../handbook.pdf) about what happened so they can get the support they need and Missouri Western can respond appropriately.

There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Missouri Western is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following website:

Students have received information via email regarding training regarding Title IX. Student employees may have additional required training. Please follow the link in the email sent to your MWSU student account to complete the training. Students who do not complete the training will receive a hold on their account, prohibiting future semester enrollment until the training is complete. These training courses will ensure that all students are appropriately educated about these important regulations.

**DISABLED STUDENT INFORMATION**

Students who are seeking accommodation must first provide documentation of needed accommodations to the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) located in Eder Hall, Suite 203. Once accommodations have been approved by the ARC, students are responsible for notifying their instructors of those accommodations. This should be done within the first two weeks of classes. Accommodations are not retroactive.
ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Currently, Missouri Western State University does not have an attendance policy in place. The attendance policies are drafted by the instructor.

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR SOC 230:

Attendance is considered as "meeting" regularly three times a week throughout the semester. You are responsible to know what went on in class the day you were absent.

1. A week period consists of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

2. Six (6) or more unexcused absences throughout the ENTIRE semester will result in an F grade for the course regardless of the grades earned on the quizzes, assignments, and other required activities in class.

3. You will not be granted the option of a make-up or extension if your unexcused absence is on the day that such requirements are due.

4. You would have to provide sufficient documentations to validate your absences as excused.

5. Excused absences are defined by the faculty member teaching the course. It is the discretion of the instructor to define and decide what constitutes an excused or unexcused absence.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
Since honesty in the course is required, knowingly furnishing false information to the instructor, as well as college, constitutes a violation. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another’s work, falsifying documents or academic records, submitting a paper written for another class without new or different information, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University.

NCSS STATEMENT:
This section is only relevant to the students who plan to major in History with Secondary Education emphasis. These students are required to save all evidence of progress (assignments, course grade, written projects, etc) as they are returned to them. These artifacts can be included in your senior portfolio for graduation purposes. This course is intended to address the following NCSS themes:

1. Culture and Cultural Diversity (chapter 10)
2. Time, Continuity, and Change (chapter 5),
3. People, Places, and Environment (chapters 3-5, 8-10)
4. Individual development and Identity (chapters 8-10, 13, & 16)
5. Individual, Groups, and Institutions (chapters 6, 8, 9)
6. Power, Authority, and Governance (chapter 2)
7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption (chapters 2, 11)
8. Science, Technology, and Society
9. Global Connection (chapter 3)
10. Civic Ideas and Practices

REQUIREMENTS

A. **Quizzes**: a series of short quizzes to prepare you for the weekly assignments. **Because of time constraint, there will be no make ups** (see Make-up Policy below).

The quizzes will be given online. These online quizzes are timed. **You cannot open the quiz and leave or close it immediately hoping to come back to continue. An abandoned or closed quiz will automatically be treated by the system as submission; it will not allow for revisits. If you do this, it will be considered as a make up and you will lose further makeup privileges.**

MAKE-UP POLICY:

a. There will be no make-ups for missed assignments.

b. Only one make-up for the quizzes may be given under special circumstances if your reasons for missing the quiz are legitimate (with legitimate documentation). You may be scheduled, at the instructor’s discretion, to take the quiz. However, make-ups are given within 24 hours after a requirement is scheduled.

c. **Sufficient Documentation**: Some examples of legitimate excuses are: car accident, hospitalization, military appointment, jury duty, and the like.

Doctors’ appointments, notes indicating “forgetfulness,” “not feeling good,” “I had another test or assignment,” and other similar excuses are not legitimate excuses, unless your physician directly orders you not to move at all for a period of time. You must notify the instructor of your case immediately.

Submit copies of the police report, court warrant/citation, hospital admission, etc. either electronically or via snail-mail. The professor will make a decision after reviewing the supporting documents. **The professor has the prerogative to deny make-ups if the student does not provide valid documents for missing a quiz or any other requirements.**

d. A make up is not a right. It is a privilege. If you miss the day in which the make-up date was set, you will be denied of the make up.

B. **Discussions and contribution to the course**. Contributions reflect how much you contribute to 1) the weekly in-class sessions and 2) to the team projects (see below).
During each session, discussion questions will be posed, and everyone’s contribution and participation is required.

The grade for contributions also reflects your teamwork and cooperation when preparing the assignments. Your team members will evaluate you for this part of the grade. The discussion grade will be based on your contribution: number of posts; contents and quality of your posts; accuracy of your assertions; whether you responded/reacted to other posts; and whether your posts generated further discussions.

C. Team Assignments: a series of five team assignments (almost one per two or more assigned chapters). These team assignments are listed in each block and are dated. You will work with other members of this class in teams of 3-5 students. The teams have already been set up randomly. Each team member will be assigned the task of coordinating the team. I will rotate the coordination task as we move on.

These assignments are small research papers (approximately 800-1200 words). A specific question is posed to your team, and your team will be required to research the answers by employing the assigned text chapters, the Internet, and other sources from the library if need be. Since these are group assignments, you would have to work together as a team and submit your assignment as a team. The team coordinator is responsible for putting the assignment together and submit the final draft. However, an individual team member may not receive credit for not contributing to the assignment.

Since this is a team effort, all team members are equally responsible for all steps of completing a project. There will be a reduction of 10% per each day that an assignment is handed in late. You will receive an F grade for an assignment handed in 4 days later than the due date.

The team project should be prepared based on the following format:

   a. Title page: This page contains information about the title of your paper, your name, the course number and name, date, and the instructor’s name. For example:

      Effects of Birth Order on Educational Achievement

      Names of the team members

      SOC 230, Social Problems

      Date

      Instructor’s name
Notes: Please insert a page break here before starting your introduction.
Please make sure that the following highlighted subtitles are included in the paper (the content of the assignment is divided by subheading/subtitles. For example,

b. **Introduction**: a statement of purpose and intention of the paper—what is being studied here? What is/are the question(s) your team is addressing?

c. **Analysis and Findings**: This is the body of your assignment. You are required to use the assigned text chapter and at least four (4) ACADEMIC (REFEREED) JOURNAL ARTICLES (one per each member of the team) relating to the theme(s) of the question(s) your team is addressing. Use the library resources (such as Ebsco Host, etc) available online. Since this is a sociology course, my preference is that you would look up mainly the sociological journals—e.g., The American Sociological Review, the Sociological Quarterly, The American Journal of Sociology, Social Problems, Symbolic Interactionism, Sociological Spectrum, International Journal of Sociology, etc. Other relevant items can be found from the Social Science Abstracts and/or Sociological Abstracts.

**INTERNET OR VANITY PERIODICAL CITATIONS are not academic journals!**

You may use the Internet for citing STATISTICS OR DATA. If using internet cites, these will be in addition to the four (4) articles from published academic journals.

d. **Conclusion**: Include a summary of the points discussed in the paper: What were the major points in the paper? What is the team’s overall assessment of this issue that it has investigated?

**Bibliography page**: Include the appropriate APA (American Psychological Association) style of referencing of your text and the four (4) journal articles you have employed in this assignment. Please check the American Psychological Association’s Website for the referencing style manual. A brief handout is provided in the course page.

**PLEASE NOTE**: Since these are team efforts, avoid using “I think…. Also, please make sure to run plagiarism checks before you submit the final draft. The Internet has many free online plagiarism check sites such as Turnitin (which is available in Moodle), Mydropbox, Copyfind, Eve. Wordcheck, to name but a few. I do not have any preference, but I run a second check when I receive the papers. Any paper with more than 10 percent match will be returned back for cleaning.
Your resubmission will be treated as late submission. See below for policy on late submissions. Plagiarism is a University violation of the codes of academic honest. Depending on its severity, it may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University.

It is the responsibility of the team coordinator to put the assignment together in a coherent format before submitting the final product. Each time, the team coordinator will assemble a coherent essay, check for plagiarism, the APA style of referencing, and send the semi-final version back to the team for their review, proof reading, and the final touches.

After receiving the semi-final draft, it is also the responsibility of each team member to communicate back to the team coordinator further inputs. Team coordinator must incorporate these suggestions, after which time ONLY ONE DRAFT of the assignment should be submitted by the team coordinator to the group “Assignment” tab.

**SOME PROCEDURAL SUGGESTIONS:** Each team coordinator must set reasonable deadlines to receive the drafts from the members. A plan of activities could look like the following:

a. Each team members will spend approximately a few days on researching and writing; each member submits his/her rough draft (with reference citation(s)) to the team coordinators no later than the deadline set for the rough drafts.

b. Each team members will spend approximately one week on researching and writing; each member submits his/her rough draft (with reference citation(s)) to the team coordinators no later than the Saturday of the first week.

c. The team coordinators will spend a few days to compile and compose the semi-final draft of the assignment; return the draft to the team member by Wednesday of the second week.

d. Team members review the semi-final draft; quickly send back to the team coordinator their feedback.

e. Team Coordinators will have a few days to correct and incorporate the team’s suggestions and feedback; and submit the assignment.

**IMPORTANT POLICIES**

1. If the team coordinator feels a portion submitted by a member is incomplete or irrelevant, communicate the issue with the instructor for further actions.

2. If any member does not contribute to an assignment, his/her name should be removed from the title page. That member will not receive a grade for assignment.
This plan may seem simple and straightforward, but there needs to be a sense of responsibility coordination, punctuality, leadership, and taking the initiative in each of you. It has worked before; I do not foresee any reasons that it may not work this time.

Please remember that while there is one grade for the content, the grade per person may vary according to their contributions and how the team views each member.

**There is no need to panic if a team member is slacking off and is not meeting the deadline; simply do not include his/her name on the assignment.** The team coordinator will have this discretion, but does not have the right to filter out a student’s work. It is your responsibility to check with the team coordinator to make sure if everything is OK. The team coordinator can also assign tasks, and contact the team for feedback.

Please type in MS Word (only) documents, approximately 800-1200 words. **I AM NOT ABLE TO OPEN ANY OTHER FILE TYPES.**

The above plan may seem simple and straightforward, but there needs to be a sense of responsibility, coordination, punctuality, leadership, and taking the initiative in each of you. This plan has worked in the past several years; I do not foresee any reasons why it cannot work this time.

Please remember that while there is one grade for the content, the grade per person may vary according to their contributions and how the team viewed each member on each assignment.

**METHODS OF EVALUATION**

Your course grade will be determined based on the points accumulated from the above items. The following scale will be used for evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
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The following scale will be used for evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 - 100%</td>
<td>(243-270 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 - 89%</td>
<td>(216-242 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 - 79%</td>
<td>(189-215 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 - 69%</td>
<td>(162-188 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% or below</td>
<td>(161 points or less)</td>
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Borderline grades will be elevated to the next higher grade if the student has perfect record of attendance, submission and participation.

**TOPICAL OUT-LINE**

Aug. 31-Sept. 4  Introduction to the Course (Chapter 1)  
The Sociological Approach to Social Problems  
a. defining social problems  
b. problems of definition

Sept. 7-18  Wealth and Power (Chapter 2)  
a. capitalism and socialism  
b. the U.S. Economy  
NCSS Themes: 6, 7

Sept 21-25  World Population and Global Inequality (Chapter 3)  
a. The Third World  
b. Poverty, Food and Hunger  
NCSS Themes: 3, 9

**September 21 Quiz 1 (Chapters 1 and 2)**  
**September 21 Assignment 1 Chapters 1 and 2) due**

Sept. 28-Oct. 2  Demographic Changes in the United States (Chapter 5)  
a. the new immigrants  
b. the aging society  
NCSS Themes: 2, 3

Oct. 5-9  Poverty (Chapter 7)  
a. the extent and causes of poverty  
b. measuring poverty  
c. myths about poverty  
d. costs to society  
NCSS Theme: 5

**October 5  Quiz 2 (Chapters 3 and 5)**  
**October 5  Assignment 2 (Chapters 3 and 5) due**

Oct. 12-16  Racial and Ethnic Inequality (Chapter 8)  
a. explanation of racial inequality  
b. discrimination against minority groups  
c. costs to society  
NCSS Themes: 3, 4, 5
Oct. 19-23  Gender Inequality (Chapter 9)
   a. learning gender
   b. causes of gender inequality
   c. costs of sexism to society
NCSS Themes: 3, 4, 5

   October 19  Assignment 3 (Chapter 7) due
   October 19  Quiz 3 (Chapters 7 and 8)

Oct. 26-30  Crimes and Justice (Chapter 12)
   a. crime in society
   b. the system of justice
   c. costs to society
NCSS Themes: 3, 4, 5

Nov. 2-6    Families (Chapter 15)
   a. family life in America
   b. family breakdown
   c. violence in the family
NCSS Themes: 3, 4, 5

   November 2  Quiz 4 (Chapters 9 and 12)
   November 2  Assignment 4 (Chapters 8 and 9) due

Nov. 9-13   Education (Chapter 16)
   a. characteristics of education
   b. education and inequality
   c. education and promoting equality if opportunity
   d. effects of education on society
NCSS Themes: 3, 4, 5

Nov. 16-20  Threat to the Environment (Chapter 4)
   a. Environmental Problems
   b. Effects on humans

   December 2  Assignment 5 (Chapters 15 and 16) due

   December 18 Quiz 6 (Chapters 4 and 19)

PLEASE NOTE: There is no final exam for this course since you were taking quizzes and completing assignments.

HAVE A GOOD BREAK 😊