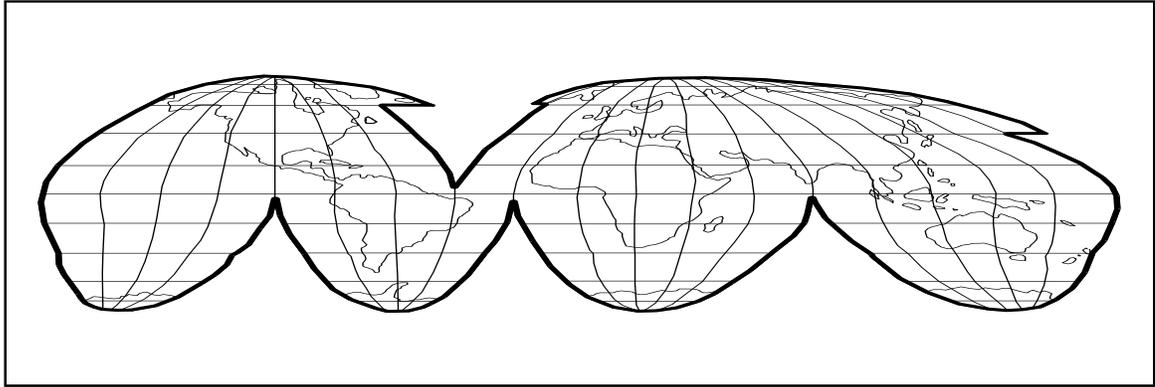


SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND PUBLIC POLICY

SOCIOLOGY 102

Spring 2013



REQUIRED BOOKS

Kozol, *The Fire in the Ashes*
Chang, *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism*
Wilkinson & Pickett. *The Spirit Level*
Zucchino. *Myth of the Welfare Queen*
Lopez. *Third and Indiana*

Instructor: F. Kurt Cylke Jr. Sturges 122/ 245-5335

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday & Thursday 1:00-2:30

or by Appointment

Course Objectives: As members of a "democratic" society, meaningful participation stems from the reality that true enfranchisement depends upon knowledge of how our society works. This course will look at sociological explanations for certain aspects of modern society's failure to meet expected ideals. Using basic sociological principles, we will attempt to develop a sound explanatory frame work, and acquire a "useable knowledge" base about the social problems confronting American society.

The nature of this class makes it advisable for you to read a daily paper (New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle) or a news weekly. The information you find in the paper will help not only in the class room discussions but in the tests as well. I encourage you spend some time each week at the *Arts and Letters Daily: An Updated Report of News and Reviews* web site: <http://www.aldaily.com>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are several grading options you can choose from. At the beginning of the second week of class you will be required to choose one of the options.

OPTION ONE: Suggested for juniors, Seniors, and all Sociology Majors.

- Two Tests (15% each)
- One 18 to 20 page Research Paper (50%)
- Participation (20%)

If you select this option you are required to purchase *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers* and meet with me to discuss your paper topic at least four times during the semester.

OPTION TWO: Suggested for Students taking this course for social science core.

- Two Tests (20% each)
- One short 10 to 12 page research or position paper (25%)
- One Project (15% each)
- Participation (20%)

OPTION THREE: Suggested for first year, second year and transfer students.

- Two Tests (25% each)
- Two Projects (15% each)
- Participation (20%)

RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS

Choice of a topic for a research paper is up to the student. I would suggest you peruse the texts and select a "social problem" compatible with your academic major and general interests. The goal of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to develop a more informed understanding of issues confronting the modern world. In your quest for an informed position, I request that you avoid the use of "Mass Media" sources. Unless you have my express permission, *Readers Digest, Time, Newsweek, Jet, U.S. News and World Report*, are not to be used as sources for your paper. I will be available to discuss paper topics, help identify sources, and go over outlines. As a minimum you should use five books and three journal articles.

PLAGIARIZED PAPERS WILL BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS WORK SHEET

You are expected to keep up with the readings. You should be reading about 5 to 7 hours per-week for this course. If you have mastered the readings and still have time please use it to surf the Arts and Letters Daily web site. We will work our way systematically through the following list. Our progress will depend upon length of class discussions and real world intrusions (war, famine, pestilence, riots and the like) into the course. The dates for each topic are a guide and should be taken as rigid

IMPORTANT DATES:

MID-TERM EXAM: March 12, 2013

FINAL EXAM: 8:30 Section – May 14th 8:00am
 10:00 Section – May 14th 12:00pm

PROJECTS & PAPERS DUE: Last day of Class Tuesday May 7th .

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT ELECTRONIC MATERIALS. I WILL NOT OPEN E-MAIL ATTACHMENTS.

January 22 Introduction

Readings: *C. W. Mills "The Sociological Imagination"
 * W. Ryan "Blaming the Victim"
 * T.R. Young "The Promise of Sociology"

Studying Social Problems

January 24 Social Problems and Electoral Politics
 Mass Media and Framing

January 29 Drunk Driving

Social Science Perspectives on Social Problems

January 31 Social Pathology
 Social Disorganization
 Functionalism
 Conflict Theory

Economics: The Essentials *February 5 – February 14*

Readings: **Ha-Joon Chang, *Things 1,2,5,8,13,16,19,20***
 Wilkinson and Pickett: *Preface, Part One, Part Two (pick two), Part Three*
 Stiglitz, *Preface and America's 1 Percent Problem
 Smith, *When Capitalists Cared
 * **Geoghegan, *Consider the Germans***
 * **Gordon, *Is U.S. Economic Growth Over?***
 * **Saez, *Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the U.S.***
 * **Hungerford, *Taxes and the Economy***

February 5	Documentary: Poletown Lives
February 7	Eminent Domain Capitalism, Socialism and the Public Good
February 12	Internal Contractions of Market Economies
February 14	Internal Contractions of Market Economies Continued

Electoral Politics vs. The Politics of Power

Readings:	<p>*Domhoff, <i>Who Rules America?</i> *Bellant, <i>The Coors Connection</i> * Mayer, <i>Covert Operations</i> *Rich, <i>The Billionaires Bankrolling the Tea Party</i> *Lakey, <i>How Swedes and Norwegians Broke the Power of the 1 Percent</i> * Kogan, <i>Federal Spending, 2001 Through 2008</i> *Kull, <i>Misperceptions, The Media and the Iraq War</i></p>
February 19	Pluralist and Elite Models of Political Power Documentary: <i>The Second Front Media Censorship and the Gulf War</i>
February 21	Documentary: <i>The American Dream at Groton</i> Documentary: <i>The Emma Willard Experience</i>
February 26	C.W. Mills – The Power Elite W. Domhoff – The Ruling Elite
February 28	C.W. Mills – The Power Elite W. Domhoff – The Ruling Elite
March 5	Power and Economics in Global Context
March 7	Power and Economics in Global Context
March 12	Midterm Exam Due Paper and Project Meetings
March 14	Wrap up Part One

Class Inequality and Poverty

Readings:	<p>Zucchino, <i>Myth of the Welfare Queen</i> Lopez, <i>Third and Indiana</i></p>
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Kozol, *Fire in the Ashes*

March 26	Documentary: <i>Taylor's Campaign</i>
March 28	Poverty in Historical Perspective : By the Numbers
April 2	Poverty in Historical Perspective : The Working Poor
April 4	The Welfare State
April 9	The Welfare State – The Myth of the Welfare Queen

Education

April 11	Educations Role
April 16	Great Day – No Class
April 18	Education Continued

Race and Ethnicity

April 23	Race and Ethnicity
April 24	Race and Ethnicity

Medical Industrial Complex

April 30	The Medical Industrial Complex
May 5	The Medical Industrial Complex
May 7	Wrap up Part Two

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED (D or Better) FOR YOU TO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE FOR THIS COURSE.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST REFLECT ORIGINAL WORK FOR THIS COURSE. WORK DONE TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS OF ANOTHER COURSE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

PLAGIARIZED PAPERS WILL BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE.

NOTE: This syllabus and accompanying work sheet are subject to modification throughout the course of the semester. Therefore it is advisable to attend class regularly to be aware of any modifications that may be made to the syllabus.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The following is a list of suggested projects which students have successfully executed in the past. You are not limited to this list. In fact, you are encouraged to develop your own special project. It is possible to work together with other individuals in the class on a joint project. However, if you are planning a joint project or a

project not listed below, clear it with me before you begin. All projects not listed below must be approved by me no later than March 12th.

I: Print Media: Select a social problem that has been receiving a significant amount of Media attention. Beginning with the February 1st 2013 issue of a daily news paper clip print or photocopy ALL relevant articles. At the end of the semester, present a portfolio with all articles and a 3 to 4 page sociological analysis of the events. This project can be done on line. Please check the *Arts and Letters Daily* web site for links to most major media outlets.

II: Select a social problem. Identify two recent (non fiction) academic books (published between 2005 and 2011) that have dealt with this topic and write a review of each book (400-500 words each). If you are uncertain as to the differences between a book report and a book review, see me. These will be due at the end of the semester.

III: Select two novels or two short stories which deal with the same social problem. Working with the theoretical approaches provided in the text and lectures, analyze the novels. Compare and contrast the author's interpretation and presentation of the social problems. This project should result in a 3 to 5 page paper.

IV: Construct five family budgets (see me for work sheet). The family budgets (two adults & two children) should be based on the income distribution by population fifths and one final budget for those whose income is in the top 5%. How many Americans fall into each category? Include a two to three page write up. This write up should include general conclusions from your budgets, and a statement about the quality of life for most Americans. The budgets should be as detailed and realistic as possible. I will provide the budget work sheets.

V: Select two major radio, television, or internet news source (ie: TV: PBS, NBC, CBS, CNN etc... / SWR: Voice of America, Radio Beijing, Radio Moscow etc../ AM: National Public radio). Three days a week tune into the same news broadcast. Compare the different presentations of various news issues, focusing on social problems if possible. Keep a journal summarizing your thoughts and chronologically record the social problems / issues as they arise. At the end of the semester present the journal and a brief (2 to 3 page) summary of your findings.

VI: Compile a profile of your home county. Your primary source of information will be the City County Data Book. You may wish to supplement this source with your local newspaper. What major changes and trends have taken place in your county in the past twenty five years (ie: age, income, unemployment, type of employment etc.)? The write up should run about 3-4 pages.

VII: Select a social problem and take photographs related to the problem. Prepare a slide show of your photographs . Submit a 2-3 page narrative along with your photographs.

You may select only ONE of the last three projects. In other words you can not do nine and ten or nine and eleven etc..

VIII: Contact the volunteer center here on campus. Volunteer at a local service agency. If you select this option, you need to contribute at least 10 hours of service. You will be required to submit the following at the end of the semester. 1) A note signed by a supervisor indicating you have completed at least ten hours of volunteer participation. 2) A brief description of what you did.

IX: Select four different social issues discussed in the context of the class. Identify appropriate elected officials and write to them. You should incorporate information learned in class about the social problem you are concerned about. Submit copies of the four letters as a package to me.

X: Attend 10 academically oriented campus events (lectures, presentations, etc). Write a one page summary of each event. Please talk to me first if you select this project.

XI: Select a Social Problem. Using an internet search engine (google) identify at least 25 sites that deal with the problem. Provide a one paragraph evaluation of each site. You will find a web site evaluation guide on my courses.

Geneseo's faculty have enumerated the following learning outcomes for the different areas of the General Education Curriculum. Those interested in the relationship between these outcomes and the SUNY Board of Trustees' outcomes in General Education should consult the Dean.

The Social Sciences core requirement consists of two three-hour courses which work to deepen students' understanding and awareness of important aspects of human behavior and social organization, to increase students' understanding of the human condition and human institutions, and to introduce them to the different approaches and methods used by the various social science disciplines. These goals are pursued through theoretically and empirically based course work.

Students will demonstrate:

- understanding of social scientific methods of hypothesis development;
 - understanding of social scientific methods of document analysis, observation, or experiment;
 - understanding of social scientific methods of measurement and data collection;
 - understanding of social scientific methods of statistical or interpretive analysis;
 - knowledge of some major social science concepts;
 - knowledge of some major social science models;
 - knowledge of some major social science concerns;
 - knowledge of some social issues of concern to social scientists;
 - knowledge of some political issues of concern to social scientists;
 - knowledge of some economic issues of concern to social scientists;
 - knowledge of some moral issues of concern to social scientists.
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