

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: SOCI 205
Course Title: Contemporary Social Problems

Year: 2023-2024
Credit Hours: 3

Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

Course Description

A variety of sociological perspectives and theories are used to understand and analyze contemporary local and global social problems. The course focuses on social problems and inequities related to housing, immigration, race, health care, socioeconomic class, gender, poverty, criminal justice, education, employment, governance, the environment, etc. Major objectives of the course are to research and comprehend the origins and histories of various social problems, to understand how and why social problems affect particular social groups, and to analyze and construct resolutions to contemporary social problems. SOCI 205 fulfills the SUNY General Education Social Science requirement. Prerequisites: SOCI 101; MATH 090 and RDNG 116 if required by placement testing; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 101. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall semester.

Course Context/Audience

Contemporary Social Problems can be used to fulfill a social science elective or a liberal arts elective requirement. The course contributes to student development of four Liberal Arts & Science – Social Science program outcomes:

1. Appropriate and effective written communication skills that reflect social scientific analysis, reasoning, and argumentation;
2. The ability to determine information needs and to locate, critically evaluate, and effectively use information;
3. The application of social science research skills, methods, and theoretical principles; and
4. An understanding of global interdependence and an appreciation of human behavior within diverse cultural contexts.

Additionally, the course is appropriate for students who have an interest in critically examining contemporary social problems.

Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations

Writing: WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.

Math: M2 Completed MATH 090 (if needed) - Course requires only the use of basic mathematical skills.

Reading: R4 Before taking this course, students must satisfactorily complete RDNG 116 or have assessment indicating that no reading course was required.

Course Goals

The aim of Contemporary Social Problems is to critically examine the social construction of social problems.

Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic	% Course
The student should be able to examine contemporary social problems sociologically.	100%
The student should be able to explain the relationships between contemporary social problems and historical, social, political, and economic processes.	100%
The student should be able to use empirical and statistical information to analyze and describe social problems and trends.	33%
The student should be able to apply sociological theories and methods to a contemporary social problems research topic.	33%
The student should be able to evaluate major implications on society of particular social problems.	33%
The student should be able to recognize how positions on social issues have developed and critically evaluate them.	33%
The student should be able to compare, evaluate, and formulate plausible strategies for the resolution of social problems.	33%
The student should be able to understand contemporary social problems from a global perspective.	20-100%
*Note: The sum of the amounts of class time assigned to each objective exceeds 100% because student mastery of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the individual objectives overlap.	

General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
Students will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions.➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.	The course assignments almost entirely consist of: 1) Unit critical reading/thinking response papers investigating and evaluating assigned readings on contemporary social issues/problems, and 2) A term-long critical reading/thinking research project investigating and evaluating multiple positions on a contemporary social issue or problem of student's choice. Both of these involve the development of questions; gathering, interpreting, and evaluating information; drawing and communicating informed conclusions; and considering the viewpoints of others and (importantly) how others may have developed those viewpoints.
SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live. ➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences. 	<p>This is a course in contemporary sociological/social problems. All of the course content (readings, lectures, assignments, etc.) deal with social, global, and environmental discussions, issues, problems, and outcomes. Some of the issues addressed include the media, values and morality, immigration, education, government and the role of government, economic issues (outsourcing, government intervention, etc.), socioeconomic inequalities, gender and sexuality issues, crime, terrorism, globalization, and environmental issues.</p>
--	--

Instructional Methods

Instructional methods for this course should include lectures to provide content knowledge, discussions, application of course concepts and theories, research, formal and/or informal collaborative work, guest speakers and videos.

Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
Oral Presentation	0-15%
Research paper (must include a process of drafting and editing)	20-50%
Annotated bibliography or research article review	10-25%
Essays (in-class or take home exams, or response papers; question should be given to students in advance)	20-60%
Quizzes	0-15%
Attendance and participation	0-15%
Participation on on-line seminars	0-33%

Text(s)

Reading Between the Lines: Toward an Understanding of Current Social Problems, Amanda Konradi and Martha Schmidt (editors), Latest Edition, MayField/McGraw Hill.

Introducing Global Issues, by Snarr and Snarr, current edition Rienner

Bibliography

There is a wealth of "print resources" concerning contemporary social problems, including a journal called "Social Problems."

There are fewer resources teaching sociological perspectives and theories of evaluating social problems, and therefore, below some are provided:

1) Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* - including Thesis on Feuerback and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy. (Karl Marx with Frederick Engels) Prometheus Books, © 1998. This text is useful in terms of teaching historical materialism and social construction as methods of evaluating social circumstances and problems.

2) Dorothy E. Smith. *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Northeastern University Press, © 1989. This text is useful for teaching feminist perspectives of the sociology and social problems. See also, Laurel Richardson, Nancy Whittier, and Verta Taylor, "Feminist Frontiers," McGraw-Hill Higher Education, © 2000.

3) C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford University Press, © 1999. This text is useful in terms of teaching students the relationship between social history (and/or macro sociological perspective) and the individual (and/or micro sociological perspective).

4) Allan G. Johnson, *The Forest for the Trees: An Introduction to Sociological Thinking*. © 1991. This text is useful in terms of getting students to understand the significance of the 'social' in contemporary social problems.

5) Chomsky, Noam, *The Chomsky Trilogy: The Real Story Series*. Odonian Press, Tucson Arizona, © 1994.

6) Stegner, Manfred B. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* Oxford 2009

Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual: No resources specified
Electronic: No resources specified
Other: No resources specified