

## Sociology 202: Social Problems

**Instructor: Dr. Stephanie Southworth**

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**Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:00-1:00 or by appt.**

**Course Days and Time:** 2:00-3:15 T, TH

Room: 100 Holzendorf Hall

### **Course Description:**

In this course we will explore social problems existing in the United States and other cultures. We will identify how these problems affect and are affected by our institutions and culture. You will learn how to critically think about social problems and the ways in which social problems are discussed and presented to the public. Among other issues, we will discuss social problems corresponding to race, gender, poverty, and the environment. We will learn how to interpret social problems within the context of sociological theory and use political paradigms to understand why people hold disparate views on how social problems should be resolved.

### **CLEMSON THINKS 2:**

This course is part of the Clemson University's Clemson Thinks2 seminar series. This course is designed to actively engage you in thinking critically about the issues discussed in this course. To assess your growth in critical thinking skills you will take the California Achievement Test (CAT) in the beginning and again at the end of this course. You will be given credit for taking the test, although your score will not be a component of your final grade. Your classroom activities and out of course assignments will focus on developing your critical thinking skills.

### **In class we will:**

- Evaluate the accuracy of statistics used in the readings and identify deceptive or manipulative statements
- Analyze the logic behind competing arguments and recognize inconsistencies or flaws
- Determine whether arguments are backed up by evidence
- Evaluate the appropriateness of methods being used to back up arguments
- Synthesize the arguments from multiple perspectives and draw appropriate conclusions
- Communicate complex ideas effectively

### **Strategies that we will use to help incorporate critical thinking:**

- We will use videos, readings, class discussions examples, and lecture to explore social issues from multiple perspectives
- Analyze and discuss the arguments in your text and class lectures
- Group discussion/debate about the rationale of the authors
- Group discussions of flaws in arguments
- Discussion of possible solutions to problems

### **Course Objectives:**

Through your active participation in this course you will:

#### Academic Objectives

- Be able to articulate the basic structure and dynamics of society.
- Be conversant with the basics of the sociological method.
- Develop greater awareness of the influence of society on individual lives.

#### Intellectual Objectives

- Improve your critical reasoning skills.

- Enhance your ability to evaluate social scientific research.

\*\*\*General Education Competency addressed in this course:

Demonstrate an understanding of social science methodologies in order to explain the consequences of human actions

## Statement of Academic Integrity

“As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson’s vision of this institution as a ‘high seminary of learning.’ Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.” “When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. At the same time, the faculty member may, but is not required to, inform each involved student privately of the nature of the alleged charge.”

## Students with Disabilities

“Students with disabilities who need accommodations should make an appointment with Arlene Stewart, Director of Student Disability Services, to discuss specific needs within the first month of classes. Students should present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disabilities Services when they meet with instructors. Student Disability Services is located in G-20 Redfern (telephone number: 656-6848; e-mail: [sds-l@clemson.edu](mailto:sds-l@clemson.edu)). Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester. In order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), faculty must follow instructions contained in letters issued by the office of Student Disability Services. All questions should be directed to Dr. Arlene Stewart (656-6848).

## Title IX

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran’s status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campuslife/campus-services/access/title-ix/>. Mr. Jerry Knighton is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator. He also is the Director of Access and Equity. His office is located at 111 Holtzendorff Hall, 864.656.3181 (voice) or 864.565.0899 (TDD).

**Readings:**     Social Problems: Macionis (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)  
                  Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues (18<sup>th</sup> Edition)

## Requirements and Grading:

### Participation and attendance: 12%

Although I will lecture, much of this course involves classroom discussion and activities. You are expected to have completed the course readings before class and to be able to engage in active classroom discourse. . This class is designed to increase your ability to articulate social problems and discuss multiple sides of each issue.

To receive an A for participation, you need to 1) be in class 2) be an active participant in class discussions and activities. 3) DO well on RANDOM QUIZZES that will be given during class. Because quizzes are a component of attendance and participation, they CANNOT BE MADE UP. Your participation must show that you have read the material before class.

Please do your readings and be prepared to discuss the readings BEFORE you come to class. If you do not participate on a regular basis or do not read the assigned material before class you will lose participation points. YOU WILL LOSE PARTICIPATION POINTS FOR BEING LATE AND/OR USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM AS WELL.

**You are given 3 “free class misses.” If you have more than three unexcused absences you will lose 50% of your participation points.**

### **California Achievement Test**

Although you will not be graded on your score on the California Achievement Test, each test is worth 1.5% of your grade. If a test is turned in that shows obvious signs that it was not completed with effort, you will lose these points (I.E. The test was completed but no questions were answered correctly).

### **Finsterbusch Reading Assignments (25%)**

You are to turn in 5 written assignments over the course of the semester. The assignments will be in response to 5 of the Finsterbusch readings. The Finsterbusch readings are designed for you to think critically about each topic from multiple perspectives. Critically thinking about an issue requires to not only understand the topic, but to be able to think about each issue from multiple perspectives and be able to apply the information to the “real world” outside of the classroom.

TWO SHOULD BE TURNED IN BEFORE THE FIRST EXAM (Before the class in which we discuss the issue)

TWO WILL BE TURNED IN BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND EXAM (Before the class in which we discuss the issue)

ONE WILL BE TURNED IN BETWEEN THE SECOND AND LAST EXAM (Before the class in which we discuss the issue)

#### **For an A each assignment should:**

- 1) Discuss the viewpoints of each side of the argument.
- 2) Discuss why the issue is a social problem.
- 4) Discuss which of the arguments were more persuasive to you. Think sociologically rather from a religious or moral perspective. Answer the following in your essay: What evidence do the authors use to back up their argument? If the authors offer solutions to the problem, discuss whether or not those solutions are reasonable. What are the costs of the solutions? Are there consequences? For example, will the solution the author suggests cause another problem to develop? Are the discussions logical? Why or why not?
- 5) State why this issue is or is not important for our society. Think about the courses you have taken in the past. How do these courses contribute to your knowledge of the topic?
- 6) Use correct spelling and grammar. SPELLING and GRAMMAR mistakes will count against your grade.

You may complete the assignments on any of the Finsterbusch readings, but a hard copy must be given to me and stapled on the day that the reading is due.

You will have the opportunity to revise ONE essay to improve your grade. If you are turning in an essay to improve your grade A HARD COPY MUST BE GIVEN TO ME IN CLASS WITHIN A WEEK OF RECEIVING YOUR GRADE

-----On the hard copy, please state the date of your original grade and what you did to improve your paper-----

### Exams: 60%

There will be three in class exams. The last exam will be given during the final exam session. The format will be a combination of short answer and multiple choice questions. The exams are designed to show that you have read the material and understand the basic concepts discussed in class. All of the information on the exams will be discussed in class before the exam. If you must miss class on the day of the exam you will need to let me know BEFORE the exam. **No makeup exams will be given if I do not know ahead of time. All exams must be made up within one week of the exam date.**

### Grading Scale:

(90-100%)	A
(80-89%)	B
(70-79%)	C
(60-69%)	D
Below 60%	F

### Grade Disputes:

ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR GRADE ON ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE ASKED WITHIN ONE WEEK OF RECEIVING YOUR GRADE. I will not take any grade disputes under consideration after you have taken your final exam.

### Power points:

Power points for slides I use in class will be posted on blackboard. You are welcome to print them out and use them in class, but please do not rely on power points for exams. The power points are meant to be an outline and information from your text and class discussion are very important components of your exams. Please check power points right before class as I sometimes make changes to what is posted online.

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### **If I Am Delayed:**

If I am delayed or unable to attend class, I will make every effort to notify you in advance. If I am unable to do so, you are excused at 15 minutes after the start of class.

### **E-Mail Access**

I often use email to correspond with students. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly. If I must miss a class, I will let you know via email and a course announcement as early as I am able to.

### **Announcements:**

I often will post changes/updates on the Announcement page in Blackboard. Please check this page regularly

### **LAPTOPS**

Laptops are not allowed in class unless you receive permission from me. If you do receive permission, laptops will be allowed to TAKE NOTES ONLY. Any other use of laptops during class time is prohibited unless I specifically tell you to bring your laptop to class for group exercises.

**CELL PHONES: Cell Phones must be turned off and put away before class begins. If I see you on your cell phone I will give you a warning. If you are on your cell phone again at any time during the semester, I will ask you to leave class.**

### **Class Schedule (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

Thursday January 10	Introduction to class, review syllabus
Tuesday, January 15	Studying Social Problems READINGS:                   MACIONIS: CHAPTER 1
Thursday, January 17	Studying Social Problems BRING CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TEST PRINTOUT TO CLASS
Tuesday, January 22	Studying Social Problems/Poverty and Wealth READING:                   MACIONIS: CHAPTER 2
Thursday, January 24	Poverty and Wealth

READING: FINSTERBUSCH: ISSUE 3. 3.1

Tuesday, January 29

Poverty and Wealth

Thursday, January 31

Race and Ethnic Inequality

READING: MACIONIS CHAPTER 3,

Tuesday, February 5

Race and Ethnic Inequality

READING: FINSTERBUCSH ISSUE 3.2

Thursday, February 7

Race and Ethnic Inequality

Tuesday, February 12

Gender

READING: MACIONIS: CHAPTER 4,

Thursday, February 14

Gender

READING: FINSTERBUSCH ISSUE 3.3

Tuesday, February 19

EXAM 1----TWO FINSTERBUSCH RESPONSES SHOULD BE TURNED IN BY THIS TIME

Thursday, February 21

Crime, violence and Criminal Justice

READING: MACIONIS: CHAPTER 6

Tuesday, February 26

Crime, Violence and Criminal Justice

READING: FINSTERBUCSH: ISSUE 5, 5.1

Thursday, February 28

Drugs and Alcohol

READING: MACIONIS: CHAPTER 8

Tuesday, March 5

Drugs and Alcohol

READINGS: FINSTERBUCSH ISSUE 5.2

Thursday, March 7

Physical and Mental Health

READING: MACIONIS: CHAPTER 9

Tuesday, March 12

Physical and Mental Health

Thursday, March 14

EXAM 2 -----TWO MORE FINSTERBUSCH RESPONSES SHOULD BE TURNED IN BY THIS TIME

MARCH 16-20

SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 25

The Economy and Politics

	READING:           MACIONIS: CHAPTER 10
Thursday, March 27	The Economy and Politics READING:           FINSTERBUSH: ISSUES 4, 4.1
Tuesday, April 2	The Economy and Politics READINGS:         FINSTERBUCSH: ISSUES 4.2
Thursday, April 4	Education READING:           MACIONIS: CHAPTER 13
Tuesday, April 9	Education READING:           FINSTERBUSCH: ISSUE 4.5
Thursday, April 11	Education
Tuesday, April 16	Urban Life READING:           MACIONIS CHAPTER 14
Thursday, April 18	Population and Global Inequality READING:           MACIONIS: CHAPTER 15
Tuesday, April 23	Populations and Global Inequality READING            FINSTERBUSCH ISSUE 6, 6.3
Thursday, April 25	Population and Global Inequality READING:           FINSTERBUSCH ISSUE 6.4 CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TEST DUE
FINAL EXAM:	THURSDAY, 8:00 AM ---IN THIS ROOM