

Sociology 104: Social Problems

Spring 2020 Session I
Course Section: SOCI 104-4236
Class Location: ONLINE (CANVAS)

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VIRTUAL Office Hours: Tues. 2:00-4:00pm

*"Never ever depend on governments or institutions to solve any major problems.
All social change comes from the passion of individuals."*

-Margaret Mead

Course Description

In this course, students explore various social problems from a sociological perspective. Students apply sociological theories and concepts to examine social problems related to race, gender, sexuality, age, and social class. Problems experienced in our social institutions such as the family, educational system, criminal justice system, healthcare, media, and environment are analyzed. Using a 'sociological imagination,' students explore potential solutions and strategies to address contemporary social problems at both micro and macro levels.

Course Format

This course operates entirely online through the CANVAS learning management system. There will be no in person classes. Modules are organized in a weekly format, and assignments are all due at certain dates and times (usually 11:59pm PST) throughout each week (I use a Tue/Wed/Fri structure). Therefore, this class requires a different type of motivation and learning for you as a student. Make sure you have a printed copy of the syllabus so you can check what your responsibilities are for the week. You should also plan to log into CANVAS on a regular basis. While it may be tempting to work ahead and complete all the modules, the assignments and rhythm of the course depend on a weekly structure. Therefore, modules will be unlocked each Friday for the following week. *Canvas has an app that can be used on any smart device. I suggest you download and use it!*

Each time you log on to the class, I suggest you do the following:

- 1) Check for any course announcements on the CANVAS Dashboard.
- 2) Check on the weekly module for the progression of assigned work.
- 3) Make sure to note any emails you have received from me/fellow students.
- 4) Take note of any upcoming assignments/quizzes/discussions.
- 5) Check the "Course Help" discussion board if you have any questions or wish to help out another student!
- 6) Email me with any questions, concerns, issues, etc.

Course Objectives

- Explain the term "sociological imagination" and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.
- Differentiate between objective and subjective elements of social problems.
- Analyze how and why members of a society define a social condition as a social problem.
- Describe and assess the basic premises of the structural functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives.
- List the stages for conducting a research study and describe methods of data collection.
- Select research methods based on their effectiveness for describing and evaluating a specific social problem.
- Identify and assess social problems related to deviance, such as substance abuse and crime.
- Identify and evaluate social problems related to inequality based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, and income.
- Identify and discuss social problems related to the social institutions of a society, such as the health care system, the family, the economy, and the education system.
- Identify and discuss social problems resulting from modernization such as urbanization, population growth, environmental issues, changes in science and technology, and international conflict.
- Evaluate explanations given by the structural functionalist, conflict and symbolic interactionist perspectives concerning causes and consequences of social problems related to deviance, inequality, social institutions, and modernization.
- Assess strategies for addressing social problems related to deviance, inequality, social institutions, and modernization.

Required Text

Trevino, A. Javier. 2019. *Investigating Social Problems*. Los Angeles: Sage. ISBN 9781506348506 (2nd edition)

Yes, the book IS REQUIRED for the course! No, you cannot use an earlier edition. This is a great textbook divided into five main sections that tackle social problems. Because our course has a quick timeframe, we may not use every single chapter. Feel free to read through the book at your leisure to explore other chapters that are not assigned for class. You may wish to also keep this book for your future studies if you are considering a major or minor in Sociology.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

SLO #1 Sociological Theoretical Perspectives: Students will demonstrate an **understanding** of the purpose of theoretical perspectives and **apply** sociological perspectives such as functionalism, conflict theory, and interactionism to social problems.

SLO #2 Sociological Concepts: Students will define and demonstrate an **understanding** of sociological concepts, such as deviance, crime, racism, and globalization by **applying** them to social scenarios.

SLO #3 Strategies for Assessing Social Problems: Students will analyze causes, consequences, and solutions to social problems as they exist in contemporary society.

Course Requirements

- **Sociological Imagination Activation Quiz / Getting to Know You Paragraph (5%):** These first **two** mini-assignments will get you thinking sociologically, as well as introduce you to the rest of your classmates through “getting to know you” paragraphs. Make sure to 1) do the quiz, 2) post and 3) reply to 5 of the posts as indicated in the directions!
- **Reading Quizzes (30%):** **Seven** reading quizzes (each worth 5 points) are assigned throughout the class. Each quiz will have twenty questions based on the module’s readings (textbook chapters and occasional supplemental readings). Any supplemental readings (such as articles/papers) can be found listed within the module as a pdf file. Quizzes must be completed by 11:59pm (PST) Wednesday for the week the readings are assigned. **No late quizzes will be accepted; therefore the lowest quiz score will be dropped.**
- **Reaction Papers (20%):** **Four** reaction papers (each worth 5 points) are assigned throughout the class. Each reaction paper is a way to critically examine issues regarding social problems. Some papers may involve answering questions, while others may involve activities, reflections, or specific tasks. Each paper **MUST** be uploaded as a WORD or PDF DOCUMENT by 11:59pm (PST) for the day of the week designated. **No late reaction papers will be accepted.**
- **Group Discussions (30%):** **Three** group discussions (each worth 10 points) are assigned throughout the class that will focus on particular issues regarding social problems. In order to receive full credit for each discussion, each student must (1) post their written response to the discussion questions, and (2) post a response to at least FIVE other classmates’ posts. Initial posts will be due by 11:59pm (PST) on the Tuesday of the week designated, and responses to classmates’ posts are due by 11:59pm (PST) Friday of the week designated. These discussions are an opportunity to think critically, engage in healthy conversation, and practice sociological interactions. **No late postings/replies will be accepted.**
- **Final Exam (15%):** The final exam will consist of a combination of 2 short answer/essay and 50 multiple choice questions based on course readings, PowerPoints, and materials throughout the entire class. The exam will be “open” for a 48-hour window. The student can begin the exam at any time during the 48-hour window, but once the exam has been started, it must be completed within 90 minutes. **No make-up exams will be allowed.**

Grades

Each assignment is graded in points (that translate to percentages that add up to 100%). Final course grades will follow a standard scale (90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 0-60=F). *Grades will be calculated in the following manner:*

Warm-Up/Getting to Know You	5%	(1 quiz/1 paragraph/5 replies worth 5 points)	=	5 points
Reading Quizzes	30%	(6 quizzes worth 5 points each)	=	30 points
Reaction Papers	20%	(4 papers worth 5 points each)	=	20 points
Group Discussions	30%	(3 discussions worth 10 points each)	=	30 points
Final Exam	15%	(1 exam worth 15 points)	=	15 points

Total:	100%	(or)	Total:	100 points

Late Policy

Students are advised that **NO LATE WORK** is accepted under any circumstances. I will stand firm on this policy. It is a good idea to plan for computer/internet problems by finishing any assignments in advance of the due date. Faulty network connections, computer glitches and general Internet issues are **not** a valid excuse for missed work.

Academic Integrity (Student Code of Conduct)

According to the El Camino College Student Code of Conduct, "It is the responsibility of all members of the academic community to behave in a manner which encourages learning and promotes honesty and to act with fairness toward others." Therefore, incidences of academic dishonesty, collusion, and plagiarism WILL NOT be tolerated in this class. Refer to the following website for a full explanation of academic dishonesty and subsequent consequences:

<https://www.elcamino.edu/student-services/activities/codeofconduct.asp> If I find that a student has committed a violation of academic integrity, the student will receive a "0" on the assignment and may fail the course. Please remember the main goal is for students to **actually learn** about sociology!

Students with Certain Needs (ADA Statement)

El Camino College is committed to providing educational accommodations for students with disabilities upon the timely request by the student to the instructor. A student with a disability who would like to request an academic accommodation is responsible for identifying him/her/themselves to the instructor and to the Special Resource Center. To make arrangements for academic accommodations, contact the Special Resource Center at (310) 660-3295 or visit <http://www.elcamino.edu/academics/src/>

Student Logistics

Confirming deadlines, dates and rules for dropping and/or withdrawal classes is the responsibility of the student. Students will be dropped if not logged into the course in the first 48 hours. Incompletes will not be given in this class under any circumstances aside from death, duress, or extreme hardship, especially after the last date of withdrawal, and after having completed at least 75% of coursework. For information on student rights and grievance procedures, visit

<http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/policies.asp>

A Word on Etiquette & "Netiquette"

We all have many responsibilities that include other classes, jobs, pets, families, friends, sports, music, eating, entertainment, socializing, and living life. At the same time, this is a college course that involves exposure to scholarly content and skills, as well as the overall professionalization process. Put forth your best effort and *engage in class responsibilities in a timely manner, be respectful to the professor and fellow students, laugh (LOL), stay informed, and keep me informed.* We will discuss some sensitive and difficult topics throughout the class. Good etiquette also involves respectful communication and appropriate expectations for interpersonal interactions. Please allow me 24-48 hours to respond to your emails. Finally, I take my position as "sociological mentor" seriously and have high expectations for you all as future sociologists "in training." I genuinely love what I do as a career, so trust the process, and be the best student you can be. In return, I'll be the best professor I can be. 😊

"Course Help" Resource

Your classmates are probably your best resource in this class. Therefore, there will be a "**Course Questions and Help**" link in the Discussion Topics that you should refer to **BEFORE** contacting me with questions. Check that link as regularly as you check the rest of CANVAS. If you have a question about *anything*, post it there first. If you see a question posted that you think you can help with, respond to it! This will help us to get to know each other a little better, as well as to help us develop a sense of community, which is imperative to successful online learning. Also, I may not always be checking email, so if you have a question, perhaps a fellow classmate can give you a quick answer!

Course Outline

All readings are due on the first day/beginning of each module. Below you will find a course outline by module and subject. All assignments/quizzes/posts are due by 11:59pm (PST) on the date indicated.

Module 1	Introductions: Sociology, Social Problems, and the Sociological Imagination
<i>Module Reading: Trevino Chapter 1</i>	
Fri 2/21	“Activating Our Sociological Imaginations” Quiz Due (no reading necessary, just follow the prompt)
Fri 2/21	“Getting to Know You” Personal Paragraph Due
Tues 2/25	“Getting to Know You” Paragraph Replies Due
Module 2	Social Problems Concerning Inequality: Class & Race/Ethnicity
<i>Module Reading: Trevino Chapters 2, 3</i>	
Wed 2/26	Reading Quiz I Due (chapters 1, 2, 3)
Fri 2/28	Reaction Paper I Due
Module 3	Social Problems Concerning Inequality: Gender, Sexualities, & Families
<i>Module Readings: Trevino Chapters 4, 5, 9</i>	
Tues 3/3	Group Discussion I Posts Due
Wed 3/4	Reading Quiz II Due (chapters 4, 5, 9)
Fri 3/6	Group Discussion I Replies Due
Module 4	Social Problems Concerning Institutions: Education, Media, & Work/Economy
<i>Module Readings: Trevino Chapters 7, 8, 10</i>	
Wed 3/11	Reading Quiz III Due (chapters 7, 8, 10)
Fri 3/13	Reaction Paper II Due
Module 5	Social Problems Concerning Bodies, Health, & Safety
<i>Module Readings: Trevino Chapters 11, 12, 13</i>	
Tues 3/17	Group Discussion II Posts Due
Wed 3/18	Reading Quiz IV Due (chapters 11, 12, 13)
Fri 3/20	Group Discussion II Replies Due
Module 6	Social Problems of Global Impact: The Environment, Science, & Technology
<i>Module Readings: Trevino Chapters 14, 15</i>	
Wed 3/25	Reading Quiz V Due (chapters 14, 15)
Fri 3/27	Reaction Paper III Due
Module 7	Evolving Social Problems: Urbanization, War, & Terrorism
<i>Module Readings: Trevino Chapters 16, 17</i>	
Tues 3/31	Group Discussion III Posts Due
Wed 4/1	Reading Quiz VI Due (chapters 16, 17)
Fri 4/3	Group Discussion III Replies Due
Module 8	Social Problems: Finding Solutions and Creating Social Change
<i>Module Readings: Supplemental Readings on CANVAS</i>	
Tues 4/7	Reaction Paper IV Due
Wed 4/8	Reading Quiz VII Due (Chapter 6)
Final Exam	Assessing the Successful Sociological Study of Social Problems
Fri 4/10	Final Exam Due