

**Camosun College**  
**School of Arts & Science**  
**Social Sciences Department**

**Sociology 162**  
**Social Problems**

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Instructor:	Dr. Paul Brady
Office hours:	5:30-6:30 Mon/Wed; 9:30-10:30 Tue/Thu or by appointment
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course we will examine some of the behaviours that have been defined as 'social problems'. We will seek to understand the causes, consequences and interventions relating to selected social problems including addictions, homelessness, poverty, ill-health, crime, sexism, racism and social inequality in Canada.

**COURSE OBJECTIVE**

As with all courses which are educational rather than "how-to" in nature, a major aim will be to assist students to develop their capacity for disciplined, critical, and independent thinking in an analysis of social problems. This ability should aid students in understanding the ways in which social problems are interrelated and how they are connected to power relations in Canadian society.

**INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. The student will develop a critical understanding of the major theoretical perspectives on social problems.
2. The student will be able to apply various sociological theories to the analysis of contemporary social problems, to see patterns and processes rather than isolated facts, and to interpret events in the broader framework of societal structure.
3. The student will have an enhanced ability to think critically and to communicate ideas effectively in writing.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Czerny, Michael, Swift, Jamie, and Robert G. Clarke  
**Getting Started on Social Analysis in Canada**  
Between The Lines, 1994  
ISBN # 0-921284-85-3

## METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

This course will consist of lectures and seminar–type class discussions. Students are required to attend class regularly and to read each assigned reading by the date indicated. Students are responsible for all lecture material, some of which is not available in the assigned readings.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Recommended readings for each of the topics is indicated in the following detailed course outline. The course text provides comprehensive coverage of most the topics that we shall examine. The chapters from the textbook and the discussion question readings will constitute the main body of required reading each week.

## EVALUATION

The grade for this course will be based on discussion unit questions and attendance as well as two in-class examinations and a final examination during the December examination period. Examinations will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions and will cover all lectures, other presentations, and assigned readings. They will be aimed at testing one's conceptual as well as factual knowledge. Please note that the ownership of all examination papers belongs to the College. An essay assignment is **optional** for the course and topics **must** be discussed with me before proceeding.

## GRADING

Discussion Unit Questions and Attendance			20% (4 x 5%)
Mid-term # 1	Wednesday October	2	25%
Mid-term # 2	Wednesday November	6	25%
Final Examination	TBA		30%

## GRADING SYSTEM

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

A+ = 95 - 100%	B = 75 - 79%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 90 - 94%	B- = 70 - 74%	F = 00 - 49%
A- = 85 - 89%	C+ = 65 - 69%	I = See Calendar for Details
B+ = 80 - 84%	C = 60 - 64%	AUD = Audit

*W = Official withdrawal has taken place.*

## EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

The dates of the first and second examinations are indicated above. The third examination will be held during the exam week. **Students are strongly advised not to make travel plans until after the Christmas final examination schedule is posted. I cannot schedule other examination times for students who make travel plans that disregard the examination schedule set by Camosun College.** All examinations must be written in the section of the course in which the student is officially registered.

A grade of Zero will be granted for absence during examination, unless the student produces a medical certificate confirming serious illness and writes the substitute exam within the proscribed period after recovery.

The student in person must claim the examination papers for the first and second examinations during the class session in which the papers are returned or the following session.

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

There is an Academic Conduct Policy. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section. Please see:

<http://www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/>

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- (i) giving, receiving, or obtaining unauthorized information during any type of examination or test;
- (ii) obtaining or providing unauthorized questions or answers relating to any examination or test prior to the time of the examination or test;
- (iii) asking or arranging for another person to take any examination or test in one's place.
- (iv) plagiarizing, that is, appropriating the work of another or parts or passages of another's writing, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as a product of one's own mind or manual skill.
- (v) disruptive behaviour/disorderly conduct  
This includes any behaviour that interferes with the provision of college services or of instruction or interferes with any member of the Camosun College community by students and any others accompanying them.  
Examples: Verbal outbursts, physical gestures, actions or interruptions, which limit or interfere with the provision of college services or instructional activities; unwarranted and unreasonable disturbances during any Camosun College related activity.

Academic misconduct will result in a grade of "F" for the entire course. The students should note that in accordance with the college policy quoted above, mere access to unauthorized information constitutes academic misconduct. It is not necessary for the instructor to prove that the student has used the information.

## TAPE-RECORDING IN THE CLASSROOM

In order to ensure free and open discussion of controversial ideas by the students, tape-recording of the proceedings is not permitted in the class. Exceptions, however, will be made for students who are visually impaired or are unable to write due to physical disability.

## PROCEDURE CHANGES

In order to deal with the day-to-day management of the course, new procedures may be implemented from time to time throughout the semester. Such procedures will be announced in class for two consecutive sessions before they are implemented. It is the responsibility of the student to keep informed of such developments. Official college policies and procedures govern all other matters that are not covered by this course outline.

## TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE IN SEQUENCE

Week 1: Wed Sept 4 Chapters 1 and 5 Introduction to Social Problems

Week 2: Mon Sept 9  
Wed Sept 11 Chapter 2 Health and Addictions

Week 3: Mon Sept 16  
Wed Sept 18 **Discussion Unit 1**

**BEFORE DOING THIS ASSIGNMENT PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR IT BELOW.**

**September 18 Discussion Unit 1** – Prepare 3 questions from the article “ **Witch Hunts and Chemical McCarthyism: The Criminal Law and Twentieth Century Canadian Drug Policy**”.

Eugene Oscapella.

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/ille-e/presentation-e/witch\\_hunts-e.htm](http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/ille-e/presentation-e/witch_hunts-e.htm)



Week 4: Mon Sept 23 Chapter 13 Gender and Sex  
Wed Sept 25

Week 5: Mon Sept 30  
Wed Oct 2 **Mid-Term # 1**

Mid-Term #1: Wednesday October 2 includes chapters 1, 2, 5, 13 and lectures

Week 6: Mon Oct 7 Chapter s 6 and 7 Poverty, Unemployment, and Work  
Wed Oct 9

**October 9 Discussion Unit 2** - Prepare 3 questions from the article “**The Beauty Myth**”. Naomi Wolf, reviewed by Laura Bryannan. <http://homestar.org/bryannan/wolf.html>

Week 7: Mon Oct 14 **Thanksgiving -College Closed**  
Wed Oct 16

Week 8: Mon Oct 21 Chapter s 6 and 7 Poverty, Unemployment, and Work  
Wed Oct 23

Week 9: Mon Oct 28 Chapter 12 Ethnicity and Racism  
Wed Nov 30

Week 10: Mon Nov 4 **Discussion Unit 3**  
Wed Nov 6 **Mid-Term # 2**

November 4 Discussion Unit 3 – Prepare 3 questions from the article “**The McDonaldization of Society**”. Robert Keel. <http://www.umsl.edu/~rkeel/010/mcdonsoc.html>

**Mid-Term #2: Wednesday November 6 includes chapters 6,7, 12 and the lectures**

Week 11: Mon Nov 11 **Remembrance Day - College Closed**  
Wed Nov 13 Chapter 10 Mass Media

Week 12: Mon Nov 18 Chapter 10 Mass Media  
Wed Nov 20 **Discussion Unit 4**

**November 20 Discussion Unit 4** – Prepare 3 questions from the article “**How Canada's daily Newspapers shut out Minorities**”. John Miller.  
<http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/issues/minrep/resource/articles/jmiller.htm>

Week 13: Mon Nov 25 Chapter 8,9, and 14 Globalization and the Environment  
Wed Nov 27

Week 14: Mon Dec 2  
Wed Dec 4 Last Class

**Final Examination (T.B.A.) includes remaining chapters and lectures**

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

These are four classes where students meet in smaller units to discuss questions prepared by each student in the unit based on the assigned readings for that day. You should aim to produce a satisfactory set of questions to enable a fruitful discussion of the assigned reading. Please note that absence from the discussion units due to illness requires a physician's note and you are still required to complete the assignment.

### **Please read carefully:**

1. Prepare three questions on the central issue or points of the reading(s), which you can pose to students in your unit. Your questions must be genuine questions not statements. Keep your questions as concise as possible and wherever you can use your own words and avoid quoting directly from the reading(s).
2. Remember to phrase your question in an open-ended format or in such a way as to invite discussion. Be careful to avoid questions, which can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no", and questions that ask what the author(s) wrote (content question) or questions that simply ask others if they agree or disagree with what the author(s) have written. You should also avoid questions that begin with "explain", "compare", "list", "describe", or any other questions that ask the respondent to provide information/data rather than a debate. Remember you do not want to ask content questions.
3. **MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE NOT SIMPLY ASKING A QUESTION THAT THE AUTHORS OF THE ARTICLE RAISE BUT RATHER CREATE YOUR OWN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.**
4. Make a **TYPED COPY** of your written questions and bring the original and copy to class. Your questions are your admission ticket to the discussion unit classes. Discussion can begin as soon as the groups are formed. Each student in turn should pose a question that is followed by a discussion. The purpose of the discussion is **NOT** to win arguments but rather to help each other understand the material better and hopefully in an enjoyable manner. It is essential to have a useful exchange of views in which each member of the unit participates fully. You cannot participate meaningfully unless you are prepared. This is why **YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED** unless you have prepared your questions. This rule will be strictly enforced to avoid students being unprepared and hindering the efforts of other students. Towards the end of the class, one student from each group will be selected to provide the class with a brief oral summary of your discussions.
5. Students will receive a mark out of 5 for each of the three discussion units. Grading will be based on the quality of the questions according to the advice given above. In order to be fair to all students the following conduct will be penalized:
  - depositing your questions with the instructor or sending them with another student and not participating in the discussions.
  - not attending a discussion unit.
  - the late submission of questions without a satisfactory excuse.

## OPTIONAL RESEARCH PAPER

1. Select a topic about social problems that you are interested in examining by using one of the major theoretical perspectives or concepts for your analysis.
2. Develop a clear problem statement. The problem statement must be a question about your topic that your paper should help you to answer. Examples of problem statements include:  
How valuable is the conflict perspective in explaining the lack of housing access for poor people and the social problem of homelessness? How valuable is Durkheim's concept of anomie in explaining the incidence of suicide among a particular group in society (i.e. the homeless, homosexual youths, or First Nation's peoples)?
3. Whatever the topic you must pose one or two questions about it and use the paper to answer them in light of theoretical analysis and empirical research. A paper that simply describes a topic is not acceptable. The research paper is intended to provide the opportunity to conduct research on the social problems and to demonstrate your capacity for divergent learning, i.e. where one takes up a problem and uses as many sources as possible to answer it. The primary sources are located in the library.
4. The completed paper must be typewritten (font size 12) and no longer than 8 pages of double spaced typing excluding the bibliography, references, and tables.
5. The following will be the basis for evaluation of term papers:
  - a. The *sociological* quality of the approach taken to the problem and in particular the use of *theory and analysis* for explanation or making critical distinctions.
  - b. The complexity and clarity of the problem to be examined and the *analytical* skills used to examine the various components of it.
  - c. The quality of *data, evidence, and other materials* presented in support of the discussion.
  - d. The degree to which the points made in the paper are presented in a *coherent, clear, and well-organized* manner. There should be both an introductory and a concluding section to the paper. The limit on the length of the paper is intended to test your ability to organize material.

## RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OR SERVICES TO ASSIST STUDENTS TO SUCCEED THROUGHOUT THE COURSE

Students are encouraged to utilize support services available at the Writing Centre to prepare for their essay exams. There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College Calendar, Registrar's Office, or the College web site at <http://www.camosun.bc.ca>.