



## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Sociology 162 Social Problems

Winter 2010

---

Instructor: Dr. Alex Ipe  
Office: Paul 237  
Email: **ipe@camosun.bc.ca**  
Phone: 370-3105  
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 1030-1130 *or by appointment*

#### **CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

This class will involve a critical introduction to the nature of social problems in modern society. Issues at the regional, national and global levels will be discussed, as chosen by the instructor. Various sociological theories will be considered and possible solutions addressing these issues will be discussed.

#### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

A major aim of the class will be to assist students to develop a capacity for independent, critical thinking with respect to social issues. 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. The intended learning outcomes of the class are three fold:

- (a) Critically assess the major theoretical perspectives on social problems.
- (b) Apply various sociological theories to the analysis of contemporary social problems.
- (c) Demonstrate an ability to think critically and to communicate ideas effectively in writing.

#### **REQUIRED TEXT(S):**

Kendall, Diane, et. al, ***Social Problems in a Diverse Society*** 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Edition.  
Pearson Education Canada.

#### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:**

This course consists of one evening lecture per week. Students are expected to complete assigned readings on time, and to come to class prepared to discuss those readings. Occasional film presentations are scheduled. The course will be based on a series of lectures, followed, at times, by seminar-type discussions in which the students are urged to participate.

## **STUDENT EVALUATION:**

### **OPTION 1:**

	<b><u>Due Date</u></b>	<b><u>Weight</u></b>
Midterm Test 1	February	30%
Midterm Test 2	March	30%
4 Discussion Reviews	See Schedule of Topics	20%
Final Test	Last Day of Class	20%

### **OPTION 2:**

Midterm Test 1	February	20%
Midterm Test 2	March	20%
4 Discussion Reviews	See Schedule of Topics	20%
Essay	Late March	30%
Final Test	Last Day of Class	10%

### **In Class Test #1 and #2 and #3 (80% or 50%)<sup>1</sup>**

The tests will consist of approximately 20-30 multiple-choice questions, plus an essay component; the essay questions will be made available to students before the test. The dates of the tests will be announced in class. There is no final exam in this class, just a final test. **The tests themselves are NOT cumulative.**

**The tests can potentially ask ANY question related to issues discussed in class, the textbook, or presented in in-class videos. The rule of thumb for tests is: BE READY FOR ANYTHING!!!**

### **Discussion Reviews (20%):**

In talking about social problems, it is inevitable that we will discuss issues or topics that some may deem to be controversial. While an effort will be made to get students to participate in class discussions on many of these issues, it has been the experience of this Instructor that most students feel intimidated by the prospect of speaking up in class; this is very understandable; making one's opinions heard in a class of 40 or so students can be a daunting experience.

In order to alleviate this concern, the class will be broken up into small groups where students can more comfortably express their opinions on a given topic. During the course of the term, 4 such discussion groups will be held, the approximate dates of which will be announced in class; these discussions will require the students to work collaboratively to answer questions as a group, present those ideas and submit a review of their discussion at the end of class. Each discussion review is worth 5% of your overall grade for a total weight of 20%.

---

**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 the discussion sessions without a legitimate excuse.
- Doing the review sessions before class and then just coming to class to hand in the review session.

**Optional Essay (30%)**

- The essay can be done alone or in groups of up to 5.
- The length of the essay should not exceed ten (10) double-spaced typewritten pages in a standard font. The essay is due the last week of March. An exact date will be given in class.
- The essay is purely optional, though if you do decide to do an essay, your evaluation will be structured differently from those who do not do an essay.
- If you choose to do the essay, select a topic about a social problem you are interested in examining by using one of the major theories or concepts discussed in class and/ or the text.
- Develop a clear argument with respect to your essay. The argument must deal with an issue about your topic that your paper should help you to answer. An example would be: ***“In this essay, I will argue that the conflict perspective is a very useful theoretical tool that can help us to understand why many corporations are not concerned with issues of environmental pollution.”***
- Or, as another example, ***“I will argue that Durkheim’s concept of anomie can effectively explain why the post-industrial world we now live in generates so much stress and unhappiness in the lives of people.”***
- Regardless of the topic selected, your essay must be structured according to the template illustrated below in the next two pages.

<b>HEADINGS</b>	<b>BASIC REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE MARKS OUT OF 100</b>	<b>YOUR GRADE</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	Tell the reader what your essay will be about. What is it that you will be trying to argue, how will you be trying to substantiate your argument and why is this important.	<b>20</b>	<b>/20</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	Tell the reader how you went about collecting your data. Did you approach your topic inductively or deductively? Why? How did you record your observations? If you did the essay as a group, how did the group record their observations? What specifically were you looking for when you were gathering your data and why? This is directly tied into the argument you stated in the introduction. Be clear and specific!	<b>20</b>	<b>/20</b>

<b>ANALYSIS</b>	In this section, tell the reader what you observed. Be as detailed and as specific as possible with respect to your observations. Avoid making vague comments that leave the reader guessing what you are trying to say. Be sure to directly link your observations with sociological concepts or theories discussed in class and/or the textbook so the reader can understand the sociological significance of your observations. Be very clear and specific!!!	<b>40</b>	<b>/40</b>
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>/100</b>

	<b>NO HEADINGS</b>	<b>-20</b>	
	<b>NO BIBLIOGRAPHY<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>-30</b>	
		<b>FINAL TOTAL</b>	

### ESSAY WRITING: ADDITIONAL NOTES

In writing the essay for this class, it is imperative that you clearly explain all terms and theories used; too often in the past, students would throw out terms and theories without even the briefest explanation or discussion. *In composing your paper, assume that the reader does not know anything about the topic or discipline in question. As such, it is up to you to clearly explain concepts and theories in as clear and straightforward manner as possible!!!*

As much as possible, avoid making vague and imprecise statements that leave the reader wondering or speculating as to what you are trying to say. *You are not writing a mystery novel but an academic paper. As such, do not leave your reader guessing or confused with what you are going to be arguing or demonstrating in your paper.*

Lastly, any definition or factual statement you make in the body of your paper needs to be properly cited.

In this respect, your essay must also have a bibliography, references or works cited page at the end of your essay. Academic work is cumulative and as such, any fact or piece of information that was published by somebody else must be fully referenced in your essay.

When citing information, follow the ASA documentation style, **or any other style that you are comfortable with**. The following are examples of the ASA style:

#### CITING REFERENCES WITHIN THE ESSAY

(1) “Researchers who focus on causal relations usually begin with an effect, then search for its causes” (Neuman,1997:107) [**Author’s last name, year book was published, page number of cited material**].

(1a) In Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Malfoy said to Ron Weasley,

“Red hair and hand-me-down robes; you must be a Weasley”(Chamber of Secrets,2002).

---

<sup>2</sup> **Note: You are expected to have a minimum of two academic references in your bibliography. If you hand in your paper with just one academic reference, you will lose 15 marks. In addition, do not pad your bibliography; that is, if you do not directly cite a reference or use it in any fashion, do not bother listing it in the bibliography.**

## CITING REFERENCES IN YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHY

(2) To cite a journal article: (e.g. **Kent, Susan**

**1995 “Unstable Households in a Stable Kalahari Community in Botswana.” *American Anthropologist* 97 (2): 292-312).**

(2a) To cite a book: Macionis, John J., S. Mikael Jansson and Cecilia M. Benoit.

2005 **Society: The Basics.** Toronto: Prentice-Hall.

(2b) To cite a movie: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. Warner Brothers. 2002

- To cite something from the internet, the website and the date the cite was visited should be included. For example:

**United States Department of Energy**

**1996 *Impact of the Human Genome Project.* March 3  
[<http://www.gdb.org/Dan/DOE/prim5.html>]**

**Remember, references in your bibliography must be in alphabetical order by last name of the principal author of the work you are citing. Lastly, do not bother listing references in your bibliography that you did not explicitly use.**

For more information on citation styles, please consult the *Style Manual for the Social Sciences* available at the bookstore or at the Camosun Library.

**IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE DUE DATES FOR THE ESSAY WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. TWO PERCENT A DAY WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR EVERY DAY AN ASSIGNMENT OR ESSAY IS LATE!!!**

**NOTE:** In evaluating the examination papers and essays the emphasis will be on understanding and analysis, rather than the recitation. Avoid memorizing sentences, in particular when it is not clear to you what the sentences mean. Papers indicating memorization will receive a grade zero. As for analysis, your learning strategy should be to understand the relationships among facts, not the facts alone. Another important point is illustration; after discussion and analysis give examples from current or historical developments in society. This will show that you understand the concepts and theories and are able to apply them to society as tools for analysis.

A grade of zero will be granted for absence during examinations, unless the student produces a medical certificates confirming serious illness and writes the substitute exam within one week of recovery.

## Examination Procedures

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 one week of recovery.

## GRADES:

### Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D	Minimum level of achievement for which credit is granted; a course with a "D" grade cannot be used as a prerequisite.	1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

### Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca) for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

<b>Temporary Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>I</b>	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
<b>IP</b>	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that, due to design may require a further enrollment in the same course. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course. (For these courses a final grade will be assigned to either the 3 <sup>rd</sup> course attempt or at the point of course completion.)
<b>CW</b>	<b>Compulsory Withdrawal:</b> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

## **Academic Misconduct**

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 behavior/Disorderly conduct**. This includes any behavior **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 (for example, texts or lecture notes) constitutes academic misconduct. It is not necessary for the instructor to prove that the information has been used by the student.

## **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 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 or revisions to procedures may be implemented from time to time throughout the semester. Such procedures and revisions will be announced in class for two consecutive sessions before they are implemented. It is the responsibility of each student to keep informed of such developments.

All matters that are not covered by this course outline are governed by official college policies and procedures.

All matters that are not covered by this course outline are governed by official college policies and procedures



## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS	READINGS
1	January	Class Introduction What is Sociology? What are Social Problems	Chapter 1
2		Social Theory	Chapter 1
3		Qualitative Research Methods	Chapter 1
4		Quantitative Research Methods	Chapter 1
5	February	<b>MIDTERM Test 1</b> <i>Covers all material from Weeks 1- 4</i>	
6		Racism and Sexism	Chapter 3, 4, 6
7		Technology: The Internet	Chapter 7
8		Wealth and Poverty	Chapter 2
9	March	<b>MIDTERM Test 2</b> <i>Covers all material from weeks 6-8</i>	
10		Health and Illness	Chapter 10
11		Substance Abuse: Alcohol and Drugs	Chapter 8
12		Crime, Deviance and the Criminal Justice System	Chapter 9
13	April	Family Diversity	Chapter 11
14		Impacts of an Aging Population	Chapter 5
	<b>FINAL TEST</b>	<b>Scheduled For The Last Day Of Class</b>	

### LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

#### 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>

## ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student 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.

[www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-](http://www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-)