



MERCER
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number
SOC 107

Course Title
Social Problems

Credits
3.0

Lecture/Lab/Other:
3/0/0

Co- or Pre-requisite
N/A

Implementation
Fall 2022

Catalog description:

This course introduces the student to sociological theory and methods and a background in the nature, causes of, and possible solutions to major social problems facing large, complex societies. Possible topics discussed include poverty and inequality, drug addiction, crime, health care, racial and minority group issues, and environmental concerns.

General Education Category:

Goal 5: Social Science

Course coordinator:

Edward Avery-Natale
X3339
AVERYE@MCCC.EDU

Required texts & Other materials:

Kendall, Diana. 2013. *Social Problems in a Diverse Society*. Pearson Press.

By no later than the fall of 2023, the above textbook will be replaced with a new textbook or with entirely OER materials. This choice will be made by the course coordinator.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Understand the sociological approach to the study of local, national, and global social problems including the distinction between individual problems and social problems. (Supports ILG #5, 6, 10, 11)
2. Understand major sociological theories and demonstrate the ability to apply these to social problems. (Supports ILG #5, 6, 11)
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical trajectory and contemporary nature of specific social problems such as, but not limited to, racial oppression, patriarchy, homophobia and transphobia, climate change, crime and violence, health and healthcare, government and democracy, etc. Professors may add or remove topics as they see fit. (Supports ILG #1, 5, 7, 8)
4. Explain the processes by which social actors—such as but not limited to individuals, social movement groups, interest groups, lobbying groups, NGOs, governments, etc.—popularize, gain support for, and change perceived social problems. (Supports ILG #1, 5, 8, 9, 11)

Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):

Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Institutional Learning Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Institutional Learning Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Institutional Learning Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

Institutional Learning Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective: Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples

Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy: Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking: Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:

First Unit – Sociological Concepts and Theories (Supports Course SLO #1, 2)

The student will be able to:

- Describe major sociological theories (must include at least conflict theory, functionalism, and symbolic interactionism) and apply these to social problems.
- Differentiate between individual problems and social problems.
- Understand and explain what sociology is.

Units X – Specific Social Problems (Supports Course SLO #1, 3)

Each section of class after Unit I will cover a specific social problem. Examples of these include, but are not limited to, racial oppression, patriarchy, homophobia and transphobia, climate change and other environmental concerns, crime and violence, health and healthcare, government and democracy, etc. Professors may add or remove topics as they see fit. Therefore, the number of sections and what each section covers may vary slightly from class to class.

At a minimum, topics covered must include: race and racism; class and socioeconomic status; gender and sexuality; government and democracy.

The student will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the history of the social problem under study.
- Apply sociological thought to the social problem under study.
- Make use of data (qualitative, quantitative, media sources, etc.) that describes the social problem under study.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the contemporary status/nature of the social problem.

Last Unit – Progress and Change (Supports SLO #1, 3, 4)

The student will be able to:

- Describe processes by which social actors popularize, gain support for, and change perceived social problems.
- Describe processes by which social movements produce change.
- Critically engage with the socially produced limitations that make social change difficult.
- Apply sociological thought to social change.

Evaluation of student learning: No single assignment should be worth more than 20% of a student's final grade.

Reading Assignments: Textbooks and/or other provided materials should be assigned to students on a regular basis.

Engagement: Students engagement should be evaluated based on a combination of attendance, participation, and other forms of communication as the professor sees fit.

Quizzes and/or Exams: Students should show proficiency in the above SLOs using written/essay exams and/or quizzes to be designed by the professor. Multiple choice assignments may be implemented at the professor's discretion but should not make up a majority of the assignments.

Writing Assignments: All students should be required to complete a research or term paper and will make use of appropriate peer-reviewed/academic sources. At least some of the students' quizzes or exams should also be in an essay format. Length and details of writing assignments will be determined by individual professors.

Application: Students should be required to apply sociological thought and theory to social problems through written assignments.