

SOCIOLOGY 251: SOCIAL PROBLEMS

SPRING 2012: TR 11-12:15

INSTRUCTOR: MICHAEL MARTIN

OFFICE: MCD 380; PHONE: 587-7878

E-MAIL: mwmartin@adams.edu

OFFICE HOURS: MW 9-10:30; TR 9:30-10:30; OTHER HOURS BY APPOINTMENT

DATES TO REMEMBER
January 26: Student Data Sheet Due
January 31: Deadline to Complete Quiz 1
February 14: Deadline to Complete Quiz 2
February 16: Notify Instructor of Research Paper Topic
February 21: Examination I
March 6: Deadline to Complete Quiz 3
March 8: Research Paper Due
March 27: Deadline to Complete Quiz 4
April 10: Examination II
April 26: Deadline to Complete Quiz 5
May 9: Final Examination —10-11:50

PURPOSE:

The course is designed to provide the student with a survey of selected contemporary social problems. Social problems addressed in the class may include poverty, addiction and substance abuse, mental health, violence with a focus on family violence, crime, teen sexuality and pregnancy, and health care issues. The causes, severity, and consequences of the selected social problems are explored. In addition, social welfare strategies for alleviating social problems are presented.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the course each student should be able to:

1. discuss the nature and severity of selected social problems facing society using a sociological perspective.
2. identify the multiple causes and consequences of social problems.
3. critically evaluate the effectiveness of various social welfare strategies to alleviate the causes and consequences of social problems.
4. write more effectively.

CLASS PREREQUISITE/COREQUISITE:

Students enrolled in Sociology 251 must have completed LS 225 (*Research Skills for the Behavioral Sciences*—1 credit hour) with a grade of “C” or better **or** be currently enrolled in LS 225.

CLASS FORMAT:

Materials are covered primarily through lectures and reading the class textbook. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and be prepared to discuss assigned readings. Lectures may be drawn from assigned readings and outside materials; as such, failure to attend class will more than likely have an adverse impact on students' grades.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Macionis, John, 2010. *Social Problems*. Fourth Edition. Prentice Hall Publishers. On sale in the college bookstore (ISBN: 0-205-74900-3).

Other assigned readings can be found on Blackboard in the *Learning Modules* tab. Be patient as it takes some time for the longer readings to download.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Students will complete two examinations and a final examination during the semester. These will be in-class examinations. Tentative dates for the examinations are **February 21** and **April 10**. The final examination is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 9, 10-11:50**; the final examination will not be comprehensive. The two examinations and final examination will comprise **45%** of the final grade. **Examinations will consist of short answer and objective (multiple choice, matching, and true/false) questions and will test content covered in class lectures and assigned readings.** Make-up examinations will not be given unless an excused absence is provided; without an excused absence, a grade of zero will be recorded for the examination.

Students will complete **five** outside-of-class quizzes during the semester. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped and **25%** of the final grade will be based on students' scores on their **best four** quizzes. Each quiz will consist of 50 multiple choice questions will cover material from the required Macionis textbook. The quizzes can be found under the *Assessment* tab in Blackboard. Students will have 90 minutes to complete each quiz. The schedule and deadlines for the quizzes are as follows:

- Quiz 1 (Chapters 1&2 Macionis): To be completed by Tuesday, January 31, Noon
- Quiz 2 (Chapters 6&11 Macionis): To be completed by Tuesday, February 14, Noon
- Quiz 3 (Chapters 3&8 Macionis): To be completed by Tuesday, March 6, Noon
- Quiz 4 (Chapters 4&9 Macionis): To be completed by Tuesday, March 27, Noon
- Quiz 5 (Chapters 7, 10&12 Macionis): To be completed by Thursday, April 26, Noon

Twenty-five percent of the final grade will be a written research project. A description of the **Social Problems / Issues Research Paper** is attached. Students should notify the instructor of their topic by **February 16** and the completed exercise is due **March 8**.

The remaining **5%** of the final grade is based upon the following:

-Participation in class exercises and assignments including the **Student Data Sheet**.

-Class attendance: Students are allowed three unexcused absences during the semester; three or fewer unexcused absences will net the student a total of 90 points. The fourth unexcused absence will reduce the total to 45 points and five or more unexcused absences will result in 0 points for attendance. Excused absences will not count against the student; excused absences are only those provided in writing by the Dean for Student Affairs (Richardson Hall 234; phone 587-7221) for happenings such as illnesses, family or personal problems, or athletic and academic events.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON PLAGIARISM: If you plagiarize someone's work (i.e., turn in the same paper that someone else has turned in, if you quote sentences from another source without using quotations and citing the source, or if you turn in a paper that is not your individual, independent work for this specific class), you will receive an automatic **ZERO** for that portion of the grade. If you do it again, you will **FAIL** the course. In addition, any assignment completed for this course should be independent and a unique paper just for this class. You cannot turn in work that is or has been completed for another class or that is part of another class's assignment. **ALL RESEARCH PAPERS WILL BE SENT TO *turnitin.com* TO CHECK FOR PLAGIARISM.**

To submit a paper to www.turnitin.com, the Class ID for Sociology 251 is **4638284** and the Password is **soc251**.

The grade information is summarized in the box below:

Examinations	= 45%
Quizzes	= 25%
Research Paper	= 25%
Participation and Attendance	= <u>5%</u>
	100%

Final letter grades will be assigned using the following distribution:

A : 90-100 %

B : 80-89 %

C : 70-79 %

D : 60-69 %

F : Less than 60 %

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Accommodations: If you require course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, if you have emergency information to share with me, or if you need particular arrangements in the case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and hours are listed on the first page of the syllabus.

*Electronic Devices: Please turn off all electronic devices including **cell/smart phones** and put them away prior to the start of class. Interruptions due to electronic devices will result in the student being asked to leave class and receiving an unexcused absence.*

Student Class Participation: Do remember that each of you brings a unique collection of experiences and perspectives to the class. By being present, reading the assigned materials, and participating in class discussions, each of you adds to the intellectual depth and richness of the course.

CLASS TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Dates	Topics and Activities	Readings
January 17-19	Discussion of the syllabus and course requirements Social health of the nation General discussion of “what is a social problem and who is to blame?” Abortion as a social problem? Extent of poverty: income and wealth distributions	“Sociology: Studying Social Problems,” Chapter 1 in Macionis textbook.
January 24-February 2	The “Queen” of social problems: Poverty Causes of poverty: blaming the individual versus blaming the system Welfare and poverty Student Data Sheet due (January 26) Deadline to complete Quiz 1-- Chapters 1-2, Macionis (Tuesday, January 31, Noon)	“Poverty and Wealth,” Chapter 2 in Macionis textbook.

February 7	Helping the poor: programs and problems Homelessness as a social problem	" <i>Homelessness Reading</i> " can be found under the <i>Learning Modules</i> tab in Blackboard.
February 9-16	Physical violence, crime, and imprisonment Solutions to the crime problem: death penalty and gun control Deadline to complete Quiz 2—Chapters 6 & 11, Macionis (Tuesday, February 14, Noon) Notify instructor of Social Problems/Issues paper topic (February 14)	"Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice," Chapter 6 in Macionis textbook. "Work and the Workplace," Chapter 11 in Macionis textbook. " <i>Crime Control Reading</i> " can be found under the <i>Learning Modules</i> tab in Blackboard.
February 21	Examination I	
February 23-March 6	The disease model of addiction Alcohol: available and abused Drinking and driving: policy issues Deadline to complete Quiz 3—Chapters 3&8, Macionis (Tuesday March 6, Noon)	"Alcohol and Other Drugs," Chapter 8 in Macionis textbook. "Racial and Ethnic Inequality," Chapter 3 in Macionis textbook.
March 8-22	Drug use and abuse The War on Drugs: fact or fiction The issue of drug legalization Research Paper Due (March 8) Spring Break—March 12-16	" <i>Drug War Reading</i> " can be found under the <i>Learning Modules</i> tab in Blackboard. "Gender Inequality," Chapter 4 in Macionis textbook.

March 27- April 5	<p>Mental health: medical and labeling perspectives Suicide The health care crisis</p> <p>Deadline to complete Quiz 4—Chapters 4&9, Macionis (Tuesday, March 27, Noon)</p>	<p>“Physical and Mental Health,” Chapter 9 in Macionis textbook.</p> <p><i>“Health Care Reading”</i> can be found under the <i>Learning Modules</i> tab in Blackboard.</p>
April 10	Examination II	
April 12	<p>The American family: issues and trends (some disturbing) The end of romance: divorce</p>	<p>“Family Life,” Chapter 12 in Macionis textbook.</p> <p><i>“Parenting Reading”</i> can be found under the <i>Learning Modules</i> tab in Blackboard.</p> <p>“Economy and Politics,” Chapter 10 in Macionis textbook.</p>
April 17-19	<p>Family violence: domestic violence Child abuse and neglect</p>	<p><i>“Domestic Violence Reading”</i> can be found under the <i>Learning Modules</i> tab in Blackboard.</p>
April 24- May 1	<p>Assault on gays: homophobia and heterosexism Teen pregnancy Sex Education in the US Rape and sexual assault Culture of rape in US</p> <p>Deadline to complete Quiz 5—Chapters 7, 10&12, Macionis (Thursday, April 26, Noon)</p>	<p>“Sexuality,” Chapter 7 in Macionis textbook.</p> <p><i>“Teen Pregnancy Reading”</i> can be found under the <i>Learning Modules</i> tab in Blackboard.</p>
May 5	Wrap-up and review for final examination	
May 9	Final Examination: 10-11:50	

SOCIAL PROBLEMS / ISSUES RESEARCH PAPER (25% of Final Grade)

The purpose of this assignment is to intellectually explore a social problem/issue that is of interest to you. Using class lectures, assigned readings, or your personal experiences and interests, select a topic and write a **four** page (minimum of four pages), double-spaced paper (font 12 in Arial or Times New Roman style). In addition to the four pages of text, each paper should have a cover page (containing the title of paper and name, phone number, and e-mail address of the student author) and a references page.

Use a minimum of three journal articles, one book, and one research-worthy website as the basis for the paper. **Do not** use popular magazines, newspaper articles, encyclopedias, opposing viewpoints books, the course textbook/assigned course readings, or the instructor's lectures as references. Please rely strictly on academic materials for references.

The paper **must** follow the following format using the specific major topic headings:

1. **INTRODUCTION** (clearly state the social problem under consideration and its extent and severity).
2. **CAUSES AND/OR CONSEQUENCES FOR SOCIETY** (what are the causes of the problem and what are the negative consequences for individuals and society).

Text citations and references should use the American Sociological Association (ASA) format. Hints on writing effectively and clearly, editing, and referencing and citing in American Sociological Association (ASA) style can be accessed through the Nielsen Library's homepage: click on *How do I...? Guides* and then *Write Citations in APA, MLA & Other Formats*, then on *American Sociological Association*. **PLEASE TYPE ALL TEXT CITATIONS IN RED SO THAT THEY CAN BE MORE EASILY IDENTIFIED.**

Very Important: Keep Xerox copies of the reference materials that you use in the paper. This means copies of the periodicals, chapters from books, and website materials used in writing the paper. The instructor reserves the right to require students to produce these materials upon request.

Always use your own words to describe others' ideas and give credit to the authors for their ideas by citing them in the text of the paper; all ideas must be cited and all citations must be referenced on the reference page. **Do not extensively copy an author's material verbatim or with minor changes; this is technically cut-and-paste plagiarism and is profoundly unacceptable.**

ALL RESEARCH PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO *turnitin.com* TO CHECK FOR PLAGIARISM; the password is soc251 and the class ID is 4638284.

In addition for this assignment, do not use the direct quotes of others. Use only your own words.

Remember that a research paper is not an opinion paper; it should reflect the documented ideas of scholars and academics studying and doing research on social problems not your own personal opinions. Your personal opinions are very important but are not an appropriate part of the research paper process. As such, references to the first person such, as “I and we” are not appropriate in research papers.

Finally, make it easy on yourself by conserving words and using short and to-the-point sentences; such sentences make it easier to check for verb-noun agreement.

The grade on the **Social Problems/Issues Research Paper** will be based on the following evaluations:

- the intellectual depth and quality of the paper
- the selection of appropriate and quality research information (journal articles, books, and Web information)
- the quality of the writing (proofreading, editing, and organization/presentation of ideas)
- the degree to which the instructions regarding the exercise are followed (format; cover page, non-use of direct quotes)

Students should inform the instructor of their topic by **February 16**. The final draft of the **Social Problems/Issues Research Paper** is due on **March 8**. In addition, an electronic copy of the paper must be submitted to *Turnitin.com* by class time on **March 8**.

Some specific factors to consider in terms of possible points lost are summarized in the following table:

Factors to Consider:	Possible Points Lost
Absence of title page with title of paper, name, phone number, and e-mail address.	10 points
Failure to the specified paper format and topic headings.	10 points
Failure to use your own words (extensively copy an author's words verbatim without citations or the use of direct quotes) or the use of direct quotes.	50 points
Citations in the text are not referenced on the reference page; references on the reference page are not cited in the text; the absence of citations or references.	20 points
Use of popular magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, or opposing viewpoints books, class textbooks/readings or class lectures for citations and references.	10 points
Use of a format other than American Sociological Association (ASA) for text citations and references.	10 points
Failure to follow directions regarding minimum paper length, font sizes, number and type of references, and number of copies to be submitted.	10 points
Failure to provide the instructor with the reference materials (copies of periodicals, chapters in books, etc.) or any other materials, if requested by the instructor.	50 points
Failure to complete paper by due date.	5 points for each day late
Failure to submit the paper to Turnitin.com by the designated date.	50 points

STUDENT DATA SHEET----Typed and due January 26

Xeroxed photo of ASC ID on top of the page

E-mail address

Hometown

College major and emphasis area

Occupational goals

Brief description of family background

Favorite leisure activities

Most pressing social problem facing the US and why?