

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**MASTER SYLLABUS**

**SOCI 105: American Social Problems**

**Created by: Diane Muehl  
Updated by: Christina M. Leshko**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Fall 2021**

- A. **TITLE:** American Social Problems
- B. **COURSE NUMBER:** SOCI 105
- C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3 lecture hours per week for 15 weeks
- D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** No
- E. **GER CATEGORY:** 3
- F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall and Spring

**G. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course, students will explore the social, economic, and ideological basis of social problems in American society. This course is grounded in a sociological approach, applying different theoretical perspectives and research methods to identify and understand contemporary social problems. Students will examine problems as they relate to social inequality, identity, wellbeing, and institutions. Students will engage material to understand the extent of each problem, how these problems arise in society, and consider possible solutions. The relationship between social problems and organizational policies will also be discussed, particularly in regard to social policy approaches. Global contexts are incorporated when international comparisons offer solutions for consideration.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:** None

**I. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

<b><i>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</i></b>	<b><i>GER 3</i></b>	<b><i>ISLO &amp; Sub-Sets</i></b>
a. Identify foundational concepts from the discipline of sociology used to explain and define contemporary social problems.	1	2 Critical Thinking [CA]
b. Analyze classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives contained in the discipline, including the basic premise, assumptions, implications and limitations of theoretical applications.	1	2 Critical Thinking [CA]
c. Evaluate a variety of research methods, including descriptive, correlational, and comparative research, for assessing the scope of social problems.	2	2 Critical Thinking [CA]
d. Examine evidence for proposed solutions to contemporary social problems and provide an analysis informing potential mitigation strategies.	1	2 Critical Thinking [IA]
<b>GER 3</b> Students will demonstrate: 1. Understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and		

interpretive analysis.		
2. Knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.		

KEY	<b>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes [ISLO 1 – 5]</b>
ISLO #	<b>ISLO &amp; Subsets</b>
1	<b>Communication Skills</b> Oral [O], Written [W]
2	<b>Critical Thinking</b> <i>Critical Analysis [CA], Inquiry &amp; Analysis [IA], Problem Solving [PS]</i>
3	<b>Foundational Skills</b> <i>Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit./Reasoning [QTR]</i>
4	<b>Social Responsibility</b> <i>Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T]</i>
5	<b>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</b>

J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** No

- K. TEXTS:** To be determined by instructor  
OER Text Recommended:  
*University of Minnesota. (2015). Social problems: Continuity and change.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. Accessed from:  
<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/social-problems-continuity-and-change>
- L. REFERENCES:**  
Best, Joel. 2017. *Social problems*. 3d ed. New York: Norton.  
Loseke, Donileen R. 2003. *Thinking about social problems*. 2d ed. Social Problems and Social Issues. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.  
Mooney, L., Knox, D., and Schacht, C. (2014). *Understanding social problems* (9th ed.). Boston MA: Cengage Publishers.  
*University of Minnesota. (2015). Social problems: Continuity and change.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. Accessed from:  
<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/social-problems-continuity-and-change>
- M. EQUIPMENT:** University supplied equipment
- N. GRADING METHOD:** A - F
- O. SUGGESTED MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:** To be determined by instructor.  
Suggestions: Quizzes, Exams, Assignments, Research, Projects, Participation/Discussion
- P. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**
- I. Understanding Social Problems within a Sociological Framework
    - A. Definition of a Social Problem
    - B. Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems
    - C. Continuity and Change in Social Problems
    - D. Conducting Research on Social Problems
  - II. Poverty
    - A. The Measurement and Extent of Poverty
    - B. Identifying the Poor: Social Patterns of Poverty
    - C. Explaining Poverty
    - D. The Consequences of Poverty
    - E. Global Poverty
    - F. Reducing Poverty
  - III. Racial and Ethnic Inequality
    - A. History of Racial and Ethnic Inequality
    - B. The Meaning of Race and Ethnicity
    - C. Prejudice & Discrimination
    - D. Dimensions of Racial and Ethnic Inequality
    - E. Reducing Racial and Ethnic Inequality

#### IV. Gender Inequality

- A. Conceptualizing Sex and Gender
- B. Feminism and Sexism
- C. Dimensions of Gender Inequality
- D. Violence against Women: Rape and Sexual Assault
- E. The Benefits and Costs of Being Male
- F. Reducing Gender Inequality

#### V. Sexual Orientation and Inequality

- A. Understanding Sexual Orientation
- B. Attitudes about Sexual Orientation
- C. Inequality Based on Sexual Orientation
- D. Improving the Lives of the LGBT Community

#### VI. Aging and Ageism

- A. The Concept and Experience of Aging
- B. Perspectives on Aging
- C. Life Expectancy and the Graying of Society
- D. Biological and Psychological Aspects of Aging
- E. Problems Facing Older Americans
- F. Reducing Ageism and Helping Older Americans

#### VII. Alcohol and Other Drugs

- A. Drug Use in History
- B. Drugs and Drug Use Today
- C. Social Patterning of Drug Use
- D. Explaining Drug Use
- E. Drug Policy and the War on Illegal Drugs
- F. Addressing the Drug Problem and Reducing Drug Use

#### VIII. Crime and Criminal Justice

- A. The Problem of Crime
- B. Types of Crime
- C. Who Commits Crime?
- D. Explaining Crime
- E. The Criminal Justice System
- F. Reducing Crime

#### IX. Sexual Behavior

- A. An Overview of Heterosexuality
- B. Teenage Sex and Pregnancy
- C. Abortion
  
- D. Prostitution
- E. Pornography

#### X. The Changing Family

- A. Overview of the Family
- B. Sociological Perspectives on the Family

- C. Changes and Problems in American Families
- D. Families in the Future

XI. Schools and Education

- A. An Overview of Education in the United States
- B. Sociological Perspectives on Education
- C. Issues and Problems in Elementary and Secondary Education
- D. Issues and Problems in Higher Education
- E. Improving Schools and Education

XII. Work and the Economy

- A. Overview of the Economy
- B. Sociological Perspectives on Work and the Economy
- C. Problems in Work and the Economy
- D. Improving Work and the Economy

XIII. Health and Health Care

- A. Sociological Perspectives on Health and Health Care
- B. Global Aspects of Health and Health Care
- C. Problems of Health in the United States
- D. Problems of Health Care in the United States
- E. Improving Health and Health Care

XIV. Urban and Rural Problems

- A. A Brief History of Urbanization
- B. Sociological Perspectives on Urbanization
- C. Problems of Urban Life
- D. Problems of Rural Life
- E. Improving Urban and Rural Life

XV. Population and the Environment

- A. Sociological Perspectives on Population and the Environment
- B. Population
- C. The Environment
- D. Addressing Population Problems and Improving the Environment

XVI. War and Terrorism

- A. Sociological Perspectives on War and Terrorism
- B. War
- C. Terrorism
- D. Preventing War and Stopping Terrorism