



University of International Business and Economics International Summer School

SOC 150 Social Problems

Term: May 28 – June 28, 2018

Instructor: DR. HUNG CAM THAI (Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley)

Home Institution: Pomona College

Email: hung.thai@pomona.edu

Class Hours: Monday through Thursday, 120 minutes each day

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from noon to 1:00 pm.

Discussion Session: 2 hours each week

Total Contact Hours: 66 contact hours (45 minutes each)

Credit: 4 units

Course Description:

In this course, we explore the dynamics of social problems including complex issues such as inequality, poverty, crime, racism, discrimination, economic recession, labor market distribution, gender inequality, and many others. We could spend the entire semester on any one of these topics—some spend entire careers on just one of them. The primary purpose of this survey course is to think about the major causes and consequences of social problems in the United States with some cross-national comparisons and to think about the construction and reproduction of social problems as a category of sociological analysis and research. We will learn to understand how social problems go far beyond personal issues, and how we try to solve them says a lot about the time and society we live in, particularly during the current moment of vast social changes within the global economy. We will utilize a social conflict perspective to study the definition, sources, distribution, consequences of and responses to social problems. Using a critical lens we will explore how inequality produce and sustain social problems.

No Prerequisite

Course Goals:

A student who satisfactorily completes this course should be able to accomplish the following:

- ✧ Understand the importance of empirical studies to evaluate and understand the context of social problems in society.
- ✧ Explain how processes of social problems emerge.
- ✧ Gain a basic vocabulary of social problems and how to think beyond them as personal issues.
- ✧ Be able to describe important characteristics of social problems and causes and consequences for them.
- ✧ Recognize the role of morals and biases in discourses on social problems.
- ✧ Gain a basic understanding of how sociologists research social problems.

Preparedness for Readings:

- ✧ Identify the author's main argument
- ✧ Identify the methods and theories used by the author in constructing the argument
- ✧ Identify the key strengths and weaknesses of a specific readings
- ✧ Articulate your analysis in your own words about the readings
- ✧ Compare and contrast the reading to the Chinese experience

Required Textbook:

This course uses one prominent textbook that introduces students to the major social problems within American society and globally. The readings supplement the lectures; you are expected to engage with both the lectures and readings accordingly on your exams. Please purchase the e-version of this textbook:

Eitzen, D. Stanley, Maxine Baca Zinn, and Kelly Eitzen Smith. 2014. Social Problems, Census Update, 13/E. New York: Pearson

*Please note to get the 13th edition, published in 2013. You can buy the online e-version on amazon with a kindle app. It will look exactly like the hard copy. You can also buy the hard copy, which is the exact version as the online version.

Grading Policy:

UIBE awards grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, and F. Most colleges and universities do not award transfer credit for grades of D or F.

In this course, grading will be based on the following:

- ✧ 10% attendance and participation
 - ✧ 60% Two Midterms
 - ✧ 30% Final
- *Total: 100%

- A. Students are required to attend and participate in discussions.
- B. You will gain writing skills through periodic in-class writing assignments, which will measure your mastery of the readings and comprehension of the lectures, and which will be the basis for our classroom discussions.
- C. No make-up exams will be given, unless you have a medical documentation

Grading Scale:

Assignments and examinations will be graded according to the following grade scale:

A	90-100	C+	72-74
A-	85-89	C	68-71
B+	82-84	C-	64-67
B	78-81	D	60-63
B-	75-77	F	below 60

Class Rules:

General courtesy and no use of iPhone and electronic devices during class lectures

Students are expected to:

- ✧ *Attend all classes and be responsible for all material covered in class and otherwise assigned. Any unexcused absence may impact a student's grade.*
- ✧ *Complete the day's required reading and assignments before class*
- ✧ *Review the previous day's notes before class; make notes about questions you have about the previous class or the day's reading*
- ✧ *Refrain from texting, phoning or engaging in computer activities unrelated to class during class*
- ✧ *Participate in class discussions and complete required written work on time*

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty. Specifically, unless otherwise directed by the professor, students may not consult other students, books, notes, electronic devices or any other source, on examinations. Failure to abide by this may result in a zero on the examination, or even failure in the course.

Students are also expected to adhere to appropriate scholarly conventions in essays and research papers. This class includes writing assignment(s) in which students must give credit to all outside sources used by means of citations and a bibliography. Failure to do so may result in a zero on the paper assignment, or even failure in the course.

Attendance Policy:

Summer school is very intense and to be successful, students need to attend every class. Occasionally, due to illness or other unavoidable circumstance, a student may need to miss a class. UIBE policy requires a medical certificate to be excused. Any unexcused absence may affect the student's grade. Moreover, UIBE policy is that a student who has more than 1/3 of the class in unexcused absences will fail the course.

Course Schedule:

The planned schedule sketched out below may be modified to suit the interests or abilities of the enrolled students or to take advantage of special opportunities or events that may arise during the term.

WEEK ONE (May 28– May 31): What is a social problem?

Mon, 5/28: Introductions to this class and to the members of the course, Introductory Lecture on the fundamentals of social problems in society

Tues, 5/29: Chapter 1, The Sociological Perspective on Social Problems

Wed, 5/30: Chapter 2, Wealth and Power, The Bias of the System

Thurs, 5/31: Chapter 3, World Population and Global Inequality

WEEK TWO (June 4-7): Problems of Inequality

Mon, 6/4: Chapter 5, Demographic Changes in the United States

Tues, 6/5: Chapter 6: Problems of Place

Wed, 6/6: Chapter 7: Poverty



Thurs, 6/7: **Exam #1**

WEEK THREE (June 11-14): Social Structure and Individual Differences

Mon, 6/11: Chapter 8: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Tues, 6/12: Chapter 9: Gender Inequality

Wed, 6/13: Chapter 12: Crime and Justice

Thurs, 6/14: **Mid-Semester Review of Materials**

WEEK FOUR (June 18-21): Macrostructures

Mon, 6/18: Chapter 14: The Economy and Work

Tues, 6/19: Chapter 15, Families

Wed, 6/20: Chapter 16: Education

Thurs, 6/21: **Exam #2**

WEEK FIVE (June 25-June 28): Solving Social Problems

Mon, 6/25: Chapter 19, Progressive Plans to Solve Social Problems

Tues, 6/26: The Varieties of Solutions.

Wed, 6/27: **Review for Final Examinations**

Thurs: 6/28 **Final Examinations**