

MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY
Department of Social Work, Sociology, & Anthropology
Summer 2009

SOC 1121: CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

INSTRUCTOR	Janice K. Purk, Ph.D.
OFFICE	203 Pine Crest
OFFICE HOURS	9-10 M, T, H, F
PHONE	Office 570-662-4486 home 570-662-7893 Cell 570-404-2792(while traveling)
E-MAIL	jpurk@mansfield.edu (days)

Course Description

A survey of the major social problems in contemporary American society with special attention to the major paradigms (conflict, functionalist, interactionist) that guide the formation of social policy. Special focus is on social and economic justice and populations at risk.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, students will demonstrate ability to:

11. present the social processes whereby a social condition becomes defined as a social problem.
2. present conflict, functionalist, and social interaction paradigms as they are applied to explain social problems.
3. explain how macro-level social conditions (e.g. economic inequality) relate to micro-level behaviors (e.g. mental disorders).
4. develop critical thinking and visual literacy relating to social problems.
5. apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice (EP 3.0.1).
6. practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation (EP 3.0.3).
7. understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice (EP 3.0.4).
8. understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues (EP 3.0.5).
9. use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities (EP 3.0.7).
10. analyze, formulate, and influence social policies (EP 3.0.8).
11. evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions (EP 3.0.9).

Required texts: Leon-Guerrero, Anna (2009) *Social Problems (2th edition)* Pine Forge Press, Los Angeles

Korgen, K and J. White (2009) *The Engaged Sociologist: Connecting the Classroom to the Community (2nd edition)* Pine Forge Press, Los Angeles

Assignments and Due Dates (All assignments are to be turned in through blackboard. No late assignments will be accepted.)

200 pts EXAMS. (meets all Course Objectives)
2 exams- Exams will be multiple choice and short answer and pertain to the information covered in each section. 6/16, 6/25

ASSIGNMENTS. **Assignments will NOT be accepted after the due date. Assignments must be typed to be accepted and turned in through blackboard.**

100 pts. Power point poster (meets Course Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Topic: A social problems.
Students will evaluate each poster:
Does it raise your concern about a social problem?
Is it presented creatively?
Is it memorable?
Offer unique insight?
Carefully designed?
Will it provoke public discussion?
Is it easily understood?

Due: 6/10

Grading

10 pts. Clear understanding of the social problem
10 pts. Creative
10 pts. Memorable
10 pts. Offering unique insight
10 pts. Carefully designed
10 pts. Provokes public discussion
10 pts. Is easily understood
10 pts. Neat
10 pts. Accurate information
10 pts. Cited correctly

100 pts Photo essay presented through power point (meets Course Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11)

- 1) Macro-Micro Analysis. Create an analysis of a contemporary social problem.
 - 2) Take at least eight **original** photos that depict the selected concept.
 - 3) Include no more than three TYPED (readable font) quotes with each photo to underscore your elaboration of the concept. Essays will be evaluated in terms of:
 - Fulfillment of guidelines
 - Creativity of images
 - Creativity of quotes
 - Flow of presentation
 - Impact on viewer
- Due: 6/17**

Grading for photo essay

50 pts Covering Macro/Micro of the issues
50 pts Fulfillment of guidelines
Creativity of images
Creativity of quotes
Flow of presentation
Impact on viewer

100 pts Analysis (meets Course Objectives 1,3,4,5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11)

Advance the photo essay project through a written analysis of the problem. Examine information beyond the text in journal and current literature.

Guidelines for Analysis

Method

Select a tentative topic, go to the library and investigate what data is readily available on your topic. Ask the librarian for assistance. A computer will be a great resource. Some resources to examine are: *Social Science Index*, *Sociology Abstracts* as well as major journals such as *Social Problems*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Family Relations*, etc. **Find at least three research journal articles and three current sources.** Current sources include reliable articles from newspaper, magazines, and websites. Select more *journal* articles than needed that are pertinent to the topic and review each to select the best. Summarize what they say and begin to compare and contrast them.

Format for the paper

Use APA guidelines. See <http://lib.mansfield.edu/citation.html#apa> for additional details and assistance with APA. This paper should be no longer than 7 pages. It should be no shorter than 5 pages. It must be typed in a normal size font (12 pt) and double-spaced consecutively. It must include a reference page and a cover sheet that are not included in your total number of pages.

Content of the Research Paper

A good research paper will begin with an introduction, a presentation about the specific questions being examined, why it is important sociologically; explain how the information was collected (by examining current research, etc), and how the paper is organized. The next part of the paper should be the bulk of the paper. This includes the facts that are uncovered, presented in a logical organized way. Do not interpret the findings. Generally, paraphrase what others have found and integrate the information. A research paper is more than a review of each article. It is answering a question and addressing an issue. REMEMBER ALWAYS TO CITE THE AUTHOR so give credit to the authors. It is important to remember to separate the results of the research from the interpretation of the findings.

The next section should discuss the facts that are found and presented in the previous section. This part of the paper is devoted to an analysis of the original question in the light of the results reported. Was it supported or should it be rejected. Complete the paper by including a summary. This should include a section that addresses policy implications. A separate short section can be added where opinions and experiences can be expressed.

Please remember that the Writing Center is on campus to assist with writing. Please contact me early with any questions. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Due: 6/24

Grading for Analysis

20 pts. APA format: cover page, abstract, correctly cited, reference page, page numbers

20 pts. Introduction: problem clearly stated, guides paper

20 pts. Body: 3 reference articles, 3 current sources, well written, accurate information

20 pts. Conclusion: logical, supported by body, policy implications

100pts Blog assignments from *The Engaged Sociologist: Connecting the Classroom to the Community* (2nd edition). Exercises will be assigned from the text. You will added to a blog about your experience in doing the assignment. Some exercises will take more than one day to complete it will be ongoing process.

100 pts BLACKBOARD DISCUSSIONS

Students will be responsible for participation in electronic discussions with colleagues and for submitting reactions on various assignments. The assignments are related to the course objectives. These discussion questions will be posted on Blackboard on weekly basis. Response to questions will need to be completed in within two days for full credit.

Grading:

<i>Grading Scale</i>		<i>Grade Descriptions</i>	
A	94-100	A Level	Exceeds expectations. Content & technical merit is outstanding. Reflects mastery of material.
A-	90-93		
B+	87-89	B Level	Meets expectations. Content & technical merit is good. Reflects acceptable grasp of material.
B	83-86		
B-	80-82		
C+	77-79	C Level	Borders expectations. Content & technical merit is adequate. Reflects familiarity with material with gaps in application.
C	73-76		
C-	70-72		
D+	67-69	D Level	Below expectations. Content & technical merit is marginal. Reflects inadequate understanding & use of material.
D	63-66		
D-	60-62		
F	< 60	F	Failure

*All grades will be available on Blackboard.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to submit original work. Where resources and sources of information are used, credit must be given to the original source. Any form of cheating may result in failure of the course. Additional information concerning academic honesty can be found in the Mounties Manual.

Special Circumstances

Students with documented psychological or learning disorders or other significant medical conditions should work through Mr. William Chabala to provide the instructor with the appropriate letter so that any particular need can be met.

General Education: This course is part of the general education program at MU and meets a requirement of general education group 5. Assignments in this course are used to measure the goals of general education and may be used for evaluation of the general education program.

Class Attendance: Students are expected to attend and participate in class discussions. A student who has more than **three (TH) or 4 (MWF)** unexcused absences is advised to withdraw or s/he will be given a failing grade. For each unexcused absence beyond three, the grade for the class will be reduced by + or - grade. Cancellations will be listed on university website or emailed to you.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

Day1

**What is a social problem?
Chapter 1 Leon-Guerrero
Chapter 1, 2, 3 Korgen, K and J. White**

Day 2

**Social Class and Poverty
Chapter 2 Leon-Guerrero
Chapter 7 Korgen, K and J. White**

Day 3

**Race and Ethnicity
Chapter 3 Leon-Guerrero
Chapter 4 and 8 Korgen, K and J. White**

Day 4

**Gender and Sexual Orientation
Chapter 4 and 5 Leon-Guerrero
Chapter 9 Korgen, K and J. White**

Day 5

**Aging
Chapter6 Leon-Guerrero**

Day 6

**Families
Chapter 7 Leon-Guerrero
Chapter 5 and 10 Korgen, K and J. White**

Test 1

Day 7

**Education
Chapter 7 Leon-Guerrero
Chapter 11 Korgen, K and J. White**

Day 8

**Work/Media
Chapter 9 and 11**

Day 9 3/16

**Medical Care
Chapter 10**

Day 10

**Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Crime
Chapter 12, 13 Leon-Guerrero**

Day 11

**Urban Problems/Population and Environment
Chapter 14, 15 Leon-Guerrero**

Day 12

**Sociologist in Action
Chapter 12 Korgen, K and J. White**

Final

**** Instructor reserves the right to adapt and change class schedule based on need.**