

Semester at Sea, Course Syllabus
Colorado State University, Academic Partner

Voyage: Spring 2017
Discipline: Sociology
Course Number and Title: SOC 105 Social Problems
Division: Lower
Faculty Name: Dr. Karen Meenan
Semester Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We live in a world of more than 7.4 billion people, and we share a society with hundreds of millions. Despite the hugeness of humanity, most people think of themselves as unique individuals, and as having distinctive experiences like no other. However, many of our personal experiences are patterned and are shaped by *social structure*, which is the organized arrangements of relationships and institutions that together form the basis of society.

A sociological perspective reveals general patterns in what otherwise might be thought of as simple random events. Problems such as social inequality, poverty, mental illness, racism, substance abuse, crime, poor health, and environmental degradation are more than just personal troubles experienced by a few people. They are issues that affect large numbers of people and originate in society's institutional arrangements.

This course introduces students to a sociological perspective that we will use to analyze the objective and subjective realities of social problems in the United States and around the world. Our travel will illustrate that social problems are often interrelated. We will also investigate strategies aimed at *solving and preventing* social problems, again using a cross-cultural and comparative lens.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Introduce the sociological imagination, drawing upon essential concepts, theories, and methods used in the discipline of sociology to analyze phenomena.
2. Identify social problems, both locally and globally, their interrelationship, and their potential solutions.
3. Analyze social policy debates, and compare and contrast conservative and liberal perspectives.
4. Encourage critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis, both verbally and in writing.
5. Gain an appreciation for social justice, human rights, and sustainability.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Kornblum, W., Seccombe, K., and Julian, J.
TITLE: *Social Problems*
PUBLISHER: Pearson
ISBN #: 978-0-13-397458-4
DATE/EDITION: 2017/15th Edition

A NOTE ABOUT READINGS

This class is run as a seminar and requires student participation. Please complete the readings prior to coming to class and be ready to discuss them. In addition to the text, I have assigned other readings related to the course content and to the countries we are visiting. These are available on the ship's E-reserve system and are *required reading*.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Ensenada January 5

A1 – January 7

Introductions, overview of the course

A2 – January 9

Chapter 1: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

VIDEO: *The Hunting Ground* (watch prior to class)

Quiz #1

A3 – January 11

Chapter 2: Problems of Health and Health Care

VIDEO: *A Walk to Beautiful* (watch prior to class)

Quiz #2

Hawaii January 12

A4 – January 14

VIDEO: *Sick Around the World* (in class)

A5-January 17

Chapter 3: Mental Illness and Treatment

Student Debate: "Should 'Obamacare' be repealed?"

Quiz #3

No classes January 19

A6 – January 20

Chapter 4: Alcohol and Other Drugs

Quiz #4

Student Debate: "Should marijuana be legalized?"

A7-January 22

Chapter 13: Population and Immigration

Quiz #5

VIDEOS: *National Geographic* (in class)

Japan January 24-28

A8 – January 29

Secombe, 2014. "China's One-Child Policy: Impressions of a Fulbrighter."

Buckley, 2015. "China Ends One Child Policy."

VIDEO: *China's Lost Girls* (in class)

China January 31-February 5

A9 – February 6

Chapter 6: Poverty amid Affluence

Quiz #6

VIDEO: *Waiting for the World to Change* (in class)

A10 – February 13

VIDEO: *Not My Life* (in class)

Vietnam February 10-14

A11 – February 15

Chapter 7: Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination
Quiz #7

No Classes February 17

A12 – February 18

Student Debate: “Should Affirmative Action be abolished?”
Human Rights Watch, “*World Report 2015: Burma.*”
Amnesty International, “*Myanmar 2015-2016*”
Schmidt, 2012. “As isolation ends, Myanmar faces new ecological risks.”
VIDEO: *Burma (Myanmar): A New Dawn (in class)*

Myanmar February 20-24**A13 – February 25**

Chapter 8: Sex and Gender
Orenstein, 2016. “When Did Porn Become The New Sex Ed?”
VIDEO: *Tough Guise 2 (watch prior to class)*
Quiz #8
VIDEO: *Still Killing Us Softly 4 (in class)*

A14 – February 27

Rudrappa, 2012, “India’s Reproductive Assembly Line.”
VIDEO: *India: The Baby Makers (in class)*

India March 1-March 6**A15 – March 7**

Chapter 10: The Changing Family
Quiz #9

No Classes March 9

A16 – March 10

Student Debate: “Should same-sex marriage be legal?”

Mauritius March 12**A17 – March 13**

Chapter 12: Problems of Work and the Economy
VIDEO: *Capitalism: A Love Story (watch prior to class)*
Quiz #10
VIDEO: *Made in Asia: Fast, Cheap, and Fair? (in class)*

No classes March 15

A18 – March 16

Chapter 5: Crime and Violence
Fisher, 2013. “A Land Without Guns: How Japan Has Virtually Eliminated Shooting Deaths.”
Quiz #11
VIDEO: *Violence Against Women: It’s a Men’s Issue*

A19 – March 18

Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, and Dunkle, 2014. “Why, When, and How Men Rape: Understanding Rape Perspective in South Africa”
Avert, 2015. “HIV and AIDS in South Africa.”
Kelto, 2014. “This is why South African Schoolgirls Say 'Yes' to Sex with Sugar Daddies.”

VIDEO: *Mandela (watch prior to class)*

South Africa March 19-24 ** Field Class March 19

A20 – March 26

Chapter 14: Technology and the Environment
Powell, 2015. "Airpocalypse Now: China and Climate Change."
Quiz #12

A21 – March 28

Field Class Assignment Due
VIDEO: *Climate Refugees (watch prior to class)*
Student Debate: "Is Global Warming a catastrophe that warrants immediate action?"

No Class March 29

Ghana March 31-April 3

A22 – April 4

Student Field Presentations

A23 – April 6

Student Field Presentations

A24 – April 8

Student Field Presentations
Chapter 15: Summing up the Sociological Imagination: War and Global Insecurity
Shout Out UK. "Does Culture Justify Sexism?"
Quiz #13
Student Field Assignment Presentations

Study Day April 10: Student Field Assignments Due 6:00pm

Morocco April 11-14

A25 – April 15

Course Wrap-Up

FIELD WORK

Semester at Sea field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete independent field assignments that span multiple countries.

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class. Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course.

Field Class and Assignment

The Field Class for this course will take place on Sunday, 19 March in Cape Town, South Africa.

Langa Township: Inequality, Social Action, and Responsibility

During this Field Class we will visit Langa Township, the oldest township in South Africa. We will witness the daily life of township residents via a walking tour of the area, observing residential and commercial life of the township. We will focus on issues such as education, employment, migration, ways to keep local customs alive, the importance of traditional foods, and the roles of women. We will have lunch in the commercial center of Langa, a hub of entrepreneurial activity where just 25 years ago apartheid had outlawed these endeavors. Afterwards we will do hands-on community service at

Cheshire Home, assisting with the feeding and care of disabled residents. Finally, we will pay a visit to Happy Feet Project, which provides township children with positive influences to keep them away from gangs and drugs in the community. We will be able to experience an inspiring performance of gumboot dancing.

Academic Objectives:

1. Learn about the history of apartheid in South Africa, and apply sociological theories of inequality.
2. Explore a township, and learn about its unique culture.
3. Provide service to needy residents in the township.
4. Learn about efforts to keep youth safe and healthy.

Students will write a 3-page paper applying the concepts learned in the course to their field experience, due at the beginning of class, March 28. Further details on this assignment will be given in class.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. TEN QUIZZES (50%)

Students will have regular quizzes on the reading, and each quiz is worth up to 5 points. I count the highest 10 quizzes (out of 13 over the term), for a total of up to 50 points. Each quiz will contain 10 multiple-choice questions on the reading (and any required DVDs). There are no late or make-up quizzes. If you miss a quiz for any reason this will count as one of your dropped quizzes.

2. FIELD CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT (20%)

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class. Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course.

3. FIELD ASSIGNMENT AND GROUP PRESENTATION (15%)

This is a project that draws on collaborative teamwork to produce a sociological photo documentary and class presentation. Using a digital camera or phone, students will work in groups of 3 to 4 students to study and observe a particular social problem across our voyage. Each group will meet with me in advance of conducting the work to select a topic for their photo documentary project. Once your topic has been approved, each group's collective task is to take photos that address and highlight this theme with the goal of producing a coherent and sociologically informed photographic essay and class presentation based on at least seven (7) ports. A strong presentation should not only include documentation of the social problem, but also ideas for or a country's attempts at a solution. Possible topics include social inequality, hunger, homelessness, environmental degradation, racism, images of women in the media, crime, transportation, gendered family roles, access to clean water, and violence, among many others, although these topics should be further refined within your group (in consultation with me).

This assignment can be accomplished on any number of field classes, faculty-led trips, port experiences, or even shipboard life, if relevant. The purpose of this assignment is to:

1. utilize a comparative approach to study one social problem in depth;
2. increase awareness of the way that culture shapes a social problem and its possible solutions;
3. gain further experience in group work; and
4. allow you to express your creativity. It will also provide you with an important keepsake from your voyage to share with family and friends.

The photos from your experience are to be organized into a Powerpoint or Prezi presentation. There should be a short paragraph caption accompanying each picture (see the "slideshows" in each chapter in the textbook for examples). This can be formatted onto the slide or listed in the "notes" section. The group presentation will be an oral report that incorporates visual components and draws upon course concepts. The presentation must demonstrate a shared and equitable distribution of labor. The presentation style should be fluent, energetic, and constrained to the time limit. Have fun with it, and show your classmates what you have learned.

Please undertake this assignment in a respectful manner. When possible, ask permission to take someone's picture; do not create an inferior/superior situation when photographing people; and avoid ethnocentrism.

Your 20-25 minute presentation should contain approximately 22-25 slides, with a supporting paragraph for each. The grade earned will include both (1) the final **collective** project and presentation; and (2) **individual** effort and contribution. Due April 10 (study day) 6:00pm.

4. PANEL DEBATE (5%)

Students will select which topic to debate (healthcare, marijuana, affirmative action, same sex marriage, or climate change) although students may be assigned their second choice topic, depending on student demand. We will form student panels with three students working together as a team to represent the "pro" side, and three students working together to represent the "con" side. Your professor will randomly assign people to a specific side of the debate. There will be a limited amount of time in class for teams to meet and plan their debates. Debates will take place throughout the course. This assignment is worth up to 5 points and the grade earned will be a collective one.

5. ACTIVITIES, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION (10%)

Please complete all readings prior to the class period for which they are assigned. These readings will be used to guide discussions, augment class lectures, and provide the basis for individual and group activities, such as a written analysis of a video or article from the country reading packets. Therefore, it is imperative that you stay on schedule with the readings. Your grade will also reflect your degree of preparation for, and active participation in, class discussions. You will be graded on both the quantity and quality of your comments. Plan to contribute something substantive every day. It is my goal that every student feels comfortable engaging in class discussion. This means that we must all exhibit tolerance and respect for one another's views, and that the discussion is protected by open-mindedness, civility, critical self-reflection, and informed opinion.

GRADING

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale.

There are a total of 100 points possible for the course. You can easily keep track of your grade.

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory/Poor</u>	<u>Failing</u>
A+ 97-100 points	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	F Less than 60
A 94-96	B 83-86	C 70-76	
A- 90-93	B- 80-82	D 60-70	

ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all classes is mandatory. Please contact your professor prior to any absence that interferes with your ability to complete your work. Note that Semester at Sea courses are interactive. All students are encouraged to participate fully in discussions and to ask questions.

UNION SEMINARS

Faculty members on the Spring 2017 Voyage will present on various academic topics during the evening Union Seminars, held during at-sea days. These topics will present relevant cultural information in various disciplines, depending on the location on the itinerary. Students are encouraged to attend these sessions.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to

implementation. A memo from the student's home institution verifying the accommodations received on their home campus is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit this verification of accommodations pre-voyage as soon as possible, but no later than November 19, 2016, to academic@isevoyages.org.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

MEDIA

Some of these DVDs or clips will be shown in class; others will be on the ship's intranet and should be viewed outside of class by announced dates.

The Hunting Ground (**watch prior to class on January 9**)

A Walk to Beautiful (**Watch prior to class on January 11**)

Sick Around the World

Population videos: National Geographic

China's Lost Girls

Waiting for the World to Change

Not My Life

Burma (Myanmar): A New Dawn

Tough Guise 2 (**watch prior to class on February 25**)

Still Killing Us Softly 4

India: The Baby Makers

Capitalism: A Love Story (**watch prior to class on March 13**)

Made in Asia: Fast, Cheap, and Fair?

Violence Against Women: It's a Men's Issue

Mandela (**watch prior to class on March 18**)

Climate Refugees (**watch prior to class on March 28**)

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

Welcome to Semester at Sea! You are on the cusp of a wonderful adventure, and will be forever changed by this experience. I am honored to be on this voyage with you.

I am a professor at Portland State University (PSU) in Oregon, and was a professor at the University of Florida before that (go Gators). Before living in Florida I was at the University of Alaska – I do like to travel. I live in the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington, accessible only by ferry.

My PhD is in Sociology, specializing in family, medical sociology, and gender issues. I also have a Master's Degree in Social Work. I stumbled upon sociology by accident. At my community college I began studying journalism. However, after a couple of semesters, I found covering the sports beat rather boring, and meanwhile fell in love with my sociology general studies course. These things happen – I switched my major and have never looked back.

At PSU I teach a year-long interdisciplinary Freshman Inquiry course, Human Sexuality, Families, Relationships, and Health, and several introductory courses. My research areas focus on families, poverty, and access to health care. I have written 6 books and more than 35 research papers published in scientific journals. I am a Fulbright Scholar and taught in China a few years ago. That was an incredibly eye-opening experience and window into another culture.

I am married to Rich Meenan and have two daughters, Natalie, in 10th grade, and Olivia, who is in 8th grade. They are all on the voyage with us, and in fact, you may find Natalie in one of your classes. (If so, please be nice to her – she's a little nervous to be around all these college students.) I also have two young Australian

Shepherd dogs at home–Stella and Bart. I enjoy hiking, cycling, and kayaking, and hanging out with my pack when I am at home.

I look forward to working with you this term, and feel confident that we will have an interesting and productive time on our voyage. I know we are all eager to learn more about the countries that we visit. Please be aware that I have high standards in my courses; however, I know you can do well if you stay focused and spend an appropriate amount of time on the course. Yes, we are all here to have an incredible experience, but please remember that learning sociology can also be a large part of that experience. Please call on me if you have any questions or concerns. **I am here to help you be successful in this course.**