

Sociology 2031: Social Problems

Meeting Place: HMN 1B80

Meeting Times: Mon / Wed / Fri 1:00 – 1:50

Instructor: Eric Bonds

Email: Eric.Bonds@Colorado.edu

Phone: 303-817-3425

Office Hours: Monday 9:00 – 10:00 and Wednesday 2:00 – 3:00

Office: Ketchum 8 (My desk is at the very back of the room.)

Required Texts:

Konradi, Amanda and Martha Schmidt. 2004. *Reading Between the Lines: Toward an Understanding of Current Social Problems*. 3rd Edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

Burns, Stewart. 1990. *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy*. New York: Twayne Publishers.

Other readings on E-Reserve

Objective:

Historically, sociology is a problem-driven discipline, which is to say that it has not been a scientific endeavor undertaken simply to understand human social behavior, but also to understand the root causes of particular problems and possible ways they might be ameliorated. The primary objective of this class is to explore the contemporary condition of social problems that have, and continue to be, of great interest to sociologists. The class will also familiarize students with the sociological study of social movements, or the ways everyday people organize to attempt to lessen social problems and improve their world. Other objectives of this class include the students' development of critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

Class Email List

I will occasionally send out emails to the class based on your university email accounts. Please check these accounts regularly.

Readings:

You are responsible for doing the readings *ahead* of each class, something that will help you immensely in this, and all of your other, classes. You will find many of our readings posted on E-Reserve.

Classroom Community

Please be respectful of others with differing opinions. Due to the nature of the discipline of sociology in general and the nature of this class in particular, we will inevitably discuss controversial issues. While we should not shy away from controversy or from disagreement with one another, we must always treat each other with respect. Expressions of bigotry – sexism, racism, homophobia – will absolutely not be tolerated.

Please do not limit other students' ability to get as much as out of the recitation as possible through rude behavior such as leaving cell phones on in class, leaving class early, talking out of turn, etc. Any behavior that is determined by me to be disruptive to the class will not be tolerated. For further information on appropriate classroom behavior, please go to www.colorado.edu/policies/classroombehavior.html.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Tests: We will have three tests during the year including a non-cumulative final covering reading materials and lecture. Each test will be worth 20% of your grade.

Reaction papers: In each of these four papers, you will react to something you read or something covered in lecture *and* develop and defend your own personal position in relation to it. The point here is to demonstrate engagement with the reading materials and the topics / concepts covered in this class. The papers will be due on the Friday after the unit was covered. You will receive a handout with further instructions and a grading rubric at a later date. Each of these four papers (2 pages maximum) will account for 10% of your total grade.

Late Work and Missed Exams:

All assignments must be submitted on time and in class unless you have been given my permission *in advance* to turn in an assignment late because of a personal emergency. If your assignment is not handed in when I collect it in class there will be an automatic full grade deduction for each day that it is late. So, for example, if you walk into class at its end (likely because you were working on it while everyone else was attending class), an "A" quality paper would be recorded as a "B." Emailed papers and papers placed in my mailbox or under my office door will not be accepted.

No make-up tests will be given without a University acceptable reason for missing the scheduled date. In other words, you will receive an "F."

Class Notes:

Because I am not requiring attendance, I will not make my lecture notes or power point slides available to you if you miss class. Besides, they would be a very poor substitute for the actual notes you would take yourself. If you must miss class, please make a friend and get the notes from him or her.

Don't Cheat!:

I'll say it again: Don't cheat! I don't want to be put in the situation of catching you, and you don't want to be caught. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council and will carry severe penalties. Information about the honor code and likely penalties can be found at www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html.

Disability:

If you have any type of disability, as documented by the campus Disability Services Office, please let me know as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs. For more information, please see <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

Accommodations for Religious Observances:

Please notify me at least two weeks in advance if any aspect of the recitation conflicts with your religious observance so accommodations can be made. For more information, please go to http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Student Athletes:

If you are on a university athletic team and will be missing classes, please turn in a letter to me by September 15th. It is your responsibility to look ahead on the syllabus and deal with any conflicts (tests or paper due dates) *prior to* the conflicting event.

Tentative Class and Reading Schedule:

Introduction to Social Problems

Date	Lecture	Readings
Aug 28 th	Welcome!	
Aug 30 th	Sociological perspectives and analyses	Konradi and Schmidt 1–13
Sept 1st	Thinking Sociologically	Becker on E-Reserve
Sept 4th	Labor Day: no class	
Sept 6 th	The Sociological Imagination	Mills in K&S: 26-31
Sept 8 th	The Sociological study of social movements	Buechler on E-Reserve

What is / isn't a social problem? How do we know?

Sept 11 th	The social construction of social problems	Best on E-Reserve
Sept 13 th	Film: Rich Media, Poor Democracy	Kuzman on E-Reserve
Sept 15 th	The politics of social problems	Rampton and Stauber on E-Reserve

Wealth, Income, and Work Inequalities

Sept 18 th	Film: The New Rulers of the World	Konradi and Schmidt 134–136 Isbister in K&S: 139-145
Sept 20 th	Income inequality in America	Konradi and Schmidt 308-311 Ehrenreich in K&S: 331-346
Sept 22 nd	Welfare reform Papers on social problems due	Barlett & Steele and Edin & Lein in K&S: 103-113 and 168-176
Sept 25 th	Film: An Injury to One	Zinn on E-Reserve
Sept 27 th	Social movement theory: Understanding movements in their social context	
Sept 29 th	1st Test	

Racial Inequalities and Racism

Oct 2 nd	Film: Viva La Causa	Zinn on E-Reserve
Oct 4 th	Contemporary overview	Konradi and Schmidt: 179-185 and Blank on E-Reserve
Oct 6 th	Whiteness Paper on wealth / work due	Feagin, Vera and Imani in K&S: 456-467 and Jensen on E-Reserve
Oct 9 th	Affirmative action	Reskin in K&S: 356-364
Oct 11 th	Film on the Civil Rights Movement	Burns: 1-52
Oct 13 th	Social movement theory: Resource Mobilization	

Gender Inequalities

Oct 16 th	A male dominant society: the basics	Konradi and Schmidt: 256-260
Oct 18 th	Domestic violence	McEachern, Van Winkle, and Steiner in K&S: 274-282
Oct 20 th	The 2 nd shift Papers on race due	Hochsild in K&S: 325-331
Oct 23 rd	The social construction of gender	Lorber in K&S: 283-289
Oct 25 th	Film: TBA	Burns 116-176
Oct 27 th	Social movement theory: Identity	

Problems in Crime and Punishment

Oct 31 st	Prison growth	Konradi and Schmidt: 481-484 and Donziger in K&S: 488-503
Nov 1 st	The privatization of prisons	Yeoman in K&S: 506-513
Nov 3 rd	2nd Test Papers on gender due	

Environmental Problems

Nov 7 th	Society and the environment	Konradi and Schmidt: 608-611
Nov 9 th	Global warming	Nijhuis on E-Reserve
Nov 11 th	Environmental inequality Papers on prisons due	Bullard on E-Reserve
Nov 14 th	The environment and war	Kuletz in K&S: 627-634
Nov 16 th	Film: TBA	Peña on E-Reserve
Nov 18 th	Social movement theory: Framing	

Nov 21st – 25th: **No Class**

Globalization

Nov 28 th	Globalization: The arguments	Konradi and Schmidt 76-79 and Grieder in K&S: 82-92
Nov 30 th	The mechanisms of globalization	TBA
Dec 2 nd	The mechanisms of globalization Papers on the environment due	TBA
Dec 5 th	Immigration and globalization	TBA
Dec 7 th	Film: The Corporation	TBA
Dec 9 th	The Corporation continued	

Conclusion

Dec 12 th	Do social movements matter?	Burns 152-176
Dec 14 th	Conclusion: Social problems and everyday life	Loeb on E Reserve
Dec 16 th	Optional class / study day Papers on globalization due	

Final: Dec 18th

