Sociology 1306.001: Social Problems
COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2015

Professor: Yvonne Villanueva-Russell
Class Time: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday: 12:00PM-12:50PM
Class Location: SS 313
Office: Ferguson Social Sciences 307
Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays: 8AM-9AM; 1PM-2:45PM
Fridays: 8AM-9AM
& by appointment
Office Phone: 903-886-5320
Office Fax: 903-886-5330
University Email: Yvonne.VRussell@tamuc.edu
eCollege Website: http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

2) Several reserve readings. These will be available on the eCollege website.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
Catalog Description:

Student Learning Outcomes
1] Demonstrate comprehension of sociological concepts as measured through objective exams

2] Demonstrate the application sociological theories to real world topics as measured by written assignments

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Exams: 4 @ 100 points each
This assignment is designed to achieve **student learning outcome # 1:** Demonstrate comprehension of sociological concepts as measured through objective exams

1. **Assignment Description:**
   There will be a total of **FOUR** exams during the semester. The format for all of the tests will consist of objective measures, such as multiple choice and true-false questions, and also will consist of short answer or essay questions, although essay tests may also be given during in the semester. A more detailed breakdown of the test format will be given to students in class several days before the exams. A study guide will also be posted on eCollege to assist in preparing for each test.

   **ALL** tests count toward your grade in this course. There will **NOT** be an opportunity to drop a test grade so be sure to do your best on all examinations and assignments in the class—everything counts.

2. **Assessment:**
   Grades for individual tests and your final grade for the course will be assigned according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 – 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Makeup Exams:**
   Notice of exams are given tentatively in this syllabus, and will be confirmed in class. Makeup exams will not be given unless a genuine emergency or crisis occurred (you will have to provide documentation), and you will be excused from the exam on the test day ONLY if prior notification has been given. Makeup exams may be given in an alternative format from the rest of the class (i.e. essay exams) and at an alternate time set up for the professor's (not the student's) convenience. Makeup exams must be completed **within two weeks** of the original exam date.

   Students with legitimate reasons for missing exams will be allowed a makeup exam ONCE during the semester. If a student has been habitually absent, sick or dealing with some other concern to the extent that they have missed more than on exam, then a meeting with the professor is warranted to discuss whether finishing the requirements of the course is possible from the student's current effort and situation.

4. **Final Exam:**
   The final exam will **NOT** be comprehensive. The format of this test will be similar to the three exams given earlier in the semester, and will also be worth **100 points.**

   No one is exempt from the final exam—all students will take this exam, and the score will count towards your final grade.

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**B. Mock Town Meetings: 5 @ 25 points each**

These assignments are designed to measure **student learning outcome #2:** Demonstrate the application sociological theories to real world topics as measured by written assignments

1. **Assignment Description:**
Periodically, we will hold mock town meetings, in which the class will assume the roles of townspeople confronted with a real social problem. Through class discussion, students will represent the viewpoints of their assigned role, apply sociological theories and concepts to analyze the problem they are presented with, and work together to formulate a solution to the problem.

Seven mock town meetings will be held over the course of the semester. Students will participate in ALL of these. Students will turn in a written synopsis of their assigned role’s viewpoint on the issue in FIVE of these meetings.

Approximately one week before each town meeting, students will be presented with a synopsis of the problem they must solve. They will also select a role, (drawn randomly out of a hat) representing a key actor in the community that they will “play” during the town meeting. Students may also be assigned related readings to the topic to be discussed.

Student will be active participants in the mock town meeting, accurately representing views likely held by their assigned role. Students will also summarize these perspectives in a short 1-page written viewpoint to be turned in at the beginning of the hour.

A list of mock town meetings is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 9th</td>
<td>Income Inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 23rd</td>
<td>Race &amp; Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Gender Inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Prostitution, Pornography and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W)</td>
<td>Sex Industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Assessment:**

A rubric and extensive feedback will be provided by the professor. The rubric will be provided to students with the assignment instructions in class, and available online on eCollege. Students will receive 5 participation points for active discussion during the mock town meeting held during class. Students will earn up to 20 points on their written viewpoint, based on their ability to accurately present and apply sociological concepts to the point of view of a key actor, and in terms of representing a position this person might likely hold relative to a given social problem.

All written work will be due at the **beginning of the hour** on the date due. Do not turn in assignments via email, in my mailbox, or under my office door without prior permission from me. Doing so will result in the paper being “late.” Late assignments will receive a **10% deduction** in points. Assignments may NOT be turned in any later than **one week beyond the original due date**. No assignment can be re-done or re-graded. Extra assignments cannot be completed for extra credit, but a student can complete all three assignments and drop the lowest score from their point total.

Any written work in this class is subject to turnitin review. Turnitin.com is a website that checks for plagiarism and generates an originality report that notes which parts of a paper appear unattributed to other student papers, internet sources or articles and books. Please make sure that you cite wherever appropriate. If you need help or advice on how to do this, please contact your professor.
IMPORTANT NOTES:
1) Complete FIVE of the seven written assignments.
2) Students must cite in-text using APA, ASA or another style they are familiar with.
3) Late assignments receive a 10% deduction in points, and cannot be accepted beyond one week of the original due date.
4) Written assignments cannot be re-done or re-graded.
5) If a student completes all seven assignments, only the five highest scores will be recorded.
6) All written work is subject to Turnitin review. Students who plagiarize will receive a zero on the assignment in question

C. Attendance and Participation  25 points

Regular class attendance is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the material covered during the semester. Therefore, attendance and participation in class will be taken and recorded regularly. Occasions may arise which make it necessary for a student to miss class, but absences on test dates will not be excused without significant extraneous circumstances. It is your responsibility to have an understanding of course material whether you were present in class or not. A total of 25 points will be awarded based on attendance and participation in this class.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please do not ask me for copies of class notes—I do not provide them. You will need to request to copy the notes from a student who was present in class, instead.

Grading Procedures:

A total of 550 points are attainable in this course. The breakdown of points is as follows:

Four tests @ 100 points each = 400 points

Five written assignments @ 25 points each = 60 points

Attendance & participation points = 25 points

Total Points in the class = 550 points

Final Grades in the course will be calculated by using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>495 - 550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>440 - 494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>385 - 339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>330 – 384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>329 and fewer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

ADA Statement
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this
legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Students with Disabilities:**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library  
Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Your professor will make every effort to accommodate your learning and testing needs as they are made known to me, as well. If you are an international student, or if English is not your primary language, you will be allowed to use a paperback dictionary during examinations.

**Statement on Student Behavior**
All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook).

The Student Handbook states: “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct, for more information) It is your prerogative to come to class but by doing so, you are making the commitment to be alert, attentive and courteous. Gossiping, phone calls and newspaper reading can all wait for 50 minutes and will not be tolerated while class lecture and discussion are occurring. If you cannot employ enough willpower to control your behavior during class, please stay home and do not distract more serious students from learning in our class.

**Statement on Nondiscrimination**
A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

All cellular telephones, beepers and electronic devices should be turned off or set on silent mode before entering the classroom.

**Special Note about In-Class Examinations:** Cell phones must not be visible and may not be checked during examinations. Students are also not permitted to leave the classroom and re-enter it during an examination. Be sure to have sharpened pencils, tissues and restroom needs taken care of prior to the beginning of the test. Please be courteous to others by refraining from eating or making superfluous noise that could be disruptive to those also taking the test near you.
COURSE POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must work to provide an environment in which each student has the opportunity to be evaluated fairly on the basis of his/her own performance. University regulations regarding academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. At a minimum, any student found to be in violation of university rules will receive a failing grade on the exam or assignment involved. ALL instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Head and he/she may decide upon punishment independent of this professor’s actions. In short, cheating, plagiarizing and engaging in unethical student behavior carries a high price for such short term rewards—don't do it!

All written work, including short answer questions on online exams is subject to turnitin review.

Grades of Incomplete:

I do not assign grades of incomplete in this course. All coursework must be handed in to me by May 8th, 2015. Your grade will be assigned based on the points you have earned from all completed work at that time. It is your responsibility to finish assignments prior to their due dates, or to make alternate arrangements for their completion. Do not assume I can or will extend due dates or course requirements for your individual needs or preferences.

Dropping the class:

I do not drop students from my courses. If you feel Sociology 1306 is not the course for you, please take the necessary steps to remove yourself from the class. Simply not attending in hopes that I will remedy the situation for you will not happen. You are responsible for the consequences stemming from either coming from class, or not coming to class. You may request a drop through MyLeo

Extra Credit and Curving:

From this syllabus it is very clear as to the number of assignments and the possible points to be attained in the course. It is your responsibility to read, listen and comprehend the material presented. If you do not understand a concept or issue, please ask me to clarify. It is important for you to be consistently diligent in your efforts throughout the semester.

I have never and will never curve the grades of a class to conform to an artificial bell curve or other objective or subjective standard, so requests to do so will fall on deaf ears. That means that it is the students’ responsibility to prepare for the exams, to make sure that they have acquired all information possible through attending lectures and doing the readings, and that they perform to the best of their abilities on the exams. I will assist the class by means of lectures, and discussions, but I do not intend to manipulate your quiz score, drop a quiz score or inflate your quiz scores so that it will be more to your liking. An improvement of grades will come from your studying efforts, and not from your instructor’s generosity in grade, so please do not expect or ask for more, or extra points in this course.

A Note about final grades:

Final grades are assigned on the 90, 80, 70% scale noted above. These percentages and their corresponding grades are firm. That is, if your final average is a 68% you have earned a “D.” Let me spare you the conversation that inevitably follows: No, I cannot and will not round your
grade up to a 70% or a "C." Students often protest this act, saying they were “only 2 points shy of a passing grade.” This is not exactly correct. In truth, they were 2 percentage points away from the next grade, amounting to being 9 raw points off. Percentage points and raw points are two very different things. I will NOT round up your final average 2 percentage points, or even a full percentage point to the next highest grade.

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Our course is primarily a face to face class and will utilize a traditional lecture-mode of delivery. For the purposes of written project assignments, and utilizing the eCollege system to check grades and/or obtain course assignments, the following is a list of technology requirements for the class:

You will need the ability to open Adobe Acrobat files (.pdf), PowerPoint files (.ppt) and Word files (.doc)

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

For those of you who are not familiar with eCollege, I suggest you take the tutorial offered online. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Technology Services.

**ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

*eCollege Access and Log in Information*

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.

**COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

Email (Yvonne.Vrussell@tamuc.edu) is the preferred means of communication with the instructor. You can expect to receive a reply to any inquiry within 24 hours (M-F). It is advisable to include the course number and your full name in any electronic correspondence with me.

Check your MyLeo email account regularly for announcements about our class!!!
Test dates and written assignments are scheduled tentatively at this time. They may be changed but advanced notice will be given in class. You are expected to read the assigned material prior to its discussion in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 21 (W)</td>
<td>Introductory Remarks</td>
<td>None!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23 (F)</td>
<td>What is sociology? What is a social problem?</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 26 (M)</td>
<td>How do sociologists study social problems?</td>
<td>“The Promise” on eCollege Video: Explaining Ferguson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 28 (W)</td>
<td>Sociological Theories used to study social problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 30 (F)</td>
<td>Wealth and poverty: scope of the problem</td>
<td>Chapter 2 in Kendall book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2 (M)</td>
<td>Wealth and poverty: scope of the problem as a public issue</td>
<td>“The Great American Recession” on eCollege</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 4 (W)</td>
<td>Wealth and poverty: experiencing the problem as a personal trouble</td>
<td>Video: Poverty in America—It’s Not What You Think</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 6 (F)</td>
<td>Wealth and Poverty: analyzing the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9 (M)</td>
<td>Wealth and Poverty: solving the problem</td>
<td>MOCK TOWN MEETING #1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 11 (W)</td>
<td>Test One</td>
<td>Test One</td>
<td>Test One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 13 (F)</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity: scope of the problem</td>
<td>Chapter 3 in Kendall book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16 (M)</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity: scope of the problem as a public issue</td>
<td>Video: “Colorblind Racism”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 18 (W)</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity: experiencing the problem as a personal trouble</td>
<td>Video: “A Girl Like Me” &amp; “Drop the I Word”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 20 (F)</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity: analyzing the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 23 (M)</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity: solving the problem</td>
<td>MOCK TOWN MEETING #2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25 (W)</td>
<td>Gender Inequality: scope of the trouble</td>
<td>Chapter 4 in Kendall book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 27 (F)</td>
<td>Gender inequality: scope of the problem as a public issue</td>
<td>“The Glass Escalator” on eCollege</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2 (M)</td>
<td>Gender inequality: experiencing the problem as a personal trouble</td>
<td>Video: 10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman Video: Oppressed Majority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Assignment/Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) March 4</td>
<td>Gender inequality: analyzing the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) March 6</td>
<td>Gender inequality: solving the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>MOCK TOWN MEETING #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) March 9</td>
<td>Test Two</td>
<td>Test Two</td>
<td>Test Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) March 11</td>
<td>Health Care: scope of problem</td>
<td>Chapter 10 in Kendall book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) March 13</td>
<td>Health Care: scope of problem</td>
<td>“Health and Wealth” on eCollege Video: What If Our Healthcare System Kept Us Healthy?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M-F) March 16-20</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) March 23</td>
<td>Health Care: experiencing the problem</td>
<td>Video: Sicko</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) March 25</td>
<td>Health Care: analyzing the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) March 27</td>
<td>Health Care: solving the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>MOCK TOWN MEETING #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) March 30</td>
<td>The Changing Family: scope of the problem</td>
<td>Chapter 11 in Kendall book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) April 1</td>
<td>The Changing Family: scope of the problem</td>
<td>“Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth” on eCollege</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) April 3</td>
<td>The Changing Family: experiencing the problem</td>
<td>Video: Slow Parenting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) April 6</td>
<td>The Changing Family: analyzing the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) April 8</td>
<td>The Changing Family: solving the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>MOCK TOWN MEETING #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) April 10</td>
<td>Test Three</td>
<td>Test Three</td>
<td>Test Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Assignment/Notes</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) April 17</td>
<td>Education: experiencing the problem</td>
<td>Video: Trading Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) April 13</td>
<td>Education: scope of the problem</td>
<td>Chapter 12 in Kendall book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) April 15</td>
<td>Education: scope of the problem</td>
<td>“From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools” on eCollege</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) April 2</td>
<td>Education: analyzing the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) April 22</td>
<td>Education: solving the problem</td>
<td>MOCK TOWN MEETING #6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) April 24</td>
<td>Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: scope of the problem</td>
<td>Chapter 7 in Kendall book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) April 27</td>
<td>Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: scope of the problem</td>
<td>“The International Sexual Trafficking of Women and Children” on eCollege</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) April 29</td>
<td>Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: experiencing the problem</td>
<td>“New Commodities, New Consumers” on eCollege</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) May 1</td>
<td>Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: analyzing the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td>MOCK TOWN MEETING #7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) May 4</td>
<td>Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: solving the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(W) May 6</td>
<td>Test Four</td>
<td>Test Four</td>
<td>Test Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) May 8</td>
<td>No class- professor out of town for a conference</td>
<td>No class- professor out of town for a conference</td>
<td>No class- professor out of town for a conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) May 15</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM 8AM-10AM</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM 8AM-10AM</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM 8AM-10AM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>