



Sociology 1306.001: Social Problems COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2015

Instructor: Bryan Parham

Class Time: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday: 1:00PM-1:50PM

Class Location: SS 150

Office: Ferguson Social Science 206/207

Office Hours: Mondays, Fridays- 11-12pm

Tuesdays-1-3pm

Wednesdays- 11-12pm; 2:00 - 3:00pm

& by appointment

Office Phone:

Office Fax:

University Email: Bryan.Parham@tamuc.edu

eCollege Website: <http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx>

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

- 1) Kendall, Diana. 2013. Social Problems In a Diverse Society, 6th edition. Boston: Pearson. ISBN: 978-0-205-15290-2
- 2) Several reserve readings. These will be available on the eCollege website.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description:

A critical discussion of the sociological perspective on studying descriptions, causes, and prevention of social problems such as crime, mental illness, drug abuse, environmental degradation, poverty, terrorism, and declining quality of life in today's world.

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:

Individual tests:

A	90 – 100%
B	80 – 89%
C	70 – 79%
D	60 – 69%
F	59% and below

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.

B. Written Assignments 2 @ 100 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:

In addition to the four exams, students will need to complete two written assignments. This exercise will give students an opportunity to do an intensive reading of a particular theory and its application to a contemporary social problem.

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.

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 575 points are attainable in this course. The breakdown of points is as follows:

Four tests @ 100 points each	=	400 points
Two written assignments @ 75 points each	=	150 points
<u>Attendance & participation points</u>	=	<u>25 points</u>
Total Points in the class	=	575 points

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

A	517 - 575 points
B	460 - 516 points
C	402 - 459 points
D	345 - 401 points
F	344 and fewer points

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 will not 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@tamuc.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Email (Bryan.Parham@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!!!

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

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.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Notes
(M) Aug 31	Introductory Remarks	None!	
(W) Sep 2	What is sociology? What is a social problem?	Chapter 1	
(F) Sep 4	How do sociologists study social problems?	“The Promise” on eCollege	
(M) Sep 7	Sociological Theories used to study social problems		
(W) Sep 9	Wealth and poverty	Chapter 2 in Kendall book	
(F) Sep 11	Wealth and poverty	“The Great American Recession” on eCollege	
(M) Sep 14	Wealth and poverty	<u>Video</u> : Poverty in America—It’s Not What You Think	
(W) Sep 16	Wealth and Poverty		

(F) Sep 18	Wealth and Poverty		
(M) Sep 21	Test One	Test One	Test One
(W) Sep 23	Race and Ethnicity	Chapter 3 in Kendall book	
(F) Sep 25	Race and Ethnicity	<u>Video</u> : "Colorblind Racism"	
(M) Sep 28	Race and Ethnicity	<u>Video</u> : "A Girl Like Me" & "Drop the I Word"	
(W) Sep 30	Race and Ethnicity		
(F) Oct 2	Race and Ethnicity		
(M) Oct 5	Gender Inequality	Chapter 4 in Kendall book	
(W) Oct 7	Gender inequality	"The Glass Escalator" on eCollege	
(F) Oct 9	Gender inequality	<u>Video</u> : "10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman" <u>Video</u> : "Oppressed Majority"	

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Notes
(M) Oct 12	Gender inequality		
(W) Oct 14	Gender inequality		
(F) Oct 16	Test Two	Test Two	Test Two Paper 1 Due
(M) Oct 19	Health Care	Chapter 10 in Kendall book	
(W) Oct 21	Health Care	"Health and Wealth" on eCollege <u>Video</u> : What If Our Healthcare System Kept Us Healthy?	
(F) Oct 23	Health Care		
(M) Oct 26	Health Care		
(W) Oct 28	Health Care		
(F) Oct 30	Health Care		

(M) Nov 2	The Changing Family	Chapter 11 in Kendall book	
(W) Nov 4	The Changing Family	“Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth” on eCollege	
(F) Nov 6	The Changing Family	<u>Video</u> : Slow Parenting	
(M) Nov 9	The Changing Family		
(W) Nov 11	The Changing Family		

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Notes
(F) Nov 13	The Changing Family		
(M) Nov 16	Education	<u>Video</u> : Trading Schools	
(W) Nov 18	Education	Chapter 12 in Kendall book	
(F) Nov 20	Education	"From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools" on eCollege	
(M) Nov 23	Education		Test 3 Paper two due
(W) Nov 25 – Dec 6	Thanksgiving Break		
(M) Dec 7	Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: scope of the problem	Chapter 7 in Kendall book	
(W) Dec 9	Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: scope of the problem	"The International Sexual Trafficking of Women and Children" on eCollege	
(F) Dec 11	Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry: experiencing the problem	"New Commodities, New Consumers" on eCollege	
(M) Dec 14	Finals week		Test 4