

## Social Problems: ISC275

“We are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay and dissolution and which cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations to other men. The suffering which comes from this last source is perhaps more painful to us than any other.” - Sigmund Freud

Location and Time: Woodang Hall, Period 4 (3:00-4:40PM)

Instructor: Brown

E-Mail: benjamin.brown@utrgv.edu

Office: Woodang Hall 310

Office Hours: Mon-Wed, 2:00-3:00PM

Or by appointment

**Required Text:** Social Problems (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) by John J. Macionis. Prentice Hall (ISBN 978-0-13-390959-3)

**Note:** Additional readings (articles/essays) may be required.

**Note:** Students are encouraged to purchase their textbook prior to the start of the class. **Korea University will not have textbooks available for students to purchase.**

**Course Description:** This course provides an overview of some of the most significant problems in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Throughout the course a number of social problems will be discussed, inclusive of but not limited to: poverty, racial/ethnic inequality, crime, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and inadequate educational opportunities. During this course the student will become familiar with a number of problematic phenomena and a variety of perspectives of how such problems evolved and proposed reforms for handling the problems.

**Course Objectives:** This course has been designed to help the student achieve the following:

- 1.) A basic understanding of several social problems such as economic inequality, racial/ethnic inequality, crime, and inadequate education opportunities. The focus of the course will be on problems and policies in the United States, but problems and policies in other nations will be discussed as well.
- 2.) A basic understanding of different perspectives on the evolution of the social problems discussed.
- 3.) A basic understanding of different proposals for handling the social problems discussed.
- 4.) A rudimentary understanding of the manner in which many of the problems (e.g., economic inequality and racial/ethnic inequality) may be related.
- 5.) An awareness of the power struggles between various interests in society and how different demographics compete to define and deal with social problems.

**Student Expectations:** As a student enrolled in this course there are a number of expectations made of you. Specifically, throughout the duration of this course you are expected to:

- 1.) Attend class on a regular basis and in a punctual manner (i.e., be on time).
- 2.) Read the assigned chapter(s) from the text prior to the class period during which they will be covered. You will also be expected to be prepared to ask and answer questions pertaining to the assigned chapter(s) and discuss the views and information presented in the chapter(s).
- 3.) Critically examine, compare, and contrast the information and views presented in lecture and in the text.
- 4.) Develop your own understanding of the social problems covered in class and your own views on the best means of handling such problems.
- 5.) Turn all cell phones/smart phones off (or to silence) prior to entering the classroom.
- 6.) Ask Questions. If something is covered in lecture or discussion which you do not adequately understand, *ask a question*. Chances are, if you do not understand something, there are several of your fellow students who are in the same situation. The grade you receive in this course will be determined largely by your mastering of the information presented. If something is covered in class which you do not understand, it is in your best interest to ask about.

**Class Participation:** As a student enrolled in this course you are expected to actively engage in the class. This means asking relevant questions, making relevant comments, and, of course, being on time and attending class on a regular basis. The instructor of this course reserves the right to call on students individually to ask questions pertaining to the materials covered.

**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance will be taken regularly for a few reasons: (1) To help the professor learn the names of the students, (2) To help determine the students' attendance/participation score, and (3) To determine whether a student is eligible for credit for the class. As per the Academic Policy of Korea University, a student must attend at least 70% of all class sessions to receive a passing grade for the class.

Class attendance is an essential element of the educational process. Missing classes may put the student at risk as the exams will cover materials from lecture which are not included in the text. Emergencies do occur, however, and in order to compensate for this fact each student is entitled to miss up to two class sessions without a reduction in the attendance/participation score. As each student is allowed to miss up to two class sessions, no excuses are necessary: any absences beyond those will result in a reduced attendance/participation score. The allowance of two missed classes does not affect the minimum attendance required to receive credit for the class.

Students should also be aware that:

- 1.) Excessive tardiness may result in a reduced final grade.
- 2.) Sleeping in class may result in a reduced final grade.
- 3.) Refusal to participate in class discussions/debates may result in a reduced final grade.
- 4.) Inappropriate talking/behaviors during class may result in a reduced final grade.
- 5.) Having a cell/smart phone which frequently rings in class can result in a reduced final grade.

**Examinations:** Each exam will cover materials presented in LECTURE and in the TEXTS. Throughout the course a variety of materials NOT found in the text will be presented in lecture. You are responsible for knowing these materials and will be tested on them. Also, throughout the course you will be expected to read materials NOT covered in lecture and will be responsible for knowing these materials as well (and will similarly be tested on them).

**Regarding Make-Up Exams:** If you cannot take an exam at the scheduled time (for a valid reason) and are aware of this fact, *please make arrangements (if possible) to take the exam early.* If you cannot be present to take an exam at the scheduled time (and can present a valid reason for this) and must take it after the rest of the class, you will be required to take a make-up exam. Because make-up exams are given after the regular exams, students taking them will have more time to prepare for the exam than the rest of the class and the make-up exams will be designed and graded with this in mind. All make-up exams must be taken within one week of the scheduled examination date. It is up to you to arrange a time to take a make-up examination. If you do not arrange to take a make-up exam within one week of the regular examination a score of zero will be assigned. If a student misses the final exam, no make-up exam will be given. All students are required to be present in class to take the final exam.

**Writing Assignments:** During the course there will be two required opinion papers. For each opinion paper the students will be required to consider an issue/social problem, briefly summarize the issue/problem, and provide an opinion on the topic/issue/problem under consideration.

**Grades:** The final grade you receive for this class will be based on the following:

- 1.) 1st Exam, 25%
- 2.) 2nd Exam, 25%
- 3.) 3rd Exam, 25%
- 4.) Writing Assignments, 20%
- 5.) Attendance/Participation, 5%

**Grading Scale:**

95-100 = A+

90-94.99=A

85-89.99 = B+

80-84.99=B

75-79.99 = C+

70-74.99=C

65-69.99 = D+

60-64.99=D

59 and Below= F

**Regarding Academic Dishonesty:** As a student at Korea University and as a student enrolled in this course you are expected to possess a high level of integrity. In keeping with this expectation, each student is expected to perform to the best of his/her capacities and, above all, to do his/her own work. Violations of Academic Integrity (i.e., any academically dishonest actions such as plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication) will NOT be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in an academically dishonest action will be sanctioned in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct of Korea University, with the sanction being dependent upon the level of the violation (please see the Student Code of Conduct of Korea University for details).

### **Tentative Schedule of Materials Covered**

Chapter 1: Sociology: Studying Social Problems (pp. 1-30)

Chapter 2: Poverty and Wealth (pp. 31-64)

Chapter 3: Racial and Ethnic Inequality (pp. 65-98)

#### **\*\* First Examination\*\***

Chapter 4: Gender Inequality (pp. 99-131)

Chapter 6: Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice (pp. 159-198)

Chapter 8: Alcohol and Other Drugs (pp. 232-263)

#### **\*\* Second Examination\*\***

Chapter 12: Family Life (pp. 354-379)

Chapter 13: Education (pp. 380-408)

#### **\*\* Third/Final Examination\*\***

**Note:** The above list of materials is NOT set in stone. It is a tentative schedule of materials to be covered. Additional materials may be added and/or some of the materials listed above may not be covered, depending upon the pace at which materials can be covered.

As some materials require longer than others to cover, there are NO SET EXAM DATES for the first two examinations. These examinations will be given once the requisite materials have been adequately covered. You will be provided with advanced notice prior to each of the first two examinations. The third/final examination will be given in accordance with the final exam schedule of Korea University International Summer Campus.