

Soc 3: Social Problems, Winter 2017

TR 1:40 – 3pm, Giedt Hall 1002

Professor:

Prof. R. Finnigan
rfinnigan@ucdavis.edu

Office Hours:

ss&H 2259
Tues. 11am–1pm, or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Maria González
margonzalez@ucdavis.edu

Office Hours:

TBD

ss&H 284
Tues. 9–11am

Michelle Rossi
micro@ucdavis.edu

Alana Stein
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ss&H 259
Wednesday 1:45–3:45pm

Discussion Sections

A01: Stein	Thursday	4:10–5pm	Wellman 115
A02: Stein	Thursday	5:10–6pm	Wellman 115
A03: Rossi	Friday	11–11:50am	Physics Building 130
A04: Rossi	Friday	12:10–1pm	Physics Building 130
A05: González	Friday	1:10–2pm	Physics Building 130
A06: González	Friday	2:10–3pm	Physics Building 130

Course Description: People talk about social issues being “problems” all the time, but what gets labeled a problem? Who decides what “problems” are, and why? Soc 3 will introduce you to sociological approaches to understanding social problems, which emphasize the way problems that may seem like individual troubles often reflect larger social issues. The course surveys a variety of issues that are labeled social problems (e.g., poverty, the gender pay gap, crime/incarceration, etc.), and reviews research-based evidence about them. The course also focuses on where that research comes from, and how it may differ from media portrayals or “common sense” explanations.

Evaluation:

Discussion Participation	5%
Weekly quizzes	15%
Paper Topic/References (Jan. 26)	5%
Midterm (Feb. 9)	20%
Research Paper 1 (Feb. 16)	15%
Research Paper 2 (Mar. 14)	20%
Final (Mar. 24)	20%

Final Grades:

A+	96.7–100%	B+	86.7–89.9%	C+	76.7–79.9%	D+	66.7–69.9%	F	below 60%
A	93.4–96.6%	B	83.4–86.6%	C	73.4–76.6%	D	63.4–66.6%		
A-	90–93.3%	B-	80–83.3%	C-	70–73.3%	D-	60–63.3%		

Course Expectations:

- **Attendance:** The lecture slides will be available on Canvas, but the content of the lectures will include much more than the slides. Take detailed notes from the lectures, and the slides alone are not enough to perform well on the exams. There will be regular announcements of course information, like deadlines, at the beginning of lecture. Please be sure to get this information from classmates if you miss lecture! Also, please don't listen headphones during lecture. I find it distracting, and might ask you what you're listening to in front of the class.
- **Reading:** Required readings come from academic articles and book chapters posted on Canvas, and a variety of online sources. The syllabus lists the required readings for each week, and contains links for some online sources.
- **Discussion:** Please attend the **discussion section** for which you are registered. The discussion sections will primarily focus on writing-related activities, the assigned readings, and their connections to the lecture. Please complete the assigned readings *before* the section meets. An 'A' for discussion participation requires very regular and insightful participation (demonstrated mastery of the lecture and reading materials, thought provoking questions/comments relating these materials to additional topics, etc.) *By definition, this course covers some controversial topics.* Please raise your hand before speaking in either lecture or discussion, and be respectful of others even (or especially) when you disagree
- **Weekly Quizzes:** Short quizzes on Canvas will ask 10 multiple choice questions covering lectures and the assigned readings. The quizzes are released on Thursday and are due by Monday at 5pm. You will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz once you begin. Late submissions are not allowed, but the lowest quiz score will be dropped to accommodate any problems that may arise (*including computer issues*).
- **Research Paper:** The research paper has three parts. (1) Select a social problem and policy/intervention designed to solve it. Find and briefly summarize relevant news articles, research reports, and academic publications about the problem/policy. (2) Write a four to five page (double spaced) paper analyzing the problem. The paper must cite supporting evidence for who identifies it as a problem, who is affected by the issue, and what the causes/consequences may be. (3) Revise your first paper, and add a second part evaluating the effectiveness of the policy you selected. The total length of the final paper is eight to ten double-spaced pages. The assignment allows you research and analyze a problem you think is important. Hopefully, the paper will also help you develop an evidence-based perspective you can apply to other issues you (or your potential employers) find important in the future.
- The assignment instructions posted on Canvas provide much more information, so please read it very carefully. *Extensions will be granted only in extreme circumstances, and when requested in advance.* I highly recommend using free online back-ups like [Dropbox](#) or [Box](#), or online programs like [Google Docs](#), to avoid computer crashes. Late assignments will be penalized 10 points each day late. The assignments should be submitted as a paper copy at the beginning of class, and as a *pdf document* to Canvas before class on the due date.

Finally, I recommend consulting the [Student Academic Success Center](#) for additional help with writing and other crucial study skills.

- **Midterm and Final Exams:** The exams have multiple choice and short answer questions. The midterm will cover the first half of the course, and the final will cover the second half. A make-up exam will only be allowed in extreme circumstances, and must be requested at least 48 hours in advance of the originally scheduled time.
- **Re-Grading:** You may request re-evaluation on papers or exams within a week of receiving the grade. Please submit a written memo to your discussion section instructor outlining the reasons you believe should be re-evaluated. Based on the memo and discussion with your discussion section instructor, both the TA and I may completely re-grade the assignment or exam. Please be aware that a re-evaluation may also lead to a lower score.
- **Academic Integrity:** You are responsible for your own work. Group discussion of course topics and material is strongly encouraged. However, your arguments in course assignments and exams should be your own. Any instances of plagiarism (including the use of sources without appropriate citation) or other forms of cheating will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. More information is available [here](#). Please consult the [Code of Academic Conduct](#), your TA, or me with any uncertainties.
- **Student Accommodations:** Please notify me in the first week of the course for any necessary accommodations. Please also request a letter of verification from the Student Disability Center. Prior to each exam, please email me one week in advance if you would like to make alternative arrangements for testing time/place.
- **Communication:** I encourage you to visit office hours with any questions or issues about the material or the course itself. And do *before* it's too late (i.e., the day before an exam or an assignment is due). You are not expected to notify me or the TAs if you cannot attend lecture. However, you are still responsible for knowing the material you missed. Please be sure to begin the subject line for all emails with "Soc 3:" to help me keep track. Email responses may take a couple days, especially on weekends. Feel free to follow up again if you haven't heard back by then.
- *Please consult the syllabus and other relevant course documents before emailing with questions that are already answered. In general, any question or concern requiring a reply longer than a two sentences is best discussed in office hours.*

Course Schedule

The course schedule and assigned readings may be revised throughout the quarter.

Week 1 Jan. 10 & 12

Readings:

What Is a Social Problem?

Mills, "The Promise"

Best, "The Social Problems Process"

Week 2 Jan. 17 & 19

Readings:

Class Inequality & Poverty

Edin & Shaefer, *\$2.00 a Day*

Week 3 Jan. 24 & 26

Readings:

The Gender Pay Gap

Cooper, "Being the 'Go-To Guy'"

Stone, "The Rhetoric and Reality of 'Opting Out' "

Paper Topic & References due in class Jan. 26

Week 4 Jan. 31 & Feb. 2

Readings:

Racial & Ethnic Segregation

Pattillo, *Black on the Block*

Week 5 Feb. 7 & 9

Readings:

Review & Midterm

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Midterm (Feb. 9)

Week 6 Feb. 14 & 16

Readings:

Crime & Incarceration

Rios, "The Labeling Hype"

Rosenfeld, "Crime Decline in Context"

Paper 1 due in class Feb. 16

Week 7 Feb. 21 & 23

Readings:

Inequality & Immigration

Gonzales, "Learning to Be Illegal"

Williams, "Undocumented Students and Social Exclusion"

Week 8 Feb. 28 & Mar. 2

Readings:

Globalization

Harrison, *Buoyancy on the Bayou*

Week 9 Mar. 7 & 9

Readings:

Social Movements

Best, "Activists as Claimsmakers"

Tufekci, "Not This One" *Social Movements and Microcelebrity Activism*

* Read Tufekci starting p.856

Week 10 Mar. 14 & 16

Readings:

Special Topic & Final Review

TBD

Paper 2 due in class Mar. 14

Final Exam

Friday, Mar. 24, 3:30pm – 5:30pm