

Social Problems (SOC 120)
Spring 2020
Tuesday and Thursday 2:15PM - 3:40PM
Room: Centennial 2310

Professor: Dr. P. Marina

Office: 437K Wimberly

Office hours: 3:45 – 5:45 pm Thursday; or by appointment

E-mail: pmarina@uwlax.edu; **Website:** <https://www.petermarina.com>

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Description

Social analysis, critical thinking, and problem solving are introduced as basic social science skills. These skills are applied to major contemporary social problems related to deviant behavior, social inequality, social change, and problems associated with major societal institutions. A variety of individual and collective responses and social policy strategies at local, national, and international levels are examined.

Student Learning Outcomes

The mission of the General Education Program at UW-L is to develop life-long learners who will be engaged as knowledgeable and responsible citizens in a diverse and ever-changing world. It is the university's vision that the core curriculum encourages students to (1) detect underlying patterns of phenomena and draw reasonable inferences from information and (2) demonstrate an understanding of the forms and mechanisms of oppression, discrimination, or privilege.

Course Objectives

- Understand the importance of utilizing your critical thinking skills and sociological imagination in the classroom and in everyday life;
- Appreciate the importance of sociology for studying macro and micro level phenomenon related to race, class, gender and sexuality in the United States and abroad;
- Understand the core theoretical perspectives and methodologies that shape and guide sociological analysis of social problems;
- Appreciate the diversity found within your own society and around the world;
- Familiarize with past issues that have shaped social problems in the United States as well as current issues that continue to do so;
- Understand the basic methods of the social sciences;
- Understand the dialectical relationship between individuals and society, and the impact of social location on social perception;
- Distinguish between social facts and myths using empirical evidence grounded in method.

Required Books

Eitzen, Stanley, Maxine Zinn, and Kelly Smith. *Social Problems* (13/E) Pearson Press, 2013. ISBN: 9780205172436

Marina, Peter and Bill Zollweg. *Understanding Social Problems: A Guide to Field Research*. Kendall Hunt Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781465295859
(<https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/understanding-social-problems-guide-field-research>)

Recommended Books

C. Wright Mills. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford University Press, USA

Outside Readings

Outside readings from scholarly books and articles may be included to compliment and elaborate on critical concepts offered in the main textbook and class discussions.

Weekly Agenda

All students must participate in weekly class discussions on class readings and assignments. It is important to read all class readings and assignments prior to class lectures and discussions. We will also have debates in class on controversial topics related to social problems in society.

Course Requirements, Evaluation, and Grading

Grade	Total Points
A	372-400
AB	356-371
B	332-355
BC	316-331
C	280-315
D	240-279
F	239 or less

400 total possible points in this course

Requirements	Points
Exam # 1: 3/12	100 points
Exam # 2: 4/16	100 points
Exam # 3: 5/15	100 points
Understanding Social Problems Workbook -Due 5/5	100 points
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	400 POINTS

Exam One (100 points)- This exam includes multiple-choice and possible essay questions. The exam covers material related to class lectures and assigned scholarly literature.

Exam Two (100 points)- This exam includes multiple-choice and possible essay questions. The exam covers material related to class lectures and assigned scholarly literature.

Exam Three (100 Points)- This all essay exam covers class lectures and assigned scholarly literature.

Workbook Assignments (100 Points)- Complete ten assignments (all of Part I and Part III and six

assignments in Part II) in Marina and Zollweg's workbook *Understanding Social Problems: A Guide to Field Research* for up to 100 total points.

Make-up Policy: Students with an approved written excused absence may be allowed to take make-up exams but cannot make up in-class writing assignments.

Other Course Requirements

Attendance: It is important to attend class. Excess lateness and absence may result in grade reduction.

Reading Assignments: Read all required class literature prior on the date assigned. Class lectures and discussions are primarily designed around the scholarly literature assigned for the class.

Writing Assignments: All class writing assignments must have a 12-size regular font and double spaced paragraphs with your name, title, date, and page numbers.

Participation: Participate in class discussion and lectures through active listening, questions, comments, and so on.

Class Structure

The course structure involves lectures and discussions primarily related to the scholarly literature, current debates, controversial issues, and current events relevant to the study of social problems. Students may be selected on certain weeks to present course material or debate in class. At times during lectures, a modified version of the Socratic method is used to stimulate critical thinking.

Class Schedule (Subject to modification)

All readings listed for a scheduled class should be read prior to attending that class. Exam review questions, lecture outlines and other helpful resources are available on Canvas.

Week One: Introduction to Social Problems

1/28: The Sociological Study of Social Problems

1/30: Defining and Identifying Social Problems

Week Two: A Sociological Approach to Study Social Problems

2/4: Sociologists as Medical Doctors of Society

2/6: The Sociological Imagination

* Read Chapter 1 – Definitions/Types of Social Problems; Norm Violations and Social Conditions/Person-Blame Approach versus System-Blame Approach

* Read Excerpt from Mill's *The Sociological Imagination*

Week Three: Using the Sociological Imagination to Understand Social Problems

2/11: Classical Theorists: Marx, Weber, Durkheim

2/13: Classical Theorists: Marx, Weber, Durkheim cont.

Week Four: Wealth and Power as a Threat to Democracy

2/18: The Concentration of Wealth & Power (Chomsky: *Requiem for the American Dream*)

2/20: Wealth & Power continued - Cont. *Requiem for the American Dream*

* Read Chapter 2 – Capitalism and Democracy as Wealth

* Read Chapter 3 – World Population and Global Inequality

Week Five: TBA

2/25: TBA

2/27: TBA

The Age of Mass Incarceration

2/25: The Thirteenth Amendment, Modern Slavery, and the Criminal (In)Justice System – Film *13th*

2/27: Cont. Film *13th* Discussion on Mass Incarceration

* Read Chapter 12 – Politics of Drugs /War on Drugs

Week Six: Immigration as a Social Problem

3/3: Harvest of Empire

3/5: Discussion on Immigration and American Politics

* Read Chapter 5: Browning of America

Week Seven: First Exam and Open Discussion

3/10: Question/Review Day

3/12: **Exam I

Week Eight: (Spring Break)

3/17 - 3/19: No Class

Week Nine: Crime as a Social Problem

3/24: Understanding Crime Using the Sociological Imagination

3/26: Understanding Crime - Human Ecology, Anomie, and Labeling Theory

* Chapter 13 – Crime & Justice in the U.S.

Week: Ten: Urban, Suburban, and Rural Problems

3/31: Urban, Suburban, and Rural Problems

4/2: Urban, Suburban, and Rural Problems cont.

* Read Chapter 6 – Urban, Rural, and Suburban Problems

* Read Marina: Excerpt from *Down and Out in New Orleans*

Week Eleven: Social Problems Workbook Assignments

4/7: Instructions provided in class

4/9: Instructions provided in class

Week Twelve: Exam II and Open Discussion

4/14: Question/Exam Review Day

4/16: **Exam II

Week Thirteen: Education and/or Policing as a Social Problem

4/21: Education and/or Policing as a Social Problem

4/23: Education and/or Policing as a Social Problem

Week Fourteen: Understanding Social Problems Workbook

4/28: Discussion of Out-of-Class Social Problems Assignments

4/30: Discussion of Out-of-Class Social Problems Assignments cont.

Week Fifteen: Solutions of Social Problems/Conclusion

5/5: Diagnosing and Treating Social Problems Using the Sociological Imagination

5/7: Solutions of Social Problems/Conclusion

* Understanding Social Problems Workbook Due 5/5

Exam III: Friday May 15, 2:30-4:30pm

Enjoy Summer Break.

Other UWL Syllabus Related Policies

Academic Misconduct (Cheating and Plagiarism)

Academic misconduct is a violation of the ASA code of ethics and the student honor code (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/academicpolicies/studentconduct/>). Plagiarism, including inadequate referencing or citation of other research is unacceptable. All work handed in for this class must be the students' own individual work. Plagiarism or cheating in any form may result in failure of the assignment or exam, failure of the course, and may include harsher sanctions. Academic misconduct is unacceptable. All work handed in for this class must be the students' own individual work. Plagiarism or cheating in any form may result in failure of the assignment or exam, failure of the course, and may include harsher sanctions. Refer to the Eagle Eye at <http://www.uwlax.edu/Student-Life/Student-handbook/#14.01> for a detailed definition of academic misconduct. For helpful information on how to avoid plagiarism, go to <http://www.uwlax.edu/catl/readiness/ethics.html>. You may also visit the Student Life Office if you have questions about plagiarism or cheating incidents. I encourage you to discuss any concerns regarding plagiarism or cheating with me directly and well before any assignments are handed in. Failure to understand what constitutes plagiarism or cheating is not a valid excuse for engaging in academic misconduct.

Communication about Class Interruptions

In the event of a campus incident that impacts the availability of teaching spaces, any changes or cancellations will be communicated to you via your university email. Depending on the incident, some or all of the information might be posted on the UWL home page.

Writing Center

The Writing Center, which is located in the Murphy Learning Center, provides trained peer tutors who can help you with any writing task (e.g., papers, proposals, research projects, summaries, reports, letters, application essays) at any stage of the process — understanding assignments, planning papers, organizing ideas, making revisions, improving sentences, using sources, etc. For current hours or to schedule an appointment, visit <http://www.uwlax.edu/writingcenter/>

Sociology as a Writing-in-the-Major Program

The Sociology major is a “writing-in-the-major” program (WIMP). The purpose behind the program is to insure that any undergraduate who completes a major in sociology has experienced sufficient informal and formal writing experiences so that graduates are proficient at communicating through a variety of formats. In all your sociology courses, you will be writing, and in each class, you may be asked to do a wide variety of types of writing. The department sees writing as an extremely important skill and as a mechanism to enhance student learning. In addition, you will learn the referencing and citation style used by archaeologists or sociologists. By completing the Sociology major, you will be completing the “writing emphasis” component of your general education requirements. The objectives of the writing-in-the-major program are available at <http://www.uwlax.edu/wimp/>. The student learning outcomes for Sociology major at UWL is available on the department webpage at <http://www.uwlax.edu/sociology/>.

Classroom Protocol

Coming to class late or leaving class early is disruptive and disrespectful. I expect students to be on time and ready for class. I expect that students will take care of personal needs such as getting a drink of water, going to the bathroom, etc. before or after class and not come and go while class is in session. On occasion, students must leave during a class, if you have to leave a class early, please let me know at the beginning of class and make a quiet exit. It is not necessary to inform me that you will not be attending a class unless arrangements need to be made to make up an assignment for that day.

All electronic devices should be silenced during class and put away. Phone calls, texting, email, internet use, MP3 players/iPod use, etc. are not acceptable within a classroom setting. Students who intentionally use prohibited electronics during class will be required to leave the classroom. Students who

disrupt the classroom or other students' learning experience by talking or carrying on side conversations within the classroom will also be required to leave the classroom.

Assignments, papers, and exams must be completed and handed in on the appointed dates. I will not accept late assignments unless I determine the circumstances to be beyond the student's control. The instructor determines the acceptability of student absences. Students with authorized absences will be allowed to make up exams or papers within a reasonable time-period. Students who are going to be absent for more than 3 days should contact the Student Life Office at 149 Graff Main Hall, 785-8062 and notify them of your absence so that the university and all instructors are informed of your absence (they do not authorize absences).

PRO-UWL (Progress Report Online via Navigate)

This class will be participating in the Navigate Progress Report Online early alert system designed to promote student success. If I notice that you are experiencing difficulties early in the semester (e.g., low assignment scores or limited participation), I may note this information and you will receive notification indicating that I have entered feedback. I encourage you to meet with me and/or utilize helpful campus resources listed on UWL's Student Success page <https://www.uwlax.edu/info/student-success/>.

Inclusive Excellence

UWL's core values include "Diversity, equity, and the inclusion and engagement of all people in a safe campus climate that embraces and respects the innumerable different perspectives found within an increasingly integrated and culturally diverse global community"

(<https://www.uwlax.edu/chancellor/mission/>). If you are not experiencing my class in this manner, please come talk to me about your experiences so I can try to adjust the course if possible.

Name/Pronouns

Please advise me of your preferred name or gender pronoun(s) early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Information on UWL's preferred name policy is available here <https://www.uwlax.edu/records/preferred-name/> and UWL's Pride Center is available for additional assistance.

Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)

UWL conducts student evaluations electronically. Approximately 2 weeks prior to the conclusion of a course, you will receive an email at your UWL email address directing you to complete an evaluation for each of your courses. In-class time will be provided for students to complete the evaluation in class. Electronic reminders will be sent if you do not complete the evaluation. The evaluation will include numerical ratings and, depending on the department, may provide options for comments. The university takes student feedback very seriously and the information gathered from student evaluations is more valuable when a larger percentage of students complete the evaluation. Please be especially mindful to complete the surveys.

Academic Services and Resources at UWL- Below are several student services available to students taking online courses:

- Academic Advising Center: <http://www.uwlax.edu/advising/>
- ACCESS Center (formerly Disability Resources): <http://www.uwlax.edu/access-center/>
- Career Services: <http://www.uwlax.edu/careerservices/>
- Counseling and Testing Center: <http://www.uwlax.edu/counseling/>
- Financial Information: Financial Aid Office <https://www.uwlax.edu/finaid/> and It Makes Cents <https://www.uwlax.edu/it-makes-cents/>
- Murphy Learning Center (Walk-in tutoring): <http://www.uwlax.edu/murphy-learning-center/>
- Murphy Library: <http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/>

- Multicultural Student Services: <http://www.uwlax.edu/mss/>
- Public Speaking Center: <https://www.uwlax.edu/murphy-learning-center/subject/public-speaking-center/>
- Records and Registration: <http://www.uwlax.edu/records/>
- Student Handbook: <https://www.uwlax.edu/student-life/student-resources/student-handbook/>
- Student Support Services: <https://www.uwlax.edu/student-support-services/>
- Veteran Services: <http://www.uwlax.edu/veteran-services/>
- Writing Center: <http://www.uwlax.edu/writingcenter/>

Technical Support- For tips and information about D2L visit the Information Technology Services (ITS) student support page, at <http://www.uwlax.edu/D2L/Help-for-students/>.

Need help making sure your computer is set up correctly for online coursework? D2L's System Check <https://community.desire2learn.com/d2l/systemCheck> ensures that your computer and web browser are configured to properly access their system.

You can also contact the ITS Support Center at (608) 785-8774 or email them at helpdesk@uwlax.edu for questions about D2L or any other technological difficulties. The hours for ITS are Monday through Thursday from 7:30 am to 6:30 pm, and Friday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Central Time.

Our Legal Obligations to You- See the following link of statements that reflect UWL's legal obligations to students: <https://www.uwlax.edu/info/syllabus/>

Student Course- and Faculty-Related Concerns, Complaints, and Grievances

Informal Complaints: If a student has a concern or a complaint about a faculty member or course, the general process for making informal complaints is outlined in steps 1-3 below. Students are welcome to bring a friend or a UWL staff member with them during the following steps. Students who report concerns/complaints/grievances, whether informally or formally, will be protected from retaliation and have the right to expect an investigation and the option to have regular updates on the investigation:

1. The student should speak directly to the instructor.
2. If the student is uncomfortable speaking with the instructor, or they are unsatisfied with the solution, they should go to the chair of the faculty member's home department.
3. If the student is uncomfortable speaking with the department chair, or the chair is the faculty member in question, or they are unsatisfied with the solution, the student should speak with their college dean.

Depending on the specifics of the student's concern, it may be helpful for them to reach out to additional offices:

- Complaints/concerns/grievances about grades, teaching performance, course requirements, course content, incivility, or professional ethics should follow the process outlined above. Students may also wish to seek support from the Student Life office.
- Complaints/concerns/grievances related to hate/bias and discrimination may follow the process outlined above, and in addition or instead students may contact the Campus Climate office and/or submit a hate/bias incident report.
- Complaints/concerns/grievances related to sexual misconduct may begin with the process outlined above, but will need to also involve the Equity & Affirmative Action and Violence Prevention offices, and/or the Title IX Team. Students should know that faculty members are mandatory reporters of sexual misconduct, but that confidential resources are available to them.

Formal Complaints: If the student is unsatisfied with the solution of their informal complaint, they have the right to file a formal institutional complaint with the Student Life office, as described in the Student Handbook.