



Learning Outcomes

This course introduces students to significant social problems in contemporary society. The course will help students acquire critical sociological thinking through understanding the foundations of these issues and become familiar with how sociologists are analyzing and addressing these contemporary challenges. The course uses the main textbook as well as other sociological materials from a variety of sources (e.g., journal articles, book sections, and blog posts) to examine diverse sociological perspectives on contemporary social problems. The first half of this course will explore some “classical” inequalities in the sociological studies of social problems: “Gender,” “Race,” and “Class.” Then, we will explore some specific topics in contemporary U.S. society, including “Crime,” “Family,” “Education,” and “Health” related issues.

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Describe and understand the basic theoretical approaches applied to social problems in contemporary American society
- Develop “sociological imagination”, i.e., identify larger social causes for personal issues and concerns
- Evaluate social problems from differing viewpoints and identify the strengths and flaws of each perspective

Required Resources

Course website elms.umd.edu: Please ensure that you have adequate technology (computer access, a reliable internet connections, word processing and PDF reader software) prior to the first day of class. Download software for free from terpware.umd.edu.

Textbook: There will be a textbook for this course. However, it is a free PDF file, which will be posted in Canvas. You can also find the book using the information below:

Social Problems: Continuity and Change (2016)

University of Minnesota Libraries, Online Textbook Library

ISBN 13: 978-1-9461352-3-0

<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=141>

Other materials: All other course materials will be uploaded and provided through the course website in ELMS (<https://www.elms.umd.edu/>). You will need daily access to the course website to find required resources.

Zhiyong Lin

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ASY1114

Class Time

Summer Session I

May 28 – June 14, 2019

Office Hours

By appointment. We can meet in person (ASY1114) or via video (Skype or Zoom)

Prerequisites: N/A

Course Communication

To contact me, please use my zylin@umd.edu email address. Please always put SOCY105 in the subject line. You can expect a response within 24 hours. And please do NOT use ELMS messages – your message may get lost. It is essential that we all conduct ourselves as professionals, so please visit [ter.ps/email](https://terp.ps/email) for some friendly guidance on writing emails.



I look forward to working with all of you!

Course Organization & Schedule

Three-week course: The course is organized as EIGHT broad parts covering different topics of social problems (see the schedule below). For each part, you need to read the textbook and other assigned materials, view a short video lecture, and complete quizzes and discussion questions. Please be advised that the course is a three-week intensive course and the pace of the course is fast. It means you need to spend substantial time and effort to complete course assignments. Please be aware that you are encouraged to put course work as a top priority for these three weeks so that you can accomplish all assignments by the deadlines. You will be required daily access to ELMS to: **i) View short video lectures and slides for each topic, ii) Read the textbook chapter(s) and other reading materials assigned in the worksheet (WS), and iii) Take quizzes in the worksheet (WS) and complete writing assignments via discussion board (DB).** More details about the worksheet (WS) and discussion board (DB) assignments are described in the ‘Course Assessments’ on the next page.

***WS = Worksheet / DB = Discussion Board**

DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS
Tuesday, May 28	1 – Introduction: Understanding Social Problems	WS-01; DB-01
Wednesday, May 29		
Thursday, May 30	2 – Gender and Sexuality	WS-02; DB-02
Friday, May 31		
Saturday, June 01	3 – Race and Ethnicity	WS-03; DB-03
Sunday, June 02		
Monday, June 03	4 – Economic Inequality	WS-04; DB-04
Tuesday, June 04		
Wednesday, June 05	5 – Deviance and Crime	WS-05; DB-05
Thursday, June 06		
Friday, June 07	6 – Family and Society	WS-06; DB-06
Saturday, June 08		
Sunday, June 09	7 – Schools and Education	WS-07; DB-07
Monday, June 10		
Tuesday, June 11	8 – Health and Healthcare	WS-08; DB-08
Wednesday, June 12		
Thursday, June 13	Exam Review	
Friday, June 14	Final Exam	

***ALL assignments are due by 11:59 PM EST on the assigned date**

Course Assessments

Worksheets (WS): For each class topic, you will find a worksheet (WS) on our course website. WS is an independent learning assessment that guides you through the course materials. It will give you clear reading and learning guide. After learning through the worksheet, you will complete an online quiz on our course ELMS page. You will have **30 minutes to complete 10 multiple-choice/true-false/matching questions**, therefore make sure you have a good internet connection and a quiet environment where you won't be interrupted to complete the quiz. You should complete and submit each worksheet by the assigned deadline. No worksheets will be accepted for credit after the deadline, so please be sure that you submit your work well in advance. If you have questions about an item on a worksheet, please do not hesitate to email me before you start working on the quiz.

Discussion Boards (DB): For each class topic, you will need to answer a set of **TWO questions** via discussion board in the ELMS. You must answer each question separately with a paragraph of at least **FIVE sentences**. In addition, you must respond to the posts of two of your classmates, and explain what you like, dislike, agree, or do not agree with in their response. These responses also need to be a minimum of **FIVE sentences** long. Writing responses are a great opportunity for you to connect course concepts to your own experiences and to reflect on your learning for each topic. Your answers will be graded for completeness, accuracy, written expression, and demonstration of understanding of material. You may find it easiest to compose your answers and responses in a separate file (e.g., MS Word) and then copy and paste into the writing response text box.

Final Exam: The final exam for this course will be a combination of multiple choice, true-false, matching, and short essay questions. You will have **90 minutes to complete the exam** once you begin, and it must be completed on the last day of the course. It will cover all materials of the course and questions will be randomized to reduce the possibility of cheating. Review notes for the final exam will be posted on the course website at least three days before the exam date, and you will have one day of "Exam Review" to prepare for the final exam.

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the course so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet in my office or through video.

Category	Amount	Points		Percentage
		Each	Total	
Worksheets	8	10	80	40%
Discussion Boards	8	10	80	40%
Final Exam	1	40	40	20%
Total Points:			200	

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%		
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%		

Course Policies

Late work and grading: All assignments – worksheets (quizzes) and answering discussion questions – should be completed by the due. If you do not complete assignments by 11:59 p.m. of the assigned date, you will only receive up to **HALF CREDIT**. Late assignments will be graded normally according to the requirements, but the the scores will be cut in half. Make-ups and extensions are not granted unless you provide documented proof or pre-approved absence defined by the University Policy (<http://ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>). However, late final exam will not be accepted except in the case of documented emergency and should get my approval at least two days in advance. There is no extra credit and the grade will not be negotiable. If you experience difficulties, I strongly encourage you to contact me as soon as possible so that I can help you get on track in the early stages of the course.

Respectful manner: This course will cover some controversial issues in the current U.S. Therefore, it's imperative that we create and keep a learning environment for all participants of the course and we should be free from judgment. Your responses to questions in the discussion board are visible to all participants in the class, so please be ready to openly share your own opinions, experiences and beliefs in an accepting and understanding manner. Do not shoot down the ideas or perspectives of others and try to learn from them. If you disagree with content or comments from the course, I encourage you to express your thoughts respectfully and provide evidence to support your statements. Personal attacks and offensive languages will not be tolerated under any circumstances and will be reported by University Policy.

Syllabus revision: This syllabus may be updated based upon the needs of students and the course at any point during the session. If any changes are made, the updated syllabus will be posted on ELMS so that you can have the latest version of the syllabus.

Copyright protection: My course materials, including slides, assignment instructions, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own personal use. You may not and may not allow others to reproduce or distribute course materials publicly whether or not a fee is charged without my express written content. More information about UMD's policies about the commercial use of course materials can be found on the [Office of the President's website](#).

Get Some Help!

Taking personal responsibility for you own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit tutoring.umd.edu to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you. In particular, everyone can use some help sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting ter.ps/writing and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit counseling.umd.edu or [one of the many other resources on campus](#).



Technical Support

Technology will never work 100% of the time. Please understand that I am not able to diagnose and fix technical difficulties with campus tools or your personal computer. If you have any problems with course resources please consult with the IT Helpdesk directly (helpdesk.umd.edu). If the problem is limiting access to a course resources, try using a campus computer in the meantime – visit the UMD library website (<https://www.lib.umd.edu>) to find available computers near you.

Course Evaluations

As members of our learning community, your personal reflection and feedback is crucial to success of this course and our conversations. As instructors, it is particularly valuable for us to collect formative feedback from our students since it can help inform our own teaching choices and strategies. To do this, there will be several opportunities throughout the course to reflect on our class and your learning experience. I also encourage you to meet with me in person (or through video) and feel free to email me if you have any questions, concerns, and suggestions for me as well as for this course.

Academic Dishonesty

Any of the following acts are considered academic dishonesty and are subject to serious punishment: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. In this class, there will be zero tolerance toward any types of the academic dishonesties and the minimum penalty will be a grade of zero for the assignment; more excessive misconduct will result in a grade of “F” for the course and the filing of charges for academic misconduct. Plagiarism is the borrowing of information, wording, organization, or ideas without acknowledging the source. You must note any sources you use in writing and assignments for this course. When you repeat exact language (even a few words!) you must put the material in quotation marks, followed by a reference to the source. For more information, see the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty (<https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/academic-dishonesty>).