

Tracy Peterchak
GAC 389
Phone: (585) 389-5148-1
Office Hours: M&W 1:30-2:45 or by apt.
Email: TPeterc7@naz.edu

SOC/SWK 204-01
SOCIAL PROBLEMS
Spring 2010; 12:30-1:20 M/W/F

Course Overview:

At first glance, social problems may appear to be an objective, obvious, and natural part of life. However, upon our further sociological examination, we will find that what are considered to be “social problems” are also dynamic, evolving, human creations. In this course you will learn about a variety of social problems while also considering their historic context and social construction. In the first portion of this course, we will examine social problems involving inequality in America, including wealth, poverty, race, and ethnicity. In the second portion of this course we will turn our focus to social problems on a global scale and their connection to the culture of capitalism. This course is designed to broaden your knowledge of social problems and how they are studied, while also helping you develop your own analytical and critical thinking skills. It is my hope that at the completion of this course you will be better prepared to evaluate the information you read, hear, and see in the media and around you.

Required Texts:

Goodwin, J., Jasper, J.M. (2008). The contexts reader: American sociological association. New York: Norton and Company, Inc. **ISBN-13:** 978-0-393-92989-8
Robbins, R. (2007). Global problems and the culture of capitalism. 4th Ed., Boston: Allyn & Bacon. **ISBN-13:** 978-0-205-52487-7
Welton, N., Wolf, L. (2001). Global uprising: Confronting the tyrannies of the 21st century. Canada: New Society Publishers. **ISBN:** 0-86571-446-0

NOTE: Additional literature & resources will be provided to you in class, via PDFs/Blackboard, and by email. **It is extremely important that you maintain your Nazareth email account and access to Blackboard throughout the semester. Check them regularly, as required class materials and essential messages may be sent.**

Course Requirements:

- (1.) Readings & Reflection Papers
- (3.) Quizzes
- (3.) Participation
- (4.) Project & Project Paper

(1.) Readings & Reflection Papers – Reading assignments are listed in the Tentative Course Schedule section and are to be completed by the **beginning** of the week (Monday), along with a Reflection Paper (RP) that you will submit in class. Details on the format for RPs are attached to the back of this syllabus. **No late papers** will be accepted unless an official excuse is provided. If you anticipate your absence, you may

email me a copy of your RP **before** the beginning of class. I also suggest printing a **second** copy of your RP to keep for yourself and use as a reference during class discussions. Throughout the semester, you are permitted to **skip any two** RPs of your choice without penalty. If you do not skip any RPs, your lowest two RP scores will be dropped at the end of the semester.

(2.) Quizzes – Tentative quiz dates are listed on the course schedule below (usually Fridays) and you will be notified early if changes are made. Quiz formats may vary between T/F, multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions. Your **lowest** quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester. You must approach me (in class or via email) and provide a valid excuse to schedule a make-up quiz. I reserve the right to alter your make-up quiz in terms of questions and/or difficulty. You have **one week** from the date of your absence to reschedule your make-up quiz, unless there is an emergency.

(3.) Participation – An attendance sheet will be circulated every class period and signed by each student present. There will also be periodic class discussions of our weekly readings where students will share their perspectives and understandings. Excessive absences and/or lack of willingness to participation in class discussions will result in a deduction from your participation grade. Also, any student who has missed over 3 classes and is unable to provide a valid excuse will void both their 2 skipped reaction papers and their 1 dropped quiz.

(4.) Project – Mid-semester you will divide into groups (3-5 people) and select a particular social problem affecting the state of New York and/or the City of Rochester to study. Once your topic is approved your group will research your topic (via media articles, scholarly literature, reliable Internet sources, visiting and information center, etc.) Your group will construct a visual aid (poster, PowerPoint, handouts, video documentary, etc.) and provide a short (10 minute) in-class presentation on your topic. Details will be discussed as the project approaches.

Project Paper – Along with your group's presentation on its selected topic, each **individual** will submit their own project paper. In this paper (minimum 4 pages) you will introduce, discuss, and draw conclusions about your group's particular social problem as you came to learn and understand it. This paper is an individual effort and your opportunity to utilize the tools and insights you have acquired throughout the semester to thoughtfully and critically analyze your topic.

Grade Distribution:

14 Reflection Papers (2 may be skipped)	40%
7 Quizzes (lowest score dropped)	30%
Participation	10%
Project	10%
Project Paper	10%

Academic Integrity: All students must adhere to Nazareth College's Academic Integrity Policy, located at Naz.edu on the Academic Policies and Procedures webpage.

“Academic integrity is compromised by any act of academic dishonesty, acts which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Misrepresenting someone else's work as one's own;
- Use of materials, or consultations with persons, not approved by the instructor for assignments, examinations, or other academic work;
- Multiple submissions of academic work without prior permission of the appropriate faculty members;
- Cheating on examinations, quizzes, or other course assignments;
- Copyright violation in materials provided in classes, or in work submitted for course assignments.”

Students with Disabilities: The Office for Students with Disabilities (GAC 327) promotes fair and equitable treatment for students with disabilities at Nazareth College. If you have or feel you may have a disability, please contact the office, as well as notify me so that accommodations can be made.

Tentative Course Schedule:

RP = Reflection Paper Due **QT** = Quiz Today

M 1/11

W 1/13

F 1/15

Readings:

Contexts Reader → #2 (p.7-11), #3 (p.12-17), #10 (p.62-68), #21 (p.147-152)

Supplemental Reading → Excerpt from *Crack Mothers: Pregnancy, Drugs, and the Media* by Humphries

M 1/18 – **RP1**

W 1/20

F 1/22

Readings:

Contexts Reader → #22 (p.153-158), #24 (p.166-176)

Supplemental Reading → Excerpt from *Banished: The New Social Control in Urban America* by Beckett and Herbert

M 1/25 – **RP2**

W 1/27

F 1/29 – **QT1**

Readings:

Contexts Reader → #23 (p.159-165), #28 (p.198-206), #46 (p.337-344), #50 (p.368-376)

M 2/1 – **RP3**

W 2/3

F 2/5

Readings:

Contexts Reader → #5 (p.26-33), #35 (p.257-261)

Supplemental Reading → Excerpt from *Racist Victimization* by Winterdyk and Antonopoulos

M 2/8 – **RP4**

W 2/10

F 2/12 **QT2**

Readings:

Contexts Reader → #11 (p.69-76), # 36 (p.262-268)

Supplemental Reading → Excerpt from *Strange Fruit* by Malik

M 2/15 – **RP5**

W 2/17

F 2/19 NO CLASS

Readings:

Contexts Reader → #13 (p.85-94), #26 (p.183-189), #62 (p.456-464)

M 2/22 – **RP6**

W 2/24

F 2/26 **QT3**

Readings:

Global Problems → Chapter 2 (p.40-46, skip to p.52-60)

Global Uprising → #1 (p.2-6), #2, (p.7-11)

M 3/1 – **RP7**

W 3/3

F 3/5

Readings:

Global Problems → Chapter 3 (skip to p.93-108)

Global Uprising → #5 (p.25-27), #28 (p.131-135), #46 (p.203-208)

M 3/8 – **RP8**

W 3/10

F 3/12 – **QT4**

Readings:

Global Problems → Chapter 6 (p.177-210)

Global Uprising → #38 (p.172-175), #39 (p.176-179)

M 3/15 NO CLASS

W 3/17 NO CLASS

F 3/19 NO CLASS

M 3/22 – **RP9**

W 3/24

F 3/26

Readings:

Global Problems → Chapter 9

Global Uprising → #31 (p.141-143), #32 (p.144-149), #45 (p.200-202)

M 3/29 – **RP10**

W 3/31 – **QT5**

F NO CLASS

Readings:

Global Problems → Part III (p.299-305) & Chapter 10 (p.307-334)

Global Uprising → #35 (p.158-163), #40 (p.180-183), #41 (p.184-185)
M 4/5 – **RP11**
W 4/7
F 4/9

Readings:

Global Uprising → #13 (p.60-66), #52 (p.229-231), #53 (p.232-233)
Supplemental Reading → Excerpt from *One Day the Solders Came: Voices of Children in War* by London

M 4/12 – **RP12**
W 4/14
F 4/16 **QT6**

Readings:

Global Uprising → #16 (p.76-79), #19 (p.88-95)
Supplemental Reading → Excerpt from *The Shock Doctrine* by Klein

M 4/19 – **RP13**
W 4/21
F 4/23

Readings:

Global Problems → Chapter 13
Global Uprising → #10 (p.45-52), #23 (p.110-113)

M 4/26 – **RP14**

Final Exam/ **QT7** Tuesday, May 4, 10:50AM–1:20PM

NOTE: This syllabus does not constitute a contract. It is possible that alterations may be made at the instructor's discretion to fit changing circumstances. Modifications will be announced in class, a notification email and/or updated syllabus may be distributed, and all students are responsible for knowing updated information.

****Reflection Paper Question Format****

Please use a standard 12pt font, label each section as indicated, be conscious of spelling and accuracy, and number/staple pages if more than one.

Student's Name
Reflection Paper #
Date Submitted

- (1) Weekly Readings: List **all** reading assignments you completed here.

- (2) What I understood & enjoyed: Write a paragraph or two about what you understood, what you enjoyed, and **why**. Discuss a few **specific** concepts, examples, and/or ideas from the reading(s) that you understood. Keep in mind I am looking for thoughtful and well-informed reflections.

- (3) What I did not understand & enjoy: Write a paragraph or two about what you did not understand and/or enjoy and discuss **why**. Cite **specific** examples particular to the content of the reading(s), indicating quotes or page numbers when possible. (Long quotes should be avoided and are not a substitute for analysis). Keep in mind I am looking for your critical sociological analysis.

- (4) New thoughts and ideas: What are a few things that this week's readings prompted you to think about? Did you have any new thoughts, ideas, or interests because of them? Tell me what you have been thinking and be **honest!**

- (5) Questions: List at least three questions that you had about the readings. Try to phrase them accurately and avoid large, grandiose questions without including some elaboration.

Scoring Guidelines:

Reflection Papers are scored out of 10 points, one point for each of the five sections.

.5-1 point will be subtracted for each section lacking minor material

1.5-2 points will be subtracted for each section greatly lacking material

Not submitting a Reflection Paper, unless it is one of your 2 freebees, constitutes a score of 0 points.