

Social Problems*

2009 Fall Semester
Sociology 2600
12:30 - 1:45 T&R
322 Baldwin Hall

Dr. Keith D. Parker
Office: 213C Baldwin Hall
Office Hours: 11:00 – 12:20 T&R
By Appointment

TEXT: *Social Problems: Community, Policy and Social Action*, by Anna Leon-Guerrero. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008.

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is intended to encourage students to analyze conditions giving rise to serious problems confronting contemporary American society; provide a clear and concise description of major social problems in the United States; stimulate interest in doing something about resolving social problems.

COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this course are: (1) to familiarize students with some of the most pressing social issues confronting people today, and (2) to provoke spirited thought, discussion and debate among students.

At the conclusion of the spring semester, each student should be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of some of the correlates and implications of social problems. Moreover, students should be able to discuss the historical development of contemporary social problems. Finally, students should be able to probe beyond the surface of current social problems.

CLASS FORMAT: Class time will be spent largely in a lecture/discussion setting. During some class time, class activities (e.g., literature review, data gathering, report writing) will require students to meet within a group framework outside of the classroom.

CLASS ACTIVITY: The class will engage in academic projects (i.e., article reviews or term paper) designed to provide evidence of the integration and application of work in research methods and sociological theories. The class projects will be a cooperative activity. In this class, as in most of real life, projects require cooperation and the ability to work with others, to respond critically but constructively to others' ideas, to present your own ideas persuasively but not defensively, and to make sure the work you do is usable by others.

READING MATERIALS FOR GROUP PROJECT: Students will determine what reading materials are needed to complete the class projects. The class projects will provide students the opportunity to demonstrate a process of disciplined inquiry (**DI***). All assignments must be typed and double-spaced in no smaller than 10-point type. For detailed information about term paper or manuscript preparation, visit the **NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS** section of one of the following journals: *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *Social Problems*, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *Social Issues*, *Sociological Quarterly*, *Sociological Spectrum*.

PROBATION: In the unlikely event of non-participation or inadequate participation by a member of the group (e.g., a group member routinely missing meetings, contributing nothing or irrelevant materials to the project), the remaining group members may place the non-contributing group member on probation. If a group member is placed on probation, she/he will receive no credit for the group project. Also, when placing a member on probation, the group should establish a set of guidelines for re-admissions.

FINAL GRADE: The final grade will be based on 300 point opportunities: three 90 point exams and 30 points in class activities (article reviews or group project). Letter grades will be assigned according to the following grading system/scale:

Grade	Points	(%)	Grade	Points	(%)
A	282+		C	222-230	74-76
A-	273-281	91-93	C-	213-221	71-73
B+	261-272	87-90	D+	201-212	67-70
B	252-260	84-86	D	192-200	64-66
B-	243-251	81-83	D-	183-191	61-63
C+	231-242	77-80	F	000-182	00-60

Test questions will come from class lectures and assigned readings. Each student is expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. When absence from class is necessary, the student is responsible for making arrangements with the professor concerning any missed lectures or readings (see, for example, the University of Georgia [Schedule of Classes Fall 2008](#) for information about class attendance). Also, each student is expected to do his/her own work (under no circumstances will cheating be tolerated). Finally, any student who believes he/she has been graded unfairly or discriminated against may take the necessary steps to resolve the situation.

***Disciplined Inquiry** is an experience requirement intended to engage students in actively developing their ability and desire to analyze, evaluate and communicate complex material and positions. **DI** will enhance the following skills:

- **Critical Thinking (objective and subjective)**, through a variety of approaches in which students investigate arguments, engage in research, gather data, perform qualitative and quantitative analysis, and assess conclusions.
- **Writing** (formal and informal), on which the instructor comments, used to explore substantial problems in the subject area and report the results of critical and creative thinking.
- **Oral Expression** in the classroom through discussion, group and individual reports, and other activities that provide students opportunities to share creative work, describe research, or explore important issues.
- **Analysis of Controversies** concerning the subject matter of the course in which students investigate concepts and hypotheses open to question.

- **Exploration of Assumptions** underlying beliefs and concepts relevant to course content and of processes for examining those assumptions, so that students understand and establish control over those ideas they bring to their study of subject matter.
- **Inquiry through Course Content into the Origins, Bases and Consequences of Intellectual Bias** through which students will understand the particular perspective on the world employed in the academic discipline of the course.
- **Consideration of Human Diversity** appropriate to the subject matter of the course so that students can explore the way in which cultural differences shape conceptions about the subject matter and discern the intellectual and pragmatic effects on human groups of the subject matter and ideas related to it.

SYLLABUS AND READINGS

- August 18----Chapter 1 “Sociology and the Study of Social Problems”
 20----Chapter 1
 25----Chapter 2 “Social Class and Poverty”
 27----Chapter 2
- Sept. 01----Chapter 3 “Race and Ethnicity”
 03----Chapter 3
 08----Chapter 4 “Gender”
 10----Chapter 4
 15----Chapter 5 “Sexual Orientation”
 17----Chapter 5
 22----Chapter 6 "Age and Aging"
 24----Chapter 6
- *******29-----Test # 1: Chapters 1 - 6**
- Oct. 01----Chapter 7 “Families”
 06----Chapter 7
 08----Chapter 8 “Education”
 13----Chapter 8
 15----Chapter 9 “Work and the Economy”
 20----Chapter 9
 22----Chapter 10 “Health and Medicine”
 27----Chapter 10
- *******29-----Test # 2: Chapters 7 – 10**
- Nov . 03----Chapter 11 “The Media”
 05----Chapter 12 “Alcohol and Drug Abuse”
 10----Chapter 12
 12----Chapter 13 “Crime and Criminal Justice”
 17----Chapter 14 “Cities and Suburbs”
 19----Chapter 14

Dec. 01----Chapter 15 “The Environment
03----Chapter 16 “War and Terrorism”
08----Chapter 16
*****15----Final Examination (12:00 – 3:00)

Department of Sociology
The University of Georgia

All students should know that the Department of Sociology has a Human Rights Committee for the resolution of student grievances. Any student registered for a sociology course at the University of Georgia who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner by an instructor is advised to follow these procedures:

- (1) The student should discuss his or her problems with the instructor of the course, unless extenuating circumstances prohibit this.
- (2) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance, the student should then discuss the problem with the Head of the Sociology Department.
- (3) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance to the student's satisfaction, the student may request the activation of the Human Rights Committee by submitting a letter to the Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia.

The Human Rights Committee will have the responsibility of investigating all charges in accordance with procedures on file at the Sociology offices, copies of which are available to students. The Committee will also have the responsibility of making recommendations in writing to the Head, copies of which will be made available to the student complainant and the instructor involved. The Department Head will review the recommendations, and make a decision, in writing, with copies to the student complainant and the instructor involved. Any appeal of that decision must be to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.