



**University of International Business and Economics  
International Summer School**

**SOC 150 Social Problems**

**Term: July 10 – August 4, 2017**

**Instructor: Hung Cam Thai (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley)**

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**Class Hours: Monday through Friday, 120 minutes each day (2,400 minutes in total)**

**Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from noon to 1 pm.**

**Teaching Assistant: TBD**

**Email: TBD**

**Discussion session: 2 hours each week**

**Total Contact Hours: 64 contact hours (45 minutes each, 48 hours in total)**

**Credit: 4 units**

**Course Description**

In this course, we explore the dynamics of social problems including complex issues such as inequality, poverty, crime, racism, discrimination, economic recession, labor market distribution, gender inequality, and many others. We could spend the entire semester on any one of these topics—some spend entire careers on just one of them. The primary purpose of this survey course is to think about the major causes and consequences of social problems in the United States with some cross-national comparisons and to think about the construction and reproduction of social problems as a category of sociological analysis and research. We will learn to understand how social problems go far beyond personal issues, and how we try to solve them says a lot about the time and society we live in, particularly during the current moment of vast social changes within the global economy. We will utilize a social conflict perspective to study the definition, sources, distribution, consequences of and responses to social problems. Using a critical lens we will explore how inequality produce and sustain social problems.

No Prerequisite

**Course Goals**

**A student who satisfactorily completes this course should be able to accomplish the following:**

- ✧ Understand the importance of empirical studies to evaluate and understand the context of social problems in society.
- ✧ Explain how processes of social problems emerge.
- ✧ Gain a basic vocabulary of social problems and how to think beyond them as personal issues.
- ✧ Be able to describe important characteristics of social problems and causes and consequences for them.
- ✧ Recognize the role of morals and biases in discourses on social problems.
- ✧ Gain a basic understanding of how sociologists research social problems.

### Preparedness for Readings

- ✧ Identify the author's main argument
- ✧ Identify the methods and theories used by the author in constructing the argument
- ✧ Identify the key strengths and weaknesses of a specific readings
- ✧ Articulate your analysis in your own words about the readings
- ✧ Compare and contrast the reading to the Chinese experience

### Required Text

This course uses **one** prominent textbook that introduces students to the major social problems within American society and globally. The readings supplement the lectures; you are expected to engage with both the lectures and readings accordingly on your exams. Please purchase the e-version of this textbook: **Eitzen, D. Stanley, Maxine Baca Zinn, and Kelly Eitzen Smith. 2014. Social Problems, Census Update, 13/E. New York: Pearson**

\*Please note to get the 13th edition, published in 2013. You can buy the online e-version on amazon with a kindle app. It will look exactly like the hard copy. You can also buy the hard copy, which is the exact version as the online version.

### Course Hours

The course has 20 class sessions in total. Each class session is 120 minutes in length. The course meets from Monday to Friday.

### Attendance

Summer school is very intense and to be successful, students need to attend every class. Occasionally, due to illness or other unavoidable circumstance, a student may need to miss a class. UIBE policy requires a medical certificate to be excused. Any unexcused absence may affect the student's grade. Moreover, UIBE policy is that a student who has more than 1/3 of the class in unexcused absences will fail the course.

### Grading Policy

UIBE awards grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, and F. Most colleges and universities do not award transfer credit for grades of D or F.

Assignments and examinations will be graded according to the following grade scale:

- A 90-100
- A- 85-89
- B+ 82-84
- B 78-81
- B- 75-77
- C+ 72-74
- C 68-71
- C- 64-67
- D 60-63
- F below 60

In this course, grading will be based on the following:

- ✧ 10% attendance and participation
- ✧ 60% Two Midterms
- ✧ 30% Final
- \*Total: 100%
  
- ✧ Students are required to attend and participate in discussions.
- ✧ You will gain writing skills through periodic in-class writing assignments, which will measure your mastery of the readings and comprehension of the lectures, and which will be the basis for our classroom discussions.
- ✧ No make-up exams will be given, unless you have a medical documentation

## General expectations

### Students are expected to:

- ✧ Attend all classes and be responsible for all material covered in class and otherwise assigned. Any unexcused absence may impact a student's grade.
- ✧ Complete the day's required reading and assignments before class
- ✧ Review the previous day's notes before class; make notes about questions you have about the previous class or the day's reading
- ✧ Refrain from texting, phoning or engaging in computer activities unrelated to class during class (不要用手机)
- ✧ Participate in class discussions and complete required written work on time

## Course Schedules

The planned schedule sketched out below may be modified to suit the interests or abilities of the enrolled students or to take advantage of special opportunities or events that may arise during the term.

### WEEK ONE (July 10 – July 14): What is a social problem?

- Mon, 7/10: Introductions to this class and to the members of the course, Introductory Lecture on the fundamentals of social problems in society
- Tues, 7/11: Chapter 1, The Sociological Perspective on Social Problems
- Wed, 7/12: Chapter 2, Wealth and Power, The Bias of the System
- Thurs, 7/13: Chapter 3, World Population and Global Inequality
- Friday, 7/14: Chapter 5, Demographic Changes in the United States

### WEEK TWO (July 17-July 21): Problems of Inequality

- Mon, 7/17: Chapter 6: Problems of Place
- Tues, 7/18: **Exam #1**
- Wed, 7/19: Chapter 7: Poverty
- Thurs, 7/20: Chapter 8: Racial and Ethnic Inequality
- Friday, 7/21: Chapter 9: Gender Inequality

### WEEK THREE (July 24-July 28): Social Structure and Individual Differences

- Mon, 7/24: Chapter 12: Crime and Justice
- Tues, 7/25: Chapter 13: Drugs
- Wed, 7/26: **Exam #2**
- Thurs, 7/27: Chapter 14: The Economy and Work



Fri, 7/28: Chapter 15, Families

**WEEK FOUR (July 31 to August 4): Macrostructures**

Mon, 7/31: Chapter 16: Education  
Tues, 8/1: Chapter 19, Progressive Plans to Solve Social Problems  
Wed, 8/2: The Varieties of Solutions.  
Thurs, 8/3: **Review for Final Examinations**  
Fri.: 8/4 **Final Examinations**

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty. Specifically, unless otherwise directed by the professor, students may not consult other students, books, notes, electronic devices or any other source, on examinations. Failure to abide by this may result in a zero on the examination, or even failure in the course.

Students are also expected to adhere to appropriate scholarly conventions in essays and research papers. This class includes writing assignment(s) in which students must give credit to all outside sources used by means of citations and a bibliography. Failure to do so may result in a zero on the paper assignment, or even failure in the course.