

Rhodes College  
Social Problems (Anthropology/Sociology 206)  
TTh 1:00 - 2:30  
Fall 1998

**Instructor:** Eva Brown

**Office Hours:** 12:00 - 1:00 rm 104C  
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**Required Texts:** Social Problems, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.  
D. Stanley Eitzen & Maxine Baca Zinn  
  
Crisis in American Institutions  
Jerome H. Skolnick & Elliott Currie

## **I. Course Description:**

An analysis of a variety of social problems such as racism and poverty. An attempt will be made to understand how situations are defined as problems and what effects are made to solve them. Emphasis will be placed on the complexity of such problems in a contemporary urban setting.

This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive view of contemporary social problems. Theory, research, social policy, and the application of these to social phenomena will be examined through a social science framework. Of particular concern in this analysis is a focus on the structural influences on social problems and the daily lives of American populations. Attention will be given to various fundamental social institutions and how they influence social problems and how social problems affect these institutions.

## **II. Course Objectives:**

1. Application of social paradigms to social problems
2. Examination of the myths, pitfalls, and paradoxes inherent in analyzing social problems
3. Placing social problems in the context of structural relations arising in the social interaction and inherent in modern
4. Describing how cultural phenomena such as values, benefits, norms, sta social problems

5. How individuals, groups, systems, and social organizations in general perpetuate or attempt to address the issues of social problems
6. Recognition of significant factors which contribute to or generate m
7. Analyzing how social systems work
8. Learning about power and how it works as a central part of the Americ
9. Determining the benefits and detriments of existing social arrangements
10. Viewing social problems as constructed realities promoted by numerous professional, organizational, and special-interest groups
11. Promoting usable knowledge about the social problems individuals currently encounter in their everyday lives and those they
12. Provide an explanatory framework for the structural, organizational and group dilemmas discussed
13. Promote the process of individuals broadening their views of the social worlds in which they live and those at large

Ultimately the goal is to enable students to think critically about the human condition through the sharpening of social awareness and social conscience. It is imperative to critically analyze the severity, causes, consequences, and possible solutions of social problems.

### **III. Attendance:**

Attendance is vital factor in the class discussion and provides a fundamental means of integrating, synthesizing, and organizing the material presented in the text, lecture, and through other sources. Information missed may have direct consequences on performance in the class. It is your responsibility to obtain any information missed as the result of an absence. It is impossible to give you a personal lecture on the material missed. Find a colleague who can help you in this area.

### **IV. Examinations:**

There are three (3) exams including the final exam. Each exam is graded on a 100 point scale and covers approximately five chapters plus the articles noted in the course calendar.

Material on the exams includes information from lecture, class discussion, text, handouts, and any other sources brought to the class. Format for the exams is essay.

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## **V. Writing Assignments:**

Each student is responsible for discussion questions or comments on particular readings, lectures, or handouts. Comment or questions should be no longer than one page each. Do not summarize the reading. The format used should lead class discussion of particular themes or issues found in the article. The following techniques will help you create such a format:

- a) Outline the major ideas or themes
- b) Focus on meaning
- c) Outline power relationships evident in the material
- d) Give your interpretation of the authors' intent, audience, point of view, etc.
- e) Note when the material causes you to question your own assumptions about the social world
- f) Note when an article touches you emotionally (i.e., angers you, pleases you, etc.)

In these assignments you may make your point of view explicit and you may write in the first person.

You will also be required to write a critical analysis paper on one of the following major topics covered in the Eitzen and Baca Zinn text. This will be a 5-8 page critical analysis of a contemporary social problem. Your analysis should achieve the following:

- description of the problem (what knowledge we have)
- analysis of the issue
- synthesis of the material
- evaluation of findings

This paper is worth 100 points and will be graded on the same points scale as the exams.

<b>VI. Grading Scale:</b>	90 - 100	A
	80 - 89	B
	70 - 79	C
	60 - 69	D
	Below 60	F

## **VII. Course Calendar:**

Aug. 27 Intro to the course

Sept. 1 Chapter 1: The Sociological Approach to Social Problems

Sept.	3	Chapter 1 cont. and Chapter 2
Sept.	8	Article #1: Pinto Madness Article #2: The Artful Dodgers
Sept.	10	Chapter 3: World Population and Global Inequality
Sept.	15	Chapter 4: Threats to the Environment
Sept.	17	Chapter 5: Demographic Change in the U.S.
Sept.	22	Chapter 6: Urban Problems in the U.S.
Sept.	24	Chapter 6 cont.
Sept.	29	Test #1
Oct.	1	Chapter 7: Poverty
Oct.	6	Article #5: Losing Out to Mexico Article #6: When You Stop You Die
Oct.	8	Chapter 8: Racial & Ethnic Inequality Article #15: Asian Americans, The Myth of the Model
Oct.	13	Chapter 8 cont. Article #14: U.S. Hispanics
Oct.	15	Chapter 9: Gender Inequality
Oct.	20	<b>No Class - Fall Break</b>
Oct.	22	Chapter 9 cont.
Oct.	27	Chapter 10: Sexual Orientation
Oct.	29	Chapter 11: Work Article #28: Working Hard, Getting Nowhere
Nov.	3	Chapter 11 cont. Article #29: Working on the Global Assembly Line
Nov.	5	Test #2
Nov.	10	Chapter 12: Families
Nov.	12	Chapter 12 cont.
Nov.	17	Chapter 13: Education
Nov.	19	Chapter 13 cont. Article #34: Life on the Mississippi
Nov.	24	Chapter 14: Health & Health Care Delivery

Nov. 26 **No Class - Thanksgiving Holiday**

Dec. 1 Chapter 14 cont.  
Article #32: AIDS, The Epidemic & the Society

Dec. 3 Chapter 16: Crime and Justice  
Article #39: Corporate Crime and Violence

Dec. 8 Chapter 17: Drugs  
Article #38: Rethinking the Drug Problem

Dec. — Test #3 (Final Exam)