

**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**  
**Social Sciences Division**  
**SOC 108 – Social Problems**  
**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:** SOC 108 Social Problems

**Credit Hours:** 3.0      **Contact Hours:** 3.0      **Lecture:** 3.0      **Lab:** N/A      **Other:** N/A

**Prerequisites:** Grades of “C” or better in ENG 096 and RDG 096 or placement. NOTE: SOC 101 is an advised but not a required prerequisite.

**Co-requisites:** None

**Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:** Fall 2010

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**Course Description:** This course examines the causes of selected social problems. National and Global social problems are examined, as well as those that affect urban areas.

**General Education Goals:** SOC 108 is affirmed in the following General Education Foundation Categories: **Society and Human Behavior** and **Global and Cultural Awareness of Diversity**. The corresponding General Education Goals are respectively as follows: Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens; and Students will understand the importance of global perspective and culturally diverse peoples. SOC 108 also addresses the General Education Integrated Course Goals: **Ethical Reasoning and Action** and **Information Literacy**, which are respectively as follows: Students will understand ethical issues and situations; and Students will address an information need by locating, evaluating, and effectively using information.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. identify the basic approaches used in studying social problems sociologically;
2. identify the social institutions in which social problems are found;
3. compare and contrast the various types of social inequality;
4. analyze and evaluate how social inequalities impact social institutions; and
5. compare and contrast global social problems to domestic social problems.

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs):** Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Identify the basic approaches used in studying social problems sociologically:
  - 1.1 *articulate the three major sociological approaches to social problems: Structural Functional, Social Conflict and Symbolic Interaction;*
  - 1.2 *explain why the concept of the sociological imagination is relevant to the study of social problems; and*

1.3 *discuss what it means to construct a social problem*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs) (continued):**

2. Identify the social institutions in which social problems are found:
  - 2.1 *describe the various roles that work, as a social institution, assumes in the study of social problems ; and*
  - 2.2 *explain how diverse family backgrounds experience social problems differently*
3. Compare and contrast the various types of social inequality:
  - 3.1 *describe how race, class and gender are interrelated;*
  - 3.2 *develop solutions to racial conflict based on one's understanding of the text; and*
  - 3.3 *determine the role men play in the maintenance of discrimination of women in the workplace and identify the solutions that can be employed to alleviate these problems*
4. Analyze and evaluate how social inequalities impact social institutions:
  - 4.1 *identify a social problem and critically analyze it using the three major sociological theories and the methods used for sociological analysis;*
  - 4.2 *explain how social inequality impacts race, class, and gender in society; and*
  - 4.3 *analyze current affairs to articulate what social institutions are involved and how*
5. Compare and contrast global social problems to domestic social:
  - 5.1 *recognize and discuss different local, national and global problems;*
  - 5.2 *analyze national and global social class differentiation using the concept of the sociological imagination; and*
  - 5.3 *analyze the role of deviance from a global perspective*

**Methods of Instruction:** Instruction consists of lectures, class discussions, videos, and a scholarly research project.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Weekly analytical reflections and/or quiz and exam questions are blueprinted to course objectives. Rubrics are used to evaluate the assigned research paper and the final presentation for the presence of course objectives. Data is collected and analyzed to determine the level of student performance on these assessment instruments in regards to meeting course objectives. The results of this data analysis are used to guide necessary pedagogical and/or curricular revisions.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Read all assigned course materials including the textbook selections.
2. Attend class regularly.
3. Complete all written assignments and participate in classroom discussions.

4. Complete the assigned research paper using ASA format for reference and citation.
5. Take exams/quizzes as scheduled.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

<b>Grading Components</b>	<b>% of final course grade</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Analytical Reflections/Class Participation/Attendance</b> Weekly assignments are made that analyze reading materials and/or current affairs, the selection of which is based on relevance to course objectives. Responses to reflective questions will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives. Classroom participation and attendance are also considered here.</li> </ul>	<b>30 – 40%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Research Paper (5 – 10 pages)</b> This research project requires students to use scholarly journals as sources and ASA formatting to present a professional research paper. The papers are evaluated using a rubric for the presence of course objectives, including using one of the three major sociological theoretical perspectives.</li> </ul>	<b>20 – 40%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Final Presentation</b> The presentation requires the use of PowerPoint and discussion of the student’s paper in conjunction with one of the chapters covered over the course of the semester and, therefore, relates to one or more course objectives.</li> </ul>	<b>0 – 35%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Literature Reviews</b> Literature reviews are written exercise in which students must investigate a particular topic either in the textbook or assigned by the instructor that is related to the course objectives and conduct a review of the sociological literature. Based on the literature review, students are required to develop a thesis and draw conclusions on the topic researched.</li> </ul>	<b>10 – 20%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Quizzes</b> Quizzes will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives.</li> </ul>	<b>10 – 15%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Final Exam</b> (optional and alternative to above measures) The <b>comprehensive</b> final exam will examine the extent to which students grasp and synthesize the sociological concepts, methods, and theories and have achieved course objectives.</li> </ul>	<b>0 – 35%</b>

**NOTE:** The instructor will determine (as appropriate) the specific component(s) appropriate for the course and provide specific weights which lie in the above-given ranges at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
- cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
- interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
- fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions. Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on the following required texts:

Macionis, John. *Social Problems*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

The Sociology Writing Group. 2008. *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Worth Publishers.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Topics/Chapters</b>
1	Overview and Introduction
2	Social Inequality <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) poverty</li><li>b) race</li><li>c) class</li><li>d) gender</li><li>e) age</li><li>f) sexuality</li></ul>
3	Social Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) justice</li><li>b) social justice</li><li>c) deviance</li><li>d) conformity</li></ul>
4	Social Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) politics/government</li><li>b) economics</li><li>c) family</li><li>d) education/schooling</li><li>e) living environment</li><li>f) physical and mental health institutions</li></ul>
5	Global Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) population</li><li>b) global inequality</li><li>c) wars</li><li>d) technology/communication</li><li>e) environment</li></ul>

**NOTE:** In SOC 108, the instructor must cover the 5 units listed above minimally in any reasonable order throughout the duration of the semester/term. However, all of the subunits do not need to be covered.

The instructor may include additional areas based on his/her expertise and/or interests. Lastly, a final exam or a final presentation must be scheduled/assigned.