

Bergen Community College  
Division of Business, Social Sciences & Public Services  
Department of Social Sciences

## **Departmental Policy Syllabus**

### **SOC 113 Social Problems**

#### **Basic Information about Course and Instructor**

Semester:  
Course Number:  
Meeting Times and Place:

Instructor:  
Office Location:  
Phone:  
Department Secretary:  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

#### **Course Description**

**SOC 113 Social Problems** is the study of contemporary social issues and problems in the United States. Various theoretical perspectives are utilized in an effort to understand why particular issues become defined as “problems,” to determine the origin of social problems, and to critically assess proposed solutions to these perceived problems. Topics of discussion can include: crime and delinquency, poverty, family violence, overpopulation, war, AIDS, sexual assault, mental illness, racism, sexism, and classism (social inequality).

3 lecture 3 credits  
Prerequisites: None  
C-requisites: None  
General Education Course – No Social Science Elective

## Student Learning Objectives/Means of Assessment

<p><b>Objectives:</b> Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:</p>	<p><b>Means of Assessment:</b> This outcome will be measured by one or more of the following:</p>
<p>1. demonstrate the ability to apply the three major sociological perspectives (i.e., structural functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism) to a variety of social problems.</p>	<p>Objective tests, essay questions, oral reports, class discussions, and writing assignments</p>
<p>2. apply the perspective of cultural relativism when viewing the diverse social world in which we all live and the existent social problems.</p>	<p>Objective tests, essay questions, oral reports, class discussions, and writing assignments</p>
<p>3. utilize the scientific method and the unique tools developed by sociologists to objectively analyze social problems</p>	<p>Objective tests, essay questions, oral reports, class discussions, and writing assignments</p>
<p>4. use critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate the ways in which sociologists examine social problems.</p>	<p>Objective tests, essay questions, oral reports, class discussions, and writing assignments</p>
<p>5. state and support their own views on social problems addressed in the course, both orally and in writing, with logical rigor and clarity.</p>	<p>Objective tests, essay questions, oral reports, class discussions, and writing assignments</p>

## **Course Content:**

SOC 113 should include the following topics:

- I. Introduction
  - A. How to Recognize a Social Problem
    - 1. Personal and social problems
    - 2. Criteria that help define social problems
    - 3. Causes of social problems
    - 4. Analyzing social problems
  - B. Theoretical Perspectives
    - 1. Structural-functionalism
    - 2. Conflict theory
    - 3. Symbolic interactionism
    - 4. Labeling theory
  
- II. The Individual and the Institutions of Society
  - A. The Family
    - 1. The modern family and its functions
    - 2. Change in the traditional marriage
    - 3. The sexual revolution
    - 4. Violence in the family
    - 5. Dual career families
  
- II. The Individual and the Institutions of Society (continued)
  - B. Education
    - 1. Traditional education for conformity
    - 2. Equality and inequality in education
    - 3. Education for what?
    - 4. Alternatives to traditional education
  - C. The Economy
    - 1. The coming crises of scarcity
    - 2. The Corporation and global power to influence government
    - 3. Inequality and stratification
  - D. The Government
    - 1. Ideology and democracy
    - 2. Distrust and apathy
    - 3. Big government
    - 4. Interest and pressure groups
    - 5. Secrecy in government
    - 6. Power politics
  
- III. The System and Its Influence Upon the Individual
  - A. Prejudice and Discrimination
    - 1. Immigrant groups in the United States
    - 2. The WASP majority

3. American minorities and their disadvantage in society
  4. The Black struggle for equality
  5. The women's struggle for equality
- B. Urban Problems
1. The growth of cities and industrialization
  2. The city and its problems today
  3. The suburbs and their problems
  4. Urban society, population and ecology
- C. The Justice System
1. Defining criminal behavior
  2. The police
  3. The courts
  4. Prisons
- IV. Individual Deviance as a Response to Social Forces
- A. Crime and Delinquency
1. Where crime occurs
  2. Types of crime
  3. Who commits crime and why
  4. Sociological explanations of crime
- B. Alcohol and Drugs
1. Alcohol use
  2. Psychoactive drugs
  3. Addiction
  4. Alienation and drug use
- C. Mental Illness
1. Who is ill? Who is healthy?
  2. Social factors and mental illness
  3. Personality disorders
  4. Treatment of mental disorders – Asylums
  5. Sociological explanations of mental illness
  6. Suicide
- D. Sex as a Social Problem
1. Changing norms and values
  2. What is sexual deviance?
  3. Prostitution
  4. Homosexuality
  5. Rape
- E. Aging and Dying
1. Contemporary society and the problems of aging
  2. The right to die
- V. Miscellaneous Important Social Problems
- A. Ecology and Overpopulation
- B. War and World Violence
- C. Worker Alienation

VI. Projects for the Future  
Social Change – Will Current Directions Lead to Solutions or to Greater Problems?

**Special Features of the Course** (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy and/or information literacy learning in the course; etc.

**Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials**

Suggested Textbooks: Kornblum, William, and Julian, Joseph. Social Problems, 12<sup>th</sup> edition, Prentice Hall, 2008.

For additional materials, consult BCC Library and Learning Resources Center.

**Research, Writing and/or Examination Requirement**

Sociology 113 requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. Students will be encouraged through classroom discussions to think about, analyze and use basic psychological concepts, major theories, and various issues regarding educational psychology. Memorization of key concepts and theories should be thought of as the first, not the final, stage of learning the course material. Students will be expected to engage in various in-class as well as out-of-class writing assignments. These may include journals, research papers, personal essays, book reviews, examinations containing essay components, and so forth.

**Grading Policy**

The final grade in the course will be determined by a student's overall mastery of the subject matter as evidenced on exams, out-of-class writing assignments and class participation.

## **Bergen Community College Attendance Policy**

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

### **Attendance Policy in This Course**

Students are expected to attend every scheduled class and to arrive punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted in such a manner that students will benefit from both the lectures and class discussions. Each student is held responsible for all material presented. While there is no automatic penalty for being absent from class, attendance is generally reflected in the student's overall performance. Those who arrive late or leave early disrupt class. If you find that it is absolutely necessary for you to leave the class early, please consult with the instructor before the beginning of the class, and take a seat close to the door so as not to disturb others when you leave. Make-ups for examinations will be allowed at the discretion of the instructor.

## **OTHER COLLEGE, DIVISIONAL, AND OR DEPARTMENTAL POLICY STATEMENTS**

### **Statement on Plagiarism and/or Academic Dishonesty - Academic Integrity**

**The Bergen Community College Statement on academic integrity as found in the college catalog is the following;**

In cases when students are charged with academic irregularities, such as cheating during an examination or plagiarism in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, or oral presentation, the instructor has the authority to:

1. Give the student a failing grade for the assignment if, within the course's total requirements, non-completion of that assignment would not constitute sufficient ground for failing the course; or,
2. Give the student a failing grade for the course if, within the course's total requirements, non-completion of that assignment would preclude the student's passing course.

The instructor must make a written report to the Vice President of Student Services of whatever action he or she has taken and its justification. In turn the Vice President of Student Services must send a copy of the instructor's report to the student. Within ten days of receipt of such notification, the student may appeal the decision in writing to the Vice President of Student Services. The Vice President of Student Services shall be responsible for maintaining a cumulative file of all infractions of academic dishonesty.

Two such offenses shall be sufficient grounds to suspend a student from the College. Thus, should it be verified that a student has committed a second such offense, the Vice President of Student Services, will report the matter to the Committee on Academic Standing and recommend an appropriate action.

### **Academic Integrity Policy in this Course**

The integrity of any academic discipline is essential and requires that those who engage the subject matter do so in an honest and forthright manner. In this environment cheating of any sort is unacceptable, and if uncovered, will be sanctioned. The policy used in this course is akin to that of the College. If a student is found cheating or plagiarizes on written assignments he/she will receive an F for that assignment. A written description of the incident will be forwarded to the Vice President of Student Services to be placed on file. If a second incident occurs the student will fail the course and a second written description concerning the event will be forwarded to the Vice President of Student Services. Any subsequent actions will be pursued by the Vice President and the Committee on Academic Standing.

The implementation of this policy requires that during quizzes or examinations the desk be completely clear of all books, papers, notes, computers and cell phones. All of these items should be placed on the floor under the seat and out of sight. The only item on your desk should be your quiz or exam and a pen or pencil. Students who need to use hand held computers for foreign language translation purposes, or who have to use such items because of special needs should first clear their use with the instructor.

### **Statement on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Bergen Community College has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by federal regulations implementing section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Section 504 and ADA state, in part, that “no qualified individual with a disability, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”

Complaints should be addressed to the Manager of Training and Compliance, Office of the Executive Vice President, Room A-330, (201)612-5331, who has been designated to coordinate 504/ADA compliance efforts. (BCC Student Handbook, 2003, Page 42).

## **Sexual Harassment Statement**

Bergen Community College is committed to providing its students and employees with an academic and work environment free from sexual harassment or discrimination. Sexual harassment in any form constitutes prohibited, unprofessional and unacceptable conduct, and is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1990, as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, established case law and State policies. The policy applies to all persons. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students are all covered. (BCC Catalog, 2007-8, pages 59-60). See catalog for complete details.

## **Acceptable Use of BCC Technology Resources**

Bergen Community College reserves the right to monitor its information technology resources and telecommunications network to protect the integrity of its computing systems, workstations, and lab facilities, and to ensure compliance with all acceptable use and related policies and procedures. To this end, the College reserves the right to inspect any and all computer systems or data that reside on its telecommunications network for violations of any acceptable use and related policies and procedures. (BCC Catalog 2007-8, pages 45-47).

The College's entire Acceptable Use policy, administrative guidelines, and procedures may be found at <http://www.bergen.edu/acceptableuse>.

## **Faculty Office Hours: The Purpose and Value**

All full-time instructors will reserve a minimum of three (3) hours per week for the sole purpose of meeting with students. The exact hours are to be determined by each individual instructor and posted in the department and if possible next to the instructor's office. The purpose of this is to assist students who have questions pertaining to class assignments or who are in need of clarification of material or concepts discussed in class. All students are welcome to visit the instructor during the posted hours but if this is not possible due to scheduling conflicts the instructor at the students request will arrange for a time to meet which is mutually convenient. The faculty office hours are valuable because they provide a setting for the instructor and student to interact on a one-to-one basis where they can focus on specific individualized concerns.



## **STUDENT AND FACULTY SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

A wide variety of services are available to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Special Services (OSS) [Room S-131; (201) 612-5270]. OSS is dedicated to serving students with physical, visual, learning, hearing, and emotional disabilities. If a student has been classified in high school or had a 504 plan, it is highly recommended that the student contact OSS during the college application process. A more detailed explanation can be found on the College web site [www.bergen.edu](http://www.bergen.edu) Personal information is kept confidential. Examples of the types of accommodations and services include:

- Extended test taking time
- Organizational strategies
- Tutoring
- Career counseling
- Adaptive equipment computer labs
- Note takers
- Sign language interpreters

### **The Sidney Silverman Library**

The Sidney Silverman Library is an integral part of the College's educational programs. To support the curriculum, the library acquires, organizes, and provides access to a variety of print, media, and electronic resources for individual and classroom use.

The library is located on the second and third floors in the L area of the megastructure. It is open whenever classes are in session and on a reduced schedule when classes are not in session. The library is open to all students, faculty, and the general public. (BCC Catalog 2007-8, page 62).

The Library's Web page, <http://www.bergen.edu/library>, is available for up-to-date information regarding library collections and services.

## **Other Student and Faculty Services**

Academic Advising Center [Main Building, Room A-101; (201) 612-5480]  
Cooperative Education and Career Development Center [Main Building, Room C-100, (201) 447-7171]  
Child Development Center [East Hall]  
Counseling Center [Main Building, Room A-118; (201) 447-7211]  
Dental Hygiene Clinic [Main Building, Room S-327; (201) 447-7180]  
The Distance Learning Office {Main Building, Room C-334; (201)612-5581]  
English Language Resource Center [East Hall, Room E-126]  
Health Services [Main Building, HS-100; (201) 447-9257]  
Math Lab [Main Building, Room C-110]  
Multimedia Lab [Main Building, Room S-250]  
Online Writing Lab (OWL) <http://www.bergen.edu/owl>  
Office of Testing Services (Main Building, Room S-127; (201)447-7203)  
Public Safety [Main Building; Room L-154; (201)447-7116]  
Tutoring Center, a.k.a. Learning Assistance Center [Main Building, Room L-125; (201) 447-7489].

## Course Outline and Calendar

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements;

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment.
- Due dates for major assignments-e.g., due dates for the paper(s), due dates for the project(s) etc.
- Any required special events-e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic performance etc.
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

### Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Topic	Assignment
1	Introduction	Assigned Reading
2	The Theoretical Perspectives	Assigned Reading
3	How to Recognize a Social Problem	Assigned Reading
4	Individual and the Institutions of Society:The Family	Assigned Reading
5	Individual and the Institutions of Society: Education, Economy, Government	Assigned Reading
6	The System and Its Influence Upon the Individual: Prejudice and Discrimination	Assigned Reading
7	The System and Its Influence Upon the Individual: Urban Problems, The Justice System	Assigned Reading
8	Individual Deviance as a Response to Social Forces: Crime and Delinquency	Assigned Reading
9	Individual Deviance as a Response to Social Forces: Alcohol and Drugs, Mental Illness	Assigned Reading
10	Individual Deviance as a Response to Social Forces: Sex as a Social Problem	Assigned Reading
11	Individual Deviance as a Response to Social Forces: Aging and Dying	Assigned Reading
12	Miscellaneous Important Social Problems	Assigned

		Reading
13	Projects for the Future	Assigned Reading
14-15	Social Change	Assigned Reading