**BMA-AMED-320**

**Social Problems in the United States**

**Description and Syllabus**

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| **Instructor** | William Hoversen  | **E-mail** | whoversen@gmail.com |
| **Office** | Room 432 | **Office Hours** | Thursday 10:00-11:30 |

### Course Description:

This course will investigate U.S. current social issues, with an eye towards how they are described in the media and how people are "meant" to consume this media. The social and economic effects of these issues will be shown and discussed in detail.

This course emphasizes the sociologist’s view of the current cultural issues in the US, looking at how culture interacts with reality and the way these shape the social landscape. However, we will also look at the issues in this class as a social anthropologist, specifically at the “real world” costs of particular social phenomena.

**After this course, students will be able to:**

1. Understand the fundamentals of the American social landscape
2. Measure the real effect of society on American citizens and residents
3. Realize the social, cultural, and political trends that push Americans to do what they do, both individually and as a society.

### Readings:

Readings for this course will be provided by the teacher. You are expected to have your own copy of any reading material and bring it to class as I will not do so. This is your responsibility.

**Attendance:** Three missed class meetings is the maximum allowed by the department, but each absence will decrease your attendance grade. A fourth absence will result in failing the course, even if all of the assignments have been completed.

If you do not think you can make it to every class on time, I would advise not signing up for this course. No exceptions will be made for people who want to juggle this course with another one that meets at the same time or overlaps in time. I keep a record of late arrivals. We only meet once a week for 1 ½ hours, so be there. Plan your transportation accordingly.

**Class Participation:** Discussion is an absolute necessity in this course. You will be graded on your participation during in-class discussions.

Active participation means that you are actively discussing topics, giving ideas, helping your groupmates, and the like. It does not mean you are sitting, arms folded, in the back of the room hiding. This includes using phones and other mobile devices. They will be silenced or turned off during class time. Any use of such a device must be sanctioned by the teacher. Looking at social networking sites, or anything else really, that doesn’t pertain exactly to the class at hand and work given (with the teacher’s permission), will result in the student being considered absent. If you want to play with your toys, go play at home.

**Exams:** There will be two essays tests in this course. You can make-up tests only in the case of failure, not merely to get a better grade. Re-taking an exam will result in either a pass (60% or “2”) or a fail mark.

**Evaluation**: Midterm Test 45 points

Final Exam: 45 points

Class Attendance and Participation 10 points

**Final Course Grades**:

***All* of the above will need to be completed and not more than three missed classes for the following grades to be assigned.**

100 to 90 of total points = 5

89 to 80 of total points = 4

79 to 70 of total points = 3

69 to 60 of total points = 2

**Rules of the class:** No off color language will be tolerated (I can joke, you can joke, but we will not put someone down, we will not make anyone feel uncomfortable). You should turn your mobiles off when you enter the classroom. If you are late, do not knock, just come in as unobtrusively as possible and take a seat.

Schedule Fall 2016

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|  | Date | Subject | Readings/Notes |
| 1 | Sept 12 | Class Intro: What are Social Problems? | Chapter 1 |
| 2 | Sept 19 | America’s Gun Issue | “Gun Nation” to be Watched in Class with discussion to follow |
| 3 | Sept 26 | Physical and Mental Health Care | Chapter 2 |
| 4 | Oct 3 | War on Drugs |  |
| 5 | Oct 10 | Crime and Social Control | Chapter 4 |
| 6 | Oct 17 | Poverty and Inequality | Chapter 6 |
| 7 | Oct 24 | Midterm Test |  |
| 8 | Oct 31 | National Holiday |  |
| 9 | Nov 7 | Environmental Problems | Chapter 13 |
| 10 | Nov 14 | Work and Unemployment | Chapter 7 |
| 11 | Nov 21 | Problems in Education | Chapter 8 |
| 12 | Nov 28 | Bro-Culture in America* Watch Part of Trophy Kids during the lesson
 | Readings to be distributed later |
| 13 | Dec 5 | Race, Ethnicity and ImmigrationandGender Inequality | Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 |
| 14 | Dec 12 | Final Test |  |