

**SOC 220 – Social Problems  
Winter 2014****Instructor:** Joel Thiessen, Ph.D.**CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR****Class Time:** TUE/THUR 2:30-3:45pm**Office Hours:** TUE/THU 1:00-2:15pm or by appointment**Email Address:** [jathiessen@ambrose.edu](mailto:jathiessen@ambrose.edu)**Website:** [www.joelthiessen.ca](http://www.joelthiessen.ca)**Location:** A2133**Office:** L2105**Office Phone:** 410-2000 ext.2979**Twitter:** @joelthiessen**REQUIRED TEXT**

Kendall, Diana, Vicki L. Nygaard, and Edward G. Thompson. 2011. *Social Problems in a Diverse Society. 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Edition*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education.

Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert. 2009. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

**ON RESERVE**

Johnson, William. 2010. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines a range of conditions in Canada and abroad which are generally perceived as social problems, including the consequences of these social problems for society and the social reaction to these problems.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To be able to apply the three major theoretical paradigms used by sociologists to examine various social problems.
2. To gain and demonstrate an understanding of social problems and their interrelationship, both in Canada and abroad, from a sociological perspective.
3. To apply critical thinking skills, and where applicable a Christian worldview, when examining social problems, including specific potential responses to social problems.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic/Reading</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| January 9   | Course Introduction   |
| January 14  | Taking a New Look at Social Problems (Ch.1)                           |
| January 16  | Poverty in the Canadian Context (Ch.2)                                |
| January 21  | Racism and Ethnic Inequality (Ch.3) and Film (“Indecently Exposed”)   |
| January 23  | Guest Lecture – Ray Aldred (Aborigines in Canada)                     |
| January 28  | Gender Inequality (Ch.4)  |
| January 30  | *NO CLASS (Community Day)   |
| February 4  | Inequality Based on Age (Ch.5)  |
| February 6  | Inequality Based on Sexual Orientation (Ch.6)                         |
| February 11 | The Sex Trade in Canada (Ch.7) and Film (“Sex Slaves”)                |
| February 13 | Addictions (Ch.8)   |
| February 18 | *NO CLASS (Reading Week)  |
| February 20 | *NO CLASS (Reading Week)  |
| February 25 | <b>Midterm Examination</b>  |
| February 27 | Class Discussion - When Helping Hurts (Intro. & Part 1)               |
| March 4     | Class Discussion - When Helping Hurts (Part 2)                        |
| March 6     | Class Discussion - When Helping Hurts (Part 3 & Concl.)               |
| March 11    | Health, Illness, and Health Care (Chapter 10)                         |
| March 13    | The Changing Family (Ch.11)   |
| March 18    | Problems in Education (Ch.12)   |
| March 20    | Problems in the Globalized Economy and Politics (Ch.13)               |
| March 25    | Popul., Urban., and the Envir. (Ch.15)                                |
| March 27    | Problems Related to Media (Ch.14)<br>and Guest Lecture - Steve Shrout |
| April 1     | Crime and Criminal Justice (Ch.9)                                     |
| April 3     | Guest Lecture – Chief Rick Hanson (Chief of Police)                   |
| April 8     | Global Social Problems (Ch.16)  |
| April 10    | Tony Campolo Film (“Social Justice... Why Bother?”)                   |

## **LEARNING AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

In the Behavioural Science Department we believe that learning is an active and interactive process, a joint venture between student and teacher and between student and student (i.e., learning is not just “downloading” information from teacher to student). Therefore, it is expected that professors will come to each class well read and prepared to engage students on the topic at hand, giving students the utmost attention and respect. In turn, it is expected that students will take an active role in the learning process. This includes: (a) regular class attendance (students are expected to notify the professor via email if they are unable to make it to class, which should only occur in the most extreme circumstances), (b) reading course material in advance of class, (c) showing up to class on time, and (d) attentively and proactively being “present” at class (i.e., not on the internet, not texting, not conversing with the person beside you). Committing to this type of “active learning” significantly increases the learning experience for both teacher and student, and reflects the Christian ethos of excellence and respect that lies at the heart of the Ambrose educational experience. Failure to adhere to this will result in the professor either asking the

student to leave the classroom for the remainder of the lecture or, in extreme cases (i.e., three or more ‘offenses’), to possibly withdraw from or fail the entire course.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING**

\* Failure to submit all assignments will result in an automatic failing final grade.

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Midterm Examination (<u>February 25</u>)</b> | <b>25%</b>  |
| <b>Reading Response (<u>February 27</u>)</b>    | <b>15%</b>  |
| <b>Research Project (<u>March 24</u>)</b>       | <b>35%</b>  |
| <b>Final Examination (<u>April 14</u>)</b>      | <b>25%</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>100%</b> |

### **1) Midterm Exam (25%) – February 25**

70 multiple choice questions based on class readings and lectures between Jan. 14 and Feb. 13.

### **2) Reading Response to *When Helping Hurts* (15%) - Due February 27 @ 9:00am on Moodle\***

Students will write a 2 page response (excluding title page and bibliography) to the book *When Helping Hurts*. In your response you will (a) account for how the book has challenged and/or affirmed your previous thinking regarding a Christian response to social problems (focus on two or three ideas), and (b) how you plan to personally respond to a social problem(s) in light of what you have read. No formal introduction or conclusion is required for this assignment – simply format this paper according to these two sections. Papers should be double spaced, with 1” (2.54cm) margins on all sides, 12 point font, and ASA formatting (see Johnson book on reserve). Students will be graded for grammar and writing and social scientific content. Therefore, ensure that your document is well-written, clearly and logically organized, and explicitly draws on material in the book. Late assignments will lose 10% per day.

\*Please note that your paper will be submitted on Moodle via a plagiarism software – Turnitin - that compares your paper against other books, articles, online sources, and papers submitted to other universities and Ambrose for plagiarism. It is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes plagiarism (see “Important Notes” section of the syllabus).

### **3) Research Project (35%) – Due March 24 @ 9:00am on Moodle\***

Students can work on this project on their own or in groups of 2-4 (the same grade is given to all students). In this assignment, students will have the option to prepare a 6 page paper (excluding title page and bibliography) or to propose another creative medium to submit their research project (e.g., video, poster/bulletin board, board/card game) on one of the two topics below. If students choose an alternative creative medium, they must discuss the proposed idea and receive approval and specific parameters moving forward from the course instructor prior to Thursday, February 13. For those who prepare a research paper, no formal introduction or conclusion is required for this assignment – simply format this paper according to the three sections (using subheadings).

1. Identify an agency in Calgary that specifically deals with any of the social problems discussed in the course. With this agency in mind, you should: (a) Provide a historical background on the agency, including but not excluded to: How long has it existed? What are its core values? What is its

- mission? What is the population that it serves? How does this agency identify social problems, what solutions do they propose, and how do they take action? (2 Pages) (b) When it comes to the social problem(s) that this agency deals with, how has sociology attempted to address this problem in terms of its causes, its consequences, and its solutions? (3 Pages) (c) Identify and discuss an area(s) where you think this agency is particularly effective (explain why), along with an area(s) that you believe could be strengthened (explain why, including an alternative) (1 Page).
2. Identify a region of the world that currently struggles with any of the social problems discussed in the course. With this region in mind, you should: (a) Provide a historical background on the country, including but not excluded to social, political, and economic context? How does this country identify social problems, what solutions do they propose, and how do they take action? (2 Pages) (b) When it comes to the social problem(s) that this place faces, how has sociology attempted to address this problem in terms of its causes, its consequences, and its solutions? (3 Pages) (c) Identify and discuss an area(s) where you think this country is particularly effective (explain why), along with an area(s) that you believe could be strengthened (explain why, including an alternative) (1 Page)

Papers should be double spaced, with 1" (2.54cm) margins on all sides, 12 point font, and ASA formatting (see Johnson book on reserve). Students will be graded for grammar and writing and social scientific content. Therefore, ensure that your document is well-written, clearly and logically organized, and explicitly draws on lecture notes, course readings, and external resources (minimum of 3 academic books (excluding the course textbooks), 3 academic journal articles, and 2 news stories). This means that all theories and concepts should be clearly defined and explained prior to using them as an explanatory and analytical tool, and all statements must be supported with empirical and rational evidence. Late assignments will lose 10% per day.

\*Please note that your paper will be submitted on Moodle via a plagiarism software – Turnitin - that compares your paper against other books, articles, online sources, and papers submitted to other universities and Ambrose for plagiarism. It is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes plagiarism (see “Important Notes” section of the syllabus).

#### **4) Final Exam (25%) – April 14, 9:00am-12:00pm, A2131**

80 multiple choice questions based on class readings and lectures between Feb.27 and April 10.

Students may request revised final exams if they have three exams in one 24-hour period or two exams at the same time. Final exam schedule revision request forms are available at the Registrar’s Office and must be handed in by Monday, October 28, 2013 (Fall semester) or Monday, March 3, 2014 (Winter semester). If you do not have your request in by this date, all exams within a 24-hour period will have to be written as scheduled. If you have two exams at the same time, you will be given four hours to write both exams.

Graded final examinations will be available for supervised review at the request of the student. Please contact your instructor. Please note that final grades will be available on the student portal. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

## **GRADING ASSIGNMENTS**

The available letter grades and percentages for course grades are as follows. A detailed chart of what constitutes an ‘A,’ ‘B,’ or ‘C,’ etc. is also included below:

|    |               |             |    |           |             |
|----|---------------|-------------|----|-----------|-------------|
| A  | 96% and above | (GPA – 4.0) | C  | 63 - 67%  | (GPA – 2.0) |
| A  | 91 - 95%      | (GPA – 4.0) | C- | 60 - 62%  | (GPA – 1.7) |
| A- | 86 - 90%      | (GPA – 3.7) | D+ | 56 - 59%  | (GPA – 1.3) |
| B+ | 82 - 85%      | (GPA – 3.3) | D  | 50 - 55%  | (GPA – 1.0) |
| B  | 75 - 81%      | (GPA – 3.0) | F  | Below 50% |             |
| B- | 72 - 74%      | (GPA – 2.7) |    |           |             |
| C+ | 68 - 71%      | (GPA – 2.3) |    |           |             |

## **IMPORTANT NOTES**

- The last day to enter a course without permission and /or voluntary withdrawal from a course without financial penalty (**drop**) – Sunday, September 15, 2013 (Fall semester) or Sunday, January 19, 2014 (Winter semester). These courses will not appear on the student’s transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date.
- Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit, or drop out of the “audit” up to the “drop” date indicated above. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.
- Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (**withdraw**) – Tuesday, November 12, 2013 (Fall semester) or Friday, March 21, 2014 (Winter semester). A grade of “W” will appear on the student’s transcript.
- Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.
- An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.
- It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).
- Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by Monday, November 25, 2013 (Fall semester) or Monday, March 31, 2014 (Winter semester). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

- We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.
- Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

|                     | <b>Theory, Method, Data:</b><br>Correctly employs paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study. | <b>Analysis and Application:</b><br>Student is able to extend past summarizing research/theory, and clearly analyze and apply the research/theory (e.g., implications and consequences) | <b>Logical and Coherent Argument:</b> Logical and coherent argument that flows from beginning to end.   | <b>Grammar and Spelling:</b><br>Writing is clear and effective communicating central ideas                  | <b>Formatting:</b><br>Use of appropriate writing style (i.e., APA, ASA) and other formatting particulars (i.e., page length, font size, margins) | <b>Oral Presentations:</b><br>Material is clearly, confidently, and creatively communicated. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study.   |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>A<br/>86-100</b> | Consistently achieved – paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used accurately and in relevant ways   | The majority of assignment demonstrates a balance in summarizing and describing theory/research and analysis and application  | Clearly states central thesis and purpose of paper<br><br>Each sentence/paragraph logically leads to the next<br><br>Carefully selected details which support general statements and central thesis | Few to no spelling, grammar, or other writing errors.<br><br>Words, sentences, and paragraphs flow smoothly | Consistently achieved  | Communicates effectively main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation.<br><br>Establishes order to ideas and points out relationships between them.<br><br>Number and quality of main points are sufficient<br><br>Presentation of ideas develops |

|              |  |   |   |   |  |
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|              |  |   |   |   | to a logical conclusion and/or summary   |
|              |  |   |   |   | Strong presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact.   |
| <b>72-85</b> | Mostly achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used fairly accurately. | Some idea of how chosen topic bears on the development of sociological/psychological thought (i.e., some analysis and application beyond merely summarizing existing theory/research) | Clear central thesis Appropriate details/synthesis most of the time.<br><br>Sentences/paragraph generally flow logically together | Some spelling, grammar, and writing errors<br><br>Some awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs | Mostly achieved<br><br>Communicates to some degree the main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation.<br><br>Ideas follow a general logical flow with presenter providing some synthesis between points<br><br>Number and quality of main points are sufficient<br><br>Logical conclusion and/or summary provided that develops from the presenters points<br><br>Moderate presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact |

|          |   |   |  |   |   |   |
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| <b>C</b> | Inconsistently achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are often summarized or used inaccurately, or not at all. | Little to no connection made to the development of paradigmatic thought in terms of analyzing or applying the theory/research | Adequately limited central thesis<br><br>Details/synthesis may be repetitious or absent altogether.<br><br>Sentences/paragraphs rarely, if ever, flow logically together | Several spelling, grammar, and writing errors<br><br>Several awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs | Inconsistently achieved<br><br><i>And so on....</i> | Unclear presentation of main theme, thesis or focus of presentation<br><br>Little order to ideas and relationships between points not clarified clearly<br><br>Number and quality of main points are lacking in sufficiency<br><br>Weak conclusion and/or summary<br><br>Presentation style lacking as demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact |
|----------|---|---|--|---|---|---|