

COURSE SYLLABUS

**CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS
SOC 245-1B
Spring 2003 (January 7th- May 6th, 2003)**

Mon., Wed., and Fri.: 9:05 A.M. - 9:55 A.M., Room: CB 15-124

COURSE MASTERS:

Jason Wasserman	UW 232-C	934-0565	jasonw@uab.edu
John Porter Lillis	UW 135	936-2744	jlillis@uab.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class demonstrates: (1) the nature and characteristics of a number of social problems; (2) theoretical frameworks for understanding such social problems; and (3) potential solutions to these issues. An empirical overview of problematic conditions (e.g., poverty, violence, crime, inequalities related to racism sexism, and ageism, and imperfections in the major social institutions of family, education, and criminal justice) in the U.S. and other societies will be presented, along with some discussion of major theoretical paradigms that may be applied to the study of social problems within the field of sociology and problematics within each of these. Finally the course will look at potential solutions to such problems from a sociological perspective.

REQUIRED TEXT: *Introduction to Social Problems* (6th Edition) by Thomas J. Sullivan
ISBN: 0205351050

EVALUATION CRITERIA: Students' comprehension of the materials included in class readings and the material given in class lectures will be evaluated using weekly quizzes and other short assignments to be administered at the conclusion of each class week. REMEMBER THAT YOU WILL BE TESTED ON INFORMATION GIVEN IN CLASS LECTURES, SO IT IS, OF COURSE, VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY! There will also be a final project that will be presented during the exam period (more info TBA).

Weekly quizzes and assignments: 70%

Final project and presentation: 30%

IMPORTANT: THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES OR ASSIGNMENTS! *All students are allowed to drop their one lowest quiz or assignment grade. Therefore, one and only one missed weekly quiz or assignment may be omitted as a student's lowest quiz or assignment grade. If more than one quiz or assignment is missed, then the student will receive a ZERO for that assignment. There will be no exceptions to this arrangement.*

All questions or other inquiries regarding grades or attendance should be directed to the course masters, Jason Wasserman or Porter Lillis, whose contact information is presented above.

TENTATIVE LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week 1-2	1/7 – 1/14	Class Overview and Theoretical Paradigms for Social Problems (Chapter 1) Jason Wasserman Approaches to the Study of Social Problems (Chapter 1) Porter Lillis
Week 2	1/16 – 1/19	Stratification (Chapters 7, 8) Lonnie Hannon, Brian Hinote

**** NO CLASS 1/19****

Week 3	1/21 – 1/23	Stratification (Chapters 7, 8) Lonnie Hannon, Brian Hinote
Week 4	1/26 – 1/30	Globalization (Chapter 2) Toby Kemp
Week 5	2/2 – 2/6	Growth of Corporate / Gov't Power (Chapter 2) Xiaofei Qiao
Week 6	2/9 – 2/13	Population Growth and Urbanization (Chapter 12) Juan Xi
Week 7	2/16 – 2/20	Environmental Problems (Chapter 13) Porter Lillis
Week 8	2/23 – 2/27	Education, Science and Technology (Chapter 15) Nick Daniel
Week 9	3/1 – 3/5	Religion (Reading TBA) Collin Farrell
Week 10	3/8 – 3/12	Family (Chapter 3) Annice Yarber
Week 11	3/15 – 3/19	Eating Behaviors- Caroline O. Robinson
Week 12	3/22 – 3/26	SPRING BREAK
Week 13	4/5 – 4/9	Crime & Delinquency – Deviance (Chapter 9) Akilah Dulin
Week 14	4/12 – 4/16	Health and Illness (Chapter 4) Cullen Clark
Week 15	4/19 – 4/21	Prostitution, Pornography, & the Sex Trade (Chapter 11) Emily Norman
Week 15-16	4/23 – 4/26	Classes End AIDS – (Chapter 4) Mercie Mwaria & Tara Jones
	4/29 – 5/5	Finals Week (Final Project)

Any further questions regarding this syllabus should be directed to the coursemasters. In addition, changes to this syllabus may be made without notice due to extenuating circumstances.

We all look forward to an enjoyable and insightful semester together. Good luck!

Your Instructors

Cullen Clark: After a 20 year career in healthcare administration as a marketing/communications professional, I recently returned to school to pursue a PhD in medical sociology. My primary research interest is complementary and alternative medicine. When time permits, my wife and I enjoy hiking and traveling. But our days are usually scheduled by the demands of work and a 15-lb. Jack Russell Terrier named Huey. culclark@uab.edu

Akilah Dulin is an Ohio native and a first semester graduate student in the Med Soc program. She received B.A. in sociology and Spanish from UAB, with a minor in criminal justice. Her main area of research is the medicalization of social life especially in regards to children's health, and more especially adjudicated youth and their health, and health disparities among various populations. I want to be a researcher and possibly have a connection with family court systems throughout the US. My favorite movie is The Whiz. kilah112@hotmail.com

Colin Farrell: I spent most of my life in Michigan, attending college at Western Michigan University. This is my first year at UAB, with my main interests being social epidemiology and access to health care. farrell@uab.edu

Lonnie Hannon: I am interested in social inequality and the means to rectify such problems. Moreover, I feel that it important deconstruct various negative structures in society while preserving those that are progressive. My burgeoning theoretical work consists of merging qualitative data with macro theories, a process that involves the structural interpretation of language. I enjoy athletic events and cultural activities.

Brian Hinote is a doctoral student in the Dept. of Sociology. His Primary academic and research interests include social stratification and inequality, HIV/AIDS, and social theory. Brian's recent work deals with group mobilization among high-risk HIV/AIDS subpopulations as well as economic sociology, and he has also participated in research examining health lifestyles in the former Soviet states. bhinote@uab.edu

Tara Jones is a doctoral student in the Medical Sociology PhD program. She has masters in medical sociology from Clark-Atlanta University and is primarily interested in HIV/AIDS particularly among the African-American population.

Toby Kemp: I'm interested in social change and inequality. My thesis is on self esteem and social support as mediating factors for depression among people with spina bifida. I enjoy caving, rappelling, mountain biking, playing guitar and drums. I'm also addicted to horror movies. tbkemp@yahoo.com

John Porter Lillis: My interests include congenital anomalies due to environmental effects, health issues of those *in utero*, access to care for gravid minority

females, and social gerontology. I did my undergraduate work in sociology at Columbus State University and masters work at Auburn University.

Mercy Mwaria: **From:** Nairobi, Kenya (East Africa); **Interests:** Research in Reproductive Health – AIDS, STDs and Family Planning; **Research experience:** Extensive work in Kenya (6 years’ research experience); **Leisure interests:** Travel (the word ‘safari’ is native to my country, meaning ‘journey’), athletics (Kenyans and the Boston Marathon fame...!), music and dance; **Ambition:** To make sure that you learn some Swahili – some of you already speak some “hakuna matata” (in the Lion King) is Swahili for ‘no worries’. **mercie@uab.edu**

Emily Norman received her second Masters degree in Sociology from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Research interests include the sociology of science and technology, gender studies, deviance, and complementary/alternative medicine (CAM). **enorman@uab.edu**

Xiaofei Qiao: I am currently working on Dr. Hwang's Three Gorges project of involuntarily resettlement. Right now, my focus is on the remittances and its effects on the family left behind. **qiao@uab.edu**

Caroline Robinson: I hold a pre-doctoral Clinical and Behavioral Research in Applied Gerontology Fellowship from the National Institutes of Aging. I currently am working within the UAB Center for Aging as the project coordinator of a National Institutes of Health grant in which we are examining the eating behaviors of homebound, older adults in four counties in Alabama. My research interests are primarily focused around food and eating behaviors as well as religion and spirituality among older adults. **crobinson@aging.uab.edu**

Jason Wasserman: I graduated with a BA in Philosophy from UAB and am in my second year in the PhD program for medical sociology. In the interim between my undergraduate and graduate work I made full length documentary called zero.two.seven.four., which chronicled the legal battle of three women whose mother was killed by a drug called rezulin. My particular area of interest is in death and dying and more specifically attitudes toward euthanasia. I also enjoy theory and statistics. **jasonw@uab.edu**

Annice Yarber is a fourth year doctoral scholar in the Medical Sociology PhD program. Her broad interests include the study of family, deviance, gender, and race and ethnic relations. Her current research focuses on the intersection between family, school, and peers on the initiation of sexual intercourse among adolescents. Teaching philosophy - "Learning should be fun." **legs@uab.edu**