

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

SOCIOLOGY 1020
SOCIAL PROBLEMS

(Winter 2012)

3 University Transfer Credits
(UA, UC, UL, KUC, AU)

STUDENTS SHOULD CONFIRM TRANSFERABILITY TO RECEIVING INSTITUTIONS

Course Prerequisite: SO1000. (Recently the University of Alberta changed its approach to Introductory Sociology. Courses not listed as required or suggested for minors or majors in the discipline, will no longer have a prerequisite at that institution).

Course Description: *Social Problems* inquires into contemporary concepts, assumptions, ideologies, politics, and creation of perceptions of social problems.

Mode Of Delivery: Discussion, Occasional Lectures, Film Analyses

Electronic Devices: People who must have contact with others during class time may leave your cell phones on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response from you is required. Otherwise, texting or use of phones will result in you having to miss that particular class. Please do not put me in a position of having to do this.

Instructor: Alan Segal ASegal@gprc.ab.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 14.00 – 14.25
After each of the evening courses.
By Appointment

Office: C410, 539-2011

Required Reading: No books are assigned for this course. However, articles will be distributed.

Plagiarism: In an academic setting, presenting others' work as your own is a serious violation. However, referencing articles and books and online academic products do not prevent you from

building on their ideas and speculations. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, consult Page 50 of Grande Prairie Regional College's Admissions Guide.

Assignments:

All work must clearly stipulate your name and course number, and identify which assignment it is. Written assignments must be sent only by email. Only assignments sent through your GPRC email accounts are acceptable. Nothing will be assessed if it arrives via a different email account. The receipt date and time that accompanies your email messages will count as the official submission time for the work you're handing in. No attachments are acceptable. Cut and paste your work and send it as a regular email message.

All assignments will go to gprcassignments@gmail.com

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas in sociology, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have said on a topic. Important as this is, other authors' ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific detail that helps you to ask questions about the topic you have selected. My assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your and others' investigations. Research is one kind of investigation. Deciding what questions are worth raising is an important part of analysis. Conclusions can be valuable but aren't obligatory for any of my assignments. Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Therefore, while it will not be valued as highly as content, it will be evaluated and therefore can affect your mark.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS EXCEPT THE JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE. JOURNALS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE GRADE LEVEL FOR EACH TWO-DAY LATENESS PERIOD. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.

Midterm Presentations: (F, D- to A+) Dates to be Discussed

These can be individual or group presentations. Select a feature of our sociocultural lives that is a) perceived as a social problem; or b) is being asserted as a problem but which you believe does not deserve the label. Utilizing the ideas communicated in the opening lectures for the course, **assess the lack of worthiness** of the social problem you've chosen. A critical analysis of the concepts you think are relevant to the analysis must be included. As this is a Sociology course, sociological concepts among others, must be incorporated into your discussion. Research is expected. Therefore a list of references will be given to me as hard copy when you present to the class.

Two Journals: (F, C- to C+)

Journals are due the second class of February and the third class of March. Anything pertaining to the sociology of creating, encouraging, criticizing, or averting the construction of social problems is open for journal discussion. Whatever we touch on in class discussions or lectures, class interaction; details from your personal life that are relevant to our course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is necessary or expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor. Grammar and general writing clarity are expected in all written assignments in university courses. While recognizing that we speak and write informally when communicating our

personal observations, the journals should be coherent and as articulate as possible. Evaluations will reflect this expectation. Minimum length is 350 words.

Film Reviews (Minimum of One): (F, D- to A+)

Throughout the term a variety of films may be shown. After each one you will submit a discussion paper exploring the concepts of problem-creation or problem-debunking, as they might apply to the film you are analyzing. The expected length is a minimum of 1000 words. The due dates are 5 days after the completion of the viewing in class.

Discussion Bonus: (A, B, C, D)

Everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to the Moodle discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. If you are absent for more than 4 classes, you will not receive a bonus grade. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark. Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 4 classes. The bonus will not result in more than a 3-level rise in final grades.

Tabulating Grades:

The total Grade Points available from your assignments is 12.6. All marks will be totaled and divided by this number. A percentage will be derived based on this calculation, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final grade according to the grid below.

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

Grade Equivalency:

A+	95-100%
A	90-94%
A-	87-89%
B+	83-86%
B	80-82%
B-	77-79%
C+	73-76%
C	65-72%
C-	60-64%
D+	55-59%
D	50-54%
D-	45-49%

NOTE: On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the course assignments, I will use D- as an additional non-failing mark.

NOTE: Some postsecondary institutions may not accept a final grade of D and D+.

Discussion Sequence

1. *Introduction to Course*
2. *Lectures on Concepts and Theories of Social Problems*