



**Reedley College
Social Sciences Division
Department of Sociology**

Sociology 1B - CRITICAL THINKING ABOUT SOCIAL PROBLEMS

**Professor Amy Vasconcellos
Fall 2021**

**SOC-1B-58343
09/07/2021 to 12/10/2021**

**Asynchronous (Completely Online)
Email: amy.vasconcellos@cloviscollege.edu
Email Office Hours*: MTWR 8am-5pm**

*Zoom Office Hour Appointments Available Upon Request

ADVISORY:

- SOC 1A and ENGL 1A/1AH Recommended

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

An identification and analysis of contemporary social problems including causes, consequences, and possible solutions. Explanation of theoretical perspectives used to explain social problems. Consideration of sociological methods of research and analysis. Application of critical thinking skills, specifically taught in the course, designed to result in heightened critical thinking ability as well as strengthened social awareness.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

The focus of this course is critical thinking, not social problems or social issues—the issues are the vehicle for teaching critical thinking. Critical thinking is an important component of sociology. “To understand social life, we must understand the intersection between biography and history.” The **sociological imagination**—a term coined by C. Wright Mills (1959)—requires us to step back, to ask questions, to identify and examine unstated assumptions, and to evaluate evidence.

Through reading, writing, lecture, activities, videos, discussion, and service to our community, this course applies a **sociological perspective** in examining social issues from everyday life. Sociology provides individuals with tools to understand their own lives in relation to larger social forces. Together, we will critically analyze social problems and consider ways we might act to address various social problems in our society.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: (This course uses NO COST/FREE digital course materials)

- *Social Problems: Continuity and Change*. 2016. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. ISBN 13: 9781946135230. Accessible here: <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/141>
- An email account & online access (including use of the campus' Learning Management System, LMS-Canvas)

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of major social problems concerning the United States.
2. Place local, regional, and national social problems in a global context.
3. Identify and distinguish between causes and consequences of social problems.
4. Analyze social problems using sociological approaches and concepts.
5. Analyze and interpret qualitative and quantitative information about social problems.
6. Identify and evaluate policies that address social problems and assess the policies' impact on society.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs):

This course has been designed to provide you, the student, with the opportunity to:

1. Identify, define, and apply the elements of critical thinking.
2. Evaluate social problems from both microsociological & macrosociological perspectives and discuss which perspectives are most useful under different conditions.
3. Support a position regarding a social problem using logical argument and evidence.

DROP POLICY:

If you do not complete the "Week 1 Discussion Board" – DUE 9/12/2021, you will be considered not attending and I will drop you from the roster. After the first week, if you have not completed the required assignments (without having notified the instructor), you may be administratively dropped from the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- A. ASYNCHRONOUS LECTURES/LECTURE HIGHLIGHTS* (100 points). All students are expected to watch the asynchronous/online lectures. There will be 13 asynchronous lectures – three of the lectures combining two chapters. When two chapters are combined in one week – you are responsible for reading BOTH, but there will only be one lecture combining the two chapters.

Lecture Highlights are something you learn from the recorded and watched Chapter Lectures – available each week – which will be posted on CANVAS every Sunday by 11:59pm.

A Lecture Highlight is something **unique** to the lecture that is NOT found in the book. I use this as accountability for watching the Lecture.

- B. READING CHECKS/QUIZZES (100 points). To assess your understanding of each week's assigned reading, students will complete a brief quiz on Canvas. Each Reading Check/Quiz is worth 10 points (only your top 10 scores will count). Each quiz will consist of usually five "multiple-choice," "true-false," and/or "fill-in-the-blank" questions on the assigned readings.
- C. CANVAS DISCUSSIONS or COIL Assignments* (60 points). You will be required to participate in 6 online Discussions. Each Discussion will require a submission on CANVAS.

Discussions usually incorporate chapter material and make it relevant to a current event. 10 points each.

Some of our course assignments may include collaboration with an international partner cohort of students – referred to as COIL. If we collaborate with COIL (I am currently trying to set this up) you would collaborate with a student or students from another country and discuss the differences in Social Problems between our society and theirs – all online. 😊

- D. SERVICE-LEARNING WORKSHOPS*** (160 POINTS). 8 at 20 points each, including the culminating Final Experience Flip Grid.

In this class, we discuss various social problems facing our communities and the importance of civic engagement to address those issues and strengthen civil society, where people act in their own interests as well as for the common good. Service-learning is a method where students learn by active participation in organized service that addresses community needs and is linked to academic study through structured reflection. **To complement your classroom learning, each student will participate in a minimum of 10 hours of service to the community** (about 2 hours per week arranged at your convenience for 5 weeks of the semester).

Workshop instructions will be on Canvas each Workshop week, but you will complete the following:

- Service-Learning Plan
- Service-Learning Log Hours and Experience 1
- Service-Learning Log Hours and Experience 2
- Service-Learning Log Hours and Experience 3
- Service-Learning Log Hours and Experience 4
- Service-Learning Log Hours and Experience 5
- Service-learning Evaluation/Verification of Service-Learning Site/Professional and Final Experience Thoughts
- Culminating Flip Grid Video to Share with Classmates (2-3 minutes in length)

The service-learning activity will provide you with a broader understanding of sociological theories, social issues, community needs, and your personal opinions. It may also aid in building professional contacts and job skills.

COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS (Choosing a “Service-Learning Site”): Typically, there are literally hundreds of possible organizations with which a student can partner to meet the service-learning requirement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **we are focusing on VIRTUAL service opportunities**. Each student will create an account at <https://www.volunteermatch.org> to search for opportunities. Sample organizations include but are not limited to [Community HousingWorks](#) and [Koreatown Youth & Community Center](#) (Tutoring), [Tulare County Free Library](#) (Adult Tutoring), [Jewish Home for the Aging of Orange County](#), [Housing Rights Center](#) (Housing Discrimination Tester), [Salinas Public Library System](#) (Citizenship Support & Bridge the Digital Divide), [California Prison Focus](#) (Music Video Editing), [The Eight](#) (Check Your Risk Diabetes Awareness Team), [Good Dog! Service Canines*](#) (Puppy Raiser, 12-month commitment), [DoSomething.org](#) (No-sew Masks & Senior Homies), [Habitat for Humanity Fresno/Madera](#), [Habitat for Humanity Tulare/Kings](#), [American Red Cross of Central California](#), [Central California Community Food Bank](#) (Groceries2Go), [Listos@The Fresno Center](#), [Cat House on the Kings*](#), and [The kNOw Youth Media](#) (Mentoring). These organizations are able to accommodate a variety of schedules. All service-learning projects are subject to instructor approval. Feel free to inquire with me, if you have any questions.

*I only accept volunteer work when dealing with animals at NO KILL SHELTERS.

Also, you may choose to create your “own” weekly volunteer work, where, instead of having the organizations sign-off on your hours, you complete tasks, such as picking-up trash for 2 hours a week, picking up cigarette butts at local parks, collecting cans and donate the proceeds, collecting used clothing to donate to shelters, etc. If this is the route you choose, you must submit pictures (“selfies” - you in the picture - and what you accomplished – 10 hours all together – 2 hours a week for 5 weeks) via CANVAS.

E. FINAL (100 points).

Final (cumulative): Chapters 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,16 – TBA

***WORD LIMITS ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED & POINT DEDUCTIONS APPLY**

****MANDATORY means an A/B course grade is not possible without submitting the assignment.**

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED ON CANVAS (do NOT send via email)

ASSIGNMENTS MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE AVAILABLE UNTIL DATE ON CANVAS.¹

¹I encourage each of you to contact me if you have concerns about the course or your work.
Please don't hesitate to inform me of extreme emergencies.

GRADING:

Lecture Highlights (Canvas)*	100 points
Reading Checks/Quizzes (Canvas)*	100 points
Service-Learning Workshops/Flip Grid (Canvas)	160 points
Discussion Boards (Canvas)	60 points
Final Exam (Canvas)	100 points
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TOTAL	520 points

*I keep the top 10 Reading Checks/Quizzes and Lecture Highlights out of 13.

Grades assigned as A (90-100%), B (80-89.9%), C (70-79.9%), D (60-69.9%), F (0-59.9%) letter grades.

EXTRA CREDIT:

There will be an Extra Credit opportunity offered during the course worth up to 10 points.

I want students to be aware of the grade symbols. Many people devalue the symbols and distort their meaning. The grade descriptions are presented below with the differences from an A, B, C, & D noted in CAPS:

A (90-100%) — EXCELLENT. Performance of the student has demonstrated the HIGHEST level of competence, showing sustained superiority in meeting all stated course objectives and responsibilities and exhibiting a VERY HIGH degree of intellectual initiative.

B (80-89.9%) — VERY GOOD to GOOD. Performance of the student has demonstrated a HIGH level of competence, showing sustained superiority in meeting all stated course objectives and responsibilities and exhibiting a HIGH degree of intellectual initiative.

C (70-79.9%) — FAIR. Performance of the student has demonstrated a SATISFACTORY level of competence, showing AN ADEQUATE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING of course objectives, responsibilities, AND COMPREHENSION OF COURSE CONTENT.

D (60-69.9%) — BARELY PASSING. Performance of the student has BEEN LESS THAN SATISFACTORY, showing INADEQUACY IN MEETING BASIC course objectives, responsibilities, AND COMPREHENSION OF COURSE CONTENT.

F (<60%) — NOT PASSING. Fails to meet course objectives. Work at this level does not meet requirements for credit towards a degree.

CAUTION:

“People who like to avoid shocking discoveries, who prefer to believe that society is just what they were taught in Sunday School, who like the safety of the rules and maxims of what Alfred Schutz has called ‘the world-taken-for-granted,’ should stay away from sociology.” (Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 1963:24)

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Students with Disabilities: Reedley College is committed to creating accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. To obtain academic accommodations or auxiliary aids, students must be registered with the DSP&S Office on campus. DSP&S can be reached at 559-442-8237 and is located in Building 1. If you are already registered with the DSP&S Office, please provide your Notice of Accommodation form to your instructor as soon as possible.

Student Conduct Standards: Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible citizens whenever they are on the campus or representing Reedley College in any activity. The Board of Trustees has adopted specific rules and regulations governing student behavior along with applicable penalties for violations. The student conduct standards and discipline policy is available at this link: [Board Policy No. 5500](#).

Academic Honesty Policy, Cheating, & Plagiarism: “Academic integrity is the foundation of an academic community.” Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, altering graded exams for additional credit, having another person take an examination for you, or facilitating academic dishonesty or as further specified in campus regulations.

Cheating is the unauthorized use of information or study guides in any academic exercise. Cheating includes: copying from others during an examination; sharing answers for a take-home examination; notes without permission during an examination; taking an examination for another student; asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you; tampering with an examination after it has been corrected, then returning it for more credit than deserved; submitting substantial portions of the same academic work for credit in more than one course without consulting the second instructor; preparing answers or writing notes in a blue book before an examination; and allowing others to do the research and writing of an assigned paper (for example, using a commercial term paper service or downloading a paper from the internet).

Plagiarism refers to the use of another’s ideas or words without proper attribution or credit. An author’s work is his/her property and should be respected by documentation. Credit must be given: for every direct quotation; when a work is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in your own words; and for information which is not common knowledge.

Collusion is when any student knowingly or intentionally helps another student to perform any of the above acts of cheating or plagiarism. Students who collude are subject to discipline for academic dishonesty. No distinction is made between those who cheat and plagiarize and those who willingly facilitate its occurrence.

Individuals found responsible for violating campus policies or regulations regarding academic honesty may receive one or more of the following sanctions: Warning, Disciplinary Probation, Loss of Privileges and Exclusion from Activities, Suspension, and/or Dismissal from the College.

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SOC1B TOPICS AND READINGS SYLLABUS*

Date	Chapter & Topic
9/7	Chapter 1: Understanding Social Problems
9/13	Chapter 2: Poverty
9/20	Chapter 3: Racial and Ethnic Inequality
9/29	Chapter 4: Gender Inequality & Chapter 5: Sexual Orientation and Inequality
10/4	Chapter 6: Aging and Ageism
10/11	Chapter 7: Alcohol and Other Drugs & Chapter 8: Crime and Criminal Justice
10/18	Chapter 10: The Changing Family (We Skip Chapter 9)
10/25	Chapter 11: Schools and Education
11/1	Chapter 12: Work and the Economy
11/8	Chapter 13: Health and Health Care
11/15	Thanksgiving Week – Flip Grid Videos & Extra Credit
11/22	Chapter 14: Urban and Rural Problems & Chapter 15: Population and the Environment
11/29	Chapter 16: War and Terrorism
12/6-12/9	Final Exam

-Syllabus is tentative & subject to change.