

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STEVENSON POINT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

Sociology 102 - Social Problems
Professor Robert P. Wolensky
Spring 2008

Office: 451CCC
Hours: M 12 – 1; F 11 - 12
T & R 2 - 3

INTRODUCTION:

What is this course about? What are some of the major social problems confronting U.S. and other societies today? Why do we have these problems? How can we lessen their occurrence? How do social problems relate to power relationships, minority/majority relations, and values and ideologies in the U.S. and elsewhere? What can we learn from past experiences with social problems and from other societies' efforts to deal with them? These are among the questions we will address in this course. Of course, our approach to the subject will be sociological, and this means that we will look to social, economic, political, cultural, and historical factors as the underlying causes of social problems.

READING LIST:

Text: D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn, *Social Problems*. (Available in Text Rental)

Supplement: Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*. (Purchase in the University Bookstore, about \$15)

Handouts:

- C. Wright Mills, “*The Sociological Imagination*,” 1959.
- Several other handouts will be distributed throughout the course
- A study guide will be distributed for each unit

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Unit 1 *Introduction* (Eitzen & Zinn, Chapter 1). READ AND DISCUSS MILLS, **UNIT 1 QUIZ**

Unit 2 *Wealth and Power: Economic and Governmental Problems* (Eitzen & Zinn, Chap. 2).
(Special emphasis on economy and government as related to minority populations)

Unit 3 READ AND DISCUSS Ehrenreich’s *Nickel and Dimed*, **UNIT 3 QUIZ**

Unit 4 *Work and the Economic Transition* (Eitzen & Zinn, Chapter 14).
(Special emphasis on work as related to minority populations)

Unit 5 *Poverty and Inequality* (Eitzen & Zinn, Chapter 7).
(Special emphasis on poverty and inequality as related to minority populations)

Unit 6 *Race and Ethnicity* (Eitzen & Zinn, Chapter 8).
(Special emphasis on race and ethnicity as related to minority populations)

Unit 7 *Environment and Global Inequality* (Eitzen & Zinn, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).
(Special emphasis on environment as related to minority populations)

EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES:

Two quizzes and **two major examinations** will be administered. The exams will consist of objective questions (multiple choice, match, true and false).

Quizzes:	(1) Unit 1	= 15% of grade
	(2) Unit 3	= 15% of grade
Major examinations:	(1) Units 1, 2, 3, 4	= 35% of grade
	(2) Units 5, 6, 7 (plus Unit 1)	= 35% of grade
	TOTAL	= 100%

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance will be taken at the start each class according to a seating chart. Each student is allowed **TWO** “free” absence marks (or the equivalent of one week of class missed). For *each* absence mark after two, the final course grade will be **lowered** by one step (B+ down to B is one step). For example, a student with four total absence marks will have his/her final grade lowered two steps (e.g., B+ to B-). However, if a student has **NO** absence marks or just **ONE** absence mark, the final course grade will be **raised** by one step. **Late** arrivals to class or **early** departures will result in an absence mark. So, good attendance and attention to time can figure into the final grade in this course. Since this class has a rather strict attendance policy, students must be “present” both physically and mentally during each class or else they will be marked absent. Falling asleep, writing letters, doing text messages, checking phone messages, etc. during lectures, speakers, or films will result in an absence mark.

NOTE ON EXCUSED ABSENCES:

If you become ill, or participate in a university activity, or miss class for any other “good” reason, these absences will be excused upon receipt of a written authorized statement from a doctor, coach, instructor, etc. Your final grade can still be raised one step if you have an excused absence; however, anyone who uses an excused absence to miss more than **ONE** full week of class (two absence marks) cannot be considered for a raised grade.

MEETING WITH THE PROFESSOR:

Each student is encouraged, but not required, to meet with the professor at least once during the semester to discuss his/her status in the course. This meeting will allow time to ask questions, review notes, ascertain comprehension of concepts, and address other matters that may be on the student's mind. The meeting is encouraged if the student's grade on the first exam is less than satisfactory.

OTHER MATTERS:

- Please inform the professor if you have any special learning needs.
- Lectures cannot be recorded without the professor's permission.
- Please turn off cell phones during class.
- Each student's physical and mental attendance is required. Therefore, students not paying attention during class for any reason (writing letters, playing video games, checking text messages, sleeping, etc.) will be marked absent.

Note on the UWSP Rights and Responsibilities handbook:

This document is available in PDF format at <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights/RRBOOKLET8-2005-06.pdf>. Students are urged to read this document.