

### Course Information

Semester & Year: Spring 2024

Course ID & Section #: D7085

Instructor's name:

Vanessa Vrtiak

Day/Time of required meetings: Distance Learning

Course units: 3.0

#### Required Texts:

Joel Best Social Problems 3rd Edition

Additional Readings listed below will be mailed through correspondence

### Catalog Description

Students learn to identify and examine social problems using a sociological perspective. Sociological concepts and theories are used to analyze social problems. Social movements such as global environmental, US civil, women's, LGBTQ and disability rights are explored with consideration of solutions for social change. This course requires critical reading and analysis.

### Course Student Learning Outcomes

- Explain how two or more social problems are related.
- Use course tools to propose a potential solution for a social problem related to gender, self-identity, ethnicity, race, socio economic status, sexuality, world view, collective behavior and/or values.
- Employ a sociological perspective to evaluate a major social problem

### Educational Accessibility & Support

College of the Redwoods is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability-related services and accommodations, please contact Tory Eagles or Disability Services and Programs for Students (DSPS).

### Student Support Services

Correspondence is not easy, and I'm aware that things happen. There can be delays in the mail system, you may get ill, overwhelmed, etc. Please communicate with me. I want each of you to be successful in this course. It's incredible that you have embarked on this educational journey, and I'm honored to be your instructor. I do not take this position lightly. I will do my best to provide you with timely, honest feedback. If you are concerned with the time frame you are receiving your assignments, or something does not 'feel right', please send me a BQ (if appropriate).

The "Ask CR" Form is the official document used for student inquiries and should be submitted to the Program Coordinator through the mail. Once received, the Program Coordinator will respond or forward the request to the proper designee.

There is a law library at Pelican Bay, but access to materials is limited. Students may have some reference books in their personal possessions and/or may have limited access to TV news reports.

Because of copyright restrictions, the library can't provide enough copies of each article for all your

students to have every article at the same time, but they should be able to provide several copies of each so that more than one student can use a given article at the same time.

## Evaluation & Grading Policy

Your final grade in the course is based on the following percentage breakdown:

Percentage Letter

90-100% A

80-89.99% B

70-79.99% C

60-69.99% D

<60% F

It is my expectation that “A” work is outstanding. In general, work in the “B” range is above average and “C” work demonstrates a “passing” mastery of the material and concepts. It is never a good idea to approach a discussion of your grade by asking me why I “took points off.” You start with ZERO points and EARN points according to demonstrated competencies.

Journal Assignments: 50%

Creativity Assignments: 30%

Final Paper: 20%

### Journal Assignments:

Students are expected to turn in 6 journals this semester. These will be different each week depending on the material. You're expected to create these journals, there are no prompts that will be mailed out. Read further for more details.

Each assignment must be at least 2-3 FULL pages in length, no more. The journal entry will cover that week's assigned (Required) readings. So, if you are submitting a journal entry on Friday of Week 3, the readings to be covered are the ones assigned for Week 3.

There are multiple purposes of the journal assignments. Primarily, these assignments are designed to help you think about the assigned course material in a more concrete way. Writing these assignments will help you to organize your thoughts, prepare you to be an active, engaged participant, and show me that you are taking responsibility for doing the readings. I encourage you to once again dig deep. Pull out pieces from the week's readings, and you must include your life experience.

Please include the main points from ALL of the readings, and the evidence the author uses to support their claims. How are the readings for the week connected? What are their common themes? Do you agree with the author's views? What was missing? What was a gut punch? Please provide evidence to support your claims. Your paper should clearly state the social issue and include all of the readings for the week. I'm not asking for a summary of the readings, so please don't do that. I already know what you read. :) I'm asking for you to dig deep and reflect on what you read.

### Creative Assignments:

You will have 3 creative assignments throughout the semester. These will vary, and the instructions will be given to you two weeks before their due date. This is an opportunity for you to create art, write a song, poem, short story about some of the content we were discussing in this course.

### Creative Assignment 1:

*Photo Visual Essay*

For this major experiential learning project, you are tasked with creating a photo (drawings, some kind of art) essay (or an essay which uses some other form of imagery) to illustrate and explicate a social problem in our society. You are free to pick whatever social problem you want for the assignment and are encouraged to be as creative and ambitious as possible, but it must be a social problem we discuss this

semester.

Learning Goal(s) for this assignment:

You will demonstrate your understanding of a selected social problem and how it manifests itself in your everyday life. My goal is that this assignment will enliven and enrich your creative capacity through an arts-based approach rather than a standard written essay.

Please create a photo essay using a series of original (self-produced) images which represent a selected social problem. Captioning of the images allows for an extrapolation and discussion of the larger social problem. Please use a minimum of three images. One should be the past, one is the present, and one is the future of the social problem. The future can be completely opinion based, since you're predicting what is to come. In addition to the images, please write a 1 page reflection on the issue, and the images you selected.

**Creative Assignment 2:**

Race and Gender Stereotypes (prompt TBA)

**Creative Assignment 3:**

Media Portrayals of Crime (prompt TBA)

**Final Assignment TBA**

## Spring 2024 Dates

January 12	Last day to register for classes (day before the first class meeting)
January 13	Classes begin
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Holiday (District-wide closure)
January 19	Last day to add a class
January 26	Last day to drop without a "W" and receive a refund
January 29	Census Date (20% of class)
February 16	Lincoln's Birthday Holiday (District-wide closure)
February 19	President's Day Holiday (District-wide closure)
March 7	Last day to petition to graduate
March 29	Last day for student initiated withdrawal (62.5% of class)
March 29	Last day for faculty initiated withdrawal (62.5% of class)
March 11-16	Spring break (no classes)

May 4-10	Final Examinations
May 10	Last day to file for P/NP Option
May 10	Semester Ends
May 17	Grades due
May 24	Grades available

## Academic dishonesty

In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. In cases involving academic dishonesty, determination of the grade and of the student's status in the course is left primarily to the discretion of the faculty member. In such cases, where the instructor determines that a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment and/or exam and may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct (AP 5500) is available on the College of the Redwoods website. Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the College Catalog and on the College of the Redwoods website.

I realize that you don't have this, so here is a section that applies to us, specifically:

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Using, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full, clear, and accurate acknowledgement.
- b) The unacknowledged use of another writer's ideas without proper citation. Borrowing all or part of another individual's work or using someone else's outline to write your own work.
- c) Copying another individual's computer printout and/or computer files and using it as one's own.

## Disruptive behavior

Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include, but is not limited to: unwarranted interruptions; failure to adhere to instructor's directions; vulgar or obscene language; slurs or other forms of intimidation; and physically or verbally abusive behavior. In such cases where the instructor determines that a student has disrupted the educational process, a disruptive student may be temporarily removed from class. In addition, the student may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct (AP 5500) is available on the College of the Redwoods website.

Since you do not have the ability to access the above online resources, send a request to Ms. Eagles if you would like a physical copy of the CR Student Code of Conduct. In general, I trust that you know what is and is not acceptable behavior, even in a correspondence environment; be mindful and respectful with your language and actions, always. :)

## Inclusive Language in the Classroom

College of the Redwoods aspires to create a learning environment in which all people feel

comfortable in contributing their perspectives to classroom discussions. It therefore encourages instructors and students to use language that is inclusive and respectful.

As you will discover this course, and the very foundation of Sociology will encourage you to “go deep.” Some of the concepts we will explore are sensitive in nature. Although we are not meeting in person this semester, I would still like to set a tone that is intentional, and collaborative. This means that we need to consider how we treat ourselves, and one another. Everyone has the right to feel safe in this course. For an environment to be safe for all, it needs to be spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe and no one should have to hide, protect, or deny their identity. We will use these strategies to promote cultural safety:

#### Self-reflection

- Reflecting on one’s own culture, attitudes and beliefs about “others”
- Understanding how implicit bias forms our world view

#### Direct Communication

- Clear, value free, open and respectful communication
- Developing trust
- Practice of receiving feedback without defensiveness or invalidating critique
- Recognizing and avoiding stereotypes
- Value marginalized voices and act based on feedback from the most vulnerable in our community
- Understand patterns played out when we uphold dominant cultural values above all else and adjust when necessary

#### Centering marginalized groups

- Cultural humility: we cannot know everything about every community AND we should never speak for another community
- Indigenous voices are often completely erased from the conversation. Indigenous voices must be a part of our conversations and practices.
- Language barriers often keep the most vulnerable from being able to access services. Bilingual workers should be supported and valued for the additional work they do to be a bridge to these communities.

**Below is our schedule for the semester. We will stay on a topic for several weeks. The General Dates are an outline of where we are in the semester. If you’re assigned a reading that is not from your Joel Best textbook it will be mailed to you in the upcoming packet.**

#### **Schedule:**

General Dates: 1/30                      Introduction (Read the Syllabus)

Write up to a one page introduction and please get it to me by 9/15. This is how I will take the census for this course. **Please work hard to get this in the deadline, so you will not be dropped**

**from the course. Introduction Due 2/10/2024**

General Dates: 2/6-2/20    Sociology & the Study of Social Problems: Theories, Methods, Approaches

Readings: Sociology & The Study of Social Problems by Leon Gurrero  
Best Ch-1 & 2

**Reflection Journal #1 Due: 2/9**

General Dates: 2/20 -3/5    Gender, Theories of Gender Inequality; Sexism, Glass Ceiling, Pay Gap, Rape Culture, Structural Oppression; Feminism/Women's Liberation; Possible Solutions

Readings: Henslin on "Becoming Male"

"It Began in Another Land"

Bell Hooks "Feminist Politics"

**Reflection Journal #2 Due: 3/1**

**Creative Assignment #1 Due: 2/23**

General Dates: 3/5-3/19    Socio-Economic Stratification, Inequality, Poverty, Welfare, Homelessness, Unemployment & Crime. Possible Solutions

Readings: Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel & Dimed on the working poor

Hood Feminism "Hunger"

Undocumented Americans Reading

Best Ch 3

**Reflection Journal #3 Due: 3/15**

General Dates: 3/19-4/2    Race vs. Ethnicity, Patterns of Ethnic Oppression, Prejudice; Institutional Discrimination; the Racial Glass Ceiling. Possible Solutions.

Readings: Allan Johnson "Becoming Part of the Solution."

"How I Discovered I was White."

\*Bonilla-Silva, "Racism without Racists"

**Reflection Journal #4 Due: 3/29**

**Creative Assignment #2: 3/29**

General Dates: 4/2-4/16    Crime & Violence: The Justice System, what works, and what doesn't.

Readings: Best Ch. 4 & 5

Lara Bazelon Interview "Unstacking the Deck"

Michelle Alexander "The New Jim Crow"

**Journal Assignment # 5: 4/5**

**Creative Assignment #3 Due: 4/12**

General Dates: 4/16-4/30    Substance Abuse, Downsides of Various Drugs; Theories of Substance

Use, History of the “War Against Drugs”; Race & Drug Laws; Possible Solutions.

Readings: They Lost Their Pregnancies. Then Prosecutors Sent Them to Prison

PBS News Article “Jail Treats Inmates with Substance Abuse to Break the Cycle of Recidivism”

Best Ch. 6 & 8

**Journal Assignment #6: 4/26**

**Final Paper Due: 5/10**

I reserve the right to change the syllabus at anytime. :)