San José State University
Department of Sociology
SOCI 80: Social Problems. Section 1, Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Boero
Office Location: DMH 211
Telephone: (408) 924-5345
Email: natalie.boero@sjsu.edu or message through Canvas
Office Hours: Monday: 5-6pm
Wednesday: 2:45-4:45pm
Class Days/Time: Monday and Wednesday 1:30-2:45pm
Classroom: Duncan 135
Prerequisites: NONE
GE/SJSU Studies Category: Core GE Area D3

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging
Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on the course Canvas page. You are responsible for regularly checking the course Canvas page as well as your email for notifications relevant to the course.

Course Description
Sociological analysis of selected contemporary social problems such as housing and homelessness, economy and employment, environment and consumerism, family and divorce, crime and drugs, politics and media, race and gender, wealth and poverty, war and peace.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives
Writing: This course requires a minimum writing assignment of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

Framework for Social Problems {Goals and Learning Objectives}

Goals:
This course will explore the major social problems facing American society today. Students will define and analyze the causes and consequences of social problems and examine possible solutions. Students will develop critical thinking skills, apply basic concepts of sociology and sociological theory to specific social problems.

This course will increase the student’s understanding of human behavior, social interaction and social location of social problems. This will be approached in the context of using value systems, economic structures, political institutions, social groups and natural environments as a paradigm for understanding social problems.

Learning Objectives and How They Will Be Met:

Linkage between Specific Learning Objectives and Student Activities/Experience:

Learning Objective 1: Students shall be able to identify and analyze the social dimension of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and social continuity, the role of human agency in those social processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation.

Small group discussions and written assignments will be used to help identify and analyze the social dimension of society, social change, and social forces behind social cohesion and fragmentation.

Learning Objective 2: Students will be able to place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.

Group discussions, written assignments, film clips, artifacts (articles, pop culture items, movies, etc.) and sociological autobiography will be used to discuss social problems in cultural, historical, environmental and spatial contexts.

Learning Objective 3: Students will be able to identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.

Small group discussions and written assignments on artifacts will be used to help students identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional and national identities and recognize the similarities and differences between them. Students will be expected to write a paper (a minimum of 1000 words) seeing their own lives in a sociological context. In the paper they will be asked to locate their own lives and experience with one or two of the social problems we have identified and studied over the semester. Students will receive feedback on the paper from the professor to aid them in making revisions.
**Learning Objective 4:** Students will be able to evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

Written assignments on artifacts and autobiography will be used to help students to analyze social problems from a variety of sociological perspectives.

**Learning Objective 5:** Students will be able to apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

The use of small group discussions will assist students in evaluating social issues and analyzing possible social action resolutions.

**Required Texts/Readings**

**Textbook**

**Other Readings**
I will post additional readings on the course Canvas page in PDF format. They will always be posted at least a week before they are due. In the course schedule below, these readings are designated with a (PDF).

**Classroom Protocol**

I expect that you will have each week’s readings completed by class on Monday of each week. I have tried to make the reading interesting and manageable so that we can all participate in active discussions. Please bring your readings to class each day so that we can refer to them in discussions.

Participation is important and it helps make discussions livelier as well as to clarify materials. Coming to class is important as I will be lecturing on materials not included in the readings.

If you cannot come to class, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your peers. If you miss any handouts or are not in class the day I return an assignment or an exam, I will have them available for you to pick up during my office hours. When you are in class, I expect all cell phones and electronic devices to be turned off and put away.

Students may use laptops in class, but, to avoid distracting other students I ask that students using laptops please sit in the back rows of the classroom.

**Office Hours, email and Canvas**

I encourage all of you to come by my office hours (listed above). Even if you don’t have a specific question, office hours are a great chance for me to get to know you better and for you to give me feedback on the course. If you are having any problems that could impact your success in the course, come see me as soon as possible. It is much easier to deal with problems early on. Please note that I do not give incompletes except in the most
extreme situations, and even then only if a student has already completed a majority of
the work for the course.

I am also available by email at the address above or through the Canvas site. However,
given the large number of students in my classes, I may take a day or two to respond to
emails. It is also important that you check your email as well as the “news” section of
Canvas for any course updates. I will email the class of any changes in the schedule. If
you do email me, please include your name and the course number and section in the
subject line.

**Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop,
grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at
http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the
current academic calendar web page located at
http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The [Late Drop
Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should
be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/).

**Assignments and Grading Policy**

Your grade is composed of three elements:

1. **Paper**

   You will be asked to write one paper for the semester on a topic I will discuss at
   length as the class progresses. The paper will be approximately 4-6 pages long
   and you will have the opportunity to revise the paper. The paper is worth 200
   points or 40% of your semester grade.

   All papers must be turned in through the Canvas website drop box during the
   specified time window. It is your responsibility to make sure I receive all of your
   work so **be sure you keep an electronic copy of all of your work.**

   **LATE PAPERS (READ CAREFULLY)**

   Late papers will be penalized one third of a grade for each day late (for example,
   a “B” paper turned in one day late would be given a “B-”). No assignments will
   be accepted if they are more than one week late and the Canvas site will stop
   accepting papers one week after the due date.
I will further detail my expectations on your assignment sheets, but in general I require that all assignments (with the exception of in-class exercises) be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, with standard 1” margins, with page numbers.

2. **Midterm exams**

There will be two midterm exams each composed of multiple choice and short answer questions each worth 100 points or 20% of your final grade.

3. **Final exam**

There will be a comprehensive final exam on the scheduled final exam date. The exam will be made up of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam is worth 100 points, or 20% of your semester grade.

Final letter grades for **the exams** will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A = 93 – 100 points
- A- = 90 – 92 points
- B+ = 87 – 89 points
- B = 83 – 86 points
- B- = 80 – 82 points
- C+ = 77 – 79 points
- C = 73 – 76 points
- C- = 70 – 72 points
- D+ = 67 – 69 points
- D = 63 – 68 points
- D- = 60 – 62 points
- F = 59 points or less

Final letter grades for **the course** will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A = 500-465 points
- A- = 464-450 points
- B+ = 449-435 points
- B = 434-415 points
- B- = 414-400 points
- C+ = 399-385 points
- C = 384-365 points
- C- = 364-350 points
- D+ = 349-335 points
- D = 334-315 points
- D- = 314-300 points
- F = 299 points or less

Your grade for the class will be broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Midterm exams</td>
<td>200 Points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total possible points: 500
University Policies

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/.
**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/) is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/.

**Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The [Peer Mentor Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/) is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/
This schedule is subject to change. I will inform you in class and via email of any changes at least one week in advance.

Table 1: Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monday 1/26</td>
<td>Social Problems and the Sociological Imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 1/28</td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monday 2/2</td>
<td>Social Class and Poverty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 2/9</td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Film: “Waging a Living”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monday 2/16</td>
<td>Social Class and Poverty con’t./Work and the Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 2/18</td>
<td>Reading: Ehrenreich “Nickle and Dimed” (PDF) Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Film: “Waging a Living”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monday 2/23</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 2/25</td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 3, McIntosh, “White Privilege” (PDF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Monday 3/2</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity Continued</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 3/4</td>
<td>Bonilla-Silva, “New Racism” (PDF) Newsweek, “See Baby Discriminate” (Link on Canvas)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monday 3/9</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity Continued/Review</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 3/11</td>
<td>MIDTERM #1 WEDNESDAY 3/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Monday 3/16</td>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 3/18</td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Film: “Killing Us Softly, 4”</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Monday 3/23</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK NO CLASS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 3/25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Monday 3/30</td>
<td>Gender Continued NO CLASS MONDAY, 3/30 Reading, Maxwell “Rape Culture” TBA</td>
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<td>Wednesday 4/1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 4/1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Monday 4/6</td>
<td>Health and Healthcare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 4/8</td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Ch. 10 Film: “Unnatural Causes”</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Monday 4/13</td>
<td>Education MIDTERM EXAM #2 MONDAY 4/13 PAPER DUE VIA CANVAS 5PM FRIDAY 4/24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 4/15</td>
<td>Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 8</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Monday 4/20</td>
<td>Education PAPER DUE VIA CANVAS 5PM FRIDAY 4/24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 4/22</td>
<td>Reading: Kozol, “Still Separate, Still Unequal” (PDF) Fergusen, “Bad Boys” (PDF)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Monday 4/27</td>
<td>The Media No Class Wednesday 11/26 Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 4/29</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Monday 5/4</td>
<td>The Media Continued/Social Movements Glassner, “The Culture of Fear” (PDF) Sternheimer “It’s Not the Media” (PDF)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 5/6</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Monday 5/11</td>
<td>Social Movements Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 17, (PDF), Johnson, “What Can We Do?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 5/13</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 20th 12:15pm You must be present at the designated start time for the final exam, students arriving more than 15 minutes after the start of the exam will not be allowed to take the exam.</td>
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