San José State University  
Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences  
Soci 80, Social Problems, Section 1, Spring 2018

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Boero

Office Location: DMH 211

Telephone: (408) 924-5345

Email: natalie.boero@sjsu.edu or via Canvas

Office Hours: Mondays: 2:45pm-5:45pm  
Wednesdays: 8:00am-11:00am

Class Days/Time: Monday/Wednesday 12:00-1:15pm

Classroom: WSQ 207

GE/SJSU Studies Category: Core GE Area D3

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.

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.) 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 five short papers (five analyses, a minimum of 300 words each) analyzing social problems in a sociological context. Students will receive feedback on the paper from the professor to aid them in re-writes.

**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 current events 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 and news analyses will assist students in evaluating social issues and analyzing possible social action resolutions.
Required Texts/Readings

Textbook:


Online subscription to *either* The New York Times or The Washington Post (details below).


Other Readings

I will post additional readings on the course Canvas page in PDF or link 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) or (link).

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Grading Policy and Assignments

Your grade is composed of four elements:

1. **Weekly News Article Analyses**

   Keeping up on current events is central to the study of social problems; thus, over the course of the semester you will be required to submit five short (between 300 and 500 words) analyses of a current news article addressing a contemporary social problem. The guidelines will be further detailed in a separate assignment posted on Canvas during the second week of class but, generally you will be asked to select a news article from a list of approved sources, provide a link to the article, briefly summarize the article, and say something about its relevance to the sociological study of social problems. You must use specific course concepts in your analysis. All article analyses are to be submitted through Canvas. You may choose which weeks you submit an analysis but you may only submit one analysis per week (due by 12pm each Monday). Plan well to avoid having to do five consecutive weekly analyses at the end of the semester! You may submit up to seven analyses and the highest five grades will be counted. NO MORE THAN SEVEN ANALYSES MAY BE SUBMITTED. Each article analysis will be worth 40 points and collectively, the five analyses will make up 200 points, or 40% of your final grade.
2. Midterm exam

There will be ONE midterm exams composed of multiple choice and short answer questions each. The midterm exam is worth 125 points or 25% 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 150 points, or 30% of your semester grade.

4. Newspaper subscription:

In order to facilitate discussion and to aid you in completing your news analyses, part of the textbook requirement for this class is that you subscribe to a newspaper online. You must subscribe to either The New York Times or The Washington Post. Both newspapers offer discounted student rates (if you are an Amazon Prime member you can get 6-months of The Washington Post Online for free). You must submit evidence of your subscription via Canvas by Wednesday, January 31st at 5pm. This assignment is worth 25 points, or 5% of your semester grade.

*Links to information on student subscriptions above

**Late Policy:**

I will not accept any late article analyses. You are required to turn in five analyses and you may turn in up to seven (of which I will use the highest five grades). However, you have twelve weeks in which to submit an analysis thus, if you do not wait until the last minute, you should have plenty of flexibility on which dates you choose.

**Grading Information**

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

A = 500-465 points  B = 434-415 points  C = 384-365 points  D = 334-315 points
A- = 464-450 points  B- = 414-400 points  C- = 364-350 points  D- = 314-300 points
B+ = 449-435 points  C+ = 399-385 points  D+ = 349-335 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>Article Analyses:</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Subscription:</td>
<td>25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total possible points: 500

***I do not offer extra credit during the semester***
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.

University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90–5 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

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 section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop 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 at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.
Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
  - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor’s process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
  - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.

- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf 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.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

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 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab 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 DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring.
enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit Peer Connections website at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu for more information.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

**SJSU Counseling Services**

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.
# Soci 80 / Social Problems, Spring 2018, Course Schedule

* You will be notified in advance through Canvas of any changes made to the schedule

## 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>1/24</td>
<td>Social Problems and the Sociological Imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/29-1/31</td>
<td>Social Problems and the Sociological Imagination con’t, Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 1, Mills “The Promise” (PDF)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3    | 2/5-2/7      | Social Class and Poverty  
Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 2;” (PDF), Pazzanese, “The costs of inequality: Increasingly, it’s the rich and the rest” (link); Edin, “What If Everything You Knew About Poverty Was Wrong?” |
| 4    | 2/12-2/14    | Social Class and Poverty con’t./Work and the Economy  
Reading: (PDF) Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 9; Ehrenreich “Nickel and Dimed” (PDF), Kantor and Hodgson, “Working Anything but 9 to 5” (link) |
| 5    | 2/19-2/21    | Race and Ethnicity  
Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 3, ASA, “The Importance of Collecting Data and Doing Social Scientific Research on Race” (PDF), Ferber, “Planting the Seed: The Invention of Race” |
| 6    | 2/26-2/28    | Race and Ethnicity Con’t  
Reading: McIntosh, “White Privilege” (PDF); Gallager, “Color-Blind Privilege” (PDF); Pager, “The Mark of a Criminal Record” (PDF). |
| 7    | 3/5-3/7      | Gender  
Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 4, TBA |
| 8    | 3/12-3/14    | Gender Con’t  
Reading: Rebecca Traister, “This Moment Isn’t Just About Sex” (link); Chira, “Men Don’t Want to be Nurses. Their Wives Agree.” (link); Miller and Fremson, “Forget about the Stigma” (link) |
| 9    | 3/19-3/21    | Gender Con’t/Midterm Review  
Reading: No Reading  
MIDTERM EXAM IN-CLASS WEDNESDAY 3/21 |
| 10   | 3/26-3/28    | SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS |
| 11   | 4/2-4/4      | Health and Healthcare NO CLASS WEDNESDAY 4/4  
Film: “Unnatural Causes” (Watch at home) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Ch. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/9-4/11</td>
<td><strong>Health and Healthcare Con’t</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Reading: Tiger, “Race, Class, and the Framing of Drug Epidemics”, TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/16-4/18</td>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Ch. 13; Kozol “Still Separate, Still Unequal” (PDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/23-4/25</td>
<td><strong>Education con’t</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Ch. 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4/30-5/2</td>
<td><strong>Media and Technology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 11, Greenfield, “A Sociology of the Smartphone” (link)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/7-5/9</td>
<td><strong>Social Movements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 17, TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>5/14</td>
<td><strong>Social Movements con’t</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Leon-Guerrero Chapt. 17, TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>5/16</td>
<td>Wednesday May 16th, 9:45am-12:00pm</td>
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