Course and Contact Information

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Office Hours: Email only
GE/SJSU Studies Category: D3

Course Format

This is an online course that will be completed entirely through Canvas (https://sjsu.instructure.com/). To complete this course you will need regular access to an internet-connected computer.

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the sociological study of contemporary social problems in the United States. The goal of this course is to encourage you to use your “Sociological Imagination” to understand society. This implies critically analyzing and viewing social issues from a structural perspective and seeing how our individual lives connect to larger social realities. This course is designed to provide you with an understanding of major systems of power such as racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism and some social problems that result from these systems of power and their intersections. We will also examine some of the major institutions of society and explore how their design influences individual behavior, especially as it pertains to corporate colonization.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of this GE course, students will be able to:

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.
   - This objective will be met through structured discussion posts that analyze social processes and social change. These posts will be based on the ideas presented in academic research articles, popular news sources, podcasts, and documentaries. Student knowledge of these aspects will also be tested with quizzes.

2. Students will be able to place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.
   - This objective will be met through structured discussion posts that encourage reflection on the broader contexts of contemporary social problems. These posts will be based on
the ideas presented in academic research articles, popular news sources, podcasts, and documentaries. Student knowledge of these aspects will also be tested with quizzes.

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.
   - This objective will be met through structured discussion posts. These posts will be based on the ideas presented in academic research articles, popular news sources, podcasts, and documentaries. Student knowledge of these aspects will also be tested with quizzes.

4. Students will be able to evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.
   - This objective will be met through structured discussion posts. These posts will be based on the ideas presented in academic research articles, popular news sources, podcasts, and documentaries. Student knowledge of these aspects will also be tested with quizzes.

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.
   - This objective will be met through structured discussion posts and the completion of a PechaKucha presentation that will explore and analyze a specific social problem.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

1. Describe examples of diverse human experiences, identities, and cultures in the United States.
2. Identify and discuss concepts, theories, institutional or social structures, hierarchies, processes, or paradigms that lead to and perpetuate inequity and injustice.
3. Examine diversity as constituted through the intersections of social categories such as race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, language, citizenship, religion, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, and so on.
4. Analyze differences in power and privilege related to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, language, citizenship, religion, class, sexual orientation, or physical ability.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook
There is no required textbook for this course. All required readings will be shared in electronic format on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course-related activities, including but not limited to internships,
labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headshot</td>
<td>Jan. 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Jan. 4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module Discussions</strong></td>
<td>Varies, see Canvas schedule</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module Quizzes</strong></td>
<td>Varies, see Canvas schedule</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PechaKucha</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Comments</td>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction**

There are two requirements for this assignment:

1. Upload a headshot photo to your Canvas account. The photo should be of your face (zoom in). Please do not include full body shots (they’re too small), pictures of animals, or pictures of cartoons. Your picture should also be upright. Your picture will help to represent your digital self. This assignment is worth one point, **however, failure to follow the above instructions will result in a points deduction for all discussion posts until you post a photo.**

2. Write a 300-word introductory post describing yourself and any interest you have in sociology. You can write about your hobbies, other life responsibilities, plans for summer, fears of taking an online course, strengths and weaknesses, why you’re taking SOCI 80, etc. You will find a discussion post prompt on Canvas where you will submit this discussion.

**Module Discussions**

You will be required to complete a discussion post for each module (plus and introductory post, for a total of 9). Each reflection should be no shorter than 250 words and no longer than 500 words. Please include your word count at the bottom of your post. The reflection posts will be graded on your ability to:

- Answer the question described in the discussion prompt
- Define and utilize concepts discussed in class, in the podcast(s) and in the reading(s). This means that you must refer to at least one of the readings, lectures, podcasts, or videos in each post using a specific reference, page number, etc.
- Provide a thoughtful, organized response
- Write thoughtful responses to your peers
Due dates for the discussions post will vary and you will find them all listed on Canvas. Each discussion is worth 4.5 points of your course grade, for a total of 36 points (this does not include or apply to the Introduction discussion post).

**Module Quizzes**

There will be a total of 9 quizzes. You must complete the quiz by 11:59 pm on the due date. The quiz will test your comprehension of that module’s materials. There are six questions per quiz, and you will have 12 minutes to complete the quiz. You will only be allowed one attempt at each quiz and there will be no make-ups. I highly encourage you to prepare for these before beginning the quiz session. Each quiz is worth 4 points, for a combined total of 36 points. A key term/concept guide will be posted to help you prepare for the quizzes.

**PechaKucha**

A PechaKucha consists of 20 images, each narrated for 20 seconds, resulting in a 6 minute and 40-second presentation. It’s useful to think of a Pecha Kucha as a multimedia haiku. Both use a rigid structure that, when done well, maintains simplicity and beauty. The PechaKucha restrictions encourage the development of a simple presentation with a strong clear theme. With the consultation of the instructor, you will select your own social problem as a topic. A proposal will be due prior to the submission of your digital presentation. Digital projects will be shared in an online discussion on Canvas. You will be asked to view several of your peers’ projects and provide written feedback/comments. In total, the work associated with the PechaKucha (proposal, digital presentation, and peer feedback) is worth 25 points.

**Grading Information**

There are 100 total assignment points available in this class. This means that the percent value for each assignment (or assignment group) is equivalent to its percentage of total points available in the class.

I enter all assignment scores on Canvas and use that grading system to track your grade. You can review your scores there at any time.

Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following ranges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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</table>
When assigning final grades, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Determination of Grades**

Following are the late policies for each assignment:

- **Headshot**: Your personal photo can be uploaded at any time and you will receive full credit for it. However, if you do not upload your headshot by Jan. 4, I will apply a 5 percent penalty to every discussion post you submit until the headshot.

- **Introduction Discussion**: You can submit your introductory discussion post through Jan. 7 with a 10 percent penalty applied for each day it is late.

- **Module Discussions**: You can submit your module discussion post up to three days late with a 10 percent penalty applied for each day they are late.

- **Module Quizzes**: Modules quizzes cannot be taken late.

- **PechaKucha Proposal**: The proposal can be submitted up to one day late. A 10 percent late penalty will be applied.

- **PechaKucha Presentation**: The presentation can be submitted up to 8 hours late. A 10 percent late penalty will be applied.

- **PechaKucha Peer Comments**: Your peer comments cannot be submitted late.

**Course Protocol**

1. Online discussion is to remain civil. We talk about a wide array of sensitive and provocative subjects in this class and I expect you to communicate with your peers respectfully. While there is nothing wrong with disagreeing with your peers and being critical of their claims, you are expected to be thoughtful and respectful in your discussions.

2. Carefully consider what you are communicating in the content and formatting of your writing. For instance, sarcasm can be hard to detect in writing and writing in all caps is often perceived as the equivalent of yelling.

3. Reference your sources if you are reposting word-for-word passages from course content. Copying another’s work without citation is dishonest. Also, academic dishonesty of this sort could result in accusations of plagiarism, which could lead to disciplinary action.

**University Policies**

Relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/

**Plagiarism**
I take plagiarism very seriously and recommend that you review SJSU’s Academic Integrity Policy very carefully. Plagiarism refers to any instance of presenting someone else’s ideas as your own and is more than simply copying and pasting text without giving credit. It is your responsibility to understand what it is and to take appropriate steps to avoid it. Ignorance is not an excuse.

Most plagiarism checking will be performed through Canvas, using the Turnitin.com functionality built into the website.

Following is my procedure for dealing with plagiarism:

1. First instance: You receive a zero on your assignment and must have a conversation with me to discuss your assignment. The infraction will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

2. Second instance: You receive a zero on your assignment and must have another conversation with me. You will also receive a 10% reduction in your course grade. The infraction will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

3. Third instance: You will be given a failing grade for the course. The infraction will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

It is important you recognize that this policy is not something I have written up to scare you but have no intention of following up on. I am not trying to threaten you but I do take this process very seriously and routinely assign student zeroes for plagiarizing. Students are often incredulous and insist that they could not have plagiarized because they did not mean to or have never been accused of it before. Ignorance is not an excuse for academic dishonesty.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction: The Sociological Perspective</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 2</td>
<td>Course Introduction (Review Introductory Module)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1: Corporate Power</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Jan. 3 | **Read**: Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization: Developments in Communication and the Politics of Everyday Life, An Introduction  
         **Read**: On the Sharing Economy  
         **Read**: Amidst Garbage and Poison: An Essay on Polluted Peoples and Places  
         **Listen**: The Sharing Economy?  
         **Watch**: The Corporation |
| Jan. 4 | **Module 1 Discussion Due**  
         **Module 1 Quiz Due** |
| **Module 2: Education** | |
| Jan. 5 | **Read**: A Matter of Degrees  
         **Read**: Friends with Academic Benefits  
         **Read**: The Black-White Test Score Gap  
         **Read**: Whitewashing Academic Mediocrity  
         **Read**: The Predicament of “Doing School”  
         **Watch**: Last Week Tonight on Student Debt |
| Jan. 6 | **Module 2 Discussion Due**  
         **Module 2 Quiz Due** |
| **Module 3: Social Media and Technology** | |
| Jan. 7 | **Read**: Connecting Communities: On and Offline  
         **Listen**: Schadenfacebook  
         **Listen**: Our Computers, Ourselves  
         **Listen**: Buying Attention  
         **Listen**: Fake News: Finding the Fake News King |
| Jan. 8 | **Module 3 Discussion Due**  
         **Module 3 Quiz Due** |
| **Module 4: Race and Immigration Politics** | |
| Jan. 9 | **Read**: Rethinking Crime and Immigration  
         **Listen**: The Huddled Masses and the Myth of America  
         **Watch**: Last Week Tonight on the Border Wall  
         **Watch**: Documented |
| Jan. 10 | **Module 4 Discussion Due**  
         **Module 4 Quiz Due** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 5: Crime and Punishment</th>
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</table>
| Jan. 11 | **Read**: Beyond Crime and Punishment: Prisons and Inequality  
**Read**: Explaining and Eliminating Racial Profiling  
**Watch**: 13th |
| Jan. 12 | **Module 5 Discussion Due**  
**Module 5 Quiz Due** |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 6: Gender Inequality</th>
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| Jan. 13 | **Read**: The Rhetoric and Reality of Opting Out  
**Read**: Low-Calorie Feminism  
**Read**: The Not-So-Pink Ivory Tower  
**Listen**: Pregnant? We Can Help  
**Watch**: Last Week Tonight on The Wage Gap |
| Jan. 14 | **Module 6 Discussion Due**  
**Module 6 Quiz Due** |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 7: Medicine and Medicalization</th>
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| Jan. 15 | **Read**: Autism, Through a Social Lens  
**Watch**: Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare |
| Jan. 16 | **Module 7 Discussion Due**  
**Module 7 Quiz Due** |

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<tr>
<th>Module 8: Drugs, Capitalism, and Politics</th>
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</table>
| Jan. 16 | **Read**: The Prescription of a New Generation  
**Listen**: How the ‘Cannabis Catch-22’ Keeps Marijuana Classified as a Harmful Drug  
**Listen**: (Legally) Selling Weed While Black  
**Watch**: Take Your Pills |
| Jan. 17 | **Module 8 Discussion Due**  
**Module 8 Quiz Due**  
**Pecha Kucha Presentation Due** |
| Jan. 18 | **Pecha Kucha Peer Comments Due** |