SC 049-01, Contemporary Social Problems  
Summer, 2013, 3 Credits

Instructor: Jesine Xavier, PsyD  
email: jesine.xavier@gmail.com  
The best way to contact me is by email. I check my email Monday-Friday, only in the morning, and do not check my email for the rest of the day. **Put the class name in the subject line of all e-mails.** I will do my best to write back to you the day I read the email.

**Office:** located in Needham  
**Office Hours:** Available by appointment to meet before and after class, also at my office in Needham Monday-Thursday  
**Telephone:** 617-517-9744  
I check my voicemail Monday-Friday, only in the morning, and do not check my messages for the rest of the day. I will do my best to call you back the day I pick up the message.

**Schedule (class times and day(s)):** Tuesdays & Thursdays 6:15-9:15  
**Room:** Campion 300

**Boston College Mission Statement**

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

**Course Description**

A look at contemporary American social problems including poverty, violent crime, substance and domestic abuse, mental illness, fear and terror, racial and gender discrimination, environmental pollution and corporate deviance. Topics include the myths, biases and hidden agendas that shape our perceptions; what perpetuates social problems, why policies to resolve them can lead to new problems and what alternatives exist.
Course Objectives

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge about the sociology of current social problems in the United States and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age as it relates to each of the individual topics discussed. This will be demonstrated by class discussions, exams, and the class presentation.

2. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to the sociology of social problems as demonstrated by class discussion, exams, and the class presentation.

3. The student will demonstrate critical thinking skills to analyze social problems from multiple perspectives as demonstrated by class discussions, exams, and the class presentation.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>30 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100 pts

**Note: Minor changes to this syllabus may be made at the discretion of the instructor. These changes will be announced with ample time for adjustment. This may include additional readings.

Summer Grading System

The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their summer grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Text(s)/Readings (Required)

Teacher may assign additional readings at her discretion

**Important Policies**

[http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html)

**Written Work**

Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

**Scholarship and Academic Integrity**

It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

**Request for Accommodations**

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. [http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html](http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html).

**Attendance**

Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. "Arriving to class more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early will result in a deduction of your participation grade for that class" When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the
instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the Summer Session Office at 617-552-3800 for consultation.

Class Expectations

Please turn your cell phone to vibrate during class.
Food and drink during are allowed in class, provided they are not overly aromatic and do not distract from your attention or participation.
Be sensitive to the thoughts and opinions of others.
o Participation is an important part of your and your fellow students' learning experience and your grade. Participation points are earned with relevant questions and thoughtful participation in class discussions.
o Participation points are deducted when students are disrespectful to the professor or other students, conduct side conversations, or introduce or discuss irrelevant or inappropriate subject matters.
o All students are expected to contribute to class discussions.
o For thoughtful and relevant participation it is crucial to read the text material before class. Due to the volume and scope of the readings, not all the material will be reviewed in class. Nevertheless, you are responsible for understanding it.
o Discuss and critic the information presented as if in a professional in training.
o Excessive personal references can be biased and inaccurate for the general population as well as uncomfortable for yourself and others.
o Choose your self-disclosures carefully, this is also a skill you will hone though your training and career as a professional.
I strongly suggest that you make a class buddy. You are responsible for all information covered in class regardless of your attendance. If you are not present to obtain handouts it is your responsibility to secure them from other students.

**Deadlines**
Exams will start at 6:20 and end promptly at 9:15.
If you come late, you will only have the remaining class time to finish your exam.
You will be assigned a date for your class presentation. This date may not be rescheduled and you will receive no credit if you do not present on the day you are assigned.

**Course Assignments**

It is expected that 8 hours per week of your study time out will be spent on out of class assignments and towards your class presentation. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 8 hours per week over the semester.

Students are expected to complete the following out of class course assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Exercises/Experiences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 25th</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td>Issues 1,2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 27th</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td>Issues 4,5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2nd</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td>Class Presentations, Issues 7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 4th</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9th</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides Midterm Review</td>
<td>Class Presentations, Issues 9 &amp; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 11th</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 9 &amp; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td>Class Presentations, Issues 11 &amp; 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 16th</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 18th</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 11 &amp; 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td>Class Presentations, Issues 13 &amp; 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 23rd</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 13 &amp; 14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 25th</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 15 &amp; 16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final Review</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 30th</td>
<td>Social Problems</td>
<td>Chapters 17 &amp; 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Sides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1st</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix A

Design
How will students make progress on objectives you have chosen for your course? What activities will promote development of those skills, concepts, experiences? How will you and your students check their progress on objectives? What assessments will provide that feedback?
Objectives --> Activities --> Assessments --> should be linked

Guidelines
The syllabus is a key communication tool between you and your students. “Your syllabus is the first learning material students encounter in your course. Because of this it is important to include the tone of your class in addition to its form. In addition to its contractual nature, the syllabus represents your initial attempt to form a relationship with your students, to begin the process of community the class will take. Take advantage of that opportunity.” From: the Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington (see http://www.uncwil.edu/cte/resources/Best Practices in Syllabus Construction.doc).

There are many models available to help you design this important document.

The Center for Teaching Excellence at Iowa State has materials from a "Learning-Centered Syllabi" workshop. This site helps you put student learning at the center of this important document, including a detailed list of what to include:
http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/syllabi.html#intro

A tutorial from the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Minnesota will help you construct a syllabus. Many examples are provided:
http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/syllabus/

The "Teaching Tools and Resources" area of a web site at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (originally prepared by their Teaching & Learning Center) has many suggestions about lots of aspects of the teaching and learning process -- arranged by topic, easy to browse for ideas. Included are ideas for planning a course, developing a syllabus, motivating students, as well as "101 Things You Can Do the First Three Weeks of Class."

Active learning tools
A great way to get more students engaged in the course material during class is to use Think-Pair-Share when you pose a question to the group. The advantages of this approach, and how to do it, are described in the following article by Susan Ledlow which also includes sample prompts to the class to help implement the approach.

The following article by Susan Ledlow, found on the web site of the UOEEE Center for Teaching & Learning at Arizona State University, describes an often used cooperative learning approach, the Jigsaw Method, giving very specific instructions for
implementation. One of the strengths of the jigsaw is that students collaboratively develop understanding of a piece of complex material and then are placed in the position to explain (teach!) that understanding to others. A synthesis assignment is also often part of the whole process. http://www.hydroville.org/system/files/team_jigsaw.pdf

For a description of the Newsprint Dialogue method, go to the following site at Indiana University-Purdue University of Indianapolis:
http://www.iupui.edu/~idd/active_learning/puNewsprint.htm

For a description of the Structured Academic Controversy, go to the following site at the University of Minnesota. Roger and David Johnson are internationally known experts on cooperative learning: http://www.co-operation.org/?page_id=65

More general information on strategies for Active Learning can be found at the following websites:

From a text Tools for Teaching by Barbara Gross Davis, 1993, Jossey-Bass (available in the Center for Faculty Development Library—many chapters are available on line as well including this one on lecturing: http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/delivering.html

Indiana University at Bloomington Teaching Handbook:
http://teaching.iub.edu/wrapper_big.php?section_id=lect

Center for Teaching Effectiveness at the University of Delaware:
http://cte.udel.edu/instructional-topics/engaging-students.html

Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of California Santa Cruz
http://teaching.ucsc.edu/tips/tips-active.html

Center for Teaching and Learning Services at the University of Minnesota: A tutorial on ways to use active learning strategies with PowerPoint presentations; includes 12 active learning strategies. http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/powerpoint/index.html

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT)
The key text about classroom assessment is Angelo, T.A. and K.P. Cross. 1993 Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. This text has detailed descriptions of 50 different CATs including instructions on how to implement them and examples of use in various courses. The text categorizes CATs by the type of goal the CAT helps you assess. Additionally this text contains a self-scorable Teaching Goals Inventory. Available from the Center for Faculty Development Library.

•A partial list of Classroom Assessment Techniques from Iowa State:
http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/cat.html
•From the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence at Penn State University—an article
introducing Classroom Assessment and discussing several techniques “An Introduction to Classroom Assessment Techniques” by Diane M. Enerson, Kathryn M. Plank, and R. Neill Johnson

http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/pdf/Classroom_Assessment_Techniques_Intro.pdf

• The FLAG (Field-tested Learning Assessment Guide) site, created by the National Institute for Science Education housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, provides extensive descriptions of several CATs, including the Minute Paper and Concept Mapping.
http://www.flaguide.org/cat/cat.php
For the Minute Paper description specifically, go to: http://www.flaguide.org/cat/minutepapers/minutepapers1.php

• From the Teaching Effectiveness Program at the University of Oregon: This site gives short descriptions of such CATs as the One-Sentence Summary; Word Journal; Directed Paraphrasing; Application Cards.
http://tep.uoregon.edu/pdf/assessment/Ways_to_Assess_Student_Learning_During_Class.pdf

**IDEA student centered Teaching Methods**

1. Displayed personal interest in students and their learning
2. Found ways to help students answer their own questions
3. Scheduled course work (class activities, tests, projects) in ways which encouraged students to stay up-to-date in their work
4. Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter
5. Formed “teams” or “discussion groups” to facilitate learning
6. Made it clear how each topic fit into the course
7. Explained the reasons for criticisms of students’ academic performance
8. Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses
9. Encouraged students to use multiple resources (e.g., data banks, library holdings, outside experts) to improve understanding
10. Explained course material clearly and concisely
11. Related course material to real life situations
12. Gave tests, projects, etc. that covered the most important points of the course
13. Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject
14. Involved students in “hands on” projects such as research, case studies, or “real life” activities
15. Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them
16. Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own
17. Provided timely and frequent feedback on tests, reports, projects, etc. to help students learn
18. Asked students to help each other understand ideas or concepts
19. Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking
20. Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (office visits, phone calls, email, etc.)

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Choose two to three Operationalized Learning Objectives (this list from IDEA)
1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories
3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team
6. Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)
8. Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing
9. Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems
10. Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
12. Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking my own questions and seeking answers

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