

Course Information

Title: **Private Troubles, Public Issues: Contemporary Social Problems**

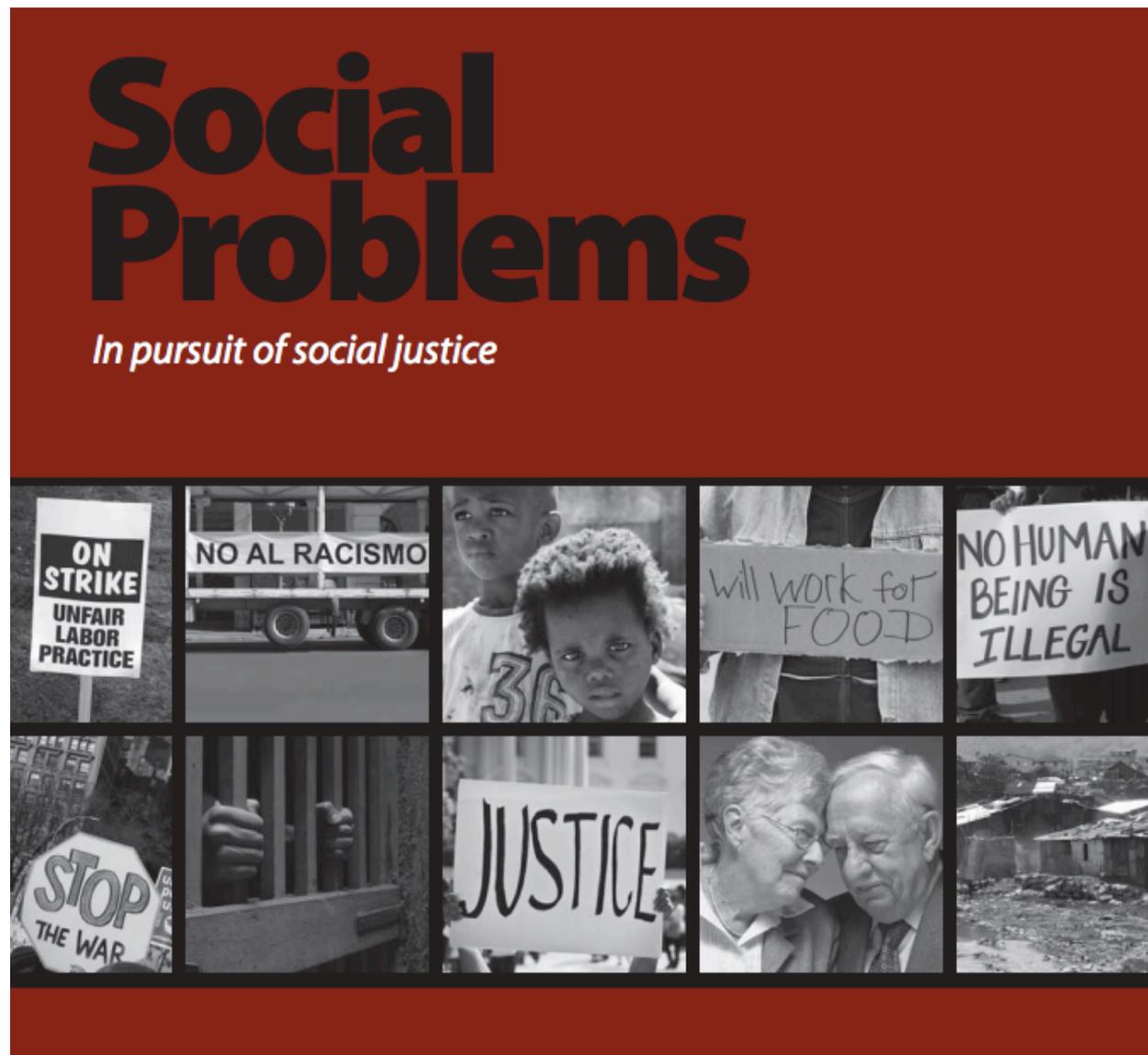
Location: **Horton 307** Schedule: **MWF 12:10pm-1:00pm** Semester: **Fall 2015**

Number: **SOC 540 (01)** CRN: **11343** Credits: **4**

Instructor Information

Name: **Ezra Temko** E-mail: **ejt2001@unh.edu** Phone: **302-283-9393**

Office Hours: **Mondays 2:30pm-4pm in McConnell 338B, or by appointment**



Picture taken from the cover of *Social Problems* journal, an official publication of The Society for the Study of Social problems. <http://socpro.oxfordjournals.org/>

Course description

Since sociology's inception, sociologists have engaged in scholarship and action to better understand the social world and to improve our society. This work is often anchored by an exploration of structural inequality; indeed, sociologist Allan Touraine (2007:71) claims that "the central subject matter of sociology is the study of all forms of resistance to power-loaded transactions and institutions."¹ This class will explore the sociological perspective on social problems, with the goal of being able to apply this perspective when you encounter social problems beyond this course. We will ask: What makes certain social phenomena social problems? What are the causes of social problems? What can be done about them? We will explore a variety of contemporary social problems, complete a project in which you explore one contemporary social problem in depth, and, through a case study of gender and welfare, explore both common misconceptions regarding social problems and the utility of sociological thinking for better understanding and addressing social problems.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand the sociological perspective and its utility for understanding social phenomena
- Develop a sociological imagination, and be able to apply it to social problems, including being able to critique competing conceptions of and explanations for social problems
- Increase your knowledge of a variety of contemporary social problems, including a social problem that is important to you
- Engage in and further develop critical thinking skills through critical conversations, reading, writing, and reflecting to learn, and inquiry into social problems
- Develop informed ideas about concrete ways society (and you as part of society) can effect social change to address social problems

Note: "Social problems" is a quite encompassing topic; there are more sociological theories and social problems than we can possibly cover in one semester, particularly with any depth. Furthermore, as we investigate complex and persisting social problems, the questions and issues raised will frequently be ones that cannot be resolved quickly, easily, or satisfactorily. Oftentimes sociology not only helps one understand the social world, but also helps unveil its complexity. Investigations frequently lead to more questions, not fewer questions. Whether or not you decide to pursue sociology further academically, my hope is that you will leave this class with the ability to think sociologically and inquire into social problems (and phenomena) in a way that will continue to impact your thinking and analysis of the social world into the future.

Discovery Program

This course fulfills the Social Science category requirement for UNH's Discovery Program. We will be engaged in a critical thinking journey in which we will explore the nature of social problems, looking beneath surface layers of popular discourse and conceptions to deepen our understanding of what social problems are, what causes them, and what to do about them. The

¹ Touraine, Alain. 2007. "Public Sociology and the End of Society." Pp. 67-78 in *Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-first Century*, edited by D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra, N. Gerstel, R. Stokes, D. Anderton, and M. Buroway. Berkeley: University of California Press.

1 following passage about the Discovery Program is taken from the UNH 2015-2016
2 Undergraduate Course Catalog:

3
4 When we discover what we had not before known, we experience wonder. When Keats
5 first read Homer, he felt “like some watcher of the skies / When a new planet swims into
6 his ken.” The Discovery Program, like Homer to Keats, serves as the beginning of a
7 great journey of learning and teaching that students and faculty take together.
8

9 When we learn and teach in Discovery, we take four questions as our common ground:
10 How do we know the world? What questions and what tools shape our knowledge? How
11 do we determine what we value? How do our different perspectives—intellectual and
12 personal—inform each other?
13

14 Professors in Discovery have a common mission: to help students from all departments
15 and programs understand better the organization of knowledge in the modern world...
16

17 Students, too, have a common mission: to claim their own educations with curiosity, open
18 mindedness, and discipline. They are responsible for active and tangible engagement in
19 the intellectual life of the University, in classrooms, on campus, and within the wider
20 community. Students are partners in the learning process. Together, students and faculty
21 seek to understand the world as it is and as it might be, and to take their places as
22 independent thinkers in the world they will help to shape.
23

24 The Discovery Program provides the intellectual framework for students in any major. It
25 represents the faculty’s collective belief in what constitutes and contributes to essential
26 knowledge of the world. Together, students and faculty attempt to understand fully and
27 use ethically that knowledge, both in the present and as a reservoir from which to draw in
28 the future.
29

30 Each course in the Discovery Program fulfills an obligation not only to its own field, but
31 also to others. Individually, courses illuminate the disciplines and ask that students
32 understand their foundational methods, tools, and questions. Collectively, the Discovery
33 Program aspires to help students recognize complexity and elegance in the relationships
34 among the disciplines, to chart constellations of human knowledge. Like Keats, we are
35 “watchers of the skies.”
36

37 *“He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great*
38 *danger.” Confucius.*
39

40 **Required Materials**

41 You will need to acquire two textbooks for this course. All other course readings will be made
42 available via Blackboard. Both books are available at the Durham Book Exchange. There will
43 also be a copy of each book at the Dimond Library Course Reserves available for 2-hour
44 circulation periods.
45

- 46 1. The Fourth (2015) Edition of *“So You Think I Drive a Cadillac?” Welfare Recipients’*
47 *Perspectives on the System and Its Reform*, by Karen T Seccombe,
48 Printed version - ISBN 10: 1269-837591 ISBN 13: 9781269837590
49 E-book version - ISBN-10: 0205917283 • ISBN-13: 9780205917280
50

- 1 2. The Third Edition (2014) of *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*, by
2 Allan G. Johnson
3 ISBN-10: 1439911843 • ISBN-13: 9781439911846
4

5 **Course Requirements**

6 7 ***Skills & Dispositions***

8 To succeed in this course, you will need certain skill competencies. We will actively practice
9 these skills throughout the semester, working together to develop them. In particular, this will
10 focus on your ability to think critically, to consider phenomena in context and from multiple
11 perspectives, and to communicate effectively – both in writing and speech. You will also need to
12 be diligent regarding staying on top of your work; if you work hard and actively engage with the
13 course material, you are likely to do well in this course. Finally, you will need to bring a
14 particular cognitive mindset to your learning that will orient you towards success; the particulars
15 of this mindset are reflected in the Discovery Program description above and the section on
16 Norms below.
17

18 ***Time Commitment***

19 While there is variability in how much work students have for various classes, federal
20 regulations require the equivalent of a minimum amount of work of approximately 15 class hours
21 and 30 work hours per semester course credit. According to the 2015-2016 UNH Student Rights,
22 Rules, & Responsibilities Handbook, in order to comply with the federal definition of credit
23 hour, “[f]or each credit hour, the University requires, at minimum, the equivalent of three hours
24 of student academic work each week.” Therefore, this class entails a minimum of 12 hours of
25 work each week. In compliance with these regulations, and with three hours of class time each
26 week, you should expect to complete, on average, a minimum of nine hours of work each week
27 outside of class time.
28

29 ***How You Earn Your Grade***

30 I follow the UNH grading policies as outlined in the 2015-2016 UNH Student Rights, Rules, &
31 Responsibilities Handbook. For information on letter grading and other grading policies, please
32 refer to the handbook.
33

34 Your grade will be determined through the following five areas:

- 35 • Attendance (expected, penalties only)
- 36 • Research Project (40%)
- 37 • Article presentation (10%)
- 38 • Learning investigations (40%)
- 39 • Reflections (10%)
40

41 Here is more detail on each of those areas:
42

43 **1. Attendance**

44 No points are given for attendance; attendance is expected. Absences may count against your
45 grade. Please see the attendance policy below under Course Policies for more information.
46

2. Research Project (40%)

You will complete a research project on a social problem of your choice. Your project assignments will correspond to our classroom learning. This is your opportunity to explore an issue you care about and demonstrate your mastery of our course learning objectives. There are no graded tests or quizzes in this class; this is your performance assessment. Please make sure you stay on top of your project; do not wait until the last minute to attempt to complete the assignments. Final versions of each project part should conform to the rules of Edited Standard Written English (e.g. avoid slang, do not use profanity unless you are discussing it as a subject matter, use standard spelling and proper punctuation, do not use shorthand (e.g. write you not u, are not r, "I found that humorous" not lol, etc.). More details about the project will be given out separately. However, included below is a summary of the project, the grading breakdown for the project, and associated major deadlines (which have also been included in the course schedule).

- **Project Part One: What Makes Your Issue a Social Problem?**

You will select an organization, social problem, proposed solution, and target. You will reflect on the social problem and analyze what makes it a social problem.

- Social Problem selection (1%), due 9/4, 11:59pm
- Draft (4%), due 9/18, 12:10pm
- Final version (10%), due 9/25, 11:59pm

- **Project Part Two: Understanding and Addressing Your Social Problem**

This is similar in depth and scope to a research paper. You will explore the empirical situation relevant to your social problem, analyze its accompanying cultural mythology, and consider it from a sociological perspective. You will also evaluate proposed solutions, including their correspondence to your understanding of the social problem.

- Draft Source List (1%), due 10/26, 11:59pm
- Draft (4%), due 11/9, 12:10pm
- Final version (25%), due 11/13, 11:59pm

- **Project Part Three: Applying Inquiry and Further Reflections**

You will interview a proponent and an opponent of the proposed solution you are researching. You will find and read first-hand accounts regarding your social problem from people who are affected by it. You will analyze the discourses used in popular media stories regarding your social problem. You will engage in and reflect on two service-learning activities – one in direct service and one in advocacy (these may or may not be directly connected to your social problem). You will take these scientific investigations along with the additional material you have learned in class since submitting Part Two and revisit your earlier analyses.

- Tentative Inquiry Plan (1%), due 11/20, 11:59pm
- Draft (4%), due 12/4, 12:10pm
- Final version (25%), due 12/11, 11:59pm

- **Project Part Four: Advocating for Your Proposed Solution**

You will write (and hopefully send) a letter/e-mail to your target about your social problem and proposed solution. You will also put together a fact sheet and prepare brief "testimony" that you could use to advocate for your proposed solution. During our final exam period, you will share this fact sheet and present your testimony.

- 1 ○ Draft (5%), due 12/11, 12:10pm
- 2 ○ Presentations (Testimony) (5%), 12/15 3:30pm-5:30pm
- 3 ○ Final version (15%), due 12/15, 3:30pm

4

5 **3. Article Presentation (10%)**

6 You will present one article to the class that is relevant to social problems. The article will come
7 from *Contexts*, the American Sociological Association's quarterly public sociology magazine.
8 More information on this will be provided in class. I understand that some people are less than
9 enthusiastic about making public presentations, but I have found that students with these
10 hesitations often share with me after the semester that they found facing that fear and presenting
11 to be quite useful. If you have a particular concern or fear regarding making a public
12 presentation, please see me privately. Your article presentation entails three assignments:

- 13 1. You will sign up for a class period and article to present on the Blackboard wiki. This is
14 worth 5% of your article presentation grade and is due on 9/11 by 11:59pm.
- 15 2. You will present the article in class. The presentation will entail one single static slide
16 (which you should submit via Blackboard in advance of your presentation), five minutes
17 to present and evaluate your selected article, and five minutes to lead a short discussion
18 about the article. This is worth 85% of your article presentation grade.
- 19 3. You will complete a short reflection evaluating your experience. This is worth 10% of
20 your article presentation grade and will be due by the class period following your
21 presentation.

22 **4. Learning Investigations (LIs) (40%)**

23 You have a learning investigation due for *every* class session (starting with Class #2). These
24 investigations are a relatively brief active learning opportunity for you to engage with the course
25 readings and class content. Think of this as your ticket to come to class; it shows that you are
26 prepared – you have thought about what you took away from the previous class and thoughtfully
27 completed the reading(s) for the upcoming class. These investigations should prepare you to be
28 ready to contribute and participate. Learning investigations are due by noon prior to our class
29 session; if you submit them earlier this will give me a chance to skim through them to note any
30 particular areas of student interest and/or what students may be struggling with understanding.
31 The format for these will be the same for each investigation. I will provide guiding questions
32 regarding the previous class, designed to help ensure you are learning in class and can articulate
33 and give meaning to what you have learned. I will also provide guiding questions for reading(s);
34 I highly suggest reviewing these guiding questions prior to beginning your reading. You may
35 have been in classes in which the teacher delivers a lecture corresponding to the text that you
36 may or may not have read. This is not that class. We will discuss and clarify the text, but I expect
37 that you have already read it and thought about it. This is an *informal* writing assignment; you
38 need to write clearly so that your writing is understandable, but your writing is not expected to be
39 publish-ready and use of contractions, the first person, and contractions are fine. If you end up
40 regularly spending more than half an hour on these assignments, you are doing much more than
41 is required (which is fine if you are happy with this, but if not you should see me and we can talk
42 through this). Because these assignments are about writing to learn, not writing to demonstrate
43 mastery, they will be graded using the following criteria:

1

Criterion	Performance Characteristics
Depth of reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insightful. ▪ Supported with evidence. ▪ Thorough and thoughtful. ▪ Demonstrates attempted understanding of sociological perspective and material at hand.
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-written, understandable (can understand on first read). ▪ Mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting do not interfere with understanding.
Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follows guidelines. ▪ Fully answers all prompts within assignment.

2

3 **5. Reflections (10%)**

4 You will complete three personal reflections, exploring and evaluating your learning and
 5 thoughts about course content, its application outside this course, and your work to date. This is
 6 an opportunity to think about your thinking and have a conversation with yourself.

7

8 For each reflections, you will review, for a given time period, your learning investigations and
 9 any feedback from me regarding these investigations. You can also take anything else from class
 10 into account (e.g. the project). Are there patterns in terms of your feedback, thinking, or growth?
 11 What progress are you making towards the course objectives? What progress are you making
 12 towards your own goals for the course? What have you learned? What are you finding difficult to
 13 learn? What could increase your learning? What preconceptions did you come into class with
 14 that may conflict with what we have learned or challenge what we are learning? Where did these
 15 preconceptions come from? What have you noticed outside of class that is relevant to what we
 16 have been learning? What similarities and differences do you notice between your investigations
 17 and your peers' comments in class? The third reflection will also include a summative reflection,
 18 holistically synthesizing the course and your learning in it, as well as providing me with your
 19 feedback about the course.

20

21 More information will be given on these reflections, but there is a good deal of flexibility in
 22 terms of where you take it. These reflections are also an informal writing assignment – thinking
 23 made visible. The same criteria described above for learning investigations will be used to grade
 24 your reflections. Grade weighting is listed below in parentheses.

25

- 26 • Reflection #1 (20%), due 9/28, 11:59pm
- 27 • Reflection #2 (40%), due 11/11, 11:59pm
- 28 • Reflection #3 (40%), due 12/15, 11:59pm

29

1 **Course Schedule**

2 The course schedule is only a guide. I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule or
3 other parts of the syllabus; I will inform you of any changes.

5 **Theme A: What is a social problem in sociology?**

7 **Class #1: Monday, August 31**

8 Topic: Course Overview, Popular Conceptions of U.S.-Americans on Welfare

9 Readings for Class#1: none

10 Assignments due: none

12 **Class #2: Wednesday, September 2**

13 Topic: Private Troubles, Public Issues? Taking a Sociological Look at Social Problems

14 Readings: 1. Unabridged Course Syllabus

15 2. "Sociological Perspective" PDF on Blackboard, containing excerpts from:

16 • Berger, Peter. 1963. *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. New
17 York, NY: Anchor Books: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.

18 • Collins, Randall. 1998. "The Sociological Eye and Its Blinders." *Contemporary
19 Sociology* (27)1:2-7.

20 • Feltey, Kathryn. 2006. "Doing Sociology to Make a Difference; Commitment,
21 Values, and the Promised Land." *Sociological Focus* 39(3):149-156.

22 • Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "Chapter 1: The Promise." Pp. 3-24 in *The Sociological
23 Imagination*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

24 Assignment due: LI#1 due 12am on 9/2

26 **Theme B: What social phenomena are social problems?**

27 **How do social phenomena come to be recognized as a social problems?**

29 **Class #3: Friday, September 4**

30 Topic: Subjective and Objective Perspectives on Social Problems

31 Readings: 1. Blumer, Herbert. 1971. "Social Problems as Collective Behavior." *Social
32 Problems* 18(3):298-306.

33 2. Nussbaum, Martha. 2007. "Human Rights and Human Capabilities." *Human
34 Rights Journal* (20): 21-24.

35 Assignments due: 1. LI#2 due 12am on 9/4

36 2. Project #1 Social Problem Selection due 11:59pm on 9/4

38 **Monday, September 7: No Class (Labor Day)**

40 **Class #4: Wednesday, September 9**

41 Topic: Social Movement Theory

42 Reading: Lee, Taeku. 2011. "Chapter 17: Collective Movements, Activated Opinion, and the
43 Politics of the Extraordinary." Pp. 257-272 in *Accountability Through Public
44 Opinion: From Inertia To Public Action*, edited by S. Odugbemi and T. Lee.
45 Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

46 Assignment due: LI#3 due 12am on 9/9

Theme C: Understanding Social Problems?

Class #5: Friday, September 11

Topic: Social Movement Theory (continued), Patriarchy

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 1: Where Are We?

Assignments due: 1. LI#4 due 12am on 9/11
2. Article Presentation Sign-up due 11:59pm on 9/11

Class #6: Monday, September 14: Virtual Class (Rosh Hashanah)

Note: We will not have class in person on 9/14. Information for participating in our Virtual Class will be on Blackboard and may be completed on your own schedule, so long you complete the Virtual Class prior to submitting LI#6.

Topic: Thinking Structurally(/Systemically)

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 2: Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, a Them, or an Us

Assignment due: LI#5 due 12am on 9/14

Class #7: Wednesday, September 16

Topic: Thinking Structurally (continued)

Reading: Eliasoph, Nina. 2001. "The Culture of Political Avoidance." *The Responsive Community* 11(3):39-47.

Assignment due: LI#6 due 12am on 9/16

Class #8: Friday, September 18

Topic: Poverty, Peer Review of Project Part One: What Makes Your Issue a Social Problem?

Reading: Rank, Mark R. 2011. "Rethinking American Poverty." *Contexts* 10(2):16-21.

Assignments due: 1. LI#7 due 12am on 9/18
2. Project Part One draft due 12:10pm on 9/18

Class #9: Monday, September 21

Topic: Roots of Patriarchy: Control and Power

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 3: Why Patriarchy?

Assignment due: LI#8 due 12am on 9/21

Class #10: Wednesday, September 23: Virtual Class (Yom Kippur)

Note: We will not have class in person on 9/23. Information for participating in our Virtual Class will be on Blackboard and can be completed on your own schedule, so long as it is complete prior to submitting LI#10.

Topic: Rethinking Gender, Gender Normativity

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 4: Ideology, Myth, and Magic: Femininity, Masculinity, and "Gender Roles"

Assignment due: 1. LI#9 due 12am on 9/23
2. Reflection #1 on LIs #1 through #4 due 11:59pm on 9/23

Class #11: Friday, September 25

Topic: Cultural Mythology and Universe-Maintenance: The Reification of the System of Patriarchy

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 6: Thinking About Patriarchy: War, Sex, and Work

Assignment due: 1. LI#10 due 12am on 9/25
2. Project Part One final version due 11:59pm on 9/25

Class #12: Monday, September 28

Topic: Feminism, StarPower Simulation

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 5: Feminists and Feminism

Assignment due: LI#11 due 12am on 9/28

Class #13: Wednesday, September 30

Topic: Oppression as Structural Inequality, StarPower Debrief

Reading: Alvarado, Lorriz Anne. 2010. "Dispelling the Meritocracy Myth: Lessons from Higher Education and Student Affairs Educators." *The Vermont Connection* 31:10-20.

Assignment due: LI#12 due 12am on 9/30

Class #14: Friday, October 2

Topic: Cultural Mythology and Universe-Maintenance: Common Denials of Patriarchy's Existence

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 7: What Patriarchy?

Assignment due: LI#13 due 12am on 10/2

Class #15: Monday, October 5

Topic: Cultural Mythology and Universe-Maintenance: Hegemonic Masculinity, (A)Historical Thinking, Worldviews

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 10: What Changes and What Does Not: Manhood and Violence

Assignment due: LI#14 due 12n on 10/5

Class #16: Wednesday, October 7

Topic: Cultural Mythology and Universe-Maintenance: Social Construction, Worldviews

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 2, pages 32-53 only – in *The Forest and the Trees*

Assignment due: LI#15 due 12n on 10/7

Class #17: Friday, October 9

Topic: Poverty and Women on Welfare

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 1: Introduction: Putting a Face on Welfare

Assignment due: LI#16 due 12n on 10/9

Class #18: Monday, October 12

Topic: Welfare Policy in the U.S., Theories of Poverty and Welfare Use

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 2: Historical and Persisting Dilemmas: How Do We Explain Poverty, What Should We Do About It?

Assignment due: LI#17 due 12n on 10/12

Class #19: Wednesday, October 14

Topic: Stereotypes, Essentialism, Stigma, and Deservedness

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 3: Stigma and Discrimination

Assignment due: LI#18 due 12n on 10/14

Class #20: Friday, October 16

Topic: Cultural Mythology and Universe-Maintenance: Culture of Poverty?

Reading: Gorski, Paul. 2012. "Perceiving the Problem of Poverty and Schooling: Deconstructing the Class Stereotypes that Mis-Shape Education Practice and Policy."

Assignment due: LI#19 due 12n on 10/16

Class #21: Monday, October 19

Topic: Causes of Needing Welfare, Internalized Oppression

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 4: Why Welfare?

Assignment due: LI#20 due 12n on 10/19

Class #22: Wednesday, October 21

Topic: Culture of Poverty?, The Production of Culture

Reading: Wilson, William Julius. 2010. "Why Both Social Structure and Culture Matter in a Holistic Analysis of Inner-City Poverty." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629(1):200-219.

Assignment due: LI#21 due 12n on 10/21

Class #23: Friday, October 23

Topic: Intersectionality

Reading: Collins, Patricia Hill. 1993. "Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection." *Race, Sex & Class* 1(1):25-45.

Assignment due: LI#22 due 12n on 10/23

Class #24: Monday, October 26

Note: The Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning will conduct a Mid Course Assessment for this course during this class period, which will take about half the class period. This Mid-Course Assessment is an opportunity for me to receive feedback regarding your perceptions of the course (and make any appropriate adjustments accordingly).

Topic: Neoliberal capitalism, The Cultural Mythology of Controlling Images, and Black Battered Women on Welfare

Reading: Davis, Dana-Ain. 2004. "Manufacturing Mammies: The Burdens of Service Work and Welfare Reform among Battered Black Women." *Anthropologica* 46(2):273-288.

Assignment due: 1. LI#23 due 12n on 10/26
2. Project Part Two: Draft Source List due 11:59pm on 10/26

Class #25: Wednesday, October 28

Topic: Living on Welfare

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 5: Day-to-Day Living and Decision Making

Assignment due: LI#24 due 12n on 10/28

Class #26: Friday, October 30

Topic: Surviving on Welfare: Social Support and Supplementing Welfare

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 6: Living and Surviving Welfare: The Importance of Family, Friends, and Formal Support

Assignment due: LI#25 due 12n on 10/30

Class #27: Monday, November 2

Topic: Deconstructing (Poverty and Welfare) Discourses

Reading: Hoffman, Andrew. 2012. "Climate Science as Culture War." *Stanford Social Innovation Review* Fall:30-37.

Assignment due: 1. LI#26 due 12n on 11/2

2. Reflection #2 due 11:59pm on 11/2

Theme D: What to do about social problems?**Class #28: Wednesday, November 4**

Topic: What does it mean to participate in systems of oppression / patriarchy?

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 9: Shame, Guilt, and Responsibility

Assignment due: LI#27 due 12n on 11/4

Class #29: Friday, November 6

Topic: Challenging Systems of Oppression (continued) / Disrupting Patriarchy

Reading: Johnson, Chapter 11: What Can We Do? Unraveling the Gender Knot

Assignment due: LI#28 due 12n on 11/6

Class #30: Monday, November 9

Topic: Challenging Systems of Oppression

Peer Review of Project Part Two: Understanding and Addressing Your Social Problem

Reading: Love, Barbara. 1984. "Developing a Liberatory Consciousness." Pp. 470-474 in

Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, edited by M. Adams, L. Bell, and P.

Griffin. New York, NY:Routledge.

Assignment due: 1. LI#29 due 12n on 11/9

2. Project Part Two draft due 12:10pm on 11/9

Class #31: Tuesday, November 10 (UNH following Wednesday schedule)

Topic: Cultural Mythology in Practice and the Promises of Liberation Work

Reading: Langille-Hoppe, Mary Marguerite, Judith Gonzalez, and Monique Maxey. 2011. "From Both Sides of the Desk: A Qualitative Analysis of Social Service Workers' Perceptions of Poverty in the Ozarks." *Journal of Poverty* 15:164-183.

Assignments due: LI#30 due 12n on 11/10

Wednesday, November 11: No Class (Veterans Day)**Class #32: Friday, November 13**

Topic: Popular Politics, Challenging Power, Participatory Democracy

Readings: 1. Gaventa, John. 1995. "Citizen Knowledge, Citizen Competence, and Democracy Building." *The Good Society* 5(3):28-35.
2. Hays, Sharon. 2003. "Off the Rolls: The Ground-Level Results of Welfare Reform." *Dissent* Fall 2003:48-53.

Assignments due: 1. LI#31 due 12n on 11/12
2. Project Part Two final version due 11:59pm on 11/12

Class #33: Monday, November 16

Topic: Welfare Policy and its Implications for Women on Welfare

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 7: Insiders Perspectives on the Welfare System

Assignment due: LI#32 due 12n on 11/16

Class #34: Wednesday, November 18

Topic: The Welfare System: What Works and What Doesn't?

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 8: Getting off Welfare

Assignment due: LI#33 due 12n on 11/18

Class #35: Friday, November 20

Topic: Evaluating Welfare Policy; Ideas for Reform

Reading: Seccombe, Chapter 9: Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Visions for Change

Assignment due: 1. LI#34 due 12n on 11/20
2. Project Part Three: Tentative Inquiry Plan due 11:59pm on 11/20

Class #36: Monday, November 23

Topic: Exploring Solutions

Reading: Wilson, William Julius. 2008. "The Political and Economic Forces Shaping Concentrated Poverty." *Political Science Quarterly* 123(4):555-571.

Assignment due: LI#35 due 12n on 11/23

Wednesday, November 25: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)**Friday, November 27: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)****Class #37: Monday, November 30**

Topic: Exploring Solutions (continued)

Reading: Broughton, Chad. 2001. "Work Programs and Welfare Recipients: An Ethnography of Work-Based Welfare Reform." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* (45):17-41.

Assignment due: LI#36 due 12n on 11/30

Class #38: Wednesday, December 2

Topic: Exploring Solutions (continued)

Reading: 1. Block, Fred and Frances Fox Piven. 2013. "Letter to Hillary Clinton: Let's Talk About Poverty." *Dissent* Fall 2013:43-46.
2. Shahmehri, Brittany. 2001. "Families Come First in Sweden." *Mothering Magazine* 109: <http://www.mothering.com/articles/families-come-first-in-sweden/>.

Assignment due: LI#37 due 12n on 12/2

Class #39: Friday, December 4

Topic: Storytelling for Change

Peer Review of Project Part Three: Applying Inquiry and Further Reflections

Reading: Ganz, Marshall. 2011. "Chapter 18: Public Narrative, Collective Action, and Power." Pp. 273-289 in *Accountability Through Public Opinion: From Inertia To Public Action*, edited by S. Odugbemi and T. Lee. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Assignment due: 1. LI#38 due 12n on 12/4

2. Project Part Three draft due 12:10pm on 12/4

Class #40: Monday, December 7

Topic: Storytelling for Change (continued)

Reading: Polletta, Francesca. 1998. "'It Was Like a Fever ...' Narrative and Identity in Social Protest."

Assignment due: LI#39 due 12n on 12/7

Class #41: Wednesday, December 9

Topic: Things are Better: A Historical Perspective on Social Progress

Reading: Best, Joel. 2001. "Social progress and Social Problems: Toward a Sociology of Gloom." *The Sociological Quarterly* 42(1):1-12.

Assignment due: LI#40 due 12n on 12/9

Class #42: Friday, December 11

Topics: Social Movements Make a Difference

Peer Review of Project Part Four: Advocating on Your Issue

Reading: Meyer, David. 2003. "How Social Movements Matter." *Contexts* 2(4):30-35.

Assignment due: 1. LI#41 due 12n on 12/11

2. Project Part Four draft version due 12:10pm on 12/11

3. Project Part Three final version due 11:59pm on 12/11

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 15, 3:30pm-5:30pm

Topic: Project Presentations: Advocating for Your Issue: Giving Testimony

Assignment due: 1. Project Part Four final version due 3:30pm on 12/15

2. Reflection #3 due 11:59pm on 12/15

Course Policies

Academic Citizenship

Academic citizenship is your exercise of rights and responsibilities as a student, co-creating knowledge through actively contributing to the class. Studies consistently show that if you engage in active learning rather than passive learning, you will learn more, better retain that learning, and improve your ability to transfer your learning to new contexts. You are expected to participate in class. While “class participation” or engagement is not directly graded, it is reflected indirectly in your grade through attendance, learning investigations, and other assignments that will demonstrate that you were actively engaged in class and mastered what we learned together. The following sections on attendance, academic honesty, norms, and asking questions all correspond with exercising your academic citizenship.

Attendance

1. Required Attendance: The baseline for academic citizenship is attendance. You are required to attend every class and be present and actively engaged for the entire class period. I will take attendance through the use of nameplates. Each class period you will pick up your nameplate and display it during class. At the end of class you will return your nameplate. There are 43 total classes (including the final examination). You will have 2.3% (1/43) deducted from your final grade for each class you miss (with the exception of up to three exceptional absences; see below). Penalties also apply for coming to class late or leaving early. There is a column in the gradebook on Blackboard for Unexceptional Absence penalty points. Blackboard is not set up to factor in these penalty points. To calculate your final grade, subtract the number in the penalty column from your calculated semester grade. If there is a zero listed in the penalty column, that means you have no penalty points. At the end of the semester I will add an additional column and manually calculate your final grade based on your calculated grade minus any unexceptional absence penalty points you have accumulated.

2. Exceptional Absences: I understand that you may on rare occasion have other priorities that you must attend to and for which you cannot make other arrangements (e.g. attending a funeral, ill health, participation in official intercollegiate events, instructional trips, etc.). If this is the case, you must e-mail me *prior* to the class that you will miss letting me know you will not be there and why you will be missing the class. If I receive this information prior to the class and find your justification to be a reasonable excuse, I will e-mail you back with make-up work to be completed prior to the next class (or within another reasonable time period). If you 1) contact me in advance of the class, 2) have a reason to miss class that I find reasonable, and 3) sufficiently complete your makeup work within the given time, then the absence will be considered an “exceptional absence.” You will not receive any deduction from your final grade for up to three exceptional absences. If you end up having to miss more than three classes, even if it falls under the circumstances outlined here, you will still receive a grade penalty. Attendance is a prerequisite for active collaborative learning. Please make it a priority to be here and be present.

1 *Academic Honesty*

2 The following statement is from the 2015-2016 UNH Student Rights, Rules, & Responsibilities
3 Handbook:

4 Honesty is a core value at the University of New Hampshire. The members of its
5 academic community both require and expect one another to conduct themselves with
6 integrity. This means that each member will adhere to the principles and rules of the
7 University and pursue academic work in a straightforward and truthful manner, free from
8 deception or fraud. Any attempts to deviate from these principles will be construed as
9 acts of academic dishonesty and will be dealt with according to the rules of due process
10 outlined [in the 2015-2016 UNH Student Rights, Rules, & Responsibilities Handbook.]

11 Please reach out if you have any questions about how this policy applies to your work in
12 this class.

13 *Norms*

14 It is vital that we create an environment that ensures this class is as beneficial as possible to
15 every student's educational and professional goals. We will best be able to meet our goals and
16 grow together if the classroom is a supportive space and if everyone practices proper etiquette.
17 There are certain norms we want to co-create and hold within this space that reflect a vision for
18 how we want to be as a class and in relation to one other—safe, supported, open, productive,
19 trusting, intellectually curious, thoughtful, and engaged. Creating a classroom environment that
20 is conducive to learning is a shared responsibility.

21
22 Be present. Classes are only 50 minutes, so it is important to arrive on time and devote the entire
23 class period to concerted intellectual engagement. Participate actively and critically in
24 discussions, having completed the readings and thought about the issues. Focus your energy and
25 attention to the topic at hand. Refrain from activities that can cause distractions. Do not pack up
26 to leave prematurely. This class is held from 12:10pm-1pm; while you are welcome to bring and
27 consume (snack) foods and (non-alcoholic) beverages, within reason, this is not lunchtime.
28 Unless you have explicit permission from me, the use of electronic devices (other than laptops) is
29 prohibited during in-person classes and should remain off or in silent/vibrate mode for the
30 duration of class. Laptops may be used but only for class related work. Presented slides will be
31 posted on Blackboard. Using electronic devices during class for anything other than classwork,
32 or laptops during class time for non-class activities, may result in the designation of an
33 unexceptional absence for that class. That being said, you are in college and will be treated as an
34 adult. Take care of yourself and step out if you need to do so. If you need to use the bathroom, do
35 so. If you need to take a call because a family member is in the hospital, do so. If you can handle
36 your needs before or after class, even better. You are responsible for any material you miss.
37 Respect the space and the people in it. Be conscientious and courteous.

38
39 Be respectful, thoughtful, and conscientious. A good deal of sociological content is of a sensitive
40 nature; individual students may have strong opinions and/or personal experiences that relate to
41 the material we cover. Therefore, it is essential that your participation maintains a civil tone,
42 respects the beliefs of others, and does not inhibit others from sharing or participating. Follow
43 the guidelines below to help create a healthy classroom climate:

- 44 • Be professional and respectful, considerate and kind. Do not make derogatory comments
45 of any kind. Only one person should speak at a time. Evaluate and reflect on the amount

1 of space you are taking up in a particular conversation. If you have not spoken up and
2 have something to add to the conversation, speak up; if you feel like you have been
3 talking a lot, create space for others to share. Listen to others' thoughts and feelings, even
4 if they differ significantly from your own. Your comments should be professional in
5 nature, based on content knowledge, and related to course material (Note: Professional
6 does not mean it cannot be personal). Ask clarifying questions when appropriate. Your
7 comments and questions are meant to probe and shed new light, not to minimize or
8 devalue others' comments. Make sure if you are disagreeing with an idea your comments
9 are aimed at the idea and are not a personal attack on a fellow student.

- 10 • Take risks. Share what you are thinking or ask questions even if you are worried that you
11 have not put what you are feeling or thinking into the right words or that it may not be the
12 “right” thing to say. Share and surface disagreements and ideas that seem at tension with
13 one another. You are encouraged to express your opinions, encourage others to develop
14 and share their ideas, explore controversial material, risk making mistakes in writing
15 about and discussing issues, and ask for help in understanding ideas you do not
16 understand. This intellectually rigorous work may be uncomfortable at times, but risking
17 such discomfort often leads to insight. Lean into discomfort. Be patient in situations in
18 which you may feel challenged or uncomfortable; there may be something else behind
19 that emotion. Help ensure others who may feel this way are supported. Keep an open
20 mind and be willing and open to being challenged or confronted about ideas or prejudices
21 you have been socialized into and internalized. Temporarily suspend your disbelief and
22 seek to understand; understanding should precede critiquing. When challenging others,
23 do so with the intent of facilitating their growth; do not demean or embarrass others.
- 24 • Assume good intentions and give others the benefit of the doubt. Comments and
25 assertions by others in this space should be assumed to be coming from a place of good
26 intentions. Understand that there may be a range of knowledge and experience around the
27 issues we discuss. This is a space where you can challenge things you do not necessarily
28 agree with and be challenged by others, without taking things personally or being clouded
29 by feelings of offense.
- 30 • Respect everyone's individual identity. Speak from your own experience and analysis of
31 the readings. Only speak on behalf of yourself; do not generalize. Do not expect others to
32 speak as representatives of a social or cultural group. Do not make assumptions about
33 other class members' identities, experiences, or beliefs. Recognize and value the diversity
34 of the class and everyone's experiences, abilities, and knowledge that they bring to the
35 class that we can all learn from. Personal stories or experiences that are shared in class
36 should remain confidential. However, what you learn from those stories and experiences
37 can definitely be shared.

38 *Asking Questions*

39 You are encouraged to ask questions, both about content and about course requirements and
40 policies. Take control of your own learning. One way to ask me a question is via a discussion
41 board set up on Blackboard for this purpose. If you do this, I will get an automatic e-mail alerting
42 me that you have submitted a question and I will answer it. This is a useful tool because other
43 students may have the same question and they will also be able to see the question and my
44 response. If you have a question you want to ask but do not want it attributed to you, I have set
45 up the discussion board so that you may opt to submit a question anonymously.

1 ***Monitoring Blackboard***

2 Blackboard is the University's online course management system and the portal for student and
3 faculty electronic services. Do not expect me to issue a warning to you if you are in danger of
4 failing the course or to contact you if you do not successfully submit an assignment. You are
5 responsible for keeping track of your progress in this course. I will be regularly updating grades
6 on Blackboard. Make sure to check your submitted assignments to make sure they submitted
7 correctly as well as for grades and feedback. Take charge of your success in this class. I
8 encourage you to contact me or meet with me if you have any questions or concerns about your
9 progress.

10

11 ***Curtailed Operations***

12 I will post an announcement on Blackboard if UNH curtails operations and it becomes necessary
13 to make last-minute adjustments to the course schedule. Unless I indicate otherwise, you should
14 assume that the schedule of readings, assignment deadlines, etc. on the syllabus remains in
15 effect.

16

17 ***Grading***

18 Any work that you are turning in for me to grade must be submitted via Blackboard. Specific
19 formatting requirements will be given for particular assignments.

20

21 You will receive one of the following grades for each assignment, corresponding with the UNH
22 grading system:

Grade	Performance Level
A	Excellent
B	Superior
C	Satisfactory, Competent, Acceptable
D	Marginal
F	Failure

23

24 Your final course grade will be rounded to the nearest whole number. The grading scale for this
25 course is as follows:

A 93%-100%	B- 80%-82%	D+ 67%-69%
A- 90%-92%	C+ 77%-79%	D 63%-66%
B+ 87%-89%	C 73%-76%	D- 60%-62%
B 83%-86%	C- 70%-72%	F 0%-59%

26

1 ***Late Work***

2 Assignments are due at the specified day and time. Assignments are considered late if completed
3 (e.g. presentations) or electronically submitted after the day and time given as the deadline. Late
4 assignments will receive the following penalties (given an assignment worth 100 points):
5

Tardiness	Penalty
Over 10 minutes	10 points
Over one hour	20 points
Over one day (24 hours)	30 points
Over two days (48 hours)	50 points
Over one week (168 hours)	100 points

6
7 Technical issues with submitting assignments via Blackboard do not excuse tardiness; it is your
8 responsibility to identify and correct any technical problems regarding submitting assignments to
9 ensure your work is submitted correctly and that I can open it. If you are asking for an extension
10 or for some other exception to this late policy, you should contact me in advance of the deadline.
11 I am much more open to working with you before an assignment is due. After an assignment is
12 due I will be relatively inflexible. Unless you have an incomplete, no assignments may be
13 submitted after December 17 for any reason.
14

15 ***Disability Services / Accommodations***

16 The University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to
17 all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring
18 accommodations, you must register with Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you have
19 questions about the process, please contact DSS at 603-862-2607 or disability.office@unh.edu. If
20 you are registered with DSS and eligible for accommodations that you would like to utilize in
21 this course, please forward that information to me in a timely manner so that we can meet
22 privately to review those accommodations. For more information visit
23 <http://www.unh.edu/disabilityservices/>.
24

25 ***Writing & Speaking Resources***

26 The Connors Writing Center is a terrific resource for writers at all skill levels and at all stages of
27 the writing process. The Connors Writing Center also offers assistance with speeches and
28 presentations. For more information or to make an appointment, call 603-862-3272, e-mail
29 writing.center@unh.edu, go to <http://www.unh.edu/writing/cwc/>, or stop by Dimond 329. The
30 Connors Writing Center also has handouts and other resources on their website.
31

32 ***IT Technical Support***

33 If you have questions about Blackboard, hardware or software issues, or other technical matters
34 relevant to this course, the Academic Technology Support Center is available to support you.
35 They have a walk-in service desk on Level 3 (Main Level) of Dimond Library that is open
36 Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm. You can also call them at 603-862-4242 or live chat or
37 submit a question online. For more information go to <http://www.unh.edu/it/it-service-desk>.