



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2021

SO1020 (A2): SOCIAL PROBLEMS – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Grande Prairie Regional College respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 8 territory, the traditional homeland and gathering place for many diverse Indigenous peoples. We are honoured to be on the ancestral lands of the Cree, Dene/Beaver and Métis, whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work, learn, and live on this land.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Michael Holland **PHONE:** 780-539-2973
OFFICE: C-404 **E-MAIL:** mholland@gprc.ab.ca

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays (1-2 PM); Wednesdays (11:30-12:30 PM), or by appointment.
Zoom office hours available: <https://gprc.zoom.us/j/9996329885>

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

Analysis of the social construction of social problems, focusing on selected structural and behavioural problems such as inequality, substance abuse, family violence, pornography, mental and physical handicaps. Personal and societal responses and intervention attempts will be explored.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: SO1000.

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Tepperman, L., Curtis, J., & la Touche, R. L. (2020). *Social Problems*. Oxford University Press.

DELIVERY MODE(S): High-Flex (attend in person and remotely via zoom). Lectures, class discussion, group work, class presentations, written tests, written projects.

Zoom link for lectures:

<https://gprc.zoom.us/j/93380251295>

VIDEO CONFERENCING (VC) STUDENTS:

Note: all tests and exams require supervision for VC students. Students need to find an approved testing centre or come to GPCR and write the exam with the other students.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will:

- Be shown how to acquire a critical sociological understanding of how social problems become perceived, or how they cease to be understood as problematic.
- Be familiarized with social practices in society.
- Be presented with sociological theories that attempt to explain the construction of social reality.
- Be encouraged to apply the meanings of “ideology”, “social cohesion”, “conflict”, “discourse”, “social stratification”, “hegemony”, and other concepts to help people consider social problems.
- Utilize different sociological interpretations of a range of social experiences.
- Shown how to develop thinking, talking and writing skills on particular theories used by sociologists to explain social problems.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will:

- Explain the wider introductory social problems literature.
- Explain the causes and consequences of social problems.
- Illustrate the applicability of sociological knowledge to understand and solve social problems.
- Identify and explain the research tools used by sociologists in the study of social problems.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. **Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assessment	Total Point Value	Weight
Online Discussion Posts *5 (10 pts each)	50 pts	7.5%
In-class Activities * 4 (10 pts each)	40 pts	10%
1 Midterm	60 pts	20 %
1 Group Presentation	50 pts	7.5 %
Research project <i>Thesis/research problem (5 pts)</i> <i>Outline (20 pts)</i> <i>Complete paper (50 pts)</i>	75 pts	25 %
Final Exam	80 pts	30 %
Total	355 pts	100 %

Please note: It is simply unfair to alter the course evaluation for any individual. Therefore, under any conditions, there will be no alternative tests or assignments if you miss or do poorly on a requirement.

- **Furthermore, it is your responsibility to track your own grades: Please do not contact the professor for such information.**

Submission & Late Policies: It is very important to complete your assignments on time. Late assignments will be deducted 5% per day (including weekends). Incomplete assignments will receive a grade of 0%, unless you have a valid reason supported with appropriate documentation (i.e., medical note from an M.D.) and you discuss it with me.

Online Discussion Posts

You will be required to upload a reaction post (reactions to course content, readings, films, lectures) to **any 5 questions** asked by the instructor, beginning end of week 2. These will be completed and **submitted online (MyClass)**. To earn full credit, you must: a) answer a discussion question posted by the instructor; and b) demonstrate reading comprehension and knowledge of the topic. It is your responsibility to make sure that you complete **5 reflection papers** for full credit. Due dates for these assignments are on Sundays at 11:59 PM.

In Class Activities

Throughout the semester, there will be in-class activities based on a given topic. Working in groups of 3-4, you will need to **submit only 4** reflection papers based on the activity for the week, although you are expected to participate in all activities. All members of the group will share the grade for the activity.

Group Presentation

Before the end of the semester, you will work in groups of 3-4 and present on a topic related to the course. The purpose of the presentation is to not only engage the class with your topic and to demonstrate your knowledge of the topic, but also a chance for feedback from your classmates and the instructor. Groups will be assigned in the first 2 weeks of class and the groups will have a choice of topic and when to present. More details on this will be discussed in the second week of classes. All members of the group will share the grade for the activity.

Research Paper Assignment

You will complete a full research paper based on a community problem relevant to your community. The topic is up to you but options will be given upon request. The project will be broken down into the following steps: First, you will come up with a **research topic (of your choice), write a research problem statement, and a working thesis or argument.**

This first project will be evaluated and must be approved by the instructor before moving onto the **outline assignment**. The outline assignment consists of locating peer-reviewed, academic resources, and then organizing research into a logical essay in which you paraphrase research and utilize proper citations (APA 7th edition citation style). Finally, you will complete a **full research paper** that consists of full sentences, paragraphs, and a complete title page and reference page. All of these assignments have strict due dates. **You must complete each part of these assignments in order before moving on to the next.** Specific information about this assignment will be provided and discussed in class.

Midterm Test and Final Exam

The Midterm term (20%) and Final Examination (30%) will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions. There will be a brief review before each of these evaluations. The final exam is cumulative (emphasis on ‘big picture’ themes and concepts). Tests and final exam will be based on all course material (textbook, journal articles, classroom discussions, and video clips).

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is less than C-.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	90-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	0-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Sept 3	Introduction to the course Meet and Greet	Syllabus	
Sept 6	Labour Day – No Classes		
Sept 10	Studying Social Problems Assign Group presentations Assign Discussion leads	Chapter 1	Online Discussion posts begin
Sept 13, 17	Class and Poverty Library Research Workshop (Sept 13)	Chapter 2	
Sept 20, 24	Racism and Ethnic Inequality	Chapter 3	
Sept 27, Oct 1	Gender Inequality	Chapter 4	Paper topic and working thesis due Oct 1.
Oct 4, 8	Sexualities	Chapter 5	
Oct 11, 15	Fall Break – No classes		
Oct 18, 22	Crime and Violence *Midterm review Oct 18	Chapter 6	Midterm (in-class, Oct 22)
Oct 25, 29	Health and Addictions	Chapter 7	

Nov 1, 5	Global Inequality	Chapter 8	
Nov 8, 12	Families	Chapter 9	Research Outline due
Nov 15,19	Aging	Chapter 10	
Nov 22, 26	Schools	Chapter 11	
Nov 29, Dec 3	Work and the Economy	Chapter 12	
Dec 6	Population and Environment Brief Final Exam Review	Chapter 13	Complete Research paper due Dec 6
			Final Exam (cumulative) Scheduled by the Registrar Office

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Sept 1 — First Day of Classes

Sept 6 — Labour Day – No classes

Oct 11 — Thanksgiving No classes

Oct 12-15 — Fall Break – No classes

Nov 11 — Remembrance Day No classes

Nov 26 — Last day to withdraw from courses in most programs with a grade of “W”

Dec 9 — Last day of classes

Dec 11 — Finals start

Dec 20 — Finals end

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Attendance and Exam Policies:

Attendance at lectures is strongly encouraged, as are your participation in class discussions and group discussions.

Class attendance is useful for two reasons. First, class attendance maximizes a student’s learning experience. Second, attending class is a good way to keep informed of matters relating to the

administration of the course (e.g., the timing of assignments and exams). *Ultimately, you are responsible for your own learning and performance in this course.*

It is the responsibility of each student to be prepared for all classes. Students who miss classes are responsible for the material covered in those classes by asking fellow students for the material covered, and for ensuring that they are prepared for the next class, including the completion of any assignments and/or notes that may be due.

PLEASE NOTE:

To be fair to everyone in this course, **I will not alter the evaluation**, so any missed testing or assignments will not be accommodated.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Calendar at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies>

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

D2L:

This course will make extensive use of our website on D2L to support your learning. You are expected to keep current with the content of the site, and I advise you to log on often.

Learning Support Centre:

The Learning Support Centre is accessible through the Library at the Main campus of GPRC, where students can gather to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and get new perspectives on learning from our tutorial staff.

The Learning Support Centre, through a variety of delivery methods, assists in skill development to GPRC students. Assistance is provided by instructors, staff, and student tutors. Individuals wishing to improve their mathematics, writing, grammar, study, or other skills, can take advantage of this unique service.

Professional Conduct:

- Please be aware that I respect that everyone's time is precious and valuable, please afford me the same courtesy.

Please note: If at any point in the semester you feel you are struggling with the course material or with your course work, please do not hesitate to ask me for assistance. Come and see me during my office hours, and I will assist you or point you towards other suitable sources of support. If you are scheduled to attend lectures or have other commitments during my office hours, please contact me by e-mail for an appointment.

- Instead of preoccupying your mind with questions such as, “how do I get an ‘A’?” Instead, ask yourself, “how can I work to expand my knowledge, perspective, and outlook on the real world?”
- Please only use your **GPRC e-mail account** to avoid having your message blocked by SPAM filters.
- Always include “SO 1020” in the subject line (or I may never even receive your message).
- Finally, in our academic environment, please practice writing e-mails *formally*, as you will need to do regularly upon graduation. For example, use a simple greeting, do not use slang or abbreviations, and always sign off with your name!