

COURSE TITLE: Social Problems

COURSE NUMBER: SOC 22000-003, CRN: 28803

(3 Credit Hours)

INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITY: hybrid

MEETING TIME: Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-9:20AM

CLASSROOM: Lecture Hall 224, Class of 1950 building

PROFESSOR: Dr. Lindsay Hamm

PROFESSOR'S EMAIL: lhamm@purdue.edu

PROFESSOR'S OFFICE: Beering Room 1118 (inside the Department of Sociology Wing on the first floor)

PROFESSOR'S OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays, 11:30AM-1:30PM, in Beering 1118, and by appointment. Please email me with three 30-minute chunks of time over the next work week if you need to find an alternative office-hours time.

SOC 220 COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Contemporary problems at the community, society, and international levels, focusing on patterns of social organization and social change in American society, with concentration on such topics as technological militarism and war, poverty, racism, political protest, and cybernation.

I recognize that you may be taking this course because you are a sociology major, this sounded like a fun elective, or you just needed to complete a general education credit. Whatever your reason, I am glad that you are here! I want you to come away from this semester with the tools you will need to analyze social problems claims you will face in your career and life in general. I urge you to use this class to investigate the troubling issues professionals in your field frame as social problems. How are they framing them? What evidence do they rely on? Who is their audience? What fixes do they suggest? Ultimately, what role could you play in your chosen field's claimsmaking processes? How could you work to make the structural and cultural changes you want to see in the world?



LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course meets Purdue University’s “Human Cultures (Behavioral/Social Sciences)” Foundational Learning Outcome, which emphasizes that Purdue students have developed the following skills:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical patterns, and/or historical contexts within a given social or behavioral domain
2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of contending explanations or interpretations for social, behavioral, or historical phenomena
3. Demonstrate literacy in social, behavioral, or historical research methods and analyses
4. Recognize relevant evidence supporting conclusions about the behavior of individuals, groups, institutions, or organizations
5. Recognize the extent and impact of diversity among individuals, cultures, or societies in contemporary or historical contexts
6. Identify examples of how social, behavioral, or historical knowledge informs and can shape personal, civic, ethical, or global decisions and responsibilities

As such, I have designed this course with the [Indiana GEC & Purdue Core Curriculum](#) learning outcomes in mind to focus specifically on the following learning outcomes:

1. Describe the cultural, social, and historical dynamics that influence how we construct social problems.
2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of contending explanations or interpretations of major social problems.
3. Critique proposed solutions to major social problems.

COURSE DESIGN

This is a hybrid course that meets for 2 50-minute periods most Tuesdays and Thursdays during the semester. Both Purdue and I expect you to attend these class sessions. Part of your grade for in-person credits is being able to attend and participate during scheduled class times.

I include a series of “dropped” lowest grades in each assignment category. Every student gets these drops, no questions asked. Plan how you want to use them wisely!

The third credit hour for each week will be completed in Perusall. Please anticipate spending the usual 5ish additional hours of reading/watching/studying/quizzes/exams that you should expect in a 3-credit college course each week in this software.

This course is NOT designed to be finished in a few weeks and the grade you earn at the end of the semester is for a FULL semester of interacting with the material and concepts. The final grade you earn is NOT for a mad dash of last-minute assignments you ask to complete after the deadlines listed in the syllabus. See below for the SOC 220 policies on late work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Social Problems (5th Edition) by Joel Best and Brian Monahan (2024)

- You must purchase access to the textbook through the [Perusall link in our Brightspace page](#).
 - 180-Day Access: \$35.65
 - Perpetual Online Access: \$40.74

FINAL GRADES

I will not “round/bump up” your grade. There is no special way for you to earn more points than everyone else has access to. Please do not ask.

Grade Breakdown:

A Point Range:	A- (90-93)	A (94-96)	A+ (97+)
B Point Range:	B- (80-83)	B (84-86)	B+ (87-89)
C Point Range:	C- (70-73)	C (74-76)	C+ (77-79)
D Point Range:	D- (60-63)	D (64-66)	D+ (67-69)
Failing:	F (59 and below)		

ASSIGNMENTS

You have two categories of graded assignments: formative assessments worth 70% of your final grade and summative assessments worth 30% of your final grade.

Formative Assessments (70% of your final grade)

These assignments are designed to help you explore the sociology of social problems to cover the foundational levels of cognitive learning: remembering, understanding, and applying.

These are relatively low-stakes assignments with many dropped lowest-scores to encourage you to engage with the material in minimally stressful or cognitively taxing ways.

1. iClicker Questions

- a. Worth 20% of your final grade
- b. Some of the questions are previous exam questions, so these are great practice for the Tech-Free Exams (see below).
- c. You must be physically present in the classroom AND successfully submit your answer to the iClicker software for at least 80% of the questions asked during the session.
- d. Barring unforeseen events, we will have 25 iClicker Class Sessions
- e. Brightspace will drop your lowest 6 scores (that's 3 full weeks of class!)
 - i. If/when ODOS sends us an email excusing an absence, we will manually "exempt" that day in Brightspace.
 - ii. These cover any days that your iClicker just isn't working/registering/in the room for some reason.
 - iii. Do not register iClicker points for anyone other than yourself. It is a violation of the Purdue Honor Code.

2. Socially Annotating Textbook Readings in Perusall

- a. Worth 25% of your final grade
- b. You must contribute at least 5 high quality comments by the deadline (see the "Getting to Know Perusall Assignment) to earn full credit on these assignments.
- c. We will not drop any low scores in this category.
- d. **Deadlines:**
 - i. The Social Annotations for Chapters 1-6 are due by 5pm on **October 6**
 - ii. The Social Annotations for Chapters 7-10 are due by 5pm on **December 1**

3. Socially Annotating Dig Deeper Materials in Perusall

- a. Worth 25% of your final grade
- b. I will provide additional videos, articles, blog posts, podcast episodes, and other kinds of material for you to "dig deeper" into topics that you find interesting.
- c. Like the Textbook Reading assignments, you must contribute at least 3 high quality comments by the deadline to earn full credit on these assignments.
- d. Your Top 8 Dig Deeper Social Annotation scores for each module will count towards this grade. This means that you need to complete 16 at full credit for this part of your final grade.
- e. **Deadlines:**
 - i. The Social Annotations for Module #1 Dig Deeper is 5pm on **October 6**
 - ii. The Social Annotations for Module #1 Dig Deeper is 5pm on **December 1**

Summative Assessments (30% of your final grade)

I've broken the class into two modules. Each module will conclude with two forms of summative assessment, designed to measure how well you can **apply** the sociological tools you are learning to better understand the social world in this class.

Between the two kinds of summative assessments, you have 4 opportunities to earn this 30% of your final grade.

We will drop the lowest 1 score, meaning that only 3 of them count towards your final grade. You may use this drop as you wish, but we strongly recommend giving all of the assignments a try and saving your drops for the end of the semester (so you don't have to take Module Exam #2) or in case something pops up and you need them later.

1. Tech-Free Exams

- a. You will have two short multiple-choice exams during regular class times.
- b. You will take these exams without any technological assistance. We want you to complete these questions using your excellent brains!
 - i. The only things you should have out during the exam are the exam sheet, your scantron, and a pencil.
 - ii. We will honor all DRC accommodation requests. Please email me if you have any questions about how this will work!
- c. We will have a day of prep, an exam day, and an exam debrief day for both modules.

2. Peer-Reviewed Paper Assignments

- a. During each module, you will have access to a peer-reviewed paper assignment in Circuit (a Purdue-built software).
- b. For the first two weeks of the assignment, you can work with Charlie, an AI-enabled TA I've trained for the past 5 years to give you feedback on your early drafts.
- c. By the final draft deadline, you will submit a final draft accompanied with a "writing process memo" worth 50% of the content grade of the assignment.
 - i. You are welcome to use AI, Purdue OWL, office hours, your friends, etc. to help you write your paper. However, you also need to document your process and submit it with your work.
 - ii. We will have days to work on the papers in class.
- d. After you submit your final paper, Circuit will assign you three of your peers' papers. You will review them and give them feedback.
 - i. Treat these as advanced discussion boards, where each participant is spending a lot of time and effort on their contribution to the conversation.
 - ii. We will have time to work on these together in class.
- e. You will conclude with a self-review of your work.

- f. Altogether, this work takes place over the entire course of the module and is worth as much as an exam.

Major Summative Assignment Dates

	<i>Summative Assessment</i>	<i>Date Due</i>
Exams	Module 1	October 7
	Module 2	December 9
Peer-Reviewed Papers	Module 1 Final Draft	September 24
	Module 1 Peer Review	September 29
	Module 2 Final Draft	November 17
	Module 2 Peer Review	November 24

What does “dropping the lowest score” mean?

Brightspace gives us the opportunity to remove (drop) the lowest x number of scores in a category from the calculation of your final grade. I will keep these drops invisible for the first half of the semester so that you can see how your grade is accumulating up to the midpoint of the semester. In Week #8, I will engage this setting in Brightspace so that you can see how many dropped assignments you have available to you for the rest of the semester.

COURSE POLICIES

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

We are using the standard percentage grading system in Brightspace. I will not round up points; an 89.97 is a B+. Please do not ask.

The final grade I submit for you to Purdue at the end of the semester is the direct outcome of the work you did during the semester by the deadlines I have laid out in this syllabus. As I will remind you frequently, the only exceptions I make are for the 5 types of ODOS Excused Absences or for DRC accommodations.

Your final grade in this class is not a negotiation – especially during the last weeks of the semester. It is a quantitative score you build up over the 17 weeks of the Fall 2025 semester. If you are not able to complete the work outlined in this syllabus by these deadlines, I will work with you on a withdrawal for the class.

I rarely grant incompletes at the end of the semester. The traditional understanding of incompletes is that they are only granted when a student has completed all the work for the semester by the deadlines in the syllabus and something catastrophic (as verified and

emailed to me by ODOS) keeps them from completing the final project. I follow this policy every time a student requests an incomplete.

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C Point Range:	C- (70-73)	C (74-76)	C+ (77-79)
D Point Range:	D- (60-63)	D (64-66)	D+ (67-69)
Failing:	F (59 and below)		

Sometimes, Brightspace does not record the score of something I have graded. Make sure that you are paying attention to your scores in Brightspace. If something seems off, please email me to let me know what it is. If you tell me in person, I will ask you to **email me** so that I have your full name, the date, the assignment, and the issue written for my to-do list.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This course is designed in a fully face-to-face model. Coming to class is an important part of your learning experience. I expect you to come to class every day that you are feeling well/not exhibiting signs of illness/have not tested positive for COVID. If you are not feeling well, please do NOT come to class. Please email me as soon as possible to let me know how you are doing and how I can help you to stay on-track in the course. I genuinely want to know that you are ok AND I want to help you do as well as possible this semester.

There are 5 types of excused absences: grief, military, jury duty, parental, and medical. Please fill out the paperwork at the [Office of the Dean of Students' webpage](#) as soon as you know you need one of these. They will send me an email with the excused absence. Please email me, too, if you feel comfortable doing so. When I receive their email, I will “exempt” the work in the Brightspace gradebook covered over the time period excused in the email.

NOTE: ODOS will not provide excuses for acute illness or planned appointments. I will also not “exempt” work or attendance for these days. BUT, I have built in dropped lowest scores and bonus assignments that every student has access to throughout the semester. You enrolled for an in-person class at this time. You made the commitment to prioritize being present and active during this exact class time for each day it is scheduled during this semester. Your ability to participate in this class in the structure laid out in the syllabus is a large portion of what your final grade in the class conveys on your transcript. Do not underestimate how important these skills are for all your future public work – either for pay or in other organizational roles.

If something happens during the semester that will cause you to miss excessive amounts of coursework, you must contact the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) as soon as possible to begin working with them on a plan for all of your classes.

Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person is threatening the safety of others by not complying with Protect Purdue protocols is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss the next steps with their instructor. Students also have the option of reporting the behavior to the [Office of the Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). See also [Purdue University Bill of Student Rights](#) and the Violent Behavior Policy under University Resources in Brightspace.

Talk to Me:

Things happen. I am human with a family and pets and outside interests, too. I have set firm due dates in this class to keep you on track to produce excellent work and to manage my own workload. This is not my only writing-intensive class this semester and I need a schedule to give you the best feedback possible. If you are struggling with a due date or with participation, contact me by email or check in with me after class or during office hours ASAP. I want to help you do well, but I can't if I don't know that something is wrong AND that you would like additional support from me. I will do everything I can to balance your learning needs with the academic integrity and rigor of this course.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

All Brightspace and Circuit assignments are due by 5:00PM EDT on Monday afternoons.

Work turned in after the deadline will lose 10% of the total possible grade for the assignment every 24 hours, beginning at 5:01PM that Monday. Assignments received after 5:00PM the Friday after the original deadline are no longer eligible for a grade.

I will only waive the late penalty for missed assignments covered by an ODOS email confirming your missed work was due to a university-approved excused absence.

FEEDBACK POLICY

I will give you feedback on your work within 2 weeks of you submitting the assignment. For most assignments, this means I will do my best to give you my feedback by 5pm on Monday 2 weeks after the initial assignment deadline.

I cannot discuss your grade over email. It is a violation of FERPA. All discussions of specific grades must take place in Brightspace or in person.

DISPUTING A GRADE

Any student who wishes to dispute a grade earned on any written or oral assignment may do so by emailing me (Dr. Hamm – lhamm@purdue.edu) a written memo that details specifically why the assignment should receive a different grade. The memo should explain how the assignment met the requirements and fully addressed the prompt using the answer as written (and not based on what could be inferred from what was written). All disputes must be submitted between 48 hours after the return of the assignment and a week of receiving the grade.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE POLICY

Email is my preferred method of contact.

All written communication you engage in as a student to another member of the Purdue community needs to meet professional standards. Emails to me should have “SOC 220” in the subject line, “Dr. Hamm” or “Professor Hamm” as the salutation, and a proper closing that includes both your preferred name and your name on our Brightspace page (if they are different). I ask for each of these elements to make our communication process as efficient as possible.

Expect email replies from me within one business day. For example, if you email me at 3:00pm on a Tuesday, I will try my best to respond by 3:00pm on Wednesday. If you email me at 7:00pm on Friday, I will get back to you by 5:00pm the following Monday.

Note – this means that the deadline for emails with questions about a specific assignment is 5:00PM the Friday before the Monday deadline.

COPYRIGHT

Notes, lectures, and in-class assignments are derivative works. This means that they are protected by copyright and may not be “sold or bartered” without my express written permission. Do NOT post anything available to other people (not for private, individual study use) from this course on Quizlet, Course Hero, Slideshare, etc.

Individuals are encouraged to alert University officials to potential breaches of this policy by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information is submitted the greater the opportunity for the university to investigate the concern. More details are available on our course Brightspace table of contents, under University Policies.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations]

Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that: "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]

In this class, these policies mean that:

- 1) EVERY source you pull ideas from must be cited in APA format in your assignments
- 2) You do NOT have my permission to post assignments, questions, or resources from this class anywhere, and
- 3) All work that you turn in must be entirely your own. (not Wikipedia's, BuzzFeed's, the New York Times, your roommate's, mom's, ChatGPT's, tutor's, fraternity brother's, etc.)

I will help you properly cite your sources but have a zero-tolerance policy for the other two. The first instance of the latter two will result in a zero grade. You will fail the class and be reported to the Dean for the second offense.

AI/CHATBOT POLICY

I will allow you to use AI-generated writing and research assistance for some assignments in this class. In these cases, it will be explicitly stated on the assignment. For all other assignments and work in this class, the use of chatbots for writing and research is strictly forbidden. Submitting AI-generated writing or research as your own is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as **plagiarism**.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION POLICY

In this class, students are encouraged to exercise their right to free inquiry and expression. You are welcome to express any view on the subject matter introduced by the instructor or other class members within the structure of the course. While you are responsible for learning the content of this course, you remain free to take a reasoned exception to the views presented and to reserve judgment about matters of conscience, controversy, or opinion. When you encounter ideas that you find offensive, immoral, or unwise, you are encouraged to engage them with reasons, evidence, and arguments.

Your course grade will be based on your academic performance, not on the opinions you express. Our commitment to freedom of expression means that no relevant ideas or

positions are out of bounds, but disruptive or disorderly behavior, threats, or harassment are strictly prohibited and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

See the University's "Commitment to Freedom of Expression" and "Bill of Student Rights" in the University Policies and Statements module on Brightspace.

RECORDING AUDIO OR VIDEO

Recording video or audio in class without express permission by DRC or the instructor is illegal in the state of Indiana. While this is a one-party consent state, classrooms are protected spaces where people need to feel free to explore ideas without fear of being recorded and having their words taken out of context. If I find that you record class without permission, you will no longer be allowed to attend class sessions.