

IDS 2113
SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ISSUES
Spring 2008

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Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45,	

Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching: Mission and Goals:

It is the **Mission** of the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching to foster intellectual and professional growth and integrity. To that end, the **goal** of the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching is to create a context that nurtures interdisciplinary learners who:

- Acquires and demonstrates content and discipline knowledge
- Demonstrates an awareness and acknowledgement of and engagement in research-based, reflective, culturally responsive practices
- Is a producer, disseminator, and critical consumer of research
- Demonstrates an awareness and acknowledgment of and engagement in social justice and equitable practices, and
- Articulate their professional philosophy and demonstrate a strong professional identity.

This course, IDS 2113, is one of many classes you will take within the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching that will fulfill this mission and goal.

Introduction:

Consider this class as a survey of social issues affecting the world society. It is a vision-thing, a study of social relationships, and the creation of personal vision – for you and for me – of global society. Over the following weeks we will explore ten thematic issues of post-modernity from interdisciplinary perspectives, primarily in the social sciences. By the end of the semester a student should have an amplified vision of the local, national, and especially the global context of our lives...and perhaps the knowledge and sensitivity to analyze and reconsider the future of our communities.

Goals and Objectives:

Society and Social Issues is a core course that encourages the development of interdisciplinary as well as critical thinking competencies. By the end of the semester students will understand and analyze the complexities and problems confronting human societies as we navigate 21st century. Some of the social issues examined are controversial and/or depressing. Students must be ready *intellectually* to confront social problems (e.g. overpopulation, deforestation, racism, classism, sexism) that they may have dodged or ignored before.

IDS 2113 also strongly supports the learning objectives of the UTSA core curriculum, especially the interdisciplinary proficiencies in Domain IV (but also Domain II). Therefore, there is considerable attention devoted to: political and sociological consequences of social life, demography, international relations, world geography, non-Western cultures and societies, economics, global environment, citizenship, culture, technology and cultural diversity. Throughout this course you will be asked to integrate various social science disciplines. Students will also demonstrate their “connectivity” – that is, their ability to do interdisciplinary studies and perform a critical reflection – in two social science research papers.

We will also explore our own identities, biases, and prejudices. We will develop an on-going conversation about the effects of race, class, and gender in society. Through our investigation our goal is to become more multiculturally and more sensitive to the experiences of all people.

Course Expectations:

This is a reading and writing intensive course. You will also conduct social research and share your findings with our class. Your attendance and appropriate class participation is essential to your understanding of the course material. You should come to each class meeting prepared to take excellent lecture notes and participate in class discussion.

You will also be asked to formulate your own research questions on a topic of your choice. You will use your own research, judgment and scholarship to integrate your findings and report possible solutions.

Texts: **Kendall, D (2006). *Social Problems in a diverse society: 4th Edition.***
Loeb, P.R. (2004). *The impossible will take a little while*

Explanation and Assignments

Grading:

Your grade in this course will be based on two examinations (Midterm and Final) and two papers (Alpha and Omega), and your participation and attendance in the course.

1. Participation and Professionalism:

Attendance will be taken in class each time that we meet, it is expected that you will come to class having read the material and ready to participate appropriately. This course is designed to engage the class members in a thoughtful on-going conversation about society and social issues. Much of what we will read and discuss can be approached from multiple viewpoints and may create controversy. During class many different activities will be introduced. It is your responsibility to complete the activities and participate in class discussion. In addition, your

attitude and behavior in class will be reflected in the points earned under the category of Classwork/Participation/Attendance this is worth 30 Points towards your final grade.

2. Email and Webct – I will use Webct (webct.utsa.edu) as my format for posting messages to the class and keeping the calendar current. Check it often, especially a day or so before class so that you will be aware of anything that I have added relevant to an upcoming class. Course Notes will be available to you through WebCT and Assignment rubrics are located there.

(1) E-mail to course instructor:

When e-mailing me, please follow these conventions:

- 1 - Begin the message subject line with [course number, e.g. IST 6503] followed by the topic of your message. Be sure and tell me your name.
- 2 - Do not include any periods (...) in the subject of your message. The UTSA e-mail service automatically deletes all messages with a period in the subject line.

(2) WebCT:

Once you have entered WebCT for the first time, please set up your e-mail to be forwarded to your Internet e-mail account. Once you have done this, all e-mail sent through WebCT will be forwarded to your personal e-mail account and you will not have to check WebCT e-mail. To set up this function, follow these steps:

- 1 - Log in to your WebCT course.
- 2 - Enter the e-mail area of the course. This should be linked on the course home page.
- 3 - Click on "Message Settings" at the top of the e-mail screen.
- 4 - Check "Forward my mail to: <your email address>"
- 5 - Click on "Update."

(458-5538)This is the number for the computer help desk.

3. Examinations will be in essay format. All essay questions will be provided to you before the due dates indicated on the syllabus. Your responses should be type written and follow APA guidelines for publication. Your essays should demonstrate your ability integrate the knowledge you have gained through class discussion and course readings. Appropriate referencing to our authors is expected, however your responses should include your own thoughts in response to the reading assignments. Each exam is worth 50 points.

Examinations will be comprehensive; they will include material from all of the readings and lecture notes. It is recommended that you keep up with the readings for each class, and give yourself ample time to prepare for the exams.

If you are absolutely sick and unable to submit a scheduled exam: call in advance; leave a message with the division office pool (#458-5969); send the instructor an email; see a doctor; obtain a signed medical excuse; recover; and contact the instructor immediately upon your return with your signed medical excuse.

4. Class Papers in connection with Service Learning

The papers you submit in this course will require social research. In our course we will explore social issues; we will consider the “isms” that people face everyday. The problem you research will need to be social in nature, but you may extend your concern to examine the environment, human rights, education, globalization, or urbanization. You will need to define the problem, state why you see it as a concern, and provide current statistics, stories and data to support your points. You should be scholarly in your research efforts; it is expected that you will use a variety of reliable current secondary and primary academic resources. In order to create a more

in depth understanding of a social issue society that concerns you, you will connect you research to a service learning project.

Part 1 - You will research a current social phenomenon.

- Select a social issue connected to the “isms” we have discussed in class.
- Your paper should include statistics, data and stories concerning your topic of interest and clearly explain why you believe it is a social problem. Your discussion should also include an explanation as to why this topic is important to you.
- **Understanding the Issue**
 1. What is the issue?
 2. Whose issue is it?
 3. Why is it an issue?
 4. What is the historical context of the issue?
 5. What roles do race, class, and gender play in the issue?
- In most communities, individuals and organizations are working to solve problems. These efforts may be taken up by individuals, nonprofit organizations, churches and publicly-funded organizations. Find out what your community is doing to help address the problem. You will need to contact individuals in your community to research this issue gathering at least 3 sources of information on this. It is important to remember here that addressing a problem includes direct service, advocacy, lobbying and so on and that social problems are complex and involve a great many efforts.
- Students should inquire about the services provided, how one qualifies, who is served, how the organization receives funding, and the historical background of the organization.
- **Action Plan – This is an important part of your reflection**

What can you do to contribute to the positive resolution of the issue?
- In order to add to your understanding of the social problem you have identified you will conduct and document at least 12 hours of service to the organization.

Part 2

- Summarize your work experience in a table form, indicating dates, number of hours, and short description of what you did (e.g., helped with homework, coached basketball, tutored, produced materials, made meals, collected clothing). Include the site of your placement and immediate supervisor or person who can verify your work, with a phone number.
- **Report and Reflection: (Due at Final Meeting)** Your final report should include the following:

- One paragraph describing your work within the organization.
- One paragraph describing the mission of the organization you worked with.
- One page or so describing events, encounters, or other highlights of your experience (progress with one person you tutored, an event that brought people together or brought out the best in certain people, a conflict or crisis you handled, a moving interaction, etc.)
- Two pages reflecting on what you learned from this experience: about the people you worked with, about the work of the organization, and/or about the social problems or issues addressed by the organization and specifically by your role in that organization. Do you feel that the organization (or your role) was effective? Would you change anything about the organization or your role if you had it to do over again? What else besides the work of this organization would be necessary?

Both papers should include detailed documentation of Contacts and Resources and References used in your research.

You will be provided with a matrix used to mark your papers and your presentation. The following criteria will be used for assignments.

1. Follow APA (5th Edition) guidelines for publication and referencing
2. 5 Page minimum length, 6-8 recommended
3. Original and/or creative thought/approaches
4. Thoughtful introduction and reflective conclusion
5. Substantive facts/evidence to support your points
6. It is expected that students will seek five current academic resources in addition to our texts to support their ideas.
7. Appropriate and thorough editing for: excellent spelling and punctuation, advanced syntax and word choice, paragraphs that are well-polished and effective and logical transitions between paragraphs.
8. You must carefully and correctly reference all of your resources following APA guidelines.
9. Timely Submittal

Your Grade will be calculated as follows

Exam 1 – 50 points	A = 225 Points
Final Exam – 50 Points	B = 200 Points
Part 1 Paper – 50 Points	C = 175 Points
Part 2 Paper – 50 Points	D = 150 Points
Presentation – 20 Points	
Attendance - 30 Points	

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance Policy. Class attendance is essential for success in this course. If you know you are going to be absent, please discuss it with the instructor prior to the absence. Missing more than 30 minutes of class will be considered an absence. While I am deeply empathetic and sympathetic to the fact that “life happens” and can get in the way of your studies. Your learning and my commitment to teaching are very important to me. We cannot engage in this exchange if you are not in class.

Tardy Policy. Attendance will be taken promptly at the beginning of each session. Missing more than 30 minutes of class will be considered an absence.

Make-up work: Please contact me when you know you are not going to be in class and you are unable to turn in an assignment. Communication is the key to your success. I respect that we are all adults and we are all committed to learning because of this I expect that your work will be completed and turned in when it is due.

Other Topics:

Students are expected to demonstrate professional conduct and attire during class sessions (see Fitness to Teach policy document located in the Department website). All cell phones and beepers must be silenced during class periods.

The instructor will follow all the policies and procedures, in regard to students, as they are specified in the UTSA Faculty Handbook and the Fitness to Teach Policy document. Any incidence of scholastic dishonesty or other student discipline issues, will be managed as the Handbook specifies (Faculty Handbook, Section 2.37, pages IV-3li-vi).

Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services located in MS 2.03.18, telephone 458-4157, 458-4981 TTY, or Downtown FS 1.526, 458-2816, in order to receive support services.

Schedule

1/15	Syllabus and Course Introduction
1/17	Introduction to Social Issues
1/22	Conceptual Frameworks <i>Kendall chapter 1</i> <i>The Impossible p. 1-29</i>
1/24	Problems in Politics and the Global Economy <i>Kendall Ch.13</i>
1/29	Problems in the Media <i>Kendall Ch.14</i>

- 1/31 Poverty and Classism
Kendall Ch.2
- 2/5 Poverty and Classism
Kendall Ch.2
- 2/7 Poverty and Classism
Kendall Ch.2
- 2/12 Wealth and Poverty
- 2/14 How do you view race?
Alpha Paper Topic Due
Williams Ten Lenses
- 2/19 Racial and Ethnic Inequality
Kendall Ch.3
- 2/21 Continue with Racism and Inequality
- 2/26 Racism cont.
- 2/28 The Racism poverty Connection
- 3/4 Gender Inequality
Kendall Ch.2
Alpha Paper Due
- 3/6 Gender cont.
- 3/11 Inequality Base on Sexual Orientation
Kendall Ch.6
- 3/13 The Changing Family
Kendall Ch.11
Midterm Due
- 3/25 Problems in Education
Kendall Ch. 266
- 3/27 Education cont.
- 4/1 Pop Culture and Fall of Society
Assigned Readings- See WebCT

- 4/3 Media and Society
- 4/8 Urbanization
Kendall ch 16
- 4/10 Urbanization cont.
- 4/15 Domestication and population, Global Inequality and
The Environmental Crisis
Kendall ch 15
- 4/17 The Environment
- 4/22 Global Social Problems:
War and Terrorism
Kendall Ch 17
- 4/24 War and Terrorism
- 4/29 Can Social Problems Be Solved?
Kendall Ch.18
- 5/1 Cont.
Omega Paper Due
Course Summary and Student research Presentations
- Final Exam Due

