

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
SOC282H1S SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

WINTER 2021

Online Asynchronous – 2 Hours per week

Instructor: René Bogović

Office Hours: Wednesday 6:00-8:00am, Thursday 2:00-3:00pm, Friday 10:00-11:00am

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Course Website: q.utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistant: Kyla Simms

TA Email: k.simms@mail.utoronto.ca

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory. [Council of Aboriginal Initiatives, 2014]

Course Description

This course provides a general introduction to the study of social problems. When you hear the words social problem do you think of juvenile delinquents? Drug addicts? Homeless people? Sex workers? Or do you think about insider trading? Tax fraud? Arms sales? The mass marketing of junk food? Celebrity sex scandals? The secret lives of powerful people? The label social problem has been applied to each of these topics and to hundreds more. In this course, we will look at social inequality and some of its consequences, including poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, crime, substance abuse climate change and urban sprawl, using sociological theories to understand the causes of these problems. We will also examine the “social construction” of these social problems and factors that influence public attention and concern. By the end of this course, you will have a better idea of how the world works today, and what you may be able to do about it.

NOTE: Prerequisites

SOC101Y1 or SOC102H1 or SOC100H1. Students without this requirement will be removed at any time discovered and without notice.

Recommended Preparation: SOC150H1

Course Delivery and Format

All components of this course are delivered online through Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

- **Lectures:** pre-recorded lectures will be posted on Quercus as a mix of MP3 videos and PowerPoint slides with audio at 5:00pm EST each Tuesday.
- **Office Hours:** to accommodate students working across time zones, the instructor will be available for individual office hours through Bb Collaborate on the following days and times:

Day of the Week	Toronto Time (EST – UTC -5)	Vancouver Time (PST – UTC -8)	Central Europe (CET – UTC+1)	Beijing (CST – UTC +8)
Wednesday	6:00am	3:00am	12:00pm	7:00pm
Thursday	2:00pm	11:00am	8:00pm	3:00am (Friday)
Friday	10:00am	7:00am	4:00pm	11:00pm

To attend office hours, you must **email the instructor at least 24 hours ahead of time.**

To access office hours, click on Bb Collaborate from the course menu on Quercus, select the appropriate session and follow the on-screen prompts to set up your system.

There will be no office hours during reading week and on the weeks term assessments take place.

- **Additional Content:** during some weeks, course readings might be accompanied by on-line documentaries that you are expected to watch before the following lecture is posted.
- **Take Home Assessments:** will be open book conducted entirely on Quercus, and will take place on Wednesdays February 3rd and March 10th from 10:00am to 12:00pm Toronto time (EST) to accommodate the most students writing across time zones.

Course Evaluation

Term Assessment 1	February 3: 10:00am – 12:00pm	20%
Term Assessment 2	March 10: 10:00am – 12:00pm	20%
Final Assessment	April Assessment Period	30%
Term Paper	Due April 2	20%
Discussion Groups	Response due: Fridays at 7:00pm Comment due: Tuesdays at 5:00pm	10%

Assignments and Grading

1. Term Assessments: 40% (20% each)

There are two term assessments, each worth 20 per cent. These assessments will cover the assigned readings and lectures for the designated section of the course. The tests are not cumulative. The assessment will consist of multiple-choice questions and will be 2 hours long. You will only be able to see one question at the time and will not be able to change your answer.

2. Final Assessment: 30%

Students will have 3 hours to complete the final assessment. The assessment is cumulative and covers all class material, with an emphasis on the last 4 weeks of the course.

The assessment will consist of multiple-choice questions and will be 3 hours long. You will only be able to see one question at the time and will not be able to change your answer.

The final will take place during the final assessment period between April 13th and April 23rd. The Faculty of Arts of Science usually posts the exact time and date of these assessments in mid to late March.

3. Discussion Groups: 10% (1% each)

To successfully complete this exercise, it is important that you do your weekly readings in full and listen to posted lecture material. The class has been randomly divided in 10 discussion groups. Each Tuesday at 7:00pm I will be posting several discussion questions based on the content we have covered in class. For full marks you are expected to:

- Respond to a question of your choice within 100-150 words by Friday at 7:00pm.
- Comment on a contribution by another student within 100-150 words by Tuesday at 5:00pm.

Your response does not need to be polished, but it should show critical engagement with course material and the responses of your peers. Participation in each discussion session is worth 1% (0.5% for the response + 0.5% for the comment) of your final grade for a total of 10%. Participation will be marked pass/fail. If your response and comment demonstrate critical engagement with course material, you will receive full credit. If they do not, you will receive a grade of 0. There will be no comments given on these assignments, but you can meet with your TA to discuss them.

4. Term Paper: 20%

The details of this assignment follow below. This assignment will be worth 20% of your grade and it is due on April 2nd. You have the entire semester to work on this assignment.

- a. Select one of the social problems we have discussed in this course. Then, show how the extent of this problem in Canada is affected by international flows of people (e.g., migrants, tourists, or terrorists), information, jobs, and money, or by

- other global processes and events, including the COVID-19 pandemic if you like.
- b. The total length of your paper is to be ~2000 words (8 pages) plus references. Please correct for spelling and grammar errors before submitting.
 - c. Use and cite a minimum of 10 **peer-reviewed** journal articles in preparing your paper. Your paper should use ASA (American Sociological Association) referencing. Please see the document posted on Quercus for instructions on how to write a paper using ASA formatting (**ASA format citation guide.pdf**).
 - d. All references should be from the year 2000 or later; earlier references should be justified (e.g., as a “classic study”).
 - e. Direct quotations must be enclosed in quotation marks and a specific reference cited. Paraphrases of published material do not require quotation marks but must indicate a reference source.
 - f. Penalties of **5% per day of lateness** will be applied for papers handed in after the deadline.

Course Policies and Guides

Course Communication

In addition to office hours, the course instructor and TA are also available via email. To ensure your emails receive a response, please note the following about email correspondence:

- Make sure all emails are sent through Quercus.
- Emails about assignments, tests, and course materials should first be directed to the TA.
- Avoid sending emails that ask for readily available information. Emails that ask for information that is provided in the course outline (e.g. “how much is assignment X worth”) will not receive a response.
- Every effort will be made to respond to student emails in a timely manner; however, instant or even overnight responses are not always possible. Please be patient. We will respond to emails as soon as we can, usually within 48 hours (excluding weekends and statutory holidays).

Accessibility

If you require accessibility services, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/> as soon as possible. For specific COVID-19 related accessibility concerns, please visit <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/covid-19-accessibility-faqs/>.

Absence Declaration

The University is temporarily suspending the need for a doctor’s note or medical certificate for any absence from academic participation. Please use the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN found in the Profile and Settings menu to formally declare an absence from academic participation in the University. The tool is to be used if you require consideration for missed academic work based on the procedures specific to your faculty or campus. In addition to this declaration, you are responsible for contacting me to request the academic consideration you are seeking. You will be notified by the University if this policy changes.

Late Assignments

Late term papers without a valid excuse will be deducted 5% per day, including weekends and holidays. We will not be accepting work submitted over a week late. Late discussion posts will not be accepted.

Missed Assessments

Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero for that test unless reasons beyond their control prevent them from taking it. Within three days of the missed assessment, students who wish to write the make-up test must give the instructor a written request for special consideration, accompanied by proper documentation from your college registrar or through the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN, which explains why the assessment was missed. The make-up test will be scheduled on Quercus.

Grade Appeals

The instructor and teaching assistant take the marking of assignments and tests very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

If it is a mathematical error simply alert the instructor of the error.

In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:

1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader's comments.
3. If you still feel the grade you received is not an accurate reflection of the work that you produced, you must discuss your grade with your TA within one week of the grade being returned to you, addressing the comments they provided to you.
4. If you are unable to come to an agreement, you may request a regrade from the instructor. In your request, you must address your TA's comments and explain why you feel they do not adequately reflect your assignment. Keep in mind that upon regrading, your mark may go up or down or stay the same.

Turnitin

The term paper must be submitted to turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their papers to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website. Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0%) **unless a student instead provides, along with their assignment**, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submitted was truly their own.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to scholarship at the University of Toronto and beyond. Academic offenses include, but are not limited to, using someone else's ideas in a paper or exam without proper citations, submitting your own work for credit in multiple

courses, obtaining assistance from others during exams (including having someone edit your work or looking at a classmate's work), and falsifying illness on the Absence Declaration tool.

Please familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>

Writing Support

Each college has a writing centre with instructors who can assist you at various stages of writing projects. I highly recommend seeking help from your college writing centre for your reading responses. Find your writing centre here: <https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/>

Note that writing support is available through phone appointments through the COVID-19 crisis.

Course Materials & Readings

We will use two textbooks for this course, listed below. As this is an online course, e-versions of the textbooks are available online for purchase and are substantially cheaper than the hardcopy version. A restricted numbers of hardcopy textbooks are available at the U of T Bookstore for those students who prefer reading on paper.

Tepperman, Lorne, Josh Curtis, and Rachel La Touche, **Social Problems: A Canadian Perspective**, 5th edition, Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 2020 (SP)

Tepperman, Lorne, Cinthya Guzman, and Ioana Sendriou, **Picturing Social Problems**, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2018 (PSP)

Supplementary material might be added at a later date.

Note: Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Session Topics and Assigned Readings Overview

Week 01: January 11

Introduction: What are social problems?

SP 1; PSP 1

Week 02: January 18

Class and economic inequality

SP 2; PSP 2

Week 03: January 25

Race and Ethnic Relations

SP 3; PSP 3

Week 04:

Assessment 1: 10:00am – 12:00pm, February 3

Week 05: February 08
Gender Relations

SP 4; PSP 4

Week 06: February 15
Reading Week

Week 07: February 22
Sexualities

SP 5; PSP 5

Week 08: March 01
Health Issues, Addictions and Substance-Use

SP 7; PSP 8

Week 09:

Assessment 2: 10:00am – 12:00pm, March 10

Week 10: March 15
Crime and Violence

SP 6; PSP 7

Week 11: March 22
Global Inequality, War and Terrorism

SP 8

Week 12: March 29
Population and the Natural Environment

SP 13; PSP 15

April 2: Term Paper Due

Week 13: April 5
Cities and Future Problems

SP 14; PSP 14

Final Assessment Period: April 13 – April 23
Assessment 3