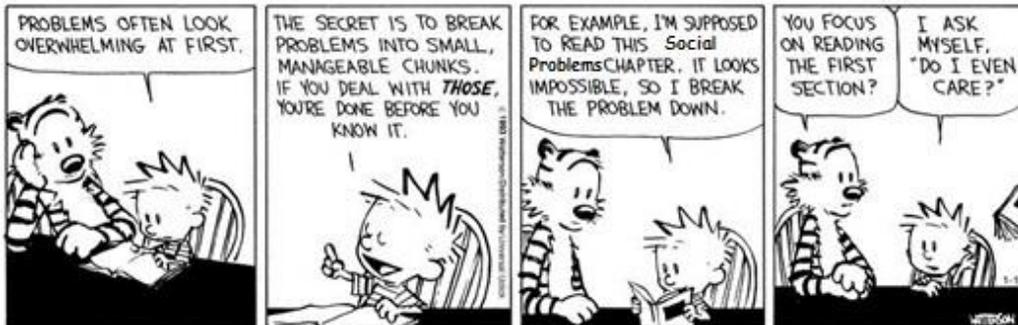




SOC 3
Social Problems
Sociology Department
University of California, Davis



Instructor: David Orzechowicz
Email: djorzechowicz@ucdavis.edu
Office Hours and Location: Wed 3-5 pm and by appointment
 SSHB 250
Class Time and Location: Mon-Thurs 10-11:40am
 Wellman 115



Course Overview

Social Problems. Most of us can identify examples of a social problem. We might hear about them in conversation with family and friends, read about them online, or experience them in our everyday lives. A wide range of people devote their lives to addressing social problems, from politicians, doctors, and lawyers, to activists, members of religious organizations, and philanthropists. But what constitutes a social problem? Do social problems “naturally” exist in the world, or are they a product of personal or structural failure? Do they transcend geography, nationality, and time, or are some people, groups, and nations just fated to experience social problems more than others?

This course takes a social constructionist approach to social problems to understand the *claimsmaking* process involved in the establishment that some feature of social life is, indeed, a “problem.” We will draw on theoretical readings as well as case studies to develop a toolkit for deconstructing and understanding social problems.

Ground Rules

Class will be a combination of lecture, free writes, and small and large group discussion about course material. Please come to class ready to ask questions, share thoughts and experiences, and otherwise participate in our discussions. Readings assigned for a particular week may be the basis for group work and discussion, and should be completed before the days on which they are assigned. I will assume that you have read and have a basic knowledge of the material for the day. Lecture material will supplement, unpack, or compliment course readings, and I do not want to see anyone feeling lost or behind.



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Ground Rules (continued)

Please be courteous and respectful of one another. We all bring different experiences to this class, and have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others. I will not tolerate verbal attacks or slander aimed at a particular racial, ethnic, gender, class, ability, religious, political, or sexual orientation group – or any other group for that matter. Challenging ideas is encouraged and desired; attacking individuals is not.

If you find yourself falling behind, not understanding material, not doing as well on assignments as you would like, or are encountering other personal or professional obstacles that might impede your ability to succeed in this course, please do not hesitate to see me during office hours or by scheduling an appointment. And **do not wait**; the sooner you approach me about potential conflicts or problems related to the course, the more I can do to help you succeed in this class.

Learning Atmosphere

I believe that students learn best when they are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this is an active, interactive course where you are expected to read, write, discuss, and participate. I think of our class as a “collaborative learning community” where we all teach and learn from each other. Every time you make a comment or ask a question, you teach something to the rest of us. I challenge you to abandon the traditional passive student role and to get involved with teaching and learning – I think you’ll enjoy it and learn a lot in the process!

Please note that we will discuss potentially sensitive and explicit topics. If at any time you feel uncomfortable during class, you are free to step out of class. However, if you think you will feel uncomfortable with open and frank discussions, this course may not be a good choice for you. This is an “R” rated class.

Expectations

The following outlines what you may expect of me as your instructor:

- A sincere effort to help you learn the course material. Since my ultimate goal is to help you learn and succeed, I intend to spend enough time and effort on class preparation to make the material as understandable and as interesting as I possibly can.
- Accessibility. I agree to be available to you outside of class should you desire help. I encourage you to come to my office hours whenever you have a question or concern. I am more than happy to help. Please try to make it your personal goal to visit my office hours at least once this quarter. I think you will find it helpful. If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can schedule an appointment that fits your schedule.
- Attention. When you are speaking, you will have my undivided attention.
- Fairness.



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The following outlines what I expect from you as a student in this class:

- **A sincere effort to learn the course material.**
- **Preparation.** You should come to class having done the assigned readings and homework. Please bring the readings to class each day, in case we use them in-class. All homework and papers should be typed and double-spaced (unless otherwise noted). Please purchase a stapler and a box of large paper clips, if you don't already have them – individual papers must be stapled, while groups of items turned in together must be clipped. (Note that the BCC guideline for homework is two hours outside of class for each hour spent in class.)
- **Attendance.** Please attend all class sessions – your presence in class contributes significantly toward your final grade in the course, as I cover a lot of material in class that cannot be found in the readings. If you do need to miss class, please note that you will not be able to make up any in-class work that you may have missed (such as group work), and you are also responsible for any and all work that is due at the class meeting immediately upon your return, even if it was assigned on the day you were absent. I highly recommend that you get the names and contact information some of your classmates so you can contact them for any assignments or notes if you miss class.
- **Promptness.** You should be in class on time except when delayed by an emergency, and you should stay until class is over unless you become ill or have made arrangements with me to leave early. **Assignments will be reduced by 1 full letter grade for each late day, unless you and I make alternative arrangements beforehand.**
- **One Diva, One Mic.** Only one person speaks at a time.
- **One Stage, Many Divas.** No one person should monopolize discussion; everyone gets the opportunity to voice their thoughts, questions, and insights.
- **Contribution.** Learning about each other's experiences and perspectives is an integral part of the learning process in this course. I believe that you will learn a lot about yourself and your fellow classmates. To work effectively in this course, therefore, you are expected to be an active participant in our learning environment. You should do your best to contribute to class discussions and activities. Please be advised that your grade will suffer if you do not participate and contribute to the intellectual life of our class.



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- **Respect and tolerance.** Since learning about diverse experiences is central to this course, it is of the utmost importance that you respect your classmates' experiences, differences, and opinions. Disrespectful attitudes will not be tolerated.
- **Honesty.** If you cheat, you fail. No excuses will be taken into account. Your work must be your own, except when asked to work with other students. Furthermore, you are required to acknowledge in your papers if you have borrowed any ideas, terms, or phrases, even if you have borrowed from a classmate. If you have any hesitation, or if you are in doubt about one of these issues, feel free to ask me.

Course Policies

1. If something is going to be late, always contact me beforehand. Given the circumstances, I *may* give you an extension, but extensions are not guaranteed.
2. For everyday a paper is late, the grad will go down by one-third. Each weekend day counts as one day. For example, if you write a "B" quality paper due Friday, and you turn it in on the following Monday, you will receive a "C."
3. If you turn in an assignment late and claim a physical or mental health excuse, you must get a letter from your doctor/therapist, including an office telephone number, written on official letterhead paper. **The medical excuse must make clear that you were not able to hand in the assignment on the due date.**
4. I adhere to University policies on plagiarism. See <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/avoid.htm> for those policies. I will report cases of plagiarism to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.
5. Contesting Grades: If you disagree with the grade you receive on an assignment and wish to contest the grade, you must resubmit the original assignment to me *no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 1 week* after it has been returned to the class *with a 1 page (min) argument* as to why you deserve a better grade.

Course Reading

Required Text: All required course readings will be available on the course smartsite (<https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu/xsl-portal/site/soc3ss2y2013>). If you have any trouble accessing the course smartsite, e-mail me **ASAP** so I can forward you the readings. Do not wait until the night before – I may not see your e-mail until it is too late.



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Assignments and Grading

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Percentage of Final Grade</i>
<i>Participation (section & lecture)</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>Paper Thesis/Outline</i>	<i>August 26</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Research Paper</i>	<i>September 9</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Midterms (x2)</i>	<i>August 19, September 2</i>	<i>20% (each)</i>
<i>Final Exam</i>	<i>September 12</i>	<i>25%</i>

Note: The midterms and final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. All exams will be open-note, open-book so long as you bring in hardcopies of your notes and the readings. Electronic copies will not be permitted, barring extenuating circumstances.

Student Disability Policy

If you have any documented educational needs, please advise me at the beginning of the quarter so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Note: While this syllabus more-or-less represents the goals, assignments, and material for this course, I reserve the right to alter any aspect at any time. Any changes to the syllabus will be communicated to students in lecture in a timely fashion.



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Reading and Assignment Schedule



<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments & Readings Due</u>
Aug. 5	Introduction to Sociology & the Course	No readings.
Aug. 6	The Sociological Imagination	Wacquant, Loic. Practical Tips for Reading Sociology. http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/reading/reading-sociology.htm Rosen, Eva and Sudhir Alladi Ventakesh. (2008.) A "Perversion" of Choice: Sex Work Offers Just Enough in Chicago's Urban Ghetto. <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 37:417-41.
Aug. 7	Social Constructionism & Social Problems, Part 1	Selections ("Social Constructionism," and "The Definition of Social Problems") from Social Constructionism. (2011.) Chapter 8 in <i>The Study of Social Problems: Seven Perspectives</i> , ed. Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Aug. 8	Social Constructionism & Social Problems, Part 2	Selections "Changing Constructions of Rape," and "Constructionism in Context") from Social Constructionism. (2011.) Chapter 8 in <i>The Study of Social Problems: Seven Perspectives</i> , ed. Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Aug. 12	<u>No class.</u>	Best, Joel. (2008.) Activists as Claimsmakers. Chapter 3 in <i>Social Problems</i> . NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Term Paper Assignment: Find sources.
Aug. 13	<u>No class.</u>	Best, Joel. (2008.) Experts as Claimsmakers. Chapter 4 in <i>Social Problems</i> . NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Term Paper Assignment: Find sources.
Aug. 14	The Claimsmaking Process, Part 1	Jenness, Valerie. (1999.) Managing Differences and Making Legislation: Social Movements and the Racialization, Sexualization, and Gendering of Federal Hate Crime Law in the U.S., 1985-1998. <i>Social Problems</i> 46:548-71.
Aug. 15	The Claimsmaking Process, Part 2	No readings.
Aug. 19	-----	Midterm 1
Aug. 20	Claimsmaking: A Case Study	Ogle, Jennifer Paff, Molly Eckman, and Catherine Amoroso Leslie. (2003.) Appearance Cues and the Shootings at Columbine High: Construction of a Social Problem in the Print Media. <i>Sociological Inquiry</i> 73:1-27.
Aug. 21	The Claimsmaking Process	Best, Joel. (1987.) Rhetoric in Claims-Making. <i>Social Problems</i> 34:101-21.
Aug. 22	The Claimsmaking Process, Continued	No readings. Bring all term paper materials to class.



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<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Aug. 26	The Claimsmaking Process, Continued	Bogard, Cynthia J. (2001.) Claimsmakers and Contexts in Early Constructions of Homelessness: A Comparison of New York City and Washington, D.C. <i>Symbolic Interaction</i> 24:425-54. Einwohner, Rachel L. and J. William Spencer. (2005.) That’s How We Do Things Hear: Local Culture and the Construction of Sweatshops and Anti-Sweatshop Activism in Two Campus Communities. <i>Sociological Inquiry</i> 75:249-72.
Due: Term Paper Thesis and Outline.		
Aug. 27	The Claimsmaking Process, Continued	Fetner, Tina. (2005.) Ex-Gay Rhetoric and the Politics of Sexuality: The Christian Antigay/Pro-Family Movement’s “Truth in Love” Ad Campaign. <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i> 50:71-95.
Aug. 28	The Claimsmaking Process, Continued	Frailing, Kelly and Dee Wood Harper, Jr. (2010.) The Social Construction of Deviance, Conflict and the Criminalization of Midwives, New Orleans. <i>Deviant Behavior</i> 31:729-55.
Aug. 29	The Claimsmaking Process, Conclusion	No readings. Bring all term paper materials to class.
Sept. 2	-----	Midterm 2
Sept. 3	Sociologists as <u>Claimsmakers:</u> The “Problems” of Pop Culture	Gans, Herbert. (1999.) Excerpts from Chapter 1 “The Critique of Mass Culture” in <i>Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste</i> , 2nd edition. New York: Basic Books.
Sept. 4	Sociologists as <u>Claimsmakers:</u> Gender & Inequality	Schippers, Mimi. (.). Gender Maneuvering in Face-to-Face Interaction. <i>Rockin’ Out of the Box: Gender Maneuvering in Alternative Hard Rock</i> . New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Plank, Elizabeth. (2013.) What would female superheroes look like if they weren’t objectified. http://www.policymic.com/articles/32605/what-would-female-superheroes-look-like-if-they-weren-t-objectified
Sept. 5	Sociologists as Claimsmakers: Gender & Inequality (Wrap-up)	No readings. Bring completed rough draft of term paper to class.
Sept. 9	Sociologists as <u>Claimsmakers:</u> Race & Inequality	Reading TBD.
Sept. 10	Sociologists as <u>Claimsmakers:</u> Class & Inequality	McClain, Noah and Ashley Mears. (2012.) Free to those who can afford it: The everyday affordance of privilege. <i>Poetics</i> 40:133-49.



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<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments & Readings Due</u>
Sept. 11	Wrap-up & Review	No readings.
Sept. 12	-----	Final Exam.