

SYLLABUS

Social Problems

Sociology 1306, Section 602

Fall Semester, 2025

My Information

Name: Dr Jacob Hardy

Email: jhardy@tamusa.edu

Office Location: CAB 347D

Class Information

Classroom: Online Via Zoom

Class Days: Tuesday/Thursday

Class Time: 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Prerequisites: None

Course Credits: 3 Credit Hours

Office Hours: By Appointment

(To be discussed further in class) You can book me for a virtual office hours appointment using my Calendly Link here:

<https://calendly.com/jacobhardy>

Required Course Materials: *Seeing Social Problems: The Hidden Stories Behind Contemporary Issues*, by Ira Silver, 1st edition, 2020, Sage Publications, ISBN: 978-1071802250

Assorted additional readings will also be posted to the course Blackboard page

Course Overview

Course Description, Goals, & Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the application of sociological principles and theoretical perspectives to major social problems in contemporary society such as inequality, crime and violence, substance abuse, environmental issues, deviance, globalization, or family problems, amongst many other issues.

This class is an introductory course but attracts a variety of students. As this is not a majors only class, I have tried to strike a balance between what is of general interest/use regardless of our academic interests and to those who are exploring the foundations of sociology as a discipline or career.

Upon completion of this course, students will have developed their “sociological imagination” and better understand themselves and their society in relation to the many potential, and existent problems we find in the world around us. The assignments in this class will also help all students develop their critical thinking and writing skills.

Course Requirements and Grading

This class is designed to be an immersive learning experience. In addition to lectures, students will be expected to keep up with weekly readings, complete several writing assignments, and participate in class discussion. Assignments will challenge students to apply the concepts covered in class to their own lives.

Please check your TAMUSA email account daily, because important information about this class will be emailed to you. Please check the course Blackboard page frequently as well. Course announcements, grades, articles, etc. will be posted there. Regular checks of the Blackboard page will be the best way to keep up with what is going on with the course, and any adjustments we may make to the tentative course calendar.

A breakdown of course requirements and how each will contribute to your grade is included below.

Notes on Course Format:

This class is delivered in an online, synchronous format. This essentially means that we will have a live, virtual lecture at the time noted and scheduled on the first page of this syllabus (and as listed in your online course registration portal.) This course will also have an asynchronous component. Basically, this means that I will, as necessary, record additional material, and post it for the class on the course Blackboard page. You will need to access those course materials and recordings and review them on your time during this course. I will work to focus our lecture times together to cover the core material, but please be sure to plan to keep up to date with any recorded material as well as it will be a core component of this course.

Readings:

The bulk of the readings for this course will be from the required book listed in this syllabus. Secondary readings will be made available in the content section of this course's Blackboard page. Please check the course Blackboard page regularly as material posted there will be beneficial to your performance in this course.

Scheduled Exams:

There will be three exams in this course. Each exam will be worth 100 points (or 25%) of your overall grade. Together these exams make up 75% of your grade in this course. None of the exams will be comprehensive. Each exam will cover the material covered in class since any previous examination up to the point of the next examination. This includes course readings, class discussion, and any relevant media utilized in class or posted on Blackboard.

If for any reason an exam is missed due to a university excused absence a makeup exam will be administered provided that you notify me of your reason for absence and provide documentation within 7 days of the absence.

Assignments:

There will be a total of three written assignments for this course. The assignments must be typed, no greater than 12 pt font, with 1-inch margins, and must be two double spaced pages.

All writing assignments will be assigned on Friday and will be due the following Friday. In this way, we can discuss the concepts presented in the weekly reading assignments during lecture and address any questions that might arise about the readings.

Some of the assignments will ask you to think theoretically, apply theory to real life situations, or to discuss policy implications. As such, a significant part of your grade will be based on how much work you put into the assignment and whether or not you read and understood the reading. Assignments will be graded on a percentage scale, with 100 indicating a perfect score.

All writing assignments will be turned in via Blackboard. For all of your writing assignments you should utilize 12pt. typeface, Times New Roman font. Late work will be accepted so long as university excused absence documentation, or communication with me regarding extenuating circumstances is submitted to me within 7 days of the assignment due date. If an assignment is turned in late and does not have a university excused absence or some form of authorization from me, but is within 24 hours of the due date then I will accept the late work with a 10% penalty to the grade. Any assignments turned in more than 24 hours after the due date without a university excused absence will not be accepted and will result in a zero for that assignment.

AI Statement:

Writing has always incorporated tools as well as the voices and ideas of other people. GenAI can be a powerful tool in any writer's arsenal, but its use is not without risk. While GenAI's ability to convincingly string words together has a place in the writing process, it also risks introducing factual inaccuracies and, more importantly, risks making invisible the important connections between writing and thinking we are cultivating in this class. I will have detailed instructions for how to address the use of AI posted with your materials on Blackboard.

Attendance:

The University views class attendance as the responsibility of individual students. Attendance is essential to complete the course successfully. University rules related to excused and unexcused absences are located online at <https://catalog.tamusa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/class-attendance/>

Classroom Policies:

I believe in a relaxed and open classroom environment. If you are late to class due to an emergency or unforeseen circumstance I understand, but please try to enter as unobtrusively as possible so as not to disturb your fellow students. Otherwise I expect you

to be on time to class. If you need to leave class early try to notify me beforehand. In regard to electronics, I encourage the use of a variety of note taking tools, so tablets and laptops are permitted, so long as they are used solely for note taking. Cell phone use, as well as chatting with fellow students once the class has begun is strongly discouraged.

Classroom Civility, Respect and Tolerance:

Sociology delves into a variety of sensitive topics. I respect your individual viewpoints and ask that you respect the viewpoints of your classmates, even those that you do not agree with. Name-calling, yelling, or condescending remarks about any individual or group will not be tolerated. We should all strive to avoid ethnocentrism in this class. Ethnocentrism is the automatic assumption that one's perspective is superior to others. This course is a seminar. This means students will read the assigned reading and then come together to discuss it. Class participation is important. Without discussing the content of this course, it would be very difficult for everyone to grasp the concepts. I encourage you to participate in class. It is vital that you ask questions if you are unsure of anything covered in the class. If you have a question, it is likely that someone else in the class has the same question and is afraid to ask. Classroom discussion is highly encouraged in this course, but the underlying policy for this course is that we will all treat one another with respect.

Calculation of Course Grades

Assignment List

Assignment Type	Assignment Name	Points	Percent of Final Grade
Tests	Test 1	100	25%
	Test 2	100	25%
	Test 3	100	25%
Assignments	Writing Assignments	80	20%
	Attendance/Participation	20	5%
	TOTAL	400	100%

Grading Scale

Number of Points Earned	Course Grade
360 or More (90-100%)	A
320 to 359 (80-89.99%)	B
280 to 319 (70-79.99%)	C
240 to 279 (60-69.99%)	D
239.9 or Less (<59.9%)	F

Access to Grades:

Grades will be posted on the course Blackboard gradebook. Please note, it is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) for me to discuss grades with you via email. Any questions about grades should be addressed with me in person, preferably during office hours. Please Verify your Blackboard grades often. If you notice any errors or omissions notify me as soon as possible.

Extra Credit:

There will be no extra credit in this course.

Borderline Grades:

There will be no rounding of borderline grades in this course. All points are earned.

Incompletes:

I may assign grades of “incomplete” (I), but only under rare circumstances, and only if you request it. If a significant crisis occurs in your life near the end of the semester (such as a serious illness or a death in the immediate family) and you provide me with detailed documentation and notification of its occurrence, then a grade of incomplete might be assigned. If you ever find yourself in a situation that is negatively affecting your performance in the course, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. I cannot help you if I do not know what the problem is. If you wait until the end of the semester to notify me of issues, my options to identify and implement strategies to help you succeed in this course are more limited.

Instructor Error:

I am human, and as such from time to time I make mistakes. If you find that there is a grade or attendance discrepancy, please notify me so that we may work to correct it as soon as possible. In addition, since a portion of this course involves writing assignments, please keep an extra copy of all your written work until final course grades have been submitted. The electronic age has minimized accidents somewhat, but nevertheless it is better to be safe than sorry.

Academic Integrity & Student Rights and Expectations

Students' Rights and Responsibilities:

The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.

4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and->

responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

We are each a part of this university and this course, and as such I expect each and every one of us to do our utmost to uphold and respect that responsibility. Academic integrity is a crucial part of your growth and experience at this university. As such, all work in this course should be the product of the individual student. Unless explicitly stated in assignment instructions, no collaborative work is allowed.

Plagiarism:

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest edition of the Texas A&M University - San Antonio, Handbook as well as the AI statement above.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance:

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Religious Observances:

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule:

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination:

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu. Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for

all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu , 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

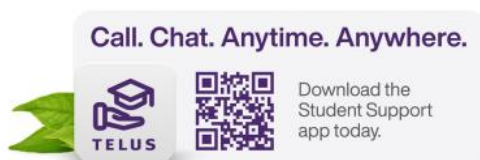
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students

wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Student Resources

Counseling/Mental Health Resources:

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120. All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling. Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331. Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness:

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Writing, Language and Digital Composing Center:

The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics>.

Meeting Basic Needs:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Pregnant/Parenting Students:

Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K). Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Young Jaguars:

This service can support parenting students with daycare who meet this criteria: Must be enrolled in classes at TAMUSA in the current semester. Must be Pell eligible or a single parent. They serve children ages 3 to 12-years-old. Children must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. You can contact them at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or (210) 784-2636