

**San José State University**  
**Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences**  
**Sociology 80: Social Problems, Section 3**  
**Spring, 2025, Course Syllabus**

**COURSE AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

Instructor:	Soma de Bourbon
Office Location:	DMH 238A
Telephone:	N/A
Email:	soma.debourbon@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays 12:00 to 1:30 pm and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Wednesdays 1:30 to 2:45 am and Asynchronous online
Classroom:	DMH 358

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

SJSU Catalog Description: “Sociological analysis of selected contemporary social problems such as housing and homelessness, economy and employment, environment and consumerism, family and divorce, crime and drugs, politics and media, race and gender, wealth and poverty, war and peace.”

Satisfies Area D: Social Sciences

**Grading:** Letter Graded

**COURSE FORMAT**

This class meets in person in DMH 358.

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on Canvas. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU (or other communication systems as indicated by the instructor). To log onto Canvas, go to <https://one.sjsu.edu/>

**AREA D LEARNING OUTCOMES**

CLO	Measurement
Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which social institutions, culture, and environment shape and are shaped by the behavior of individuals, both past and present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midterm and final exam</li> <li>• Reading quizzes</li> <li>• In-class exercises</li> </ul>
Compare and contrast the dynamics of two or more social groups or social systems in a variety of historical and/or cultural contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midterm and final exam</li> <li>• Reading quizzes</li> <li>• In-class exercises</li> </ul>

Place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midterm and final exam</li> <li>• Reading quizzes</li> </ul>
Draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Events Group Project</li> <li>• Midterm and final exam</li> <li>• Reading quizzes</li> <li>• In-class exercises</li> </ul>

## REQUIRED TEXTS / READING

- All readings will be available on Canvas or via an internet link.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

**\*\*If you are struggling or think you may fail the class, please come and see me during office hours. The earlier you talk with me, the more I can assist you. Please do not come to discuss passing the class in the last three weeks of the semester.**

### Exams (50%: 25% for midterm, 25% for final exam)

The exams, one midterm and one final, will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answers based on the readings, classroom presentations, and discussions. A makeup of a missed exam requires an official notice from a doctor, court officer, or other official.

### In-Class Reading Quizzes (20%)

Some information about the Reading Quizzes:

- The in-class quizzes will take place during the first ten minutes of class. If you come late, you will not be able to take the quiz.
- There will be nine quizzes during the semester.
- Your lowest score will be dropped.
- For the in-person quizzes, you can bring one hand-written sheet of paper with you to use for each quiz.
- There are no make-up quizzes since you can miss one quiz without it affecting your grade.
- The first two quizzes will consist of the following open-ended question: “Discuss three things you learned from the reading.” You will be asked to respond with a one to two paragraph answer.

### Reading Discussion Posts

- **You will submit 11 discussion posts on Canvas about the reading. Your lowest score will be dropped.**

### In-Class Participation/Discussion/Films (10%)

We will do in-class assignments most class sessions. You get points for showing up to class and doing the assignment. Points are not assigned based on how many times you raise your hand or talk in class. Some students do not enjoy talking in front of the class, and other students enjoy it. I would like every person to participate as much as they are able. See classroom protocol for use of devices in class. Since this is a hybrid class, we will have online discussion posts most weeks of the semester.

## **Group Project (10%)**

You will work in a group to discuss some of the topics we will cover in class.

## **LATE POLICY**

I will accept assignments turned in to me before class up until one week past the due date. **I will not accept assignments through email.** If you turn in the assignment late, you will receive partial credit, up to one half of the full credit for the assignment.

## **CLASSROOM PROTOCOL**

You are expected to arrive on time, participate in class discussions, and to be attentive during lectures and discussions. It is important to be courteous and respectful to your peers as well as to the instructor. Please refrain from using computers (unless typing notes from lecture), cell phones, earphones or other devices during class. When someone is using their phone or browsing the web on their computer, it is difficult to lecture, and makes discussions impossible. It is also distracting to other students. We do activities in class, so if you cannot participate in class without your technology, you should find another class.

If you are using your phone or computer while in class (unless cleared ahead of time), you may be asked to leave for the rest of the class period. If you are talking while the professor is lecturing or other students are presenting, you may be asked to leave for the remainder of the class period. This is not meant as a punishment; it is meant to ensure the wellbeing of the class as a whole. If you come to class, I expect you will give the class your full attention.

**PHONE:** I do not check the phone assigned to me, so please see me in class or during office hours for any important issues.

**EMAIL:** I cannot respond to hundreds of emails every day, and I do not want to miss any important emails from students who have an emergency or are requesting an in-person meeting. You can talk to me in class two days a week, so please only use email to set up an appointment with me or in case of an emergency.

**Recording and Privacy:** Recording any class activities, including lectures, is only allowed with the instructor's permission. You are not permitted to share or distribute class recordings. Instructor-generated materials (like syllabi, lectures, and presentations) are protected by copyright. Violation may result in referral to Student Conduct and Ethical Development office.

## **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Use of an AI Generator such as ChatGPT, MidJourney, DALL-E, etc. is explicitly prohibited unless otherwise noted by the instructor. The information derived from these tools is based on previously published materials. Therefore, using these tools without proper citation constitutes plagiarism. Additionally, be aware that the information derived from these tools is often inaccurate or incomplete. It's imperative that all work submitted should be your own. Any assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized AI tools may receive a zero and / or be reported for academic misconduct.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web](#)

[page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)(https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

**SJSU COUNSELING SERVICES**

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](#).

**GRADING**

Percentage	Grade Assigned
100 or higher	A+
93-99	A
90-92	A-
88-89	B+
83-87	B
80-82	B-
78-79	C+
73-77	C
70-72	C-
68-69	D+
63-67	D
60-62	D-
59-	F

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Reading Quizzes	20
Discussions and film notes	20
Current Events	10
Midterm	25
Final Exam	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**Course Schedule**

Dates	Topics, Readings, Assignments, and Deadlines (THIS IS A GENERAL GUIDE, BUT TOPICS AND DEADLINES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH ADEQUATE NOTICE)
Jan 29	<p><b>Topic(s): First Class!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know your classmates</li> <li>• Syllabus discussion</li> <li>• Setting expectations</li> <li>• <b>Picking Groups!</b></li> </ul>
Feb 3	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Understanding Social Problems</p>

	<p><b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 1  <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 1 on Chapter 1</p>
Feb 5	<p><b>Native American and Indigenous Studies Candidate Teaching Demonstration</b>  <b>Due:</b> Your hand written notes (Turn in notes when you leave class)</p>
Feb 10	<p><b>Topic(s): Thinking about Sex and Gender</b>  <b>Reading(s):</b> “Sex Redefined,” “Understanding Gender,” and “Some Common Myths About Gender,” and “The Language of Gender” (Canvas)  <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 2 on Reading</p>
Feb 12	<p><b>Topic(s): Trans Teach In the Student Union 2AB</b>  <b>Due:</b> Your hand written notes (Turn in notes when you leave class)</p>
Feb 17	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Understanding Poverty  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 2  <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 3 on Chapter 2</p>
Feb 19	<p><b>Topic: Poverty</b>  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 2  <b>Due:</b> Quiz 1: In-Class quiz on Chapter 2</p>
Feb 24	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Racial and Ethnic Inequality  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 3  <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 4 on Chapter 3</p>
Feb 26	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Racial and Ethnic Inequality  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 3  <b>Due:</b> Quiz 2: In-Class quiz on Chapter 3</p>
Mar 3	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Gender Discrimination  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 4.2-4.5  <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 5 on Chapter 4.2-4.5</p>
Mar 5	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Sexuality  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 5  <b>Due:</b> Quiz 3: In-Class quiz on Chapter 5</p>
Mar 10	<p><b>Midterm Review—time to create your study guide</b></p>
Mar 12	<p><b>In-Person Midterm Exam</b></p>
Mar 17	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Aging and Ageism  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 6  <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 6 on Chapter 6</p>
Mar 19	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Alcohol and Substance Use  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 7  <b>Due:</b> Quiz 4: In-Class quiz on Chapter 7</p>
Mar 24	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Alcohol and Substance Use  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 7  <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 7 on Chapter 7</p>
Mar 26	<p><b>Topic(s):</b> Thinking About Crime  <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>, Chapter 8  <b>Due:</b> Quiz 5: In-Class quiz on Chapter 8</p>

Mar 31	<b>No Class: Spring Recess</b>
Apr 2	<b>No Class: Spring Recess</b>
Apr 7	<b>Topic(s):</b> Sexual Behavior <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 9 <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 8 on Chapter 9
Apr 9	<b>Topic(s):</b> The Changing Family <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 10 <b>Due:</b> Quiz 6: In-Class quiz on Chapter 10
Apr 14	<b>Topic(s):</b> School and Education <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 11 <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 9 on Chapter 11
Apr 16	<b>Topic(s):</b> School and Education <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 11 <b>Due:</b> Quiz 7: In-Class quiz on Chapter 11
Apr 21	<b>Topic(s):</b> Work and Economy <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 12 <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 10 on Chapter 12
Apr 23	<b>Topic(s):</b> Work and Economy <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 12 <b>Due:</b> Quiz 8: In-Class quiz on Chapter 12
Apr 28	<b>Topic(s):</b> Population and the Environment <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 15 <b>Due:</b> Reading Discussion Post 11 on Chapter 15
Apr 30	<b>Topic(s):</b> Health and Healthcare <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 13 <b>Due:</b> Quiz 9: In-Class quiz on Chapter 13
May 5	<b>Topic(s):</b> Sociological Perspectives on War <b>Reading(s):</b> <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i> , Chapter 16
May 7	<b>Last Day of Our In-Class Meetings</b> <b>Topic: What will we take away from this class?</b>
May 12	<b>Due: Semester Reflections</b>
May 19	<b>Final Exam: May 19, 1-3pm</b>