

SOCI 2203
SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL POLICY
社會問題 與社會政策

Second Term, 2020-21
Wednesday, 2:30pm – 4:15pm
Online

Teacher : Dr. Lee King Wa 李勁華
Tel.: 3943 6618
Email: kentkw@cuhk.edu.hk
Office: Rm. 440A, Sino Bldg.

Course Assistant: Charles Fung
Tel: 3943 6627
Email: charlesfung1990@gmail.com
Office: Rm 424, Sino Bldg

Course Assistant: Wang Shengbo
Tel: 3943 1205
Email: shengbowang@link.cuhk.edu.hk
Office: Rm 421, Sino Bldg

COURSE OUTLINE

This course introduces students to the sociological approach to understanding social problems. It is divided into two components: theoretical perspectives of social problems and corresponding sociological research that informs social policy. The theoretical component presents a variety of perspectives, the purpose of which is to show that social problems are complex and multi-causal in nature. The social policy component explores the extent sociological research provides empirical evidence to the formulation of policies addressing social problems.* By the end of the course, students will be able to investigate a social problem sociologically, and draft a policy paper recommending intervention that is theoretically grounded and empirically supported.

Zoom Login Page: <https://cuhk.zoom.us>

Meeting ID: 977 8344 7199

Textbook: Social Problems : Continuity and Change

(recommended open textbook, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing edition, 2015). You can download the e book here: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/socialproblems/>

Alcock, P., M. May, and S. Wright (edited). 2012. *The Student's Companion to Social Policy. (4th Edition)*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. (recommended, access via CUHK ProQuest Ebook Central online)

Rubington, E., & M.S. Weinberg. 2010. *The Study of Social Problems: Seven Perspectives (7th edition)*. NY: Oxford University Press. (recommended supplementary textbook)

The course will highlight selected *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* and explore how the study of social problems and social policy might help to achieve them. *Design thinking* will also be experimentally introduced to help finding creative solution to social problems. Please see the following websites for further information:

UN Sustainable Development Goals – The 17 Goals and Targets- <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Course Schedule

Week 1 Topic: Introduction

Week 2: Topic: Problems of social order? Functionalism and urban delinquency

Week 3: Topic : Symbolic interactionism - from social censure to welfare stigma

Week 4: Topic: Conflict perspective: capitalism, inequality and the welfare state

Week 5: Topic: Topic : Drug use and drug policy in the risk society

Week 6: Public holiday

Week 7: Topic: The medicalization of deviance: gambling and other addictions

Week 8: Topic: Global poverty – social exclusion and social capital

Week 9: Topic: Gender and sex work – how occupational identity mediates sex work related risks

Week 10: Topic: The housing problem – from housing exclusion to study of homelessness

Week 11: Topic : Racial inequality in the global city

Week 12: Reading week

Week 13: Topic : Healthy aging and ageism

Week 14: Topic: Environmental problems and social inequalities – climate change as a global social problem

Readings

Chan, G.H., Lo, T. Wing. 2017. “The Social Censure of Hidden Youth in Hong Kong.” P.139-189 in Amatrudo A. (eds) *Social Censure and Critical Criminology*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. “The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State.” *International Journal of Sociology* 20(3): 92-123.

Parker, Howard, Lisa Williams and Judith Aldridge. 2002. “The Normalization of ‘Sensible’ Recreational Drug Use.” *Sociology* 36(4): 941-964.

Rosecrance, J. 1985. “Compulsive gambling and the medicalization of deviance.” *Social Problems* 32(3): 275-284.

Brady, David. 2019. “Theories of the Causes of Poverty.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 45: 155-175

Weitzer, R. 2009. “Sociology of sex work.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 213-234.

Zavisca, J. R., & Gerber, T. P. 2016. “The socioeconomic, demographic, and political effects of housing in comparative perspective.” *Annual review of sociology* 42: 347-367.

Clair, M., and J. Denis. 2015. “Sociology of Racism” p.857-863 in J. Wright (edited). *The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Oxford: Elsevier..

Hagestad, G. O., & Uhlenberg, P. 2005. “The social separation of old and young: A root of ageism.” *Journal of social issues* 61(2): 343-360.

Dietz, T., Shwom, R. L., & Whitley, C. T. 2020. “Climate Change and Society.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 46: 135-58.

Course Assessment

Individual online and offline tutorial participation (15%):

- There will be five online tutorials, each lasts for two sessions.
- For details please refer to handout “Tutorial Guideline”.

Group project (45%)

- Students will form groups of three to four people to study a social problem and to propose policy responses (based on literature and second-handed data or reports). While students can choose to conduct their online interview or online focus group or online ethnography, **FIELDWORK in PHYSICAL SETTING IS HIGHLY NOT RECOMMENDED and IS NOT MANDATORY**. Students will first submit a group project proposal in March. The final report will then be presented by the group in the last online tutorial before being

- submitted in May. Apart from self-selected topics, students can also choose from one of the listed case study topics @ Blackboard to conduct a comparative case study.
- Students are encouraged to use Zoom for project discussion. (<https://cuhk.zoom.us/>)
 - **Group project proposal** (around 750-1000 words; English or Chinese; submitted on or before: 24 March (Wednesday), 11:59p.m.) **(10%)**
 - **Group project presentation of findings in last tutorial** (maximum 15minutes) **(10%)**
 - **Group final project report** (including a separate one to two pages poster design, maximum 3,000 words; can recycle content of proposal; English or Chinese; submitted on or before: 5 May (Wednesday), 11:59p.m.) **(25%)**
 - All group project assignments must be submitted to VeriGuide (except for presentation PowerPoint). No hardcopy is required.

Take home essay exam (40%)

- Take home essay topics will be released via both Blackboard email and announcement on **21 April, 8pm**. (*maximum* 3000 words excluding references and footnotes).
- Take home essay exam must be submitted to VeriGuide on or before **26 April 11:59pm**. No hardcopy is required. Detail of the take home essay exam will be released later.

Learning outcomes:

- (a) look beyond common sense or public perception in understanding social problems in Hong Kong
- (b) analyze social problems in Hong Kong from sociological perspectives
- (c) propose and draft policy responses to these social issues

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Descriptors</u>
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B+/B/B-	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C+/C/C-	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D+/D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirement.

* This set of grade descriptors will be subject to review in future.

Note:

- Late submission for assignments: deduct one half grade for one day (e.g. B→B-)
- Students are required to submit all assignments in the form of a computer-generated document via VeriGuide (the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine System). Please email the signed VeriGuide acknowledgement form to the TA of the course. Submission without a signed VeriGuide acknowledgement form will not be marked.
- Students must closely observe the academic honesty guidelines (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty>). Our Department also has a detailed guideline on academic citations (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf>)