

SOCI 1306 SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Course Syllabus: SPRING 2026

“Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide personal, dynamic learning experiences empowering students to succeed.”

CARMEN SHURTLEFF

Associate Professor of Social Work and Sociology

Office Hours

Monday - off campus/by appointment
Tuesday - 10:00-11:00 & 1:30-3:30
Wednesday - 10:00-12:30 & 1:30-3:00
Thursday - 10:00-11:00 & 1:30-3:30
Friday - off campus/by appointment

Office: UHS 109

Email: cshurtleff@ntcc.edu

Phone: 903.434.8307



This syllabus documents all course policies and requirements, assignments, and instructor/student responsibilities.

Information relative to the delivery of the content contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Should that happen, the student will be notified.

Course Description: 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, or family problems.
Three credit hours.

Prerequisite(s): None

Student Learning Outcomes:

Describe how the sociological imagination can be used to explain the emergence and implications of contemporary social problems.
Explain the nature of social problems from at least one sociological perspective, e.g., critical, functional, interpretive, etc.
Identify multidimensional aspects of social problems, including the global, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of social problems.
Discuss how “solutions” to social problems are often contentious due to diverse values in society.
Describe how the proposed “solutions” to a social problem, including social policies, may bring rise to other social problems.

Evaluation & Grading Policy

The assessments in this course are designed to evaluate students’ understanding and application of key sociological concepts. Each component aligns with course learning objectives to assess comprehension, critical thinking, and the ability to apply sociological

theories to real-world issues.

Assignment	Points
Social Problem Presentation	100 Points
Social Problem Statement Paper	50 Points
Social Survey	50 Points
Discussions/Activities	100 Points
Mid-term Exam	100 Points
Final Exam	100 Points
Total Possible Points	500 Points

Grading Scale:

A = 90% to 100% of possible points

B = 80% to 89% of possible points

C = 70% to 79% of possible points

D = 60% to 69% of possible points

F = 59% and below

Grading Criteria & Expectations:

"C" grades represent an acceptable level of work.

"B" grades indicate substantial effort and above-average performance.

"A" grades are awarded for outstanding efforts and quality in required work.

Required Textbook(s)

Social Problems a Down-To-Earth Approach 17th ebook, Henslin, Pearson

ISBN Number: 978-013-52568-5

Course Structure and Overview

Course Structure and Overview: This is an online course where students must access graded activities on the Blackboard Learning Management System.

Online Coursework Student Expectations

Complete all assigned readings from the required textbook

Instructional videos to reinforce learning

Complete the online chapter activities in Blackboard

Technology and Time Commitment

Regular access to a computer and the internet is required. Technical difficulties will not be accepted as an excuse for late submissions.

Students should expect to dedicate 3-6 hours per week to this course, including both in-person and online activities.

Assignment Deadlines & Participation

Late Assignment Policy: Assignments are expected to be submitted by the designated due date. However, any late submissions will incur a daily point deduction. If an assignment is more than seven (7) days late, the student must contact the instructor via email to request an extension. Approval of an extension is at the instructor's discretion and may require documentation or additional justification. To stay on track, students are encouraged to review deadlines carefully and reach out in advance if they anticipate any challenges in meeting due dates.

Active class participation is required. In-class speaking drills and activities are essential for skill development and will directly impact on your success in this course.

Completion of the online portion is mandatory. You cannot pass this course without fully engaging in both the in-person and online components.

Assignments

Written Assignment Guidelines

All written assignments must be formatted according to the current (7th edition) APA style and adhere to the following requirements:

- Font & Spacing: Use a legible font such as 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Arial, or 11-point Calibri, double-spaced.
- Margins: One-inch margins on all sides.
- Title Page: Required, formatted according to APA 7th edition guidelines (include the title, student name, institution, course, instructor, and date).
- Headings: Use APA-style headings where appropriate to organize content.
- **Citations & References: In-text citations and reference lists must follow APA 7th edition format. Include a References page for all sources cited in the assignment.**
- Indentation & Spacing: The first line of each paragraph should be indented 0.5 inches.
- Page Numbers: Include page numbers in the top-right corner of each page.
- Running Head: Not required for student papers unless specified by the instructor.

Before submitting, students should proofread their work to ensure it is spell-checked and free of grammatical errors. Assignments that do not meet these formatting and writing standards will receive point deductions.

For additional guidance on APA formatting, refer to the current APA 7th Edition Manual or visit www.apastyle.org or <https://owl.purdue.edu>.

Social Problem Project

This is the major project for this course; it is broken into three grades due on separate dates throughout the semester. The student will identify a social problem or issue you are passionate about, which may even affect you as a student. Every day, we experience a social issue. These issues affect the way we interact with others and how we interact with the world around us. Social issues can affect our everyday life and influence the decisions we make. It is essential to understand social issues so that we can address the issues that are affecting us.

A social issue is any situation that adversely affects the social or political status of a group or individual group or individual's social or political status. For example, bullying is a social issue that can seriously impact a person's life. The quality of life of a person can be significantly affected by social issues. We must learn about social issues because they can significantly impact our quality of life in many ways and those of others.

After identifying the social issue, you want to focus on; you will start your research and write a 3 to 4-page statement of the problem essay.

Statement of Problem Paper (50 Points)

A Statement of Problem is a concise description of an issue that needs to be addressed or a situation that requires improvement. It identifies the gap between the current and desired states, outlining the importance of solving the problem. This statement typically includes a clear description of the problem, why it is significant, and the potential consequences if left unresolved. It also provides context and background to help understand the issue and sets the direction for addressing it effectively. A well-crafted statement of problem lays the foundation for focused action or research. Your paper should be 3-4 pages in length.

Survey (50 Points)

The next step will be to develop, create, and launch a survey to explore understanding the social problem. To create a survey on social media, you must have a solid knowledge of your social issue and commitment to the topic. Brainstorm some ideas for questions surrounding your identified social issues. Next, explore and narrow it down to 20 questions, including five demographic questions. Finally, create a survey using Google Forms. Make sure it user-friendly, and it is error-free. Launch your survey and gain a minimum of 50 respondents. Then, analyze your results. What patterns do you see? Are there any recurring themes or similarities that stand out to you? Use the results of your survey in your final presentation.

Presentation (100 Points)

Your presentation you will research a social issue or problem in society. You will discuss at least three reasons why this issue is an actual problem rather than a minor inconvenience. Your presentation with ten to fifteen slides discussing what features contribute to your current social issue. You should also include the impact of the issue on the population you focus on your report and possible solutions to the problems you have outlined.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES PROVIDED IN BLACKBOARD

Discussions/Activities

100 points

Discussions are an essential component of this course, providing opportunities for active engagement, peer learning, and a deeper understanding of the course material. Participation in discussions ensures that you remain involved in the learning process and allows you to develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills.

Participation Expectations

- Each student is expected to participate fully in all discussions and related activities. This may include:
- Summarizing assigned readings
- Responding to questions from the textbook or course materials
- Watching and providing insightful commentary.
- Posts that do not meet the word count requirement or lack citations will receive point deductions.
- All students must follow netiquette guidelines, ensuring respectful and professional communication.

Posting Requirements

To receive full credit for each discussion, you must complete the following: Initial Post:

Due: Thursday by 11:59 PM (CST)

Minimum Length: **250 words**

- Your response should address the discussion prompt, demonstrate critical thinking, and incorporate relevant course concepts.
- Citations required: Support your response using course materials, assigned readings, or credible external sources, formatted in APA style (7th edition).

Response Post:

Due: Monday by 11:59 PM (CST)

Minimum Length: **125 words**

Respond to at least **one (1) peer's** post, providing meaningful engagement by:

- Offering a new perspective
- Asking a thought-provoking question
- Providing additional supporting evidence
- Expanding on their ideas with relevant connections to the course material

Exams (TEST)

(SLO 3 & CT1)

100 Points per Exam:

There will be two tests (100 points each). Everyone must take the exams. Exams will include multiple-choice, matching, or definitions, and short essay questions. As a rule, make-up examinations will not be permitted unless the student's absence is excused in advance. A grade of incomplete ("X") will not be given unless the student contacts the instructor to make special arrangements for making up the required work. Only an emergency that prohibits the

student from completing the course as planned will warrant consideration of the grade of "X". **EXAMS will be released on the date above, and students are provided 48 hours to complete the exam.**

Communication

Instructor Communication & Feedback Plan

The college's official means of communication is via your campus email address. Emails will be responded to within 48 hours (Monday-Friday). However, for faster communication, this course uses primarily Blackboard announcements to keep students informed outside of class.

Typical response to messages within four hours during weekdays, but response time may be up to 24 hours depending on availability. If you need additional help, email me at cschurtleff@ntcc.edu.

Instructor Availability & Response Time

<u>Communication Method</u>	<u>Expected Response Time</u>
<i>Email (NTCC Email Address)</i>	<i>Within 48 hours (Monday-Friday)</i>
<i>Assignment Feedback</i>	<i>Within 5-10 days after submission</i>
<i>Virtual Office Hours</i>	<i>Scheduled weekly (details in syllabus)</i>

Feedback on Assignments & Discussions

- Discussions: individual and general feedback within 5-7 days (business) after the discussion closes.
- Sociology Data Workshops & Writing Assignments: individual and general feedback within 7-10 days (business) after the discussion closes.
- Expect detailed, constructive feedback, including strengths in analysis and areas for improvement. In addition, suggestions for deeper engagement with the course material
- Exams & Quizzes: Auto-graded exams provide immediate feedback.

Opportunities for Additional Interaction & Support

- Weekly Announcements – I will post weekly updates and reminders to help students stay on track.
- Virtual Office Hours – Available for one-on-one meetings via Microsoft Teams.
- Instructor Check-Ins – I will periodically check in through announcements or discussion boards to address common misconceptions, highlight student contributions, and reinforce key concepts.

Where to Find These Expectations

These communication and interaction expectations are clearly outlined in:

- The syllabus under "Instructor Communication & Feedback Policies"
 - Course orientation materials under the Start Here Folder and Introductory module
 - Weekly announcements (to reinforce deadlines and updates)
 - By providing clear expectations for communication and feedback, I ensure that students receive regular, meaningful, and substantive interaction throughout the course.
-

Minimum Technology Requirements

Below are some technical requirements for using Blackboard that will help your experience in this course. You will see the NTCC Tech Support email address and phone number below. Please contact them if you run into any technical problems during the semester. Please let your instructor know you are having difficulties as well. If you need further NTCC technical support services, please contact IT at IT@ntcc.edu or 903.434.8140.

Blackboard will work on both a Mac and a PC. (Chrome Books are known to have issues with Blackboard.) Accessing Blackboard through Fire-Fox or Chrome as your web browser is best. If you have trouble with improper activities, you might change your web browser as your first solution. The Default Browser in Windows 10 is Edge. This browser does not do well with Blackboard! If you go to Windows Accessories, you will find Internet Explorer still on your computer, but it is not your default browser. If you struggle to navigate with Edge, close it and go to Internet Explorer. You can download Blackboard Student for your smartphone from the Play or App stores. More information is available for Technology Requirements and Support under the Student Resources – Technical Support Tab in Blackboard.

Required Computer Literacy Skills

The ability to communicate via email, including sending attachments; navigate the World Wide Web using a Web browser such as Internet Explorer; use office applications such as Microsoft Office (or similar) to create documents; willingness to learn how to communicate using a discussion board and upload assignments to a classroom website. In addition, students need to be comfortable uploading and downloading saved files, as well as navigating Blackboard and using its email component.

For more information or technical assistance on using the Learning Management System, please refer to the Home Page, Orientation Module in Blackboard's critical technical requirement, information, and support folder.

Institutional/Course Policy

Late work will only be accepted with prior approval by the instructor. Students are always expected to be respectful toward classmates and professors! Review Student Conduct in the Student Handbook., which can be located at <https://www.ntcc.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/NTCC%20Student%20Handbook.pdf>. It is the student's responsibility to check Blackboard for important information/announcements regarding the course. Students should be working on course material via Blackboard every week. Do not wait until the last minute to complete and submit assignments in case of technical issues.

Alternate Operations During Campus Closure and/or Alternate Course Delivery Requirements

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, it may be necessary for Northeast Texas Community College to move to altered operations. During this time, Northeast Texas Community College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to, online through the Blackboard Learning Management System, online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor NTCC's website (<http://www.ntcc.edu/>) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, Blackboard for each class for course-specific communication, and NTCC email for important general information.

Additionally, there may be instances where a course may not be able to be continued in the same delivery format as it originates (face-to-face, fully online, live remote, or hybrid). Should this be the case, every effort will be made to continue instruction in an alternative delivery format. Students will be informed of any changes of this nature through email messaging and/or the Blackboard course site.

NTCC Academic Honesty/Ethics Statement

NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. The college expects all students to engage in their academic pursuits in an honest manner that is beyond reproach, using their intellect and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. Academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion, is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty and Academic Ethics policies in the Student Handbook. Refer to the student handbook for more information on these subjects.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

The use of AI in this course must be approached with responsibility and integrity. While AI can serve as a helpful academic tool for brainstorming, organizing ideas, or strengthening study habits, it must not be used to complete assignments, assessments, or other graded work on your behalf. Doing so constitutes academic dishonesty.

Students may use AI to support their learning process (for example, clarifying concepts, generating study questions, or improving academic skills); however, all submitted work must reflect the student's own original effort and understanding. Any use of AI in preparing coursework must be cited appropriately; failure to do so may result in plagiarism.

Recognizing both the benefits and risks of AI, students are expected to use these technologies ethically and responsibly. You are fully accountable for all content you submit, whether generated by you or assisted by AI. If you are unsure about whether a specific use of AI is acceptable, it is your responsibility to ask the instructor for clarification before submitting work.

ADA Statement

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodation as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. More information can be located at, <https://www.ntcc.edu/student-services/eagle-assist/classroom-accommodations>. An appointment can be made with the Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in Student Services and can be

reached at 903-434-8264. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the special population's page on the NTCC website.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law protecting student education records' privacy. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable U.S. Department of Education program. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when attending a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered "eligible students." A parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child's college records without the student's written consent. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as "directory information" may be released to the general public without the student's written consent unless the student requests in writing. Directory information is defined as the student's name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, the field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.

Student Social Support Resources

At Northeast Texas Community College, we understand that students may encounter challenges that can create barriers to success. If you need support or guidance, NTCC offers Eagle Assist—a comprehensive hub where you can access resources beyond the classroom. <https://www.ntcc.edu/student-services/eagle-assist>. Services available through Eagle Assist include classroom accommodation, mental health counseling, tutoring, the CARE Center, financial literacy, and emergency assistance. NTCC is committed to alleviating barriers and fostering student success, regardless of your lived experiences. To access these services, please email eagleassist@ntcc.edu. Additionally, if you need further community resources, please visit www.ntcc.edu/carecenter.

Title IX Statement

Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) is committed to maintaining an educational environment free from discrimination based on sex, in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits sex-based discrimination in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This includes, but is not limited to, acts of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and interpersonal violence. Title IX is a federal law that ensures no individual is subjected to discrimination on the basis of sex under any education program or activity. At NTCC, this commitment extends to all students, faculty, and staff, promoting a safe and inclusive campus community. If you or someone you know has experienced any form of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment or violence, NTCC encourages prompt reporting to ensure appropriate support and resources are provided. You can find more information at <https://www.ntcc.edu/about-us/police-department/information-statistics/sexual-harassment>.

Classroom/Online Recording and Academic Integrity,

To support an effective learning environment and protect student privacy, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and to uphold academic integrity, recording of class sessions by any method, whether conducted face to face or online, is not permitted without prior written permission from the instructor. Students with approved academic accommodation through the Office of Special Populations may be permitted to record class sessions as specified in their official accommodation letter, in addition to instructor knowledge prior to recording. Course materials, including lectures, instructional content,

and class recordings, are the intellectual property of the instructor and the institution and are provided solely for use by students enrolled in this course. Unauthorized recording, sharing, posting, or distribution of course, content or images of students or faculty may violate FERPA and academic integrity standards.