

# McLennan C O M M U N I T Y C O L L E G E

WACO, TEXAS

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## **COURSE SYLLABUS AND INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

### **SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

**SOCI - 1306 – 87**

**Spring Semester, 2023**

**Meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:35 to 10:55 PM**

**MAC 341**

**WILLIAM H. “BILL” LOCKHART, Ph.D.  
Instructor**

**NOTE: This is a 16-week course.**

**NOTE: This is a fully Online course.**

#### **COVID 19 Notice:**

McLennan Community College is committed to providing you with every resource you need to reach your academic goals including your safety. We will continue to monitor the evolving situation with COVID 19 and adjust our safety guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. Please make sure to consult your faculty and the MCC website at <https://www.mclennan.edu/crisis-management/coronavirus-updates/index.html> on any changes to these guidelines.

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### 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

### Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

None

### Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

#### **Looking Sociologically at "Social Problems"**

Reports of social problems confront us every day: on the covers of magazines, on talk shows, and on the internet. To the casual observer, some things seem obviously to be "social problems." Of course, we say, domestic abuse, drunk driving, crime, homelessness, religious conflict and so on are social problems that need to be publicly addressed. But from a "social constructionist" framework, particular social conditions are not intrinsically "social problems." They become public problems *only* because people are successful in defining them as public problems.

This course is designed to teach you how to understand and evaluate the "stories behind the news stories" of social problems. There are four basic "stories" to be found behind any social problem. I sometimes refer to these as "the Four Socials":

- First is the story of the **social conditions** that produce these social problems – conditions such as the economic structure of society, the shape of gender relationships, how deviance is controlled, and the like. This is often considered the "**objective conditions**" part of the problem
- The second set of stories describes how these social conditions are perceived by those affected by them. C. Wright Mills says that many people see these problems as only "**personal troubles.**" (I sometimes call this aspect the "**social situation**" that people find themselves in.) Mills urges us to see the links between these personal troubles to the underlying social conditions, and that doing so used "the sociological imagination".
- How people perceive their situations is the "**subjective concerns**" part of the problem and relates to the idea of "morals" – what is considered right and wrong. As interactions with others, historical investigation and social research demonstrate, perceptions of right and wrong vary among people, cultures, religions and times. Current research (Jon Haidt, 2012) shows that moral thinking may really be based on "feeling" and intuition rather than just rational thoughts. In our diverse society we need to learn how other people feel, intuit and reason if we want to understand them and work together.
- The third story is how these "personal troubles" became publicly discussed as "**social problems**" that demand solutions. This is where we'll bring in the social constructivist perspective and discuss **social movements**.
- The last story to be told involves the **social policies and programs** developed to combat these social problems. These "solutions" often change social realities, but perhaps not always in the ways intended by their designers.



As we explore a selected group of "social problems" we will seek to understand all four types of stories and how they are interrelated. We will also develop a related "social problems toolkit"

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that will help us analyze any social problem we find and explore how the problem can be solved.



**To do well in this class** you need to have the college level abilities to:

1. read and comprehend a textbook
2. do critical thinking in evaluating social problems claims
3. write paragraphs and short papers using a computer's word processor
4. access the internet and Brightspace, post on discussion boards, read and send emails with attachments

The only other quality needed to do well is for you to work steadily and seriously desire to master the course material.

**“Face-To-Face” Course:** This course is designed as a traditional lecture course but also utilizing online resources for course readings, quizzes and exams and other activities as needed. We'll meet in person at MCC's main campus as scheduled for interactive lectures, discussion, class activities and questions. During the rest of the week, you'll be responsible on your own to do your class readings and activities online on our Brightspace page, but you have the freedom to do these activities on your own time schedule during the week.

Don't be complacent. You are NOT done with your work by just showing up in class those two days a week. This is a “three credit hour” course, so you have much more work to do outside of our class times. So, you really need to be organized and self-disciplined to do well in the online portion of this course. Do also be sure to come to the “face to face” part of the class because during these times we will have activities and better learn the material as well as cover new material not in the textbook.

**Online resources.** Consider the class Brightspace page to be an “always available extra classroom” where you can find links to our textbook, the course instructions, PowerPoints, extra readings, assignments, quizzes and exams. Brightspace is an essential element in this course. If you do not know how to access Brightspace, contact the instructor or MCC technical staff. To find out more about Brightspace at MCC, go to <http://www.mclennan.edu/brightspace-students/>.

**D2L | Brightspace**

### **Instructor Information:**

Instructor Name: **Bill Lockhart**

MCC E-mail: [wlockhart@mclennan.edu](mailto:wlockhart@mclennan.edu) (or use the email link ☒ in Brightspace)


Office Phone Number: **254-299-8930\*** ☎

Office Location: **MAC 232** (on the second floor of the Michaelis Academic Center where the MCC Bookstore is located. See the adjacent photo)

Office/Teacher Conference Hours:

- **Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30-3:30 PM**
- **Tuesdays from 11 AM to 12:30 PM**
- **and by appointment.** (I'm often around MCC other times, so stop by my office and if I'm not there, email me for an appointment.)



Zoom address:  <https://mclennan.zoom.us/j/lockhart2998930> contact me for access instructions  
Other Instruction Information: **\*Instructor is hearing impaired, so it is best to contact him in person or via email. If you contact him by phone☎, be sure to speak clearly and slowly and be ready to repeat.**

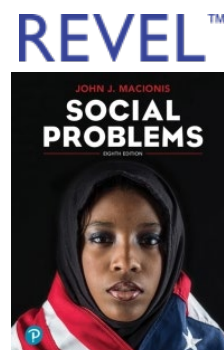
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### **Required Text & Materials:**

1. **Revel:** Our textbook is the latest updated **Revel** version of **Macionis, Social Problems, 8e**. REVEL is an online software that provides an interactive e-textbook with embedded quizzes. **Access to Revel is embedded within Brightspace, so you won't have to go to another website to access it.** I will assign reading, quizzes and other homework activities in Revel - they are worth 15% of your grade -- plus these readings are key for the rest of the course grade.

- Title: Social Problems (REVEL online access via Brightspace)
- Edition: Eighth Edition, Digital Update (2021)
- Author: John J. Macionis
- Publisher: Pearson Higher Education



**MCC Bookstore Website:** <http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/>

While access to Revel is required, **the printed version of this text is optional.** Pearson provides a free limited time period trial access to REVEL and the e-textbook, but you will need to purchase the online access before the course concludes if for somehow you did not get it with enrollment.

Beyond the textbook plan on using the following resources:

2. **Use of a word processing software.** (MCC provides Microsoft Office 365 free to all students: <https://www.mclennan.edu/tech-support/software.html>. Since I cannot open Apple “.pages” documents, if you typically use an Apple/Mac/iPhone, be sure to save and/or convert your documents into Rich Text Format (.rtf) or Word format (.doc or .docx).
3. **The Internet.** Beyond accessing our Brightspace page and your MCC email, you will need to a lot time for quality access to the internet, either at home (if available), at MCC or at a public wi-fi facility (such as a library). One of the major transformations in our society during the last two decades has been the invention and growth of the internet. We now have access to much *more* information than ever imagined before. **The key for us today is to discern the quality of this information.** We'll try to guide you in accessing this information and in learning how to evaluate websites and their claims. You need to have consistent good quality access to the internet for this course. You also should regularly “check the news” so you can be current with the depiction of social problems in the news media during the course.
4. **The Instructor.** I have been involved in social problems most of my life. Among the highlights of my life are that in college I helped to found a new student group that dealt with social problems; I directed an urban ministry working with the poor, the homeless and at-risk children and youth for ten years in urban Appalachia; and my doctoral dissertation was on how faith-based organizations contrast with secular groups in providing services to the poor. I currently serve on the board of a non-profit organization that seeks to empower the poor in Waco and around the world. I have taught various forms of this college level course in four different institutions since 1999. I want people to be involved in solving social problems, but to do so with wisdom and skill and not just passion. (As some have put it, to move from “Feel Good” events to “Real Good” actions.) I look forward to helping each of you learn and succeed in this course (and through the rest of your life.) I've prepared some unique additional learning materials for you to read and learn which will be posted on Brightspace and which will helpful for you.



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5. **The Other Students.** In an online course it can be easy to forget that there are other people involved than just yourself and the computer screen. However if you do so, you miss out on the great resource of other students who may agree or disagree with you about social problems and their solutions, but above all can bring in different experiences and perspectives to your understanding of social problems. [Every semester I personally learn something from the students in this course!] In addition, groups and networking are important resources for social problems work. To facilitate interaction with other students, I'm using many online discussion forums in this course.



### **Methods of Teaching and Learning:**

As described below under Course Grading Information, this course requires four different types of assignments; failure to complete any one of them will seriously hurt your grade so that you may not be able to pass the course. These four include studying the textbook and completing online learning activities, participating in online class discussions; passing quizzes and exams; analyzing case studies; and writing two "social problem field observation" reports.

### **Course Objectives and/or Competencies:**

**Learning Goals:** As you take this class you will learn:

- 1) **What causes social problems?** What are the basic perspectives and concepts that sociologists use to understand the social world and how they are these ideas then applied to social problems? What are the objective conditions that lead to social problems?
- 2) **Why is this considered a social problem now?** How is the "social problems game" played by claims-makers so that some issues gain public attention over other issues? What are the subjective concerns that make people motivated to do something about a social problem? How do claims-makers push their subjective concerns?
- 3) **How real is this social problem?** What analytical skills do I need to evaluate social problems claims – understanding flaws and winning points in the logic and presentation of claims and by seeking truth about the social realities underneath the claims?
- 4) **What can we do about this social problem?** What solutions will work? Are there insolvable problems? What are the difficulties and joys of dealing with social problems?

As a **transferable course** within the state of Texas, this course introduces sociology and social problems and develops specific information and skills about a social scientific approach to social problems. Students successfully completing this course will be able to meet each of these transfer social problems learning objectives (SLO):

- SLO 1: **Describe how the sociological imagination can be used to explain the emergence and implications of contemporary social problems.**
- SLO 2: **Explain the nature of social problems from at least one sociological perspective, e.g., critical, functional, interpretive, etc.**
- SLO 3: **Identify multidimensional aspects of social problems** including the global, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of social problems.
- SLO 4: **Discuss how "solutions" to social problems are often contentious due to diverse values in society.**
- SLO 5: **Describe how the proposed "solutions" to a social problem, including social policies, may bring rise to other social problems.**



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As part of the **MCC Core Curriculum**, this course seeks to develop the following core competencies in our college students:

### **Core Objectives for Social & Behavioral Sciences:**

Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

- **Critical Thinking (CT)** -- to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- **Communications Skill (COM)** -- to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- **Empirical & Quantitative Skills (EQS)** -- to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- **Social Responsibility (SR)** -- to include intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

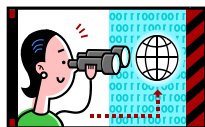


### **Course Outline or Schedule:**

**This course outline and the details and names of the assignments listed here is subject to change!** For specific dates and details for this course's assignments and exams, please refer our Brightspace course page. **The dates announced on the Calendar on Brightspace are authoritative ones for this course.** Do regularly check the calendar on the home page of our course.

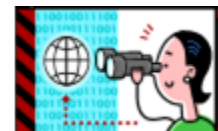
Plan on being "in class" reviewing the class Brightspace page with latest chapter activities and assignments, and then turning in these assignments *at least* twice a week – once before Wednesday evening and once before Sunday evening.

Note for this schedule: You can check off the little circles as you complete these tasks. The symbols represent the type of assignment it is.



## **Unit 1: Sociology and the Study of Social Problems**

*How do Sociologists View Social Problems?*



First Week of Classes: **January 9-13, 2023**

### **Getting Ready to learn at MCC this semester:**

- o ☺ Find your way to our classroom and come to class on time each Tuesday and Thursday that MCC is open this semester.
  - o Be sure to bring paper and pen for taking notes and stay for the whole classtime.
- o 📖 If you are new to Brightspace (MCC's learning management system), log into Brightspace and review the **Brightspace Orientation**. You can learn more about Brightspace at MCC at <https://www.mclennan.edu/brightspace-students/>
- o 📖 Do the **course online orientation** found in the "Getting Started" folder in the Content area of our class Brightspace page. When you've completed it, follow the instructions so that the instructor knows you've completed the orientation.
- o Sign up for your **REVEL etextbook via Brightspace**, as part of the course online orientation and start your two week free access. Your continued access should be provided through

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your tuition and course fees due to participation in the McLennan IncludedED program (<https://www.mclennan.edu/included/index.html>).

#### **Sociology's Basic Approach** (do all of this by Sunday)

-  **Read and do the online assignments on REVEL** the first part of chapter 1 of the textbook, "Sociology: Studying Social Problems, pp. 1-16 (to the end of section 1.3, ending right before "Finding the Facts: Sociological Research")
-  If you missed class on Tuesday, post on **Introductions Discussion**: read instructions on my Brightspace discussion post, introduce yourself and apply the sociological imagination. More details on Brightspace. (If you didn't miss class, but want to do this, go ahead!)
  - All DB posts relate to critical thinking, reading, communications and cultural and social understanding as well as key concepts in sociology, SLO 3.

#### **Week 2: January 16-22, 2023**

*Monday January 16, 2023: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: MCC closed*






-  **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
-  **Finish Reading and do the assignments on REVEL** for the rest of chapter 1 of the textbook, "Sociology: Studying Social Problems (Sections 1.4 and following) by the REVEL deadline (Sunday)
-  **Discussion Forum 1c – Personal/Social Problems**: By 11:59 PM on **Wednesday**, join the 1c discussion forum on personal/social problems. Be sure to read other people's posts before you post.
-  **Navigating Digital Information** video & worksheet – found in the Brightspace assignments.



#### **Week 3: Jan. 23-29, 2023**




##### **Making a Claim: Political Action and The Social Construction of Social Problems**

##### **Instructor's Materials: Claims-Makers Constructing Social Problems**

-  **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- Do all of the Following by Sunday:
  -  **Read** the instructor's materials on Claims-Making (on Brightspace)
  -  **Take the quizzes** on Brightspace on this material and the nine analytical questions
  -  **Do the Perspectives Course** and **"Political Assessments"** as linked in Brightspace and post your results.
  -  **Review the "Claims-making in Action" hands on research project**. If you haven't already, review the instructions for this first paper. This assignment requires you to attend a social problems event for at least one hour and then analyze the event and the claims-making occurring in it, utilizing the materials from the course. This is NOT an assignment to put off and try to do two hours before it is due! So plan ahead about what sort of event you could attend.

#### **Week 4: Jan. 30-Feb. 5, 2023**

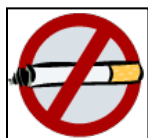
##### **The Media and Social Problems**

-  **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
-  **Read on Revel** chapter 10, "Social Media" skipping 10.2 and 10.3 for now, and do the Revel quizzes.
-  **Do the "take home" case study** posted in the assignments folder to be completed and submitted to the instructor by 11:59 PM on **Sunday**.

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- **Unit 1 exam** to be taken online at your choice of time between **Wednesday and Sunday of this week**. [This exam focuses on the materials in this unit and to SLO 1 & 2 on the sociological imagination and different sociological perspectives.]



## Unit 2: Changing Norms and Social Change

*What do you mean that these things haven't always been considered social problems?*



### **Week 5: February 6-12, 2023**

#### **Deviance and Social Problems: Crime and Criminal Justice**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and do the REVEL assignments** for Chapter 7 Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice, except we'll skip the section 7.3 on violence and do that later.

### **Week 6: Feb. 13-19, 2023**

#### **Alcohol and Other Drugs**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do the REVEL assignments:** Chapter 8: Alcohol and Other Drugs
- ✂ **"Claims-Making in Action" Field Observation Report due at 11:59 PM on Sunday**

**Feb. 19, 2023**– this report requires students to observe a social problems protest or service event and then analyze its claims-making. Details on Brightspace and elsewhere in this syllabus. [This assignment relates to core curriculum goals of critical thinking, communication skills, and social responsibility – particularly as you seek to discern the values and ethics involved in this expression of social responsibility and service. This discussion also relates to all five of the SLOs.]



### **Week 7: Feb. 20-26, 2023**

#### **Physical and Mental Health**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do the REVEL assignments:** Chapter 9 Physical and Mental Health

### **Week 8: Feb. 27-March 5, 2023**

#### **Social Media and Health**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do the REVEL assignments:** Chapter 10.2 and 10.3 on Social Media
- **Unit 2 exam (to be taken online between Wednesday and Sunday)**. [This exam focuses on the materials in this unit and to SLO 3, 4 & 5 on the multidimensional aspects of social problems, on how the solutions can be contentious and how the chosen solutions can give rise to other problems.]

### **Spring Break: March 6-12, 2023**

No classes at MCC, enjoy the Break

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### Unit 3: Social Movements for Equality

*Why do some people get more of the good things of life than others?  
How can people seek social justice?*



#### Week 9: March 13-19, 2023

##### **Social Movements: Seeking Equality (Instructor's Materials)**

- 😊 **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read on Brightspace:** Instructor's Materials online: Social Movements and the Civil Rights Movement, including the articles in the "Social Movements" folder. There are no readings from the textbook for this week.
- 📖 **Chapter Activities on Brightspace:** Do the online lesson on Social Movements and take the quiz on Social Movements. By Wednesday post on DB 3a on Insiders & Outsiders about how President Johnson and Martin Luther King Jr. worked towards the Civil Rights Bill and/or President Obama's using insider & outsider approaches. By Sunday, Post on DB 3a a second time about social entrepreneurs.
- 📄 **Personal Application Paper** – 1 page paper on identity & group membership submitted to the instructor; worth 10 points



#### Week 10: March 20-26, 2023

##### **Racial-Ethnic Relations**

- 😊 **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do the REVEL assignments:** Chapter 3: Racial and Ethnic Inequality
- 📖 **Chapter Activities on Brightspace:** Review the instructor's PowerPoint on "Solutions" to Race Relations.
- ☑ **Take the Brightspace quiz on Race Relations**
- 🗣 **Do at least two** internet activities on "What is Race?" Post as described on the Brightspace discussion board and post on the board

#### Week 11: March 27-April 2, 2023

##### **Social Problems Related to Gender and Sexuality**

- 😊 **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do REVEL:** Sections of Chapter 7: Sexuality and Chapter 4: Gender Inequality
- 📄 **Do the Muslim American case study** – as found in the Assignments area; worth 30 points
- **Unit 3 exam** taken between Wednesday and Sunday. [This exam focuses on the materials in this unit and to SLO 3, 4 & 5 on the multidimensional aspects of social problems, on how the solutions can be contentious and how the chosen solutions can give rise to other problems.]



### Unit 4: Problems with the Social Structure

*How much do we need to care about other people and what they do?  
What do we do when society "falls apart" and what used to work,  
doesn't?*



#### Week 12: April 3-9, 2023

##### **Economic Problems: Poverty and Wealth**

- 😊 **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do the REVEL assignments:** Chapter 2: Poverty and Wealth
- **Friday and Saturday April 7-8, 2023—Spring Holiday! MCC Closed**

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**Week 13: April 10-16, 2023**

**The Environmental Crisis**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do the REVEL assignments:** Chapter 16: Technology and the Environment



**Week 14: April 17-23, 2023**

**"Natural" Disasters; Responding to Crises**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read on Brightspace** the Instructor's Materials on disasters
- ☑ **Take the quizzes on Brightspace**
- 📎 **"Take Home" Case Study due:** "In Texas, Toll Roads or Flood Preparedness?"
- 📎 **Report 2: "Getting it Solved" Social Movement Strategy in Action report due 11:59 PM on Sunday April 23, 2023.** [This assignment relates to core curriculum standards on critical thinking, communication skills, empirical data analysis, and social responsibility – particularly as you seek to discern the values and ethics involved in this expression of social responsibility and service. This report also relates to all five of the SLOs.]

**Week 15: April 24-30, 2023 – last week of classes**

**War, Terrorism and Violence**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 📖 **Read and Do the REVEL assignments:** Chapter 7.3: on Violence and Chapter 18: War and Terrorism

**Finals Week: May 1-4, 2023**

- ☺ **Come to class** on Tuesday and Thursday and participate in class activities and discussion
- 🗨 **Closing Discussion Forum** – to say goodbye to one another for this course (not graded).
- ⌚ The **Unit 4 and final exam** (to be taken online between **Friday April 28 and Wednesday May 3, 2023**) will primarily cover these student chosen topics and the general sociological approach to social problems as described in the first unit of this course.
  - [This exam focuses on the materials in this unit and to SP-SLO 3, 4 & 5 on the multidimensional aspects of social problems, on how the solutions can be contentious and how the chosen solutions can give rise to other problems.]
  - 📎 **If you are graduating at the end of the semester**, please let me know to be sure that your grade will be completed by the graduation deadline. 📎 You will need to take your final exam by Tuesday of Finals week.



**Course Grading Information:**

Each part of the class will provide a certain percentage of your course grade:

10%	Class participation
10%	<b>Chapter Activities</b> , including case studies and a few quizzes
15%	REVEL Activities
25%	two <b>Observation Reports</b> 📎 (the first 10%, the second 15%)
40%	Three Mid-Term Unit <b>Exams</b> and a Final Exam ⌚
100%	

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### Learning and Applying the Material: chapter activities, REVEL work, and exams

This course will teach some general information about the sociological perspective as well as some general sociological approaches to the study of social problems. We will also investigate several social problems and the social conditions that give rise to these problems. This material will be taught to you through the textbook, its website, on-line discussions and some additional readings and activities on Brightspace.

Read each chapter as assigned and study the summary, review and key terms. Each week I will post in “assignments” **chapter activities** for each week, typically the REVEL reading and quizzes and a Brightspace discussion board post or two. Some of these assignments will include activities that you'll need to write up and send to me (such as answers to questions or responses to the boxes in the chapter). Some weeks I will not use REVEL or the textbook but will instead provide my own readings and online quizzes via Brightspace. Some assignments will take more time than others, so plan ahead to review these assignments and to access Brightspace and REVEL regularly.

**REVEL™**

You will be tested on this material through three **midterm exams, the final exam, chapter activities**, and through your comments on our interactive Brightspace **discussion forums**. The exams will be taken online. There may also be a “take home” part of each exam, which would be a short essay or other project that should be emailed to the instructor.

The exams (including the comprehensive final exam) will total 45% of the course grade. The chapter activities and REVEL will total another 30% of the course grade.

### Extending the Learning: hands-on observation reports 🗨️

In online classes, students can get so wrapped up with the textbook and the computer that they may fail to see the implications of the class in the real world. The purpose of the two social problems observation papers is to help you enter into the experience of people dealing with a social problem and to analyze their efforts. For these two papers you will participate in or observe either a program seeking to help some people in need OR a rally or other event demanding a solution to a claimed social problem. (For either you must participate for at least an hour. Due to COVID-19 concerns, your “observation” can either be live – if you feel safe enough—or virtual via interviews or online observations.) In each paper you should describe the activity, your reactions to the activity and its setting, and the potential effectiveness of the activity. From informal interviews you should seek to determine the motivations of the participants in the activity. You will be especially graded on how you bring insights from class readings and discussions to bear on your interpretations of the activity. The complete instructions for these reports will be made available on Brightspace.

- The first report, on Social Problem “**Claims-Making in Action**”, will focus on the Claims-making occurring at the event in which you observed or participated. It is due after you complete the first unit and learned about “claims-making”. It will be worth 100 points or 10% of your final course grade (the same as one of the exams).

- The second report, “**Getting it Solved!**” focusing on a Social Problem Strategy and Solution, should be based on a different event with a different organization or site. It is typically due at a few weeks before the end of the course. It will be worth 15% of your final course grade.

Plan ahead for these projects! **You are responsible to find an event** – rather it be a protest rally (such as political protests), health care and research fundraising event, or a service project (cleaning up Lake Waco, helping the poor, etc.) – to attend or observe virtually and to describe and analyze.



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Each report should be completed with a word processor, saved (keeping a copy for yourself in case the one you give to me gets lost in cyberspace), and then submitted in the appropriate



Assignments Link in Brightspace **as an attachment in Word (.doc or .docx) format or in Rich Text Format (.rtf).**



Most word processing software should allow you to save your document in that format. I can **not** (unfortunately) open documents from google docs or in the Apple pages (.pages) format, so please convert papers from these formats into Word or Rich Text Format. Get these papers in on time, because the late penalties severely hurt! See the late work policy below.



College level writing skills are appropriate for these papers, for I will be taking points off for spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes. Utilize the MCC Writing Center in the Center for Academic Excellence as appropriate, as well as your word processor's spell checker.



### Grade Scale:

Although I use points in grading many assignments, your course grade will be calculated using percent according to the following scale:

100 - 90% = A

79 - 70% = C

59 - 0% = F

89 - 80% = B

69 - 60% = D

**Basic Paper, Discussion Post, and Presentation Grading Rubric – details and more specific rubrics are on Brightspace**

Criteria	Outstanding “A”	Proficient “B”	Basic “C”	Below Expectations “D” or “F”
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rich in content; <input type="checkbox"/> thoughtful & insightful	<input type="checkbox"/> substantial information; <input type="checkbox"/> thought, insight, and analysis has taken place	<input type="checkbox"/> generally competent; <input type="checkbox"/> information is thin and commonplace	<input type="checkbox"/> rudimentary and superficial; <input type="checkbox"/> no analysis or insight is displayed
<b>Communication &amp; Connections</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clear</b> connections to content and to real-life situations <input type="checkbox"/> clear accurate connections to course terms and concepts	<input type="checkbox"/> connections are made; <input type="checkbox"/> not really clear or too obvious	<input type="checkbox"/> limited, if any connections; <input type="checkbox"/> vague generalities	<input type="checkbox"/> no connections are made; <input type="checkbox"/> off topic
<b>Mechanics</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Very few grammatical or stylistic errors	<input type="checkbox"/> several grammatical or stylistic errors	<input type="checkbox"/> obvious grammatical or stylistic errors; <input type="checkbox"/> errors interfere with content	<input type="checkbox"/> obvious grammatical or stylistic errors; <input type="checkbox"/> makes understanding impossible

### Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

Students are expected to follow the General Conduct Policy in the Highlander Guide, and to maintain classroom decorum – including in our “online” settings -- that includes respect for other students and the instructor, prompt and regular attendance, and an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of this opportunity for education.

## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

### SOCI 1306-05, Spring 2023

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#### Instructor's Academic Integrity Statement

##### Plagiarism and cheating: **Double Danger!**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of information, wording, organization, or ideas. Whether the original source is public (e.g., a newspaper, book, journal article, the Web) or private (e.g., a classmate's paper), you need to indicate your indebtedness to it. Where you repeat the exact language of your source, you must treat the borrowed material as a quotation and place it within quotation marks or as an indented block paragraph. However, by merely changing a few words or the word order or by paraphrasing, you do NOT avoid plagiarism; you should still credit your source.

In the case of plagiarism or cheating, the instructor has the right to give the student a "zero" for the assignment and an additional zero for an equivalent assignment or exam. So, instead of sneaking by, you may get double trouble!

#### Class Discussion Ground Rules

Social problems are inevitably controversial. To provide full discussion of social problems, the following ground rules will be followed.

- 1) ***It has been said that "it takes a lot of work to get to disagreement." To accurately disagree with someone, you need to understand where you agree – including facts, values and feelings -- so that where and how you disagree is clear.*** The name calling seen on TV and social media does not create clear disagreement; instead there is more smoke and heat than light being generated.
- 2) Students (and the teacher) will behave respectfully toward each other; there will be no insults or put-downs. Although we can strongly disagree with people's ideas or values, people themselves should not be attacked. Let us focus on the facts of the matter and clarify the facts and values involved.
- 3) Each student will be given room to voice her or his own opinion. The teacher may ask each person to contribute at least one thought to each discussion.
- 4) Additional ground rules may be developed and enforced by the instructor.



#### **Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:**

Part of the socialization of this course is to teach you to be a punctual worker. Thus **late work will be severely penalized, just as it would at a job.** So, plan ahead. Print off your work before the last minute, just in case the computer crashes, won't print, etc. Work is always accepted early! Be sure to keep track of deadlines by using the calendar below. Each paper turned in late will be penalized 5% of its potential value for each business day it is late. Thus if it is worth 100 points and is due on Monday and you turn it in on Wednesday (two days late), you will be penalized 10% (2 x 5%) – that is 10 points -- before I even look at it. 10% is a full letter grade lower – from a B+ to a C+. So, get your work in on time!

**You are responsible for making sure all assignments get to me.** If you email an assignment and I don't respond that I got it within two working days (Monday through Friday, except holidays) assume that I did not get it and then re-send the email! Emailed assignments may not be graded as quickly as assignments turned in during class.

#### **Make Up Exams**

Make-up tests will be granted only by the instructor's discretion and will be subject to the same late penalty, which means that you will lose 20 points on a 100-point test just for taking it 2 days late. If you know ahead of time that you will not be able to be in class the day of a test

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(e.g. due to an official MCC event), you may be able to make prior arrangements with the instructor to take the exam without the late penalty. **Make-up final exams will not be allowed.**

**Attendance/Absences and Drop Policies:**

One of the motivations for many students in taking an internet or hybrid course is the flexibility it provides, but with this flexibility comes responsibility. **On-line courses also require “class attendance” in the form of course participation. If you do not participate in a course discussion forum or fail to turn in a chapter assignment or take an exam by the indicated deadline, you will be considered “absent” for that assignment. If you miss more than 25% of the deadlines before the official drop date you may be withdrawn from the class with a “W” grade, or I may assign you an F grade for the course. If your absences are reached after the Last Day for Student-Initiated Withdrawals, I may assign you a W grade, but ONLY if you were passing in the rest of your work and you provide me a written (including email) request to be withdrawn by the Sunday of the last full week of classes. Otherwise you will receive an F for the class. If you have any questions, please contact me.**

**“Six Drop” Rule:**

The Texas State Legislature has required a “six drop” rule stating that students can drop no more than six courses during their undergraduate college career. More information about this policy and how it is being implemented at MCC is available in the Highlander Guide and at <http://www.mclennan.edu/records/withdraw>, but the following acts as a summary:

Students who enroll at MCC as entering freshman or first-time college students during the fall 2007 semester or any subsequent semester may not drop more than six courses. The six-course limit does not apply to students who were enrolled in college courses prior to the fall 2007 semester. Students who have completed a baccalaureate degree at any accredited public or private institution are not subject to the six-course limit. The six-course limit includes courses taken at MCC or any other Texas public institution of higher education. If a seventh drop is attempted, the student and instructor will be informed that the student must remain in the course and the student will receive a grade of A, B, C, D, F, or I and will not be able to receive a W or withdrawal grade and will not be due a refund of tuition and fees. [There are a few exceptions to this policy, such as for health reasons or for those who drop all of their courses for a semester. Contact the MCC registrar's office or the Highlander Guide for more details.]

Combined with the attendance policy this means that if you do not participate sufficiently I will give you an F for the class if you have already dropped six other classes. So, make attendance of classes a high priority for your time.

**[Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)**

**(<https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html>)**

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have additional guidelines specific to this course.

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Updated 11/04/2022

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## **ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES**

### **Accommodations/ADA Statement:**

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit [www.mclennan.edu/disability](http://www.mclennan.edu/disability).

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

[disabilities@mclennan.edu](mailto:disabilities@mclennan.edu) 254-299-  
8122  
Room 319, Student Services Center

### **Title IX:**

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the acting Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@mclennan.edu](mailto:titleix@mclennan.edu) or by calling, Dr. Claudette Jackson, (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Title IX) at (254) 299-8465. MCC employees are mandatory reporters and must report incidents immediately to the Title IX Coordinator. Individuals may also contact the MCC Police Department at (254) 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/>.

Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at [www.mclennan.edu/titleix/](http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix/). It contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the

crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, or domestic violence.

**Student Support/Resources:**

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at <http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/>

Academic Support and Tutoring is here to help students with all their course-related needs. Specializing in one-on-one tutoring, developing study skills, and effectively writing essays. Academic Support and Tutoring can be found in the Library and main floor of the Learning Commons. This service is available to students in person or through Zoom from 7:30 am - 6:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 7:30 am - 5:00 pm on Friday. You can contact the Academic Support and Tutoring team via Zoom (<https://mclennan.zoom.us/j/2542998500>) or email ([ast@mclennan.edu](mailto:ast@mclennan.edu)) during the above mentioned times.

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources or want to explore strategies for balancing life and school, we encourage you to contact either MCC CREW – Campus Resources Education Web by calling (254) 299-8561 or by emailing [crew@mclennan.edu](mailto:crew@mclennan.edu) or a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing [SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu](mailto:SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu). Both are located in the Completion Center located on the second floor of the Student Services Center (SSC) which is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff. To schedule an appointment, go to [https://mclennan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_07byXd7eB8iTqJg](https://mclennan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_07byXd7eB8iTqJg). Both the Completion Center and Paulanne's Pantry are located on the second floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

**MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund:**

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html> to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found at [https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency\\_Grant\\_Application.pdf](https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf).

**MCC Academic Integrity Statement:**

Go to [www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity) for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

**Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:**

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty-andStaffCommons/requirements.html> for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

**Minimum Technical Skills:**

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

**Backup Plan for Technology:**

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be notified via your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

**Email Policy:**

McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy (<http://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf>) regarding college email. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails. For more information about your student email account, go to [www.mclennan.edu/studentemail](http://www.mclennan.edu/studentemail).

**Instructional Uses of Email:**

Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with their students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

**Email on Mobile Devices:**

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email [Helpdesk@mclennan.edu](mailto:Helpdesk@mclennan.edu) for help.

You can find help on the McLennan website about connecting your McLennan email account to your mobile device:

- [Email Setup for iPhones and iPads](#)
- [Email Setup for Androids](#)

**Forwarding Emails:**

You may forward emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

For more helpful information about technology at MCC, go to [MCC's Tech Support Cheat Sheet](#) or email [helpdesk@mclennan.edu](mailto:helpdesk@mclennan.edu).

**Disclaimer:**

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.