

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

Second Term, 2019-20
Monday, 9:30am – 11:15am
Li Koon Chun Hall LT1

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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.

Design thinking will be experimentally introduced to help finding creative solution to social problems.

Textbook: Rubington, E., & M.S. Weinberg. 2010. *The Study of Social Problems: Seven Perspectives (7th edition)*. NY: Oxford University Press. (recommended)
Alcock, P., M. May, and S. Wright (edited). 2012. *The Student's Companion to Social Policy. (4th Edition)*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. (CUHK ProQuest Ebook Central online)

Note: *=Required reading; #=Supplementary reading

Stanford University: Tools for taking action – <https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources>

CUHK I-Care: Social Service Projects Scheme / Social Enterprise Startup Scheme – <https://www4.cuhk.edu.hk/icare>

Course Schedule

- Topic 1 Introduction – social problems and social policy
- Topic 2 Problems of social order - functionalist perspective of crime
- Topic 3 Meaning and identity - symbolic interactionist perspective of bullying
- Topic 4 Power and inequality - conflict perspective / welfare capitalism

- Topic 5 Drug use and drug policy in the risk society
- Topic 6 The medicalization of deviance: gambling and other addictions
- Topic 7 Gender and sex work – occupational identity and occupational risks
- Topic 8 Global poverty – social exclusion, social capital and global transfer policy
- Topic 9 Racial inequality in the global city and affirmative policy
- Topic 10 Healthy aging and ageism

Course Assessment

Individual tutorial participation (15%):

- There will be five 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 and investigate a particular social problem and suggest policy responses (based on literature). Students will first submit a group project proposal in March. The final report will then be presented by the group in the last tutorial before being submitted by April.
- **Group project proposal** (around 750-1000 words; English or Chinese; submitted before: 16 March (Monday), 11:55p.m.) **(10%)**
- **Group project presentation of result in tutorial** (maximum 15minutes) **(10%)**
- **Group final project report** (including a separate one to two pages poster design, maximum 3,000 words; can include content of proposal; English or Chinese; submitted before: 26 April (Sunday), 11:55p.m.) **(25%)**

Class test (Short questions and essay-type questions) (40%)

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:

- Hardcopies of the assignments with the signed VeriGuide acknowledgement form should also be

delivered to the Department of Sociology, 4/F Sino Building, CUHK before deadline. Submission without a signed VeriGuide form will not be marked.

- Late submission for assignments: deduct one half grade for one day (e.g. B→B-)

Remarks:

- Students are required to submit all assignments in the form of a computer-generated document via VeriGuide (the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine System).

- Students must closely observe the academic honesty guidelines

(<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty>) and submit an “honesty statement” with every assignment.

- Our Department also has a detailed guideline on academic citations

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf>