Instructor: Jonathan Wrathall  
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Phone: 801-503-7478  
Email: jonathan.wrathall@soc.utah.edu  
Office Hours: by appointment

**About your instructor:**

I am a 4th year PhD graduate student in Sociology with an emphasis in Comparative International Sociology. I graduated with Master's degree in Social Psychology in 2006 with an emphasis in theoretical and philosophical psychology. I began teaching university courses as an undergraduate and have been responsible for my own curriculum for over 14 semesters.

I expect students to be interested and enthusiastic in the subject matter and willing to put in time and effort to learn material. I encourage students in my classes to think practically, creatively, and flexibly. I want to help students verify that their learning style matches my teaching style as a good student-teacher match will ideally make for an enjoyable and productive semester for everyone.

I believe wholeheartedly in education and its merits but I believe education is only useful in as much as it can be applied to real world experiences and situations. I feel it is important to relate course material to concrete examples in students' lives. As such, I value respectful dialogue and discussion to include diverse experiences as a useful and necessary means to incorporate new perspectives. I also expect students to be responsible for their learning. I can do the teaching but you must do the learning. It is my opinion that learning comes with a balance between effort and success. Therefore, if you just want to cruise through class, I do not recommend taking this course. I invite you to consider your goals as a student at University as you are spending valuable time and money to be here.

**Course Overview:**

Social Problems is a survey course that covers a wide range of issues that we face in society today. This course is also an introduction to some of the main topics and theories of sociology. Students will discuss, read, think, and write on both domestic and international issues. At the end of this course students will be able to:

1) Identify problems we face in modern society and understand some of their complexities and how they affect your life.  
2) Differentiate between and apply the sociological theories to problems as a framework for understanding possible causes, purposes, and solutions.  
3) Learn to think critically and creatively about social problems.  
4) Be motivated to take individual action to improve the world in which we live.

**Readings:**

Readings will be assigned as it relates to course topics and are made available on WebCT (Blackboard) for download or electronic reserve from the library. Dates when readings are required are marked on the course schedule. Readings are to be done on the date indicated by the syllabus.
Assignments:

Participation: There will be class activities where you will be required to participate. A student will be asked to give a brief review of the reading covered that day including critical thoughts and or evaluations of the reading. There will also be in-class writing assignments to help convey lesson materials due in class. There will be no make up class activities. Participation is worth 25% of your overall grade; you may miss 1 class period without penalty to your grade.

Response Papers: Each week we will be doing readings on the assigned topic. You are required to submit responses to readings that reflect your understanding of the issues at stake as well as your critical review of the reading. Your job with this assignment is to identify the factors that contribute to the problem being discussed and offer a reasonable and realistic solution including a brief discussion about how to proceed with your solution attempt.

Grades will consist of a three point scale based on “good” “pass” or “needs work”. Response papers will comprise 25% of your overall grade. Papers are to be one page, single spaced, in a 12 point readable font. No late assignments are accepted.

Volunteer Work: Each student will be required to volunteer 15 hours for an organization dealing with a topic covered during the semester. Each student should submit an “application” for approval to your instructor by the 3rd week of class including a brief overview of the organization's scope, purpose, services, and location. Below is a partial list of possible ideas; you may volunteer with other organizations pending instructor approval. A final report is due on the last day of class describing your service, what you learned, and any ways in which your experiences matched (or didn't match) the material we covered in class. How has this experience changed your view of the related social problems where you live? This assignment should be 5 double-spaced pages in a 12 point readable font, worth 25% of your overall grade due on the last day of class.

Exams: There will be three exams consisting of essay format. You will be given a list of review topics comprising materials from both lecture and course readings. Exams will be worth 25% of your total grade.

Final grades will be based on your cumulative total points from the above assignments at the end of the semester.

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Class Schedule: *This schedule is subject to change and will likely occur depending on our progress.

May 18th
Week 1 Social problems—introductions and problems.

Week 2 Income Inequality
Week 3 **Educational Inequality**

Week 4 **Racial Inequality**

Exam 1 administered online

Week 5 **Gender and inequality**


Week 6 **Heterosexism**


Week 7 **Healthcare**

Exam 2 administered online

Week 8 **Immigration**
Nov 15

Week 9 **Human impact on the environment**
Week 10 Terrorism
Dec 6
Turk, (2004). Sociology of Terrorism,

Exam 3 administered online

Community Service reports due.
August 4th – last day of classes

Things to Remember:

● Faculty and Student Responsibilities: All University policies and procedures will be followed. Please refer to the University of Utah Faculty Handbook (http://www.admin.utah.edu/fhb/) and Student Code (http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html).

● Cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean. The penalty for cheating is an automatic failing grade for the course, in addition to other potential penalties decided by the Dean's Office.

● These actions are consistent with consequences of other forms of theft. The reason for strict cheating and plagiarism guidelines results from the fact that plagiarism is stealing other's work and claiming it as your own. The foundation of science is that one person's findings can be trusted. Furthermore, distrust undermines the whole progress of scientific discovery. Please prepare ahead of time so you will not feel tempted to steal work from other people. See to it that you are not guilty of undermining the progress of knowledge.

● ADA Statement: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Please inform me of disabilities with written documentation from the Center for Disability Services within the first 2 weeks of class so appropriate accommodations can be made.

● Accommodations: Some of the writings, lectures, films or presentations in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus and course materials carefully to see if this course is one you are committed to taking. If you have concerns, please discuss it with me within the first two weeks of the course.

● If you are a member of a university athletic team, you must provide me with a schedule of games and team commitments during the first two weeks of the semester.

● As there will be class discussions, I ask that you please be respectful towards me and others, turn off cell phones, refraining from disruptive personal conversation and arrive on time. If you do bring a laptop for notes, please do not surf the interwebs as it is a distraction to others around you and your instructor can usually tell making it a distraction to him/her also.