



**SOC 497.02W**  
**Clashing Views on Social Issues**  
**Summer I 2016**  
**(Online)**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will examine several major social issues in the United States. It will explore clashing views on these controversial topics from a wide variety of perspectives and viewpoints.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** This course has the following major objectives/learning outcomes:

1. Encourage students to stay informed of current social issues and become more informed, engaged, and responsible local, national, and global citizens.
2. Help students develop critical thinking skills and apply them to the understanding of contemporary social issues.
3. Help students express their views on controversial issues in logical and rational written and oral formats.

**REQUIRED BOOKS:** *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues* (19<sup>th</sup> ed.) edited by Finsterbush, 2017, ISBN: 978-1-259-66640-9.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

**CLASS FORMAT:** This is an online summer course that takes a full semester of coursework (15-16 weeks) and condenses it down to five 4-day weeks (essentially 19 days because of July 4 holiday). Consequently, things happen very quickly and the course moves at a very fast pace. It is imperative to keep up with reading assignments and discussions, as once a student gets "behind," it becomes almost impossible to get "caught up." Missed discussions cannot be made up. **If you have schedule or time conflicts drop the class and take it some other time when you can complete all of the assignments on time.** Every effort will be made to provide the best possible learning experience for students by blending PowerPoint presentations, online discussions, and appropriate reading assignments. We will be studying and discussing many current, interesting, and often controversial subjects. Thus, a mature attitude is assumed of all students. Do NOTHING that will interfere with anyone else's opportunity to learn in this class and be sure to practice good "netiquette" (see below).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Students are expected to be polite and courteous and conform to online etiquette at all times. For detailed rules on "netiquette" go to the website: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html> A summary of netiquette rules are provided below.

- Rule 1: Remember the Human
- Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life
- Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace
- Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth
- Rule 5: Make yourself look good online
- Rule 6: Share expert knowledge
- Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control
- Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy
- Rule 9: Don't abuse your power
- Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

**THIS CLASS IS A “SAFE SPACE”**

All persons enrolled in this class will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of age, race, sex, social class, religion, politics, sexual orientation , and/or lifestyle. There will be “Zero Tolerance” in this classroom for any form of ageism, racism, sexism, sexual harassment, or any other form of prejudice, discrimination, or bigotry.

**EXAMINATION:** There is one 100 pt. exam covering the basic concepts of sociology presented in the first week’s Power points and in the introduction/preface to your book. You will take it on the first Thursday of class between 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. Once you enter the exam, you have only one hour to complete it. You may not use any notes, book, or outside help on the exam. Take it as if you were sitting in a classroom with the professor present.

**CRITICAL THINKING PAPERS:** There will be 5 critical thinking papers analyzing what we learned from each week’s reading assignments. (1-2 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font) They will be worth 40 pts. each for a total of 200 pts.

Grading Rubric for papers:

Does the paper focus on the topic(s) at hand?	0-10 pts.
Does the paper reflect information from reading assignment?	0-10 pts.
Does the paper reflect critical thinking?	0-20 pts.
Total	0-40 pts.

**ON-LINE DISCUSSIONS:** There will be one online discussion per week. On Monday at 12:01 a.m. of each week a discussion question will be posted that relates to the reading assignments for that week. Students have until 11:59 p.m. (central time) Thursday of each week to respond to that discussion question and to interact with classmates. Students are minimally expected to type at least one response to each of the discussion questions to receive 10 points. To receive 11-19 points on each discussion, students are expected to “engage” in the discussion by asking other students questions and/or responding to the posts of other students and/or the professor. To get 20 points will require a **minimum of 4** meaningful posts on each discussion.

To earn these points students must post some type of response to the question as well as a comment/question that is on topic and contributes to the overall discussion (see rubric below). Online discussions are not the same as texting or tweets. They should reflect critical thinking and contain complete sentences that are grammatically correct with as few spelling and punctuation mistakes as possible. Do not use slang or popular abbreviations such as btw, lol, etc. Discussions will be worth a total of 100 pts. Always be polite and courteous when responding to someone else’s comments or questions. **Once a discussion is closed it is over. You cannot post after the closing date/time because your classmates will not be able to respond to your posts. Post early and often.**

**NOTE:** Online discussions should not be viewed as similar to a discussion around the dinner table with friends or family where everybody expresses their views, opinions, and beliefs on some topic often about which they know absolutely nothing. This is an academic course and your discussion topics are directly linked to the Power Points and reading assignments in your textbook. Consequently, your posts should reflect a certain amount of knowledge on the topic based on research, facts, and data. It is fine to critique, interpret, and occasionally interject an opinion or two, but for the most part, this should be an academic and intellectual discussion of the topic at hand. Cite examples, data, and information from the readings where appropriate. This is not the place to air your personal political or religious beliefs.

**Grading Rubric for Online Discussions:**

Did student respond to question posed? (0-10 pts)
Does the response reflect sociological and critical thinking, facts, and data as opposed to just personal opinion? (0-4 pts)
Does the student’s response add to and/or stimulate other discussion? (0-4 pts)
Is the response grammatically correct and free of abbreviations and spelling errors? (0-2 pts)

**PARTICIPATION:** It is essential to read and complete all assignments and participate in all online discussions to do well in this course. If you do not have time to complete all the assignments on time, please drop the course and take it some other time when you do have the time to successfully complete it.

**GRADES:** Grades will be based on the exam (100 pts) online discussions (100 pts), critical thinking papers (200 pts),  
A = 90-100% (360-400 total pts.)

- B = 80 - 89% (320-359 total pts.)
- C = 70 - 79% (280-319 total pts.)
- D = 60 - 69% (240-279 total pts.)
- F = < 60 % (< 240 total pts.)

**POLICIES ON ENROLLMENT, "Xs", AND WITHDRAWAL:** All policies regarding last day for enrollment, dropping without a grade, withdrawal from class, and the use of "X" will be rigidly adhered to in this course. Students should check the student handbook, current semester schedule, and the appropriate bulletin boards for specific deadlines. Seeing that all university procedures are properly followed is the student's responsibility.

**CHEATING AND PAGIARISM:** Cheating or plagiarism of any kind will **not** be tolerated. Anyone who participates in either activity will fail the course and the professors will initiate steps for the university to take further disciplinary action.

### **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

- Students need to have ready access to a broadband connection to the internet such as Cable, DSL, or the TAMU-C campus network. (Dial-up, satellite, or other non-broadband internet connections will not function sufficiently with eCollege.)
- A computer with a 2.0Ghz or better processor and 1 GB of RAM. MAC computers with similar configurations will also work.
- Windows XP, Vista, or 7 operating system. MAC with the OS 9 or X operating system.
- Microsoft Office or similar package with a word processor, Power Point type presentation application, and a spreadsheet application. (OpenOffice is a free, open source application that is very similar to the Microsoft Office applications and is available for download at [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org) )

### **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

### **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

**CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR:** The best way to contact the professor will be through campus e-mail. Every effort will be made to reply to inquiries made Monday thru Thursday within a 24-hour period. E-mails received on Friday, or over the weekend will not receive a response until the following Monday. The professor will NOT be available on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays. **If you have technical problems with E-college or your computer, do not contact the professor.** Call the 24-hour help line.

Technical Support: This is the statement from the initial page in eCollege

eCollege Technical Concerns: Please contact the eCollege HelpDesk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. by sending an email directly to [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org). You may also reach the HelpDesk by calling (toll-free) 1-866-656-5511 or 720-931-3847 (direct), or through the Online Chat by clicking on the "Live Support" tab within your eCollege course.

Course Concerns: If you have questions pertaining to the content of this course (e.g., questions about an exam, about course due dates, etc.), please contact your instructor via email, through the "Virtual Office," or during office hours.

Other Questions/Concerns: Contact the appropriate TAMU-C department relating to your questions/concern. If you are unable to reach the appropriate department with questions regarding your course enrollment, billing, advising, or financial aid, please call 903-886-5511 between the hours of 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Again., there are only 5 weeks in Summer, so it is critical to keep up to date on all assignments. Do not fall behind, as work cannot be made up later.**

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
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<b>Week 1 (June 6-9)</b>	<b>Culture and Values</b>	
	Is it Necessary to Become Less Consumerist?	1.1
	Does Social Media Have Largely Positive Impacts on its Users?	1.2
	Online discussion #1 begins June 6 at 12:01 a.m.	
	Online discussion #1 ends June 9 at 11:59 p.m.	
	<b>Critical thinking paper #1 due no later than June 9 11:59 p.m.</b>	
	<b>EXAM (log on June 9 between 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.; 1 hr. time limit)</b>	
<b>Week 2 (June 13-16)</b>	<b>Sex Roles, Gender, and the Family</b>	
	Is the American Family in Trouble?	2.1
	Can Women Have it All?	2.2
	Is Same-Sex Marriage Harmful to America?	2.3
	Online discussion #2 begins June 13 at 12:01 a.m.	
	Online discussion #2 ends June 16 at 11:59 p.m.	
	<b>Critical thinking paper #2 due no later than June 16 11:59 p.m.</b>	
<b>Week 3 (June 20-23)</b>	<b>Stratification and Inequality</b>	
	Is Increasing Economic Inequality a Serious Problem?	3.1
	Has America Made Substantial Progress in the Rights of Blacks?	3.2
	Has Gender Equality Come a Long Way?	3.3
	Online discussion #3 begins June 20 at 12:01 a.m.	
	Online discussion #3 ends June 23 at 11:59 p.m.	
	<b>Critical thinking paper #3 due no later than June 23 11:59 p.m.</b>	
<b>Week 4 (June 27-30)</b>	<b>Crime and Social Control</b>	
	Are the Police in America to be Condemned?	5.1
	Is American Justice Too Severe?	5.2
	Is the United States in Significant Danger of Large-Scale Terrorist Attacks?	5.3
	Online discussion #4 begins June 27 at 12:01 a.m.	
	Online discussion #4 ends June 30 at 11:59 p.m.	
	<b>Critical thinking paper #4 due no later than June 30 at 11:59 p.m.</b>	
<b>Week 5 (July 4-7)</b>	<b>The Future: Population/Environment/Society</b>	
	Happy 4 <sup>th</sup> of July! (This is only a 3-day week, so don't miss deadlines!)	
	Does Immigration Benefit the Economy?	6.1
	Is Humankind Dangerously Harming the Environment?	6.2
	Online discussion #5 begins July 5 at 12:01 a.m.	
	Online discussion #5 ends July 7 at 11:59 p.m.	
	<b>Critical thinking paper #5 due no later than July 7 at 11:59 p.m.</b>	