



## **SOC 1306.01W & SOC 1306.02W – Contemporary Ideas**

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Mica Thompson

**Online**

**Department Office Phone:** 903-886-5332

**Department Office Fax:** 903-886-5330

**University Email Address:** mica.thompson@etamu.edu

**Preferred Form of Communication:** email

Office: Remote

Office Hours: Email, Telephone, or Virtual by Appointment

**Communication Response Time:** M-Th within 24 hours, emails received after noon on Friday will be answered the following Monday. ***Always include your name the way you are enrolled in the class as well as the course number and section with all e-mail correspondence.***

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

##### **Textbook(s) Required**

Henslin, James M. 2018 Social Problems: A Down to Earth Approach. 14<sup>th</sup> Edition.  
ISBN 13: 978-0-13-810294-4

### **Course Description**

A critical discussion of the sociological perspective on studying descriptions, causes, and prevention of social problems such as crime, mental illness, drug abuse, environmental degradation, poverty, terrorism, and declining quality of life in today's world.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## Student Learning Outcomes

This course is intended to enable you to:

1. Demonstrate comprehension of how social problems/issues affect people at the individual, group, and societal levels as measured through objective exams.
2. Communicate, in written, oral, or visual means the application of sociological theories and quantitative analysis to real world topics and contemporary issues as measured by written exams.
3. Demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues and view yourselves as engaged citizens within an interconnected and diverse world.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Use of D2L learning management system, use of Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, use of basic presentation and graphics programs, etc.

### Instructional Methods

This course is entirely online. Every effort will be made to provide the best possible learning experience by blending reading assignments, Power Point slides, online discussions, selected videos, writing assignments, and other materials. Students should login to D2L on a regular basis and check their university e-mails every day Monday through Friday in order to keep up with class assignments, to review power point presentations, and participate in online discussions.

Because we will be dealing with controversial contemporary social issues, an open mind and a mature attitude are important requirements for this course. Students are expected to be polite and courteous and conform to classroom etiquette and the university code of conduct 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**

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## Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

In order to be successful in this course, you will need purchase and READ the required textbook. You are expected to complete all discussions, submit any assignments on time, and take exams when they are scheduled. It is recommended you put all due dates and exam dates on your calendar. The Power Points used in class will be posted online through e-college. Although they do not contain all of the material covered in the textbook, they do provide a general outline of topics, concepts, theories, etc., covered, so it may be helpful to review them before exams. It also is a good idea to review them after reading the chapters.

### Assessments

Assignment Type	# of Assignments	Point Value	Total Points
Discussions	5	40	200
Response Papers	4	50	200
Quizzes	4	50	200
Midterm	1	200	200
Final	1	200	200
		TOTAL	1000

### Grading

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

A total of 1000 points are attainable in the course.

The final grades in this course will be calculated according to the following scale:

A     900-1000     points

B     800-899     points

C     700-799     points

D     600-699     points

F     0-599     points

**Grades will be posted in D2L**

**NOTE: We will NOT be negotiating for grades at the end of the semester. You have plenty of opportunities to earn points throughout the semester. A few**

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**“bonus” points are built into each exam. At the end of the semester, your total points will be applied to the scale on this syllabus. That is the grade you have earned, and that is the grade you will be assigned. (By the way, there is a big difference between a percentage point and a raw point. For example, if you earn 69% of the 560 total points, you are not 1 point away from a C—you are actually 1 percentage point from a C which is 6 points). **EARN your points during the semester, don’t try to BEG for them at the end of it.****

### **1. Assignment Description:**

#### **Discussion Boards (DB) – (5 at 40 points each=200)**

Reading all assignments and participating in all online discussions is essential for doing well in this course. Please refer to your syllabus or eCollege for Discussion windows. If you miss the “window” for participating in any online discussion, there is no way to make it up. **A discussion cannot be re-opened once it is closed so don’t ask.** In order to earn 40 points you must enter the discussion early and post often. To get full credit, you must have at least:

- (1) one post that responds to the question(s) posited by the professor (15pts.)
- (2) one post that poses a relevant question to your classmates (5 pts.)
- (3) two posts responding to questions posed by your classmates (20 pts.)

(these are minimum requirements; hopefully you will engage in discussion and post more; it takes a minimum of 4 posts to earn all 40 points).

\*Each post is expected to use key terms, theories, and ideas from the textbook. The purpose of these discussions is to show you have done the assigned reading and understand them. Facts are expected not opinions.

NOTE: Keep all discussions civil and academic/intellectual in nature. We will be dealing with controversial topics. It is essential to treat these subjects seriously and courteously. The discussions should focus on ideas, research, data, facts, and information from the textbook and class. You will have strong personal opinions about some of these topics. That is fine, but you need not share them with the class.

Before you post, read what you have written. Any sentence beginning with the words “I feel . . .” or “I believe . . .” are probably better deleted. Your feelings and beliefs are important to you and we do not want to tread on them, but we also do not need to know them. **These are academic discussions, NOT therapy sessions or attempts to convince somebody else to think like you. Every discussion should reflect that you have read the material, attended class, and are applying critical sociological thinking to the topic.**

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 which they know absolutely nothing about. 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.

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**2. Response Paper Assignments: 4 at 50 points each = 200 points**

These will be short answer questions where you will write a paragraph or two relating a social issue to your real life, pop culture, etc. I will pose a question and you will respond using what you have learned in the course to answer. These are not research papers and do not require extensive research, citations, etc. They are simply your response.

**3. Module Quiz 4 at 50 points each = 200 points**

Each module will have a quiz which consists of 10 multiple-choice questions based on the topics discussed on the discussion forums and the readings assigned in the module. Each quiz is worth 50 points. You can take the quiz only once, and you must complete the quiz within the time allotted once you have started it. Issues with the quiz should be captured with a screenshot and provided to your instructor upon request.

**Midterm and Final (200 Points + 200 Points):** Two exams are contained within this course. One will be administered at midterm, the other during finals week. Each exam will be presented a mix of multiple-choice and true/false questions, as well as several short-answer questions. Short answer questions, in this context, mean that you will write between 3-5 sentences or more (depending on the question's specific instructions) to answer the question; short answer may also include fill-in-the-blank questions where the answer is typed in only a few words (fewer than 10 words). It will be necessary for you to review each assigned chapter or reading before the exam in order to maximize your chances of completing the exam with a high score.

The first exam will cover material from the first half of the course, and the final exam will be cumulative with an emphasis on the materials covered since the Midterm. It will be necessary for you to review each assigned chapter or reading before the exam in order to maximize your chances of completing the exam with a high score.

Each exam section is not separated, so the same timer will run for all parts of the exam. If you have a computer crash, lose internet service, or otherwise go away from the exam after starting it, the timer will continue to run down. If this happens, you will be able to access the exam again as long as the timer has not expired. If you are not finished with the exam within the provided time-limit, what you have completed will be automatically submitted for partial grading/credit. No additional time is given for exams without documented support from DSS, so please ensure you study before starting the exam. If extenuating circumstances will prevent you from completing your exam on time, please email me and make arrangements to take the exam early. Makeup/Late exams are not permitted except in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the student, and these determinations are within the purview of the instructor.

**Makeup Exams:**

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You are expected to take exams without the aid of your textbook, notes, or any other type of help or aid from anything or any other person. You are on the honor system to take the exams just as if you were taking them in a classroom with the professor present.

Makeup exams will not be given unless a genuine emergency or crisis occurred (you will have to provide documentation), and you will be excused from the exam on the test day ONLY if prior notification has been given. Makeup exams may be given in an alternative format from the rest of the class (i.e. essay exams) and at an alternate time set up for the professor's (not the student's) convenience. Makeup exams must be completed within two weeks of the original exam date.

Students with legitimate reasons for missing exams will be allowed a makeup exam ONCE during the semester. If a student has been habitually absent, sick or dealing with some other concern to the extent that they have missed more than one exam, then a meeting with the professor is warranted to discuss whether finishing the requirements of the course is possible from the student's current effort and situation.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Don't ask, there won't be any. Two types of students usually want to do extra credit work: those who would like to make an even "higher" A; and those who are failing the course. In either case, extra credit makes no sense. Put in the time, energy, and effort on the "regular" work and you will not need any "extra" credit.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

### Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office. Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements:

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

### Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

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## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### Interaction with Instructor Statement

**CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR:** The best way to contact the professor will be through campus e-mail ([mica.thompson@etamu.edu](mailto:mica.thompson@etamu.edu)). 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 may not receive a response until the following Monday.** Please include the course number in the subject of your email to expedite response times. I often teach more than one course so it helps me best answer you if I know in which course you're enrolled.

**E-MAIL COMMUNICATION:** I will communicate with the class through the online course and/or MyLeo e-mail. Consequently, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to check your e-mail regularly for messages from me. I will **attempt** (*not guarantee*) to respond to any e-mail you send to me within 24 hours of receiving it unless the e-mail is received Friday-Sunday. If that is the case, it more than likely will be the following Monday afternoon before you receive a response. If you have a class-related issue that occurs over the weekend, DO NOT PANIC. There is no such thing as "sociological emergency" and I guarantee we can work it out as soon as I can address it.

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Remember, this is not an adversarial relationship. I want you to be successful and am here to help you. If you do not receive an email from me in a timely matter, please try again. Sometimes emails get sorted/filtered in my inbox and/or I may miss them.

**Above all; DO NOT PANIC.** There no such thing as a “sociology emergency.” Any problem that is class-related that occurs over the weekend can wait until the following Monday to be addressed.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

All assignments need to be completed and turned in on time. Exams need to be taken on the days assigned. Makeup exams are offered for special circumstances which you must work out with the instructor.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### **University Specific Procedures**

#### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

#### **ETAMU Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#).

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, complicity in cheating, multiple submissions (or substantial portions) of the same work for credit without authorization, submitting

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another's work, submitting past work, plagiarism, submitting algorithmically (AI) plagiarized work, and other acts that may reasonably be called academic dishonesty.

### **Use of Artificial Intelligence**

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

### **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
East Texas A&M University  
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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## **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## **Counseling Center Services**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

## Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

### COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_ READING ASSIGNMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 1

Jan 12-16

The Abortion Dilemma

Ch. 1

**Online Discussion #1 opens Tuesday at 12:00 AM**

Week 2

Jan 19-23

**Monday: MLK Holiday NO CLASS**

Aging

Ch. 2

**Online Discussion #1 closes Friday at 11:30 PM**

Week 3

Jan 26-30

Social Problems Related to Sexual Behavior

Ch. 3

**Response Paper 1 due Friday at 11:30 PM**

Week 4

Feb 2-6

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Ch. 4

**Online Quiz #1 Open Friday 12:00 AM-11:30 PM**

**Online Discussion #2 opens Monday at 12:00 AM**

Week 5

Feb 9-13

Violence in Society: Rape & Murder

Ch. 5

**Online Discussion #2 closes Friday at 11:30 PM**

Week 6

Feb 16-20

Crime & Criminal Justice

Ch. 6

**Online Discussion # 3 opens Monday at 12:00 AM**

Week 7

Feb 23-27

Economic Problems; Poverty & Wealth

Ch. 7

**Online Discussion #3 closes Friday at 11:30 PM**

**Midterm Exam Open Friday 12:00 AM- 11:30 PM**

**Ch.1-7**

Week 8

Mar 2-6

Racial Ethnic Relations

Ch 8

**Response Paper 2 due Friday at 11:30 PM**

**SPRING BREAK March 9-13**

Week 9

Mar 16-20

Inequalities of Gender & Sexual Orientation

Ch. 9

**Online Discussion #4 opens Monday at 12:00 AM**

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<u>Week 10</u> Mar 23-27	Medical Care: Physical & Mental <b>Online Discussion #4 closes Friday at 11:30 PM</b> <b>Online Quiz #2 Open Friday 12:00 AM-11:30 PM</b>	Ch. 10
<u>Week 11</u> Mar 30-Apr 3	The Changing Family <b>Response Paper 3 due Friday at 11:30 PM</b>	Ch. 11
<u>Week 12</u> Apr 6-10	Urbanization and Population <b>Online Quiz #3 Open Friday 12:00 AM-11:30 PM</b>	Ch. 12
<u>Week 13</u> Apr 13-17	The Environmental Crisis <b>Online Discussion #5 opens Monday at 12:00 AM</b>	Ch. 13
<u>Week 14</u> Apr 20-24	War, Terrorism, The Balance of Power <b>Online Quiz #4 Open Friday 12:00 AM-11:30 PM</b> <b>Online Discussion #5 closes Friday at 11:30 PM</b>	Ch. 14
<u>Week 15</u> Apr 27-May 1	Review for Final Exam covering chapters 8-14 <b>Response Paper 4 due Friday at 11:30 PM</b>	
<u>Finals Week</u> May 4-8	<b>Final Exam* opens Monday 12:00 AM</b> <b>Final Exam closes Wednesday at 11:30 PM</b>	Ch. 8-14

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