Course Title:
Current Problems in Human Relations

Course Number:
HR 5013-492

Course Description:
This course examines current social problems confronting the individual, the nation, and the world. The course utilizes an interdisciplinary systems approach in discussing the causes and possible resolutions of these issues.

Course Dates:
May 1-August 31, 2012
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: April 2, 2012

Site Director:
This is a three-credit hour online course. Please see your local Site Director or e-mail our online site coordinator at aponline@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:
Course Professor: Dorscine Spigner-Littles, Ph.D.
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Virtual Office Hours: Please discuss this with the professor.
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students during the above listed Virtual Office Hours and other methods by arrangement.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:
Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomanunion.bkstr.com or by telephone at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to oklahomanunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-7140 (outside the U.S.).

3. I will send lectures from time to time that you may use in your writings.

Note: The Follett/AP Bookstore is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through the Follett/AP Bookstore.

OU E-Mail:
All official correspondence from distance learning instructors will be sent only to students’ ou.edu address.

Online Learning Resource Center:
The Online Learning Resource Center of the University of Oklahoma’s College of Arts and Sciences Online Program is here to serve you and assist you with any questions, problems, or concerns you may have. For assistance go to http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/ or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

Course Objectives:
This course provides students with the means to understand the nature and extent of social problems in American society and the world. By learning the interrelationships between social problems and the organization of society, students will be able to understand the essence of current social problems and therefore effectively deal with various social issues as informed citizens committed agents for change. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- learn the interrelationships between social problems and the organization of society;
- understand the nature and extent of problems in various institutions of the United States such as the family, education, the economy, and government;
- articulate the essence of current social problems that exist in American society in regards to poverty, ethnic issues, gender, sexuality, drug use, and crime and violence;
- grasp the nature and extent of global problems such as international inequality, population growth, and international conflict and terrorism; and
- understand how various social problems are related to each other.

Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:
1. Attendance and participation. You are expected to maintain a reliable computer system with an e-mail account and to check in at least once each week. You are expected to participate in discussion and class assignments. You are responsible for materials covered during your absence. If you will be late with discussions, assignments, or other coursework, you need to notify me of this fact. Absences are excused if they are due to events beyond your control. Excused absences give you the right to make up the work/discussion missed.

2. Weekly Assigned Readings. Questions related to the weekly topic are on these syllabus pages. Each week you are to select one question to answer. Your answers should not be more than 2 pages. The weekly questions are designed to help you integrate the material by reflecting upon applications and implications of assigned readings. The weekly discussion board questions constitute 25% of your final grade. Due Weekly.

3. Class Participation. Also, you are expected to participate in class discussions by responding to postings by your classmates each week. This means that in addition to writing your answers to one of the questions, on a weekly basis, you should write at least one response to another student’s written answer. There is no required length for the responses to your fellow student’s writings. This forum is your discussion, designed for you to create knowledge and meaning, and to educate each other. The group is a learning community. You will learn via interaction and illuminating ideas that you and others post on the thread. This is the class participation that will determine 25% of your final grade. Due Weekly.

You can react to a report and/react to a reaction – reactions to reactions show that a dialogue is taking place and that we are beginning to analyze a point at a deeper level.
The deadline for posting your answers to weekly discussion questions is midnight every Saturday, and the deadline for responding to your classmates’ postings is midnight every Sunday.

Guidelines for creating a meaningful, in-depth discussion

- Say something that will contribute to a meaningful discussion—this requires time and thought! Thoroughly reflect on and think about the point you are making.
- Fully explain and elaborate your points, using examples, evidence and logic to explain. Speak with precision regarding your meaning, rather than being vague or general.
- Place your reaction in the context of the discussion.
- Label your reactions in the message subject line with the main point you are trying to make. A subject line needs to be very specific, and helps the reader a great deal—it's like a title or red flag.
- Minimize prejudices, biases, unfounded beliefs, and too much reliance on emotional reactions, which can sidetrack good sound judgment and opinions rooted in your learning and in the human relations perspective. In a Current Problems course, it is easy for bias, belief and emotion to dominate a discussion because we have empathy for the people impacted by the social problem, or because we fall prey to "reductionism" (seeing individuals as causes of their predicaments, which have social roots and solutions).
- Feel free to be personal and interpersonal on the threads, in addition to substantive discussion. This aspect of discussion helps the group bond as a community.

4. Internet Research of a social problem. You are to locate a web site that is dedicated to researching, reporting and developing policies and/or finding solutions for a selected social problem. Your report will be posted on the discussion board and should cover the following:
   - provide an overview of the site; What is covered on the site?
   - connect the site directly to the social problem that you are studying. How is this site addressing the social problem;
   - decipher policy (guiding principles) or practical implications of material on the site. These implications are based on what you are learning and thinking;
   - provide a solution to ease the social problem, which you have derived via your exploration of the site. This solution is your own analysis based on what you are learning and thinking;
   - evaluate the adequacy of your site. Criteria for evaluating sources or your site will be given before class begins. After reviewing details on each criterion, draw a sub-conclusion about the adequacy of the site overall; and
   - your paper should provide comprehensively analyzed structural solutions to the social problem and should explain and interpret main points and evidence with your own analytic voice. This assignment constitutes 25% of your grade. Due July 31, 2012.

5. Book Review of a Social Problem. You are to select a book that addresses a social problem and write a review of the selected book. Your selection must be a book other than the textbooks. Examples of socially relevant books are Savage Inequalities by Jonathon Kozol, The Other Side of the River by Alex Kotlowitz, or any relevant book of your choice. You should identify 3 major points or arguments by the author and then compare and contrast them with the concepts you have learned in the class through the readings of the text and discussions. More information about writing a book review will be posted before class begins. This assignment constitutes 25% of your grade. Due August 10, 2012.
Grading: This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F. A: 90 – 100; B: 80 – 89; C: 70 – 79

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Assigned Readings</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet Research of a Social Problem</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review of a Social Problem</td>
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Grading in the course will be based on the following definitions:

A = Student excels in completing the requirement – has gone substantially above and beyond the basic requirements to show an outstanding level of competence and effort.

B = Student demonstrates very good performance (i.e., satisfactory competence and effort at a graduate level).

C = Student performs just at or below the minimally acceptable level of required competence and effort (less than expected at a graduate level).

D/F = Student performs substantially below minimally acceptable standards of competence and effort, completes unacceptable work, or does not complete the assignment.

Student Evaluation: Student performance is evaluated based on the quality of the written assignments as they reflect how well the student read the material and how well he or she is able to describe the “lessons learned” in a timely manner. If you will be late with assignments you need to notify me of this fact. Absences are excused if they are due to events beyond your control. Excused absences give you the right to make up the work missed.

NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

**Policy for Late Work:**

Please contact the professor regarding his/her policy for late work.

**Attendance Policy:**

In addition to interaction via Desire2Learn and E-mail contact, students are required to contact the instructor via E-mail or telephone BEFORE the beginning of the course term for an initial briefing. Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, participation in all interactive, learning activities is required.

Student assignments and student/instructor communications will be conducted via Desire2Learn, although students may contact the instructor via telephone, postal mail, e-mail, or fax as needed.

**Incomplete Grade Policy:**

A grade of “I” is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the instructor a “Petition for and Work to Remove an Incompleted Grade” form. An “I” can never be used in lieu of an “F” nor can an “I” be assigned because of excessive failure to participate in class activities.

**Technical Support Information:**

If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: [http://webapps.ou.edu/it/](http://webapps.ou.edu/it/) or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).
Procedures for Completion of Course Evaluation:
Upon completion of the course students should go to the Advanced Programs Distance Learning webpage and click on the applicable semester link under “Course Evaluations” which will direct them to the evaluation. The evaluation will take approximately five minutes to complete. Completion of the online evaluation is an important tool allowing Advanced Programs to gain information and student feedback for improvement of courses.

Your responses will be kept confidential. They will be reviewed by the department and only supplied to the professor once grades for the course have been submitted.

Important information you should know about online courses:

- To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), log in using your 4+4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, please look for “My Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.

- Students enrolled in online courses may be required to take the CAS student orientation in Desire 2 Learn. To take the orientation, sign-on to D2L and then click on “Self Registration” at the top left corner of the page. Information about and instructions for the orientation can be found at http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm

- If the course is using a course website, you will find a link for the website on the first page of this syllabus. Please click on this link to start your course.

- Course Materials are available at Follett/AP Bookstore. On this syllabus you will find a link to the Follett Bookstore.

- If you need to drop or withdraw from a course, please contact your Site Director. You can drop a course without a penalty up to the add/drop date. You can drop a course after the add/drop date through the first day of class with a penalty. There will be a 25% penalty if you drop 16-29 days before the start of class, 50% penalty if you drop between 15 days before and the start of the class, or 100% penalty if you drop on the first day of class or later.

- After the class has started, you can only withdraw from the course with the professor’s permission; you will not receive a refund for your tuition. You can only drop without a penalty after the add/drop date by providing proper documentation and receiving approval from the Advanced Programs Theater Director. Provide this documentation to your Site Director.
CURRENT PROBLEMS ASSIGNMENT 1
READINGS AND WEEKLY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Weekly Assigned Readings: Listed below are the readings and questions related to the weekly discussion topic. You are to select one question to answer. Your answers should not be more than 2 pages. The weekly questions are designed to help you integrate the material by reflecting upon applications and implications of assigned readings.

You should write thoughtful comments connected to each reading assignment. Please feel free to weave in other reading you are doing, current events, or other observations about social problems as they apply to the weekly themes. The comments should capture your responses and reactions to each week’s readings and should make specific references to the week’s readings and their content. The comments are a key way to demonstrate that you are integrating the information into your thought process, and learning from them in ways that are professionally and personally meaningful. One way to start is by identifying new concepts, definitions, and/or models provided by the readings. Also, you can reflect about the new information that you gained from the readings (e.g., What did you learn that week? What should you study more to enhance your knowledge? What are your doubts and how does this information connect to your own life, interests, observations, and/or experiences).

You may address other questions such as: What questions or issues do the readings raise for you? What connections do you see among the readings for a particular week? What associations do you see with prior readings or with other material you have read? How does what you have read either clarify something you have been wondering about or make you more confused? Why is a particular writer completely off base? Why is she or he on target? What ideas or questions relevant to issues of personal or professional concern for you were raised? Two general questions you might think about in considering any particular article(s) or the full set of readings for a week are:

- What three things did you learn that you didn't know before?
- What three things would you still like to know?

It should be evident from your written comments that you have read the readings, thought about them, and can apply them in meaningful ways.

The weekly discussion board questions constitute 25% of your final grade. Papers are due weekly.

**Week One: Introduction**

- **Readings: Eitzen**
  - Preface
  - Introduction
  - *U. S. Social Problems in Comparative Perspective*, D. Stanley Eitzen
  - *The European Social Model*, T. R. Reid
  - *The Swedish Welfare State*, D. Stanley Eitzen
  - *How Canada Stole the American Dream*, Duncan Hood
- **Readings: Skolnick and Currie**
  - Preface
  - Introduction: Approaches to Social Problems
- **Discussion Questions: Answer both questions.**
  - Introduce yourself: Tell me about yourself!!
    - academic background
    - geographic location
    - work
    - personal life
    - hobbies
    - physical appearance, age, etc
  - How do we become aware of social problems?
Week Two: Corporate Power and Inequality

- **Readings:** Skolnick and Currie
  - Mark Zepezauer: *Take the Rich off Welfare*
  - Robert S. McIntyre: *Tax Cheats and Their Enablers*
  - Neil Postman & Steve Powers: *The Commercial*
  - John Luoma: *Water for Profit*

- **Readings:** Eitzen
  - *Income and Wealth Inequality*, Americans for Democratic Action

- **Discussion Question:** Briefly discuss how economic and political inequalities are threats to global security.

Week Three: Inequality

- **Readings:** Skolnick and Currie
  - Barbara Ehrenreich: *Nickel-and-Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*
  - Tamara Draut and Javier Silva: *Generation Broke: The Growth of Debt among Young Americans*
  - Dale Russakoff: *Retirement’s Unraveling Safety Net*
  - Robert Kuttner: *The Squandering of America*
  - Dean Baker: *Increasing Inequality in the United States*
  - Center for American Progress: *From Poverty to Prosperity*
  - Elliot Liebow: *Day by Day: The Lives of Homeless Women*
  - David Wessel: *As Rich-Poor Gap Widens in the U.S., Class Mobility Stalls*

- **Readings:** Eitzen
  - *How Other Countries Fight the War on Poverty*, Sid Ryan

- **Discussion Question:** Please select one question to answer:
  - What social policies might prevent the creation of a permanent underclass?
  - Discuss the interaction of race and social class in determining one’s life chances in the US.
  - Equation of racism – Prejudice = Discrimination; Discrimination + Power = Racism. What is institutional racism?

Week Four: Racism

- **Readings:** Skolnick and Currie
  - Michael K. Brown et al: *The Roots of White Advantage*
  - Sentencing Project: *Schools and Prisons*
  - Daniel Golden: *At Many Colleges, the Rich Kids Get Affirmative Action*
  - Aviva Chomsky: *They Take Our Jobs*

- **Discussion Question:** Please select one question to answer:
  - What is institutionalized discrimination and how does institutionalized discrimination contribute to ongoing social inequality?
  - Discuss the conservative and liberal views on racial inequality
  - Is inequality acceptable?

Week Five: Sexism and Homophobia

- **Readings:** Skolnick and Currie
  - The Economist: *The Conundrum of the Glass Ceiling*
  - American Association of University Women: *Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus*
  - Peggy Orenstein: *Learning Silence*
• Readings: Eitzen
  o Europe Crawls Ahead, Megan Rowling
  o Gender Equality in Sweden, Swedish Institute
  o Social Shift Opens Door to Gay Marriage Plan (Canada), Clifford Krauss
  o Gay Rights and European Citizenship, Joydeep Sengupta
• Discussion Question: Please select one question to answer:
  o Do you think homosexuality is a social problem? Why or why not? If you were a
    politician or social policy maker, what would your position be on this issue? Do you
    think your “official” position would differ from your personal feelings? Why or why not?
  o What are some sources of gender inequality and what can be done to combat gender
    inequality?
  o What can be done to reduce family Violence?
  o Discuss the “institutional” discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexual, and
    transgender people that exists within American society. Provide examples.

Week Six: The Family
• Readings: Skolnick and Currie
  o Arlene Skolnick: Beyond the ‘M’ Word: the Tangled Web of Politics and Marriage
  o Sharon Lerner: The Kids Aren’t All Right
  o Brittany Shahmehri: More Than Welcome: Families Come First in Sweden
• Readings: Eitzen
  o Atlantic Passages: How Europe Supports Working Parents and Their Children, Janet
    Gornick.
  o The Father Generation, Rainer Stumpf
  o Teen Pregnancy: Trends and Lessons Learned, Heather Boonstra
• Discussion Question: Select one question to discuss:
  o Why do you think divorce rates are so high and would making divorce harder to get help
    to solve the social problem of divorce? Why or why not?
  o Dual wage-earning couples sacrifice family values and harm their children's
    development. Share your thoughts about this subject.
  o A functionalist view would argue that the family is a “preserver of social stability”.
    Conflict theorists would argue that the family is a repressive institution perpetrating the
    power of men over women. Some sociologists, like David Popenoe, argue that modern
    American society has placed emphasis of personal individualism and fulfillment above
    family responsibilities and that this has hurt American children. Which of the three
    arguments do you most agree or disagree with and why?

Week Seven: Schools
• Readings: Skolnick and Currie
  o Jonathan Kozol: The Shame of the Nation
  o Ellen Mutari and Melaku Lake: Class Conflict: the Rising Costs of College
  o Lawrence Mishel and Richard Rothstein: Schools as Scapegoats
  o Jennifer Washburn: Hired Education
• Readings: Eitzen
  o Early Childhood Education and Care in Advanced Industrialized Countries, Sheila B.
    Kamerman
  o Learning from South Korean Schools, David J. Lynch
  o A World Transformed: How Other Countries Are Preparing Students for the
    Interconnected World of the 21st Century, Vivien Steward
• Discussion Question: In the U.S. today, problems of education relate to funding, teacher quality
  and the status of the teaching profession, student academic performance and standardized testing,
  racial imbalances and equal educational opportunity, and the curriculum in relation to labor force
  needs and global competition. New problems, such as teacher shortages; overcrowded and unsafe
  schools; and unequal access to educational technology join other perennial issues in education
  such as gender bias and the bilingual education debate. The educational system as a social
institution and individuals’ educational experiences and levels of attainment are key factors in addressing other social problems. Please select one question to discuss:

- One school of thought is that America’s schools serve as a “sorting machine” by categorizing students on the basis of their intellectual abilities and test scores. What are the consequences of tracking students and what is a solution to unequal education based upon tracking?
- Another belief is that problems in education have more to do with the quality of teachers than with the students. What are thoughts on this subject?

**Week Eight: The Aged**

- **Reading:** Eitzen
  - *As Good As It Gets: What Country Takes the Best Care of its Older Citizens?,* Mike Edwards
  - *We Should Rejoice in an Ageing Society, So Long as We Plan Properly for It,* Hamish McRae
  - *We’re Not Finished With You Yet,* Gail Edmondson

- **Discussion Questions:** Please select one question to discuss:
  - The social security system should continue to serve the nation’s elderly whatever the cost. Share your thoughts about this subject.
  - What social policy would you propose in order to offer elderly people the opportunity to work, while still ensuring adequate employment opportunities for the young?
  - Do you thing that specific generations share a common experience that differentiates them and their age group from others in different cohorts? Can you observe any evidence of “generation gap” between your parents’ cohort and yours? How do you thing growing up was different for parents than it was for you? In addition to technological changes, and the availability of more consumer goods, do you think values or norms have shifted also? If so, explain.
  - What are some problems that confront people who are considered senior citizens?

**Week Nine: Environment**

- **Readings:** Skolnick and Currie
  - James Gustave Speth: *A World of Wounds*
  - Steve Lerner Diamond: *A Struggle for Environmental Justice in Louisiana*
  - Union of Concerned Scientists: *Smoke, Mirrors, and Hot Air*

- **Readings:** Eitzen
  - *Flush with Energy,* Thomas L. Friedman
  - *Scandinavia Gets Serious on Global Warming,* Bruce E. Johansen
  - *The $6.66-a Gallon-Solution,* Simon Romero

- **Discussion Question:** Please select one question to discuss.
  - What is sustainable economic growth?
  - Is unrestrained capitalism inherently detrimental to the environment?
  - How does short-run economic gain endanger the environment?

**Week Ten: Cities**

- **Readings:** Eitzen
  - *New Lessons from the Old World,* Jay Walljasper
  - *I Love Paris on a Bus, a Bike, a Train, and in Anything but a Car,* Serge Schmemann

- **Discussion Question:** Please select one question to discuss.
  - What are some problems identified with cities and Identify one to two viable solutions to the problems of cities
  - What is gentrification and is it good or bad?
  - Why are the poor concentrated in certain areas in cities?
Week Eleven: Work and Welfare

- **Readings:** Skolnick and Currie
  - Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo: *Domestica*
  - Peter Edelman, Harry Holzer, and Paul Offner: *Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men*
  - Herbert Gans: *The Underclass Label*
  - Sharon Hays: *Flat Broke With Children*

- **Readings:** Eitzen
  - *The Vanishing American Vacation*, Don Monkerud
  - *The New WPA?*, Ryan Dodd

- **Discussion Question:** Many myths and stereotypes--and many theories--exist about the poor and the causes of poverty. Sociological explanations for poverty focus on societal needs and social forces. In one view, poverty is an outcome of longstanding conflict between haves and have-nots; in another, poverty is actually functional for society. Structural arrangements, such as official unemployment and the stipulation of a poverty line, have the effect of limiting opportunities and justifying social inequality. Thus, poverty is perpetuated through class discrimination and unequal opportunities for upward mobility. Programs and policies for addressing problems of poverty and work are seen as themselves problems. Please select one question to discuss.
  - Comparing international societies and the United States, what are some solutions to the “poor” becoming a more viable part of the workforce?
  - Discuss the widening gap between the rich and poor in the U.S. and has it mattered which political party has held power in the past twenty years?

Week Twelve: Problems of Health, Illness, and Health Care Delivery

- **Readings:** Skolnick and Currie
  - Susan Starr Sered and Rushika Fernandopulle: *Sick Out of Luck*
  - Commonwealth Fund: *Why Not the Best?*
  - Lillian Rubin: *The Untold Health Care Story: How They Crippled Medicare*

- **Readings:** Eitzen
  - *International Health Systems*, Physicians for a National Health Program
  - *Has Canada Got the Cure?*, Holly Dressel

- **Discussion Question:** Decreasing access to care and rising costs of care are major problems. In the U.S., health care increasingly is provided on a for-profit basis only by the health maintenance organizations, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and insurance companies on which health care access, delivery, and quality depend. Please select one question to discuss.
  - Are the reforms made under the Obama administration providing a better health care system?
  - Overall, how would you "grade" our current health care delivery system in the United States?
  - What reforms do you think should occur in the medical community?

Week Thirteen: Crime and Justice

- **Readings:** Solnick and Currie
  - Pew Foundation: *One in 100*
  - Ken Silverstein, *Unjust Rewards.*

- **Readings:** Eitzen
  - *Lawless, But Gunless*, Ken MacQueen
  - *Reducing Crime by Harnessing International Best Practices*, Irvin Waller and Brandon C. Welsh
• Discussion Question: Please select one question to discuss.
  o What is the importance of anomie theory in terms of understanding criminal behavior? How might this perspective point to a solution to the crime problem?
  o How does conflict theory contribute to our understanding of the crime problem and possible solutions?
  o What can be learned about the crime problem and possible solutions by employing differential association theory?

Week Fourteen: Individual Deviance: Drugs
• Readings: Eitzen
  o Does Europe Do It Better: Lessons from Holland, Britain and Switzerland, Robert J. MacCoun and Peter Reuter
  o Europe, Curing, Not Punishing, Rick Steeves
• Discussion Question: Many social problems involve the concept of deviance in relation to a society’s system of social control. These problems overlap significantly because the social and cultural factors that contribute to deviant or antisocial behaviors are complex and deeply interrelated. Juvenile delinquency and street crime, for example, may be linked to youth gang and organized crime activities; the availability of guns, alcohol, and drugs; poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunity; racism; family instability and domestic violence; school failure; and the influence of mass media. Issues within the criminal justice system itself add to the social problems of crime, violence, and drugs. Some theorists believe that crime prevention could be enhanced by the legalization of some drugs and victimless crimes. Please select one question to discuss
  o Discuss your thoughts on the above theory.
  o Define deviance and give examples.

Week Fifteen: America in the World
• Readings: Solnick and Currie
  o Chalmers Johnson: Blowback
  o Michael T. Klare: Oil, Geography, and War
  o 9/11 Commission: What to Do? A Global Strategy Against Terrorism
• Discussion Question: Discuss your reactions to one of the articles.

Week Sixteen: No Readings
There is no topic, but you may use the course website to say good-bye to your fellow students and make any observations about the social problems you have discussed. Or, you may address a topic that you perceive as a social problem, but was not covered during the weekly discussions.
CURRENT PROBLEMS EVALUATION OF INTERNET SITE

ASSIGNMENT TWO

Assessment of your internet site report:

- Follow all five guidelines below in reviewing your internet site.
- Use APA writing criteria guide
- The criteria for evaluating sources are listed below. These criteria will help you to conduct a thorough and balanced evaluation.
- Introduce your report, and provide a thesis statement and conclusion based on what your report has uncovered.

Report Guidelines:

1. Overview the site or the portion of the site you are focusing on if it is a large and lengthy site. What is covered on the site? In addition to coverage or breadth, support your points and generalizations with evidence, explanation, and examples from the site (depth).
2. Connect the site directly to the social problem that you are studying. How is this site addressing your social problem, i.e. poverty, homophobia, homelessness, racism and inequality, or inequality in education, depending on problem you are studying.
3. Decipher policy (guiding principles) or practical implications of material on the site. These implications are based on what you are learning and thinking.
4. Provide a solution to ease the social problem, which you have derived via your exploration of the site. This solution is your own analysis based on what you are learning and thinking.
5. Evaluate the adequacy of your site. The criteria for evaluating sources are listed below--after reviewing details on each criterion, draw a sub-conclusion about the adequacy of the site overall.

Evaluating Sources

Not all sources are equally adequate! Evaluate your sources according to the following criteria. Problems within and across criteria should be kept in mind when deciding if and/or how to use sources. For example, knowing the bias of an author helps you to translate the information but doesn’t necessitate throwing out the source; however, an extremely biased source with sweeping generalizations may require that you not include such a source. *Note that not all actions must be performed under each criterion to conduct a thorough evaluation of a source. Consider as many as you can, depending on which apply to your source. Check the last criterion first, or you may have to go back to the drawing board! Draw a conclusion at the end of your evaluation about the adequacy of the site.*

A. ACCURACY: You are doing well evaluating accuracy of a source if you are:
   - locating ways to verify the accuracy of the information (e.g., reference list or other knowledge that you have);
   - evaluating whether information is specific enough to verify;
   - analyzing the logic of the author’s analysis;
   - determining whether the conclusion flows from the analysis or material; and
   - research study: is the author tapping what he/she intended to (validity)?

B. AUTHORITY: You are doing well evaluating authority of a site if you are:
   - finding the author as listed on the site or its links; and
   - describing the qualifications of the author as listed on the site or its links.

C. OBJECTIVITY: You are doing well evaluating objectivity of a site if you are:
   - articulating the goals and aims of the persons or groups presenting the material on the site, and placing those in context (i.e., are the goals or aims serving to add to knowledge on the subject?); and
   - detecting whether a bias colors the analysis or whether the author is on a soapbox (e.g., one-sided analysis or heavy dependence on emotional language and terms).
D. CURRENCY: You are doing well evaluating currency of a site if you are:
- locating the dates when the site is last updated; and
- concluding whether currency of the information is relevant to the question.

E. COVERAGE: You are doing well evaluating coverage on the site if you are
- locating background material for the information;
- concluding to what depth the author is exploring the topic;
- determining how thorough the description and/or analysis is;
- analyzing whether the design and sampling in a research study are suitable for the question;
- deciding whether there is enough evidence to support the generalizations or main points; and
- evaluating whether the conclusion can be made on the basis of the material presented.

F. EASE OF NAVIGATION: You are doing well evaluating navigability of the site if you are:
- able to get around the site and its internal links fairly easily: are there clear and prominent icons on the home page to internal links? is there a search function for finding what you need on the site?; and
- determining if the site and its links are organized in a logical fashion.

G. RELEVANCE: You are doing well evaluating relevance of the site if you are:
- deciding whether the site is relevant to your assignment or objective; and
- concluding whether or not the site material helps you to analyze your topic or make a point that supports your thesis.
CURRENT PROBLEMS BOOK REVIEW OUTLINE

ASSIGNMENT THREE

The following is the outline for the book review. The review should be double spaced and not exceed 10 pages. Use American Psychological Association (APA) format and referencing as appropriate.

1. Cover sheet includes your name, class, and date of submission, as well as the title of the book, author, year of publication, and total number of pages.

2. Discuss how this book is relevant to the course.


4. Describe the strength(s) of the book. Give examples. If you liked the book, give your reasons. If not, why not? Cite specific evidence from the book to support your statements.

5. Be critical of the book. What are its shortcomings? Where can you take issue with the book or author’s message? Why?

6. Search the writer’s thinking. Discuss one of the assumptions that the author makes. What are your thoughts on the subject? Elaborate.

7. Discuss at least one important fact (not limited to one) you learned from reading this book. Think hard—a new view, idea or notion is important here.

8. If you had a chance to visit with the author, what would you say to him or her? What list of questions would you take with you?

9. Find a good quote and directly quote this portion from the book. This might be a part worth remembering or thinking about or sharing with someone.

10. What were your thoughts and feelings as you read the book? Do not repeat questions above. Be straightforward and share your insights, suggestions, etc.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Note: Attendance/absences do not apply to online courses. However, participation in all course activities is extremely important to student success in online courses.

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity

Accommodation Statement

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Dorsicine Spigner-Littles, Ph.D.

Education
1985 Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, University of Oklahoma

Current Positions
- Advanced Programs Professor since 1994
- Associate Professor, Department of Human Relations, University of Oklahoma

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
- HR 5033 Leadership in Organizations
- HR 5083 Seminar In Group Dynamics
- HR 5093 Introduction to Graduate Studies in Human Relations
- HR 5113 Racial Diversity In Organizations

Representative Publications and Presentations

Representative Honors and Awards Received
- Appreciation Award, Minority Graduate Student Association, 1993
- Outstanding Young Woman of America Award, 1982
- Minority High Academic Achievement Award, 1977-80

Major Professional Affiliations
- National Research Conference on African and African American Studies
- Strategic Planning Committee Research and Graduate Programs
- Quarterly Forum on Issues Facing the African American Community
- General Education Committee
- African American Studies Committee