

DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2024

SO1020(A2 & VC): Social Problems – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Michael Holland	PHONE:	780-539-2973
OFFICE:	C404	E-MAIL:	mholland@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	10 am – 11 am, Tuesdays and Thursdays		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Analysis of the social construction of social problems, focusing on selected structural and behavioural problems such as inequality, substance abuse, family violence, pornography, mental and physical handicaps. Personal and societal responses and intervention attempts will be explored.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:

SO1000 - Introductory Sociology

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Tepperman, L., Curtis, J., & La Touche, R. L. (2020). *Social Problems*. Oxford University Press.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus and Videoconference (VC).

Note: *Videoconference Student Requirements:* Technology (e.g., webcam, microphone, speakers), Class Participation (e.g., camera on during class, appropriate screen name)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will:

- Explain the wider introductory social problems literature.

- Explain the causes and consequences of social problems.
- Illustrate the applicability of sociological knowledge to understand and solve social problems.
- Identify, use and explain the research tools used by sociologists in the study of social problems.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <https://transferalberta.alberta.ca/>

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Assessment	Weight
Attendance/Participation	10 %
Chapter quizzes	10 %
2 Infographics @ 10 percent each	20 %
SSO Project, Part 1	10 %
SSO Project, Part 2	10 %
SSO Project, Part 3	10 %
SSO Project, Part 4	30 %
Total	100 %

Note: Assignment instructions and rubrics will be made available on our myClass page.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is crucial for your success in this course and will be recorded for each class. Active participation is equally important; even in a large class, your contributions are highly valued. Engage in discussions by offering insights grounded in readings, personal experiences, and critical thinking. Remember, even occasional thoughtful participation can have a meaningful impact!

I will be looking for substantive contributions, so simply stating an opinion isn't enough. You are expected to back up your arguments with evidence from the required readings. Additionally, I encourage you to think creatively and present well-reasoned arguments that draw on your personal experiences and previous education. There will be plenty of opportunities and options for you to engage with the class material. If you have concerns about public speaking, please discuss this with me early in the course.

Note: If you miss a class, you are required to watch the recorded lecture and submit a 3-page, single-spaced reflection on what you found interesting and what you learned from the lecture.

Chapter Weekly Quizzes

Starting week 2, you'll tackle weekly quizzes on our course webpage (myClass). Each quiz has a mixture of multiple-choice, true-and-false, matching, questions, and there are 9 quizzes total. They're designed to keep you up-to-date with readings and check your knowledge. Quizzes open Monday at midnight and close the following Sunday at 11:59 PM. You'll have two attempts per quiz, and the system keeps your highest score. No late submissions will be accepted.

Policy Brief Infographics Assignments

You will create two policy brief infographics, each focusing on a different social problem you want to address. Using sociological theories, data, and evidence, you will outline the problem and suggest practical solutions. Your infographics should be clear, persuasive, and visually engaging, effectively communicating the issues and your proposed interventions. After completing the infographics, you will share them in a walk-around session, where your peers will have the opportunity to review your work, ask questions, and provide feedback. This assignment will enhance your ability to present complex ideas in a concise, impactful way and encourage meaningful class discussions.

Systematic Social Observation (SSO) Project

In this course, you will conduct a Systematic Social Observation (SSO) project that involves a sociological examination of the environment around us. The project consists of four parts, and before you begin, we will cover the detailed protocol, data collection methods, and ethical considerations in class. Workshops will also be provided to support your research efforts. All parts of the assignment will be submitted on MyClass.

Part 1: You will collect data during daylight hours, including observations, photos, and notes. To ensure your safety, all fieldwork must be conducted in pairs or groups, and you must provide proof of this collaboration.

Part 2: You will then analyze your notes and data from Part 1, identifying themes that connect to our course material. Reflect on how your findings address the research questions you had before entering the field. Consider what types of evidence or data highlight social issues in our community and which theoretical perspectives help you interpret these themes.

Part 3: Toward the end of the semester, you will present your findings. You will transform your analysis from Part 2 into a concise presentation. You can choose the format based on your technical skills and preferences—whether it's a PowerPoint presentation, a simple video recorded on your phone, a more polished video, an academic poster (we'll workshop this), or a live class presentation. The presentation should be 5-10 minutes long or the equivalent if you're creating a poster. Your work will be assessed on quality and clarity. Additionally, you are required to view and comment on three other students' presentations and submit your feedback on MyClass before the end of the presentation period.

Part 4: The final component of your SSO project is a comprehensive academic paper. This paper should include a title page, research questions, a theoretical section, literature review, data analysis, conclusion. The paper should be between 18 and 20 pages long (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font), not including the title page and reference list. It's crucial to stay within this page limit, ensuring your paper is thorough but concise. The paper should be polished and written to a standard suitable for publication in a leading academic journal, such as the *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Social forces*, etc. Incorporate feedback and critiques from both me and your peers to refine your work. Although the registrar's office may schedule an exam time, there will be no final exam for this class. Instead, this paper will serve as your final assessment and must be submitted by 11:59 PM on the date scheduled by the registrar. I will notify you once this information is available.

GRADING CRITERIA (select the appropriate chart below based on the grading type for this specific course):

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Grading Chart for courses with Alpha Grading:

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Class Date	Topic (s)	Readings	Assignments
Sept 3,5	Introduction to the course Meet and Greet, Studying Social Problems *Discuss SSO/Infographics (Sept 5)	Chapter 1 for Sept 5	

Sept 10, 12	Class and Poverty	Chapter 2	Weekly quizzes start
Sept 17, 19	Racism and Ethnic Inequality	Chapter 3	
Sept 24, 26	Gender Inequality	Chapter 4	
Oct 1, 3	Crime and Violence	Chapter 6	
Oct 8	SSO Workshop		
Oct 10	# 1 Policy Infographic Presentation/Discussion		#1 Policy Infographic Due before class
Oct 15, 17	Health and Addictions	Chapter 7	SSO Part 1 Due, Oct 17, 11:59 pm
Oct 22, 24	Families	Chapter 9	
Oct 29, 31	Aging	Chapter 10	
Nov 5, 7	Schools	Chapter 11	
Nov 12-15	Fall Break – No Classes		
Nov 19	Work and the Economy	Chapter 12	SSO Part 2 Due, Nov 19, 11:59 pm
Nov 21	# 2 Policy Infographic Presentation/Discussion		#2 Policy Infographic Due before class
Nov 26, Nov 28	SSO Presentations Start (Part 3)		
Dec 3, 5	Presentations Continue		Last week for quizzes
Dec 10	Course wrap-up		Finalize Presentations
Final Exam (Assignment Part 4: TBA)			

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:

Sept 12 Last day to add courses or drop courses for a full refund (in most programs) & last day to pay Fall semester fees (except for students on an approved payment plan). Last day to opt out of the Student Health/Dental Plan

Sept 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Oct 14 Thanksgiving Day—No Classes

Nov 11 Remembrance Day—No Classes

Nov 12-15 Fall Break—No Classes

Nov 27 Last day to withdraw from classes (most programs) with a “W”

Nov 29 Deadline to apply for Winter courses

Dec 10 Last day of classes for the Fall semester

Dec 12 - 19 Final exam period

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

PLEASE NOTE:

To be fair to everyone in this course, **I will not alter the evaluation**, so any missed testing or assignments will not be accommodated.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

D2L:

This course will make extensive use of our website on D2L to support your learning. You are expected to keep current with the content of the site, and I advise you to log on often.

Professional Conduct:

- Please be aware that I respect that everyone’s time is valuable, please afford me the same courtesy.

Please note: If at any point in the semester, you feel you are struggling with the course material or with your coursework, please do not hesitate to ask me for assistance. Come and see me during my office hours, and I will assist you or point you toward other suitable sources of support. If you are scheduled to attend lectures or have other commitments during my office hours, please contact me by e-mail for an appointment.

- Instead of preoccupying your mind with questions such as, “How do I get an ‘A’?” Instead, ask yourself, “How can I work to expand my knowledge, perspective, and outlook on the real world?”
- Please only use your **NWP e-mail account** to avoid having your message blocked by SPAM filters.

- Always include “SO 1020” in the subject line (or I may never even receive your message).
- Finally, in our academic environment, please practice writing e-mails *formally*, as you will need to do regularly upon graduation. For example, use a simple greeting, do not use slang or abbreviations, and always sign off with your name!