

SOC 2601 - Social Problems

Summer 2026 Syllabus, Section A02, CRN 30524,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Dr. Amanda Fehlbaum

Professional Qualifications:

Ph.D., Sociology, The University of Oklahoma

Master's, Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Texas at Dallas

Bachelor's, Gender Studies, University of Texas at Dallas

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Communication Expectations:

I typically respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays. I strive to grade assignments within one week.

How to Refer to me:

Dr. Fehlbaum

Course Description

2601. Social Problems. A sociological overview of various contemporary social issues, analyzing significant discrepancies between standards of expectation and actual social behavior, attempting to ascertain possible causes, and discussing trends and possible changes. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Social Problems, 5th Ed.	Best, Joel and Brian Monahan.	9781324101666

eBook access is required.

This course is First Day Ready which means that your book is included as part of your tuition and fees. You may [opt-out of these charges](#) though it is strongly discouraged.

Students are required to have access to [Blackboard](#) as this course takes place online. These are the [computer lab locations](#) on campus.

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
6/29	• Syllabus • SP: Chapter 1	MODULE 1 Introduction to Course & Social Problems Process CAREER CONNECTION: Every organization, policy, and institution is shaped by how problems are defined — knowing the process gives you the power to name and reframe issues in any professional context.	• Syllabus Quiz • Watch and Annotate: - Social Problems Process • Assignment 0: Submit Social Problem
7/6	• SP: Chapter 2	MODULE 2 Claims CAREER CONNECTION Evaluating the rhetoric and evidence behind claims is one of the most transferable skills you can have — it is what separates professionals who think critically from those who simply repeat what they are told.	• Watch and Annotate: - Claims Presentation • Assignment 1: Annotated Bibliography • Assignment 2: Analyze Rhetoric • Module 2 Course Project Journal • Project Presentation 1 • Exam 1
7/13	• SP: Chapter 3 • SP: Chapter 4	MODULE 3 Activists and Experts as Claimsmakers CAREER CONNECTION Every field has its own experts and advocates; understanding how they build credibility and shape conversations helps you identify who to listen to, who to question, and where you might fit.	• Watch and Annotate - Activists as Claimsmakers - Experts as Claimsmakers • Assignment 3: Separate Activist Sources • Assignment 4: Identify Experts • Module 3 Course Project Journal • Peer Review of Project Presentation 1 • Exam 2
7/20	• SP: Chapter 5 • SP: Chapter 6	MODULE 4 The Media & Claims and Public Reaction CAREER CONNECTION Understanding how media frames issues and shapes public opinion is essential for anyone who will ever communicate with an audience, manage a message, or design a public-facing campaign.	• Watch and Annotate - Media and Claims - Public Reaction • Assignment 5: Media Coverage • Assignment 6: Role of Popular Opinion • Module 4 Course Project journal • Project Presentation 2 • Exam 3
7/27	• SP Chapter 7 • SP Chapter 8	MODULE 5 Policymaking and Social Problems Work CAREER CONNECTION Policy is not made in a vacuum — understanding the political and institutional processes that produce it helps you engage with, influence, or work within those systems more effectively.	• Watch and Annotate - Policymaking - Social Problems Work • Assignment 7: Role of Social Policies • Assignment 8: Power Dynamics of Workers • Module 5 Course Project Journal • Peer Review of Project Presentation 2 • Exam 4
8/3	• SP: Chapter 9 • SP: Chapter 10	MODULE 6 Policy Outcomes & Claims Across Time and Space CAREER CONNECTION Evaluating whether policies actually work — and why they succeed or fail differently across contexts — is the analytical foundation for evidence-based practice in any field.	• Watch and Annotate - Policy Outcomes - Claims Across Time and Space • Assignment 9: Analyze Effectiveness of Social Policy • Assignment 10: Comparing Constructions • Module 6 Course Project Journal • Exam 5

8/10	• SP. Chapter 11	MODULE 7 Uses of the Constructionist Stance CAREER CONNECTION The ability to step back and ask "how did this come to be defined this way, and who benefits?" is one of the most sophisticated analytical tools you will carry out of this program.	• Watch and Annotate - Uses of the Constructionist Stance • Assignment 11: You're the Expert • Final Project Presentation • Final Course Project Journal • Exam 6
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