



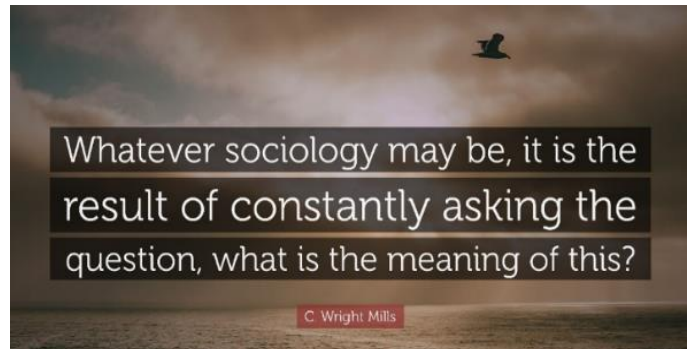
Social and Behavioral Sciences/ Sociology
Social Problems / Fall 2022
SOCO 264 (001-21202)

Dr. Brenda Wilhelm, Professor

Welcome to Social Problems! If you have any questions at all about what you find on this syllabus or want to talk with me at any point during the semester, please don't hesitate to come to office hours or send an email. I'm looking forward to an excellent semester with you all.

About the Course

What's wrong with society?? It would be pretty hard to have gotten through the last several years without asking that question at least once. While it would take a lot more than one course to answer that question definitively, we'll spend this semester taking a crack at it. We'll investigate a range of interrelated societal conditions that can be labeled either "social problems" or "social issues." This is a sociology course, so we'll be studying society – social organization and patterns of social interaction – as we try to better understand the social problems we face.



I fully believe that each of us has a significant role to play in the welfare of our community, our nation, and our world. I hope that this class is one part of your journey toward finding your own role in this. I also know that thinking about what's wrong with society can be frustrating, maddening, anxiety-producing, and sometimes downright depressing. As we dig into the social problems we face, we'll try to find a middle ground between unrealistic optimism and doom-and-gloom pessimism. We'll try to stay focused on underlying causal factors rather than getting caught up in current events and headlines. We'll keep an eye on the potential for positive change and the roles we can play in that change. And I'll encourage you throughout to take frequent "news breaks" and to prioritize taking care of your physical, mental, and emotional health.

Essential Course Information

Prerequisites for the Course: None

Drop Date: September 6 / *Withdraw Date:* October 31

Credit Hours: 3 (45 contact hours plus 90 hours student preparation hours)

Class Meetings: Houston Hall 105, Mondays and Wednesdays at 1pm, Fridays online

Time Commitment: Per CMU policy, students should expect to spend a total of approximately 9 hours per week doing the work for a three-credit class, including the time spent in the classroom plus the work that you do outside the classroom. If you are consistently spending significantly more than 9 hours per week on this class, please don't hesitate to see me to discuss the problem. I'm sure we can develop some strategies that will help.



About Your Professor

Quick Professional Bio: I've considered myself a sociologist since I decided to major in sociology as an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, after a circuitous trip through a variety of other majors. I went on to earn my MA and PhD in sociology at the University of Arizona. Having had the opportunity to teach during graduate school, I made the decision to pursue a career at an undergraduate-focused college and have been teaching here at CMU since 2000.

Phone: 970-248-1429

Email: bwilhelm@coloradomesa.edu

Typical Response Time: 24-48 hours

Office: Lowell-Heiny 402

Office Hours: MW 3-4 and TR 2-3:30. I will be in my office during those times and will have my Zoom office hours link open. Click [here](#) to make an appointment during my office hours. If you would like to see me outside of normal office hours, please email me to request an appointment. If you wonder what office hours are all about, I recommend this video about "[FWOOMP](#)" from Arizona State University.

I use the announcement (news) section of D2L to communicate with the class as a whole and provide frequent feedback in the D2L grade book. Try to make a habit of checking the course news, the grades tool, and your email regularly.



Student Learning Outcomes

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply sociological theories, perspectives, and concepts to contemporary social problems.
2. Analyze the process through which social problems are constructed in society.
3. Describe important findings from the sociological research on social problems.
4. Illustrate the reciprocal relationship between personal troubles at the individual level and social problems at the societal level.
5. Discuss policy and program implications – and potential personal actions - developed out of a sociological study of social problems.

This course is a critical component of CMU's Essential Learning Curriculum and a CMU Degree. In addition to knowledge in the course content area, this class will provide specific learning opportunities in the following areas (see the addendum for GT Pathways Learning Objectives):

1. Produce effective arguments and summaries in written English.
2. Critically examine and evaluate an argument.
3. Demonstrate investigative and analytical thinking skills to solve problems.

Finally, if you are a sociology major or considering becoming one, you should think of this course in terms of its contributions to the Sociology program goals, which link to CMU campus-wide student learning outcomes. The Sociology program goals are as follows:

- Apply scientific principles to an understanding of the social world in a summative project (specialized knowledge/applied learning)
- Rigorously analyze and evaluate the quality of social scientific methods and data (quantitative reasoning)
- Defend sociological analyses of social phenomena in formal papers and oral presentations. (communication fluency)
- Critically evaluate explanations of human behavior and social phenomena (critical thinking)
- Use sociological knowledge to contribute to public understanding of social issues, policy debates, and the development of a sense of civic duty (personal and social responsibility, applied learning)
- Develop scholarly arguments by locating, evaluating, applying, and synthesizing information from sociological and other social scientific sources (information literacy)

You'll find information on how I'll assess these learning outcomes below. If you are unclear as to the purpose of an assignment or assessment, don't hesitate to ask me about it. I will do my best to explain my reasoning to you. My aim is to be as transparent as possible.



Required Text and Other Materials

- Silver, Ira. 2021. *Seeing Social Problems: The Hidden Stories Behind Contemporary Issues*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publishing.
- A digital subscription to *The Atlantic*

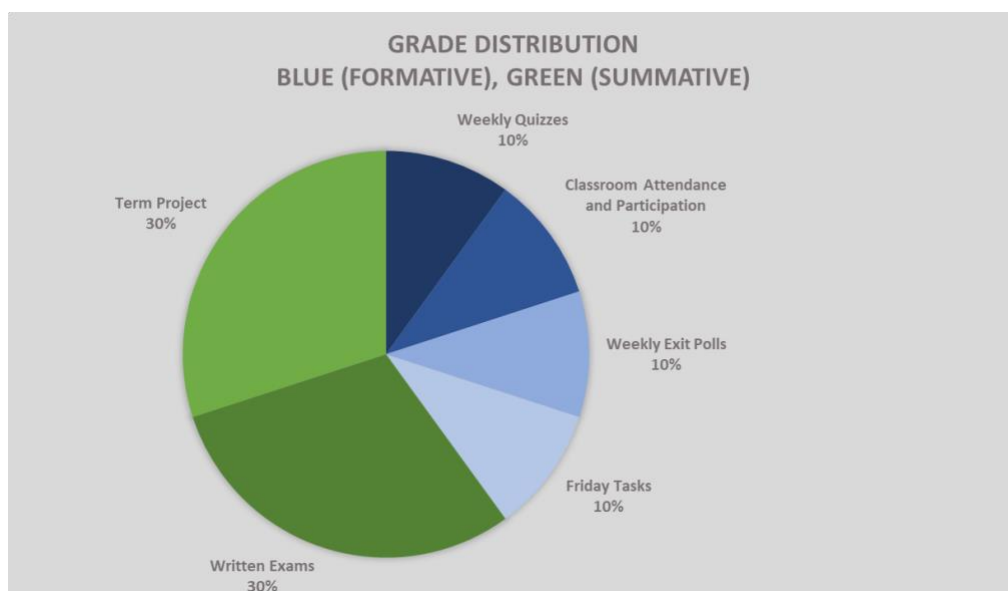
You were billed \$51 for the Direct Digital version of the textbook when you registered for the class and have access to it through D2L. If you decide to opt out of Direct Digital, you will need to get your own copy of the textbook by the third week of class. The textbook will serve as our foundation throughout the semester.

An [annual subscription](#) to *The Atlantic* is \$29.99 at the academic rate. We'll use *The Atlantic* as a source for current events and issue analysis that you will supplement with articles from [other recommended publishers](#). We will discuss other access options during the first week of class.



Course Requirements

The requirements for this class are divided into two categories: formative and summative. Formative requirements are those that are all about the *process* of learning the material. Summative requirements are all about *demonstration* of the knowledge you gained and the skills you have developed.



A Note on Extensions: The requirement descriptions below include information on late work and include a notation about “extenuating circumstances.” Except for quizzes, there is a grace period built into all deadlines. If something has come up that makes it impossible for you to get a requirement in within that grace period, please send me an email as soon as possible.

Weekly Quizzes (10%): Your weekly quizzes are multiple-choice and based on the textbook chapter assigned for the week along with other assigned material posted in the weekly folder. Quizzes are always due before class on Monday. You can use any of your course materials as you take the quiz, and you’ll get a second attempt to answer whatever you missed the first time. *You may miss one quiz without penalty; adjustments are made at the end of the semester. Unless you discuss extenuating circumstances with me, late quizzes will be accepted for one-half credit as long as they are in within one week of the original deadline.*



Classroom (10%): Your classroom grade is based on attendance and participation (verbally and in classroom activities). *You may miss three class periods without penalty; this adjustment will be made at the end of the semester. If you must miss more than three class periods, please use the Student Absence Notification form and email to keep me in the loop.*

Weekly Exit Polls (10%): There will be an exit poll each Friday, in which you will answer questions about the week’s material. You will have considerable latitude in what you choose to discuss. These will be evaluated on a plus/check/minus basis. *After an automatic 48-hour grace period, exit polls submitted late will earn one-half credit unless you’ve discussed extenuating circumstances with me. I will drop one exit poll grade from the calculation of your final grade; that adjustment will be made at the end of the semester.*

Friday Tasks (10%): Instead of coming to class each Friday, there will be a task to accomplish by 5pm. These tasks will move you toward successful completion of the exams and term project. These will also be evaluated on a plus/check/minus basis. *After an automatic 48-hour grace period, Friday Tasks submitted late will earn one-half credit unless you’ve discussed extenuating circumstances with me. I will drop one Friday Task grade from the calculation of your final grade; that adjustment will be made at the end of the semester.*

Written Exams (30%): Your exams will be based on the material we cover as a class, including the textbook chapters, other assigned material (readings, podcasts, videos), and lecture material. *After an automatic 48-hour grace period, exams will be accepted for ½ credit only. If you have extenuating circumstances that makes it impossible for you to complete the exam within that grace period, contact me as soon as possible (preferably before or at least the day of the exam) so that we can arrange for a later deadline.*



Independent Term Project (30%): Throughout the semester, you'll be working on putting together a reading list about a social problem of your choosing containing summaries of scholarly and non-scholarly sources from diverse types of publications and media. *The final term project will have an automatic 24-hour grace period but will not be accepted after that point except by prior arrangement. Note that this is a shorter grace period than normal. You will be developing your reading list and working on your summaries as "Friday Tasks" throughout the semester. Ideally, the only thing that will be left at the end of the semester is clean-up work, organization, and writing an introduction to your reading list.*

CMU Grading Scale

- A (90-100%) = Excellent to superior
- B (80-89.9%) = Good to excellent
- C (70-79.9%) = Satisfactory
- D (60-69.9%) = Passing but not satisfactory
- F (0-59.9%) = Fail

Your final grade in the course will be based on the above scale, and all summative written work will be evaluated with letter grades that correspond to the above scale. I will make every effort to provide feedback on all required student work within one to two weeks. I will often ask you to evaluate your own work; if your evaluation and mine don't mesh, don't be shy about coming to discuss it with me.

Course Policies and Other Important Information

Classroom Policies: The best classes are those where everyone is engaged with the material and each other. I hope that you will all join me in trying to make our classroom such an environment by showing up on time and ready to roll.

Academic Integrity Policy: I hope we don't have any problems this semester, but I do recommend that you read the [CMU's Student Code of Conduct](#) . You'll find the academic policies – including definitions, sanctions, and the appeal process – beginning on page 16. and [Policy on Academic Integrity](#).

Missed and Late Work: See the description of requirements and note on "extenuating circumstances" above.

LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR STUDENTS

BOOST YOUR GRADES!

- 1 SLEEP**
Make sure you're catching those Zs. For high school students, **8 hours of sleep or more** will allow you to excel in the classroom and stay alert while you study. Younger students may need 9-10 hours per night.
- 2 EAT BRAIN FOOD**
Brain food comes in all shapes and sizes, from fruits and veggies to nuts and seeds. Avoid fatty and sugary snacks. Try broccoli for vitamin K and pumpkin seeds for zinc. **Focus on getting a variety of vitamins every day.**
- 3 GET ACTIVE**
Exercise every day. Regular physical activity boosts mental alertness and energy levels required to study effectively. *An active body is part of a healthy mind.*
- 4 READ THE NEWS**
Keep up with current events and **gain the knowledge you need to apply what you learn in class to real life.** Reading non-assigned material is also a great way to discover what truly interests you.
- 5 ENJOY YOUR TIME AWAY FROM SCHOOL WORK**
When you're not in the classroom or studying, make sure you enjoy yourself. Get outside, connect with friends, and have fun. **Enjoying life reduces school-induced stress.**

skooli.com

Incompletes: If you've been successfully completing the class and something comes up at the end of the semester that makes it impossible to finish, I will consider assigning an "incomplete" instead of a final grade. All missing work will need to be made up in a timely manner according to a schedule that you and I agree upon; at that point, I will replace the "I" grade with the appropriate letter grade.



Supplemental Help

In coordination with Educational Access Services, reasonable accommodations will be provided for qualified students with disabilities. Students must contact Educational Access Services (EAS) at 970-248-1856 or Houston Hall Room 108 as soon as possible. Visit <https://www.coloradomesa.edu/educational-access> for additional information."

Additional [Student Services](#), including academic and non-academic support, are available as well; click on the link for details. If you would like a tutor for this course, please let me know so that I can try to ensure that one is available. If you are having any sort of trouble and are not sure where to turn for support, please don't hesitate to see me so that I can help you find the support that you need.



Minimum Technology and Skills Requirements

You will need basic computer skills and should be comfortable using a word processing program, browsing for files, and copying and pasting between programs. You will need a computer that connects to high-speed Internet. Your username and password are required for access. If you do not own a computer or if your computer malfunctions during the term, you will be expected to identify a computer to use (there are plenty on campus). Technology issues are not an excuse for missed or late work. To have the best learning experience possible, please be sure you have access to [Colorado Mesa University's recommended technology](#). *For reasons that I will explain in class, I will ask you to submit documents in Microsoft Word; as a CMU student, you have access to Microsoft 365, including on your own computer, laptop, tablet, and/or smartphone, and 1TB of One Drive storage... please utilize the resources available to you.* For more information, go to <https://www.coloradomesa.edu/information-technology/how-to.html>.

Addendum: GT Pathways Learning Objectives

This course is a GT Pathways Course (GT-SS3). It fulfills the following content criteria, competencies, and student learning objectives:

Diversity & Global Learning:

1. Build Self-Awareness

- a. Demonstrate how their own attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs compare or relate to those of other individuals, groups, communities, or cultures.

2. Examine Perspectives

- a. Examine diverse perspectives when investigating social and behavioral topics within natural or human systems.

3. Address Diversity

- a. Make connections between the worldviews, power structures, and experiences of individuals, groups, communities, or cultures, in historical or contemporary contexts.

Critical Thinking:

1. Explain an Issue

- a. Use information to describe a problem or issue and/or articulate a question related to the topic.

2. Utilize Context

- a. Evaluate the relevance of context when presenting a position.
- b. Identify assumptions.
- c. Analyze one's own and others' assumptions.

3. Understand Implications and Make Conclusions

- a. Establish a conclusion that is tied to the range of information presented.
- b. Reflect on implications and consequences of stated conclusion.