

**SKYLINE COLLEGE**  
**SOCI 105: Contemporary Social Issues**

Instructor:  
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Office Hours: By appointment  
Office Location: Zoom

Course information:  
Fall 2020  
CRN 96287, 3 Units  
Online, Asynchronous

**Course Description**

Every moment in history is unique, and this moment is no different. In this course, we examine social issues for the current moment, including social issues that have evolved and have taken on a contemporary platform and some that are unique to this moment. Through this course, students will make a connection to contemporary social issues, build a foundation for understanding different movements, learn how to view these issues through sociological theory, and identify how issues that might be identified as individual are inherently social.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Recognize the interaction of social institutions and social structures with the behaviors of individuals and social groups.
2. Evaluate the impact of culture, social class, gender, and race/ethnicity on people's life chances, practices and attitudes.
3. Analyze, explain and apply key sociological theories, concepts and terms to social issues.
4. Communicate and apply sociological knowledge using oral, written, and/or other technologically-driven mediums to current social issues and problems.

Additionally, upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Increase tolerance and cultural understanding of social classes, gender issues, diversity and race and ethnic issues.
2. Demonstrate skill in critical thinking and writing by analyzing the assigned readings, audio-visual materials and other primary sources utilized in the course.
3. Demonstrate increased understanding of diverse disciplinary perspectives and research methodologies.
4. Integrate and expand their understanding of and access to the Internet, computers and online resources.

## Course Materials

Book: Jobin-Leeds, Greg and AgitArte. 2016. *When We Fight, We Win!: Twenty-First-Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World*. New York, NY: The New Press.

All other readings and articles will be posted on Canvas.

## Course Details

Prerequisites:

- There are no required prerequisites for the course, but ENG 100 or 105 is recommended.

Attendance, Withdrawal, and Transferability:

- This course is asynchronous, meaning there will be no required class meetings
- The withdrawal deadline is November 17, 2020
- This course is transferable to both the CSU and UC college systems.

Technology:

- Check out the Online Resources tab in the Course Information module in Canvas for resources regarding tech support.

Late Work:

- Late assignments will be taken for a portion of a letter grade off up to 24 hours after the initial due date. For example, a B+ paper would receive a B if it were turned in six hours after the deadline.
- Students may not turn a paper in more than 24 hours late without prior consent of the instructor (that is, you must submit a written request to the instructor—usually this takes place via email—AND have received a consenting response to turn it in late prior to the actual date and time the paper is due).
- Your emergency is not my emergency. I will try to respond to all emails within 48 hours, but I will not immediately respond to emails sent at 11:58 PM regarding assignments due at 11:59 PM.

Academic Integrity:

- For general academic integrity guidelines, please refer to Student Rights and Responsibilities in the Skyline College catalog, as these will apply in this course.
- Your work at all times must be your own. While you are encouraged to collaborate with others to get preliminary feedback on your work and for engagement with the material, you may not submit another person's work (or the work of a computer) as your own.

- I reserve the right to refer any incidents of academic dishonesty to the Dean of Enrollment Services/ Disciplinary Officer. Additionally, I reserve the right to award plagiarized work with a grade of zero and not to allow the opportunity for make-ups.

#### Class Accommodations:

- All content will be available on Canvas, and I will strive to incorporate Canvas's accessibility settings into each course page.
- Occasionally, I may occasionally post exemplary de-identified student work so students have examples from which to draw.
- If you require additional accommodations or if there is anything I can do to make the classroom experience more accessible for you, please email or set up a time to meet with me.
- In coordination with the DRC office, reasonable accommodation will be provided for eligible students with disabilities. If you do not yet have an accommodation letter, please contact the DSPS office in room 5132 or call them at 650-738-4280.

### Grades and Assignments

#### Grades:

- Grades will be assigned using the assignment allocations and grading scheme described below. Students will not have the opportunity to turn papers in multiple times, nor will they get extra credit at the end of the semester. Students should plan accordingly.
- If you do not get the grade you believe you deserve on any assignments, you are welcome to discuss the grade with me in further depth during office hours. However, please note that no grades will be changed.

Grades will be assigned based on the following scheme:

A	100-93%
A-	92-90%
B+	89-88%
B	87-83%
B-	82-80%
C+	79-78%
C	77-73%
C-	72-70%
D+	69-68%
D	67-60%
F/NP	59-0%

Grades for the class will be based on assignment types as follows:

Journal Entries	15%
Case Study Posts	15%
Group Project	15%
Midterm Paper	25%
Final Paper	30%

## Weekly Assignments

### Journal Entries:

- Each **Tuesday by midnight**, students will submit a journal entry through which they connect that week's theme to their own lives by describing a personal experience with the topic, describing what they already know about the topic, or how they see the topic play a role in their everyday lives. Journal entries are to be at least 300 words. This exercise helps students see sociological content in their own lives and practice their writing skills.
- Students may respond in the following ways:
  - Write about a memory that you have that explains the context through which you are approaching this week's topic. This can relate to your own identity or that of someone you know (please don't provide their names or any identifying information, just tell us who they are to you—a friend, a family member, etc.)
  - Describe what struck you from the reading. What surprised you? What didn't?
  - Describe some facet of the issue that the reading did not address or only addressed at a glance. This can be another challenge that people are working to address or something else.
  - Some other response that clearly connects that week's topic to your own life, experience, perception, and/or ideas.
- 16 journal entries are assigned. Students may skip six without penalty (so students must turn in at least 10 for full credit). Students must have at least 10 complete journal entries for full credit by the end of the course.
- Journal entries are graded on a complete/incomplete basis. Journal entries that fail to engage/apply the topic or do not meet the word count will be considered incomplete. Through this activity, students will work toward Student Learning Outcomes #1 and #4.

### Case Study Posts:

- Each **Thursday by midnight**, students will *respond* to the week's case study prompt asking them to identify their own "case" of that week's prompt. Examples are provided. Case Study posts should be at least 300 words. Case Studies will be in discussion board format.
- Students should *comment* on two peers' posts by the following **Saturday by midnight**. Responses should be at least 50 words and are part of the grade (if you only submit a case study but do not comment on peers' posts, you will not get credit).

- This assignment is graded on a complete/incomplete basis. This is an opportunity to connect course content to real-world scenarios and learn something new about the world we live in. Case studies that fail to engage/apply the topic or do not meet the word count will be considered incomplete. Through this activity, students will work toward Student Learning Outcomes #2 and #4.
- 16 case study posts are assigned. Students may skip six without penalty (so students must complete at least 10 for full credit).

To summarize:

- Journal entries and case study posts should each be at least 300 words.
- For case study posts, comments to peers should be at least 50 words.
- Students may skip six of each type of weekly assignment at some point during the semester without penalty.
- For each of the assignment types above, posts and submissions are graded on a complete/incomplete basis. Posts and submissions that fail to engage/apply the content, are not at least 75% original content from the student, and/or do not meet the word count will be considered incomplete.

## Milestone Assignments

Guidelines for All Milestone Assignments:

- Topics are loosely structured. Students who wish to write on a different topic are invited to do so, though they must get the consent of the instructor.
- Papers are to be written in double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. Papers should be turned in via Canvas and should be labeled LastName\_Assignment (e.g., Matheny\_Midterm). Students who fail to appropriately format their papers risk losing half a letter grade.
- All papers must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents or Google Docs. All presentations/posters must be submitted as Microsoft Powerpoint files or Google Slides.
- Students are expected to write at the college level (e.g., no spaces before periods, academic language, etc). Students should cite the assigned readings as well as other sources.
- At least 75% of the assignment must be your own original content. This includes content in quotes (you may only use direct quotes from other sources for up to 25% of your response, and the content you do quote should always be cited in ASA style). Please use plagiarism and grammar checkers before submitting assignments. If you have a high similarity rating, consider paraphrasing and adding your own interpretation of the quotes you have included.
- All papers/projects are graded based on the following criteria:
  - 20% Ideas – Ideas are creative, accurate, and appropriate to the prompt

- 50% Application – Course content is effectively applied (includes the required number of citations, uses language from course readings)
- 20% Organization – Ideas are organized and there are effective transitions; the paper is of the appropriate length to address the topic and meet page count requirements
- 10% Mechanics – Grammar, punctuation, capitalization, formatting

Group Project (Poster):

- Students will draft a poster exploring a contemporary social issue with 1-3 other students in the course. Specific details about the topics will be sent to students after add/drop.
- Students will be assigned to groups in Canvas after the add/drop period.
- Please see the project handout on Canvas for specific assignment guidelines. This will be posted after add/drop.
- Only one group member will need to submit the project.
- The **project is due** in the Canvas discussion board on **Thursday, October 8 at 11:59pm**.
- In order to receive your grade for this assignment, you will also need to **comment** on two other groups' projects by **Saturday, October 10 at 11:59pm**.

Midterm Paper:

- Students will write an essay extending a topic from the course. Specific details about the assignment will be released after the Group Project deadline has passed.
- In this paper, students will apply the content from the course thus far. For more specifics, please see the midterm handout on Canvas. This will be posted after the Group Project deadline has passed.
- The project should be at least three pages long. See paper/project guidelines above for formatting specifics.
- The midterm paper is due on Canvas at by **Saturday, November 7 at 11:59pm**.

Final Paper:

- Students will write an essay extending a topic from the course. Specific details about the assignment will be released after the Midterm Paper deadline has passed.
- The paper should be five pages long. For more specifics, see the final handout on Canvas. See paper/project guidelines above for formatting specifics.
- The Final Paper is due on Canvas by **Wednesday, December 16 at 11:59pm**.

## Course Outline

Week 1: The Sociological Imagination

Unit I. Substance Abuse

Week 2: Tobacco Use and Criminalization of Drug Use

Unit II. LGBTQ Issues

Week 3: Contemporary LGBTQ Issues

Week 4: The Importance of Intersectionality

Unit III. Education Equity

Week 5: What Is A “Public” Education?

Week 6: The Education Infrastructure

Week 7: Desegregating Schools

Unit IV. The Police State

Week 8: Racial Justice

Week 9: Identity and Incarceration

Week 10: #DefundThePolice

Unit V. Immigration Reform

Week 11: DREAMers

Week 12: Political Activism

Unit VI. Economic Struggle

Week 13: Occupy Wall Street

Week 14: Eviction

Week 15: Minimum Wage and the 40-Hour Workweek

Unit VII. Environmental Justice

Week 16: Intersectionality

Week 17: Looking Forward