

**SOCI 2203**  
**SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL POLICY**  
社會問題 與社會政策

First Term, 2022-23  
Tuesday, 4:30pm – 6:15pm

Esther Lee Bldg LT4

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**COURSE OUTLINE**

This course introduces students to the sociological approach to understanding social problems. It is divided into two components: theoretical perspectives of social problems and corresponding sociological research that informs social policy. The theoretical component presents a variety of perspectives, the purpose of which is to show that social problems are complex and multi-causal in nature. The social policy component explores the extent sociological research provides empirical evidence to the formulation of policies addressing social problems.\* By the end of the course, students will be able to investigate a social problem sociologically, and draft a policy paper recommending intervention that is theoretically grounded and empirically supported.

Textbook: Social Problems : Continuity and Change

(recommended open textbook, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing edition, 2015). You can download the e book here: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/socialproblems/>

Alcock, P., M. May, and S. Wright (edited). 2012. *The Student's Companion to Social Policy. (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. (recommended, access via CUHK ProQuest Ebook Central online)

Rubington, E., & M.S. Weinberg. 2010. *The Study of Social Problems: Seven Perspectives (7<sup>th</sup> edition)*. NY: Oxford University Press. (recommended **supplementary** textbook)

The course will highlight selected *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* and explore how the study of social problems and social policy might help to achieve them. *Design thinking* will also be experimentally introduced to help finding creative solution to social problems. Please see the following websites for further information:

UN Sustainable Development Goals – The 17 Goals and Targets- <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Stanford University: Tools for taking action – <https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources>

CUHK I-Care Programme: see Social Service Projects Scheme / Social Enterprise Startup Scheme / Lean Poverty Alleviation Initiative – <http://www.icare.cuhk.edu.hk/>

CUHK Sustainable Development Goals Action Fund - <https://www.srsdo.cuhk.edu.hk/en-gb/sd/sdg-action-fund>

\* Required text / # Supplementary text

### **Course Schedule**

<p>Week 1 6 September</p>	<p><b>Topic : Introduction</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch1 Understanding Social Problems *Alcock, P. Ch1. The Subject of Social Policy; Becker, S. Ch2. Approaches and Methods; Ch3. Manning, N. Social Needs, Social problems, and Social Welfare and Well-being, in Alcock and Wright (2012), p.5-25.</p> <p>#Rubington &amp; Weinberg (2010). Ch1. Social Problems and Sociology, Ch4. Value Conflict</p>
<p><u><b>In class: Tutorial arrangement</b></u></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>The Concepts</u></b></p>	
<p>Week 2 13 September</p>	<p><b>Topic : Problems of social order? Functionalism and urban delinquency</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch8.4 Explaining Crime</p> <p>#Rubington &amp; Weinberg. 2010. Ch2. Social Pathology, Ch3. Social Disorganization, Ch5. Deviant Behavior, Ch6. Labeling</p>
<p>Week 3 20 September</p>	<p><b>Topic : Symbolic interactionism - from social censure to welfare stigma</b></p> <p>* Chan, G.H., Lo, T. Wing. 2017. “The Social Censure of Hidden Youth in Hong Kong.” P.139-189 in Amatrudo A. (eds) <i>Social Censure and Critical Criminology</i>. Palgrave Macmillan, London.</p> <p>* Baumberg Geiger, Ben. 2016. “The stigma of claiming benefits: a quantitative study.” <i>Journal of Social Policy</i>, 45 (2): 181-199.</p> <p># Rubington &amp; Weinberg. 2010. Ch6. Labeling, Ch8. Social Constructionism # Henman, Paul. “The computer says ‘DEBT’: Towards a critical sociology of algorithms and algorithmic governance.” Conference paper for <i>Data for Policy 2017: Government by Algorithm?</i>, 6-7 Sept 2017 (espace UQ library).</p>
<p>Week 4 27 September  (1<sup>st</sup> tutorial)</p>	<p><b>Topic: Conflict perspective: capitalism, inequality and the welfare state</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch13.1 Sociological Perspectives on Health and Health Care, Ch13.2 Global Aspects of Health and Health Care. * Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. “The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State.” <i>International Journal of Sociology</i> 20(3): 92-123.</p> <p># Holliday, Ian. 2000. “Productivist welfare capitalism: Social policy in East Asia.” <i>Political Studies</i> 48(4): 706-723.</p>

	<p>#Bambra, Clare. 2007. "Defamilisation and welfare state regimes: a cluster analysis." <i>International Journal of social welfare</i> 16(4): 326-338.</p> <p>#Rubington &amp; Weinberg. 2010. Ch7. Critical Perspective.</p> <p><b><u>First tutorial: Design thinking – Priority Seats in Public Transport</u></b></p>
Week 5 4 October	<b><i>Public holiday – Chung Yeung Festival</i></b>
<b><u>Inequalities and Social Policy</u></b>	
Week 6 11 October	<p><b>Topic: Gender and sex work – how occupational identity mediates sex work related risks</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch4.2 Feminism and Sexism, Ch9.4. Prostitution</p> <p><i>Understanding sex work:</i></p> <p>*Weitzer, R. 2009. "Sociology of sex work." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 35: 213-234.</p> <p>#Kong, Travis S.K. 2006. "What it feels like for a whore: The body politics of women performing erotic labour in Hong Kong." <i>Gender, Work and Organization</i> 13(5): 409-434.</p> <p>#Wong, W. C., Holroyd, E., &amp; Bingham, A. 2011. "Stigma and sex work from the perspective of female sex workers in Hong Kong." <i>Sociology of health &amp; illness</i> 33(1): 50-65.</p> <p><i>Policy on sex work:</i></p> <p>*Biradavolu, M. R., Burris, S., George, A., Jena, A., &amp; Blankenship, K. M. 2009. "Can sex workers regulate police? Learning from an HIV prevention project for sex workers in southern India." <i>Social science &amp; medicine</i> 68(8): 1541-1547.</p> <p>#Sanders, T. and R. Campbell. 2007. "Designing out vulnerability, building in respect: violence, safety and sex work policy." <i>British Journal of Sociology</i> 58(1): 1-19.</p>
Week 7 18 October (2 <sup>nd</sup> tutorial)	<p><b>Topic: Global poverty – social exclusion and social capital</b></p> <p><i>Explaining poverty</i></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch2. Poverty</p> <p># Brady, David. 2019. "Theories of the Causes of Poverty." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 45: 155-175.</p> <p><i>Poverty and social exclusion:</i></p> <p>*Kabeer, N. 2000. "Social exclusion, poverty and discrimination: Towards an analytical framework." <i>IDS bulletin</i> 31(4): 83-97.</p> <p>#Saunders, Peter, Hung Wong, and Wo Ping Wong. 2014. "Deprivation and Poverty in Hong Kong." <i>Social Policy &amp; Administration</i> 48(5): 556-575.</p> <p><i>Social capital and other poverty reduction policy</i></p> <p>*Wong, S. 2008. "Building social capital in Hong Kong by institutionalizing participation: potential and limitations." <i>Urban Studies</i> 45(7):1413-1437.</p> <p>#Valencia Lomelí, Enrique. 2008. "Conditional cash transfers as social policy in</p>

	<p>Latin America: An assessment of their contributions and limitations.” <i>Annu. Rev. Sociol</i> 34: 475-499.</p> <p><b><u>Second tutorial: Work or oppression? Sex work policies and the welfare state</u></b></p>
<p>Week 8 25 October</p>	<p><b>Topic: The housing problem – from housing exclusion to study of homelessness</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch.14.2 Sociological Perspectives on Urbanization, Ch14.3 Problems of Urban Life.  * Zavisca, J. R., &amp; Gerber, T. P. 2016. “The socioeconomic, demographic, and political effects of housing in comparative perspective.” <i>Annual review of sociology</i>, 42, 347-367.</p> <p><i>Housing and social welfare</i>  # Lee, James. 2013. “Housing policy and asset building: exploring the role of home ownership in East Asian social policy.” <i>China Journal of Social Work</i>, 6:2, 104-117  # Somerville, Peter. 1998. “Explanations of social exclusion: where does housing fit in?.” <i>Housing studies</i> 13.6: 761-780.  # Chan, Siu Ming, and Hung Wong. 2021. "Housing and Subjective Well-Being in Hong Kong: A Structural Equation Model." <i>Applied Research in Quality of Life</i> (Springer online publication).</p>
<p>Week 9 1 November (3<sup>rd</sup> tutorial)</p>	<p><b>Topic : Healthy aging and ageism</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch6. Aging and Ageism</p> <p><i>Aging and wellbeing:</i>  * Hagestad, G. O., &amp; Uhlenberg, P. 2005. “The social separation of old and young: A root of ageism.” <i>Journal of social issues</i> 61(2): 343-360.  # Moen, P., D. Dempster-McClain , &amp; Jr, R.M. Williams. 1992. “Successful aging: A life-course perspective on women's multiple roles and health.” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 1612-1638.  # World Health Organization. 2002. <i>Active Ageing. A Policy Framework</i>. Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Department, World health Organization.</p> <p><i>Policy concerning aging and ageism:</i>  * Cheng, S. T., Lum, T., Lam, L. C., &amp; Fung, H. H. (2013). Hong Kong: Embracing a fast aging society with limited welfare. <i>The Gerontologist</i>, 53(4), 527-533.  # Qian, Q. K., Ho, W. K., Ochoa, J. J., &amp; Chan, E. H. (2019). Does aging-friendly enhance sustainability? Evidence from Hong Kong. <i>Sustainable Development</i>, 27(4), 657-668.</p> <p><b><u>Third tutorial: Homelessness: the social implication of sleeping rough</u></b>  <b><u>Submission of Group Project Proposal (10%, 2 November 11:59pm)</u></b></p>

<p>Week 10 8 November</p>	<p><b>Topic : Racial inequality in the global city</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch3. Racial and Ethnic Inequality.</p> <p><i>Understanding racism and racial inequality:</i>          *Clair, M., and J. Denis. 2015. "Sociology of Racism" p.857-863 in J. Wright (edited). <i>The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences</i>. Oxford: Elsevier.          #Phillips, C. 2011. "Institutional racism and ethnic inequalities: an expanded multilevel framework." <i>Journal of Social Policy</i> 40(1):173-192.</p> <p><i>Policy mediating racial inequality:</i>          #Rauscher, E., &amp; Shen, Y. 2022. "Variation in the Relationship between School Spending and Achievement: Progressive Spending Is Efficient." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 128(1): 189-223.          #Thapa, Chura Bahadur, and Bob Adamson. 2018. "Ethnicity, language-in-education policy and linguistic discrimination: Perspectives of Nepali students in Hong Kong." <i>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural development</i> 39(4): 329-340.</p>
<p><b><u>Deviant behavior, social intervention, and the state</u></b></p>	
<p>Week 11 15 November</p> <p><b>(4<sup>th</sup> tutorial &amp; project progress report)</b></p>	<p><b>Topic: Drug use and drug policy in the risk society</b></p> <p><i>Explaining drug use:</i>          * Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch7. Alcohol and Other Drugs          #Parker, Howard, Lisa Williams and Judith Aldridge. 2002. "The Normalization of 'Sensible' Recreational Drug Use." <i>Sociology</i> 36(4): 941-964.          #Rhodes, T. 2002. "The 'risk environment': a framework for understanding and reducing drug-related harm." <i>International Journal of Drug Policy</i> 13: 85-94.</p> <p><i>Drug policy:</i>          *Erickson, Patricia G. 1999. "Introduction: the three phases of harm reduction. An examination of emerging concepts, methodologies, and critiques." <i>Substance Use &amp; Misuse</i> 34.1: 1-7.          #James-Burdumy, S., B. Goesling, J. Deke, E. Einspruch. 2011. "The effectiveness of mandatory-random student drug testing: A cluster randomized trial." <i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i> 50: 172-178.</p> <p><b><u>Fourth tutorial : Tackling racial inequality with design thinking?</u></b></p>
<p>Week 12 22 November</p>	<p><b>Topic: The medicalization of deviance: gambling and the casino state</b></p> <p><i>Understanding gambling behavior:</i>          *Rosecrance, J. 1985. "Compulsive gambling and the medicalization of deviance." <i>Social Problems</i> 32(3): 275-284.          *Cheung, Nicole W.T. 2016. "Social Strain, Self-Control, and Juvenile Gambling Pathology: Evidence from Chinese Adolescents." <i>Youth &amp; Society</i> 48(1): 77-100.          #Frey, James. 1984. "Gambling: A Sociological Review." <i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences</i> 474: 107-1212.</p> <p><i>Gambling policy:</i>          *Cosgrave, J. and T. Klassen. 2001. "Gambling against the state: the state and the</p>

	<p>legitimation of gambling.” <i>Current Sociology</i> 49(5): 1-15.</p> <p>#Korn, David A., and Howard J. Shaffer. 1999. "Gambling and the health of the public: Adopting a public health perspective." <i>Journal of gambling studies</i> 15.4: 289-365.</p>
<p>Week 13 29 November</p> <p><b>(5<sup>th</sup> tutorial)</b></p>	<p><b>Topic: Environmental problems and social inequalities – climate change as a global social problem</b></p> <p>* Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Ch15.1 Sociological Perspectives on Population and the Environment, Ch15.3 The Environment.</p> <p><i>Sociology and climate change</i></p> <p>* Dietz, T., Shwom, R. L., &amp; Whitley, C. T. 2020. “Climate Change and Society.” <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>, 46, 135-58.</p> <p># McCright, A. M., &amp; Dunlap, R. E. 2000. “Challenging global warming as a social problem: An analysis of the conservative movement's counter-claims.” <i>Social problems</i>, 47(4), 499-522.</p> <p># Gould, K. A., Pellow, D. N., &amp; Schnaiberg, A. 2015. <i>Treadmill of production: Injustice and unsustainability in the global economy</i>. Routledge</p> <p><b><u>Fifth tutorial: Group presentation of project result (10%)</u></b></p> <p><b>Take Home Essay topics will be released through Blackboard at 8pm, 29 November</b></p>
<p>6 December 11:59pm</p>	<p><b><u>Deadline for submitting Take Home Essay Exam</u></b></p>
<p>18 December 11:59pm</p>	<p><b><u>Deadline for submitting Group Project Report (25%)</u></b></p>

## Course Assessment

### **Individual tutorial participation (20%):**

- Tutorial participation (15%): there will be five tutorials, each lasts for two sessions. For details please refer to handout “Tutorial Guideline”.
- Social annotation (5%): before tutorials 2, 3 and 4, students will engage in collaborative ‘Social Annotation’ (<https://web.hypothes.is/>) on web-based materials (e.g. Secretary for Labour and Welfare Blog at: <https://www.lwb.gov.hk/en/blog/index.html>) assigned by the tutors that is relevant to the lecture/tutorial topics.

### **Group project (45%)**

- Students will form groups of three to four people to study a social problem and to propose policy responses (based on literature and analysis of data collected). Students will first submit a group project proposal in the first week of November. The final report will then be presented by the group in the last tutorial before being submitted in mid-December. Apart from self-selected topics, students can also choose from one of the listed case study topics @ Blackboard to conduct a comparative case study.
- **Group project proposal** (around 750-1000 words; English or Chinese; submitted on or before: 2 November (Wednesday), 11:59p.m.) **(10%)**
- **Group project presentation of findings in last tutorial** (maximum 15minutes) **(10%)**
- **Group final project report** (including a separate one to two pages poster design, maximum 3,500 words; can recycle content of proposal; English or Chinese; submitted

on or before: 18 December (Sunday), 11:59p.m.) (25%)

- All group project assignments must be submitted to VeriGuide (except for presentation PowerPoint). No hardcopy is required.

**Take home essay (35%)**

- Take home essay topics will be released via both Blackboard email and announcement on **29 November, 8pm**. (*maximum* 3000 words excluding references and footnotes).
- Students can refer to lecture and tutorial reading materials, including those discussed via 'Social Annotation' if it is relevant to the essay topic.
- Students can expand their arguments by looking for relevant literatures via Google Scholar
- Take home essay must be submitted to VeriGuide on or before **6 December 11:59pm**. No hardcopy is required. Detail of the take home essay will be released later.

**Learning outcomes:**

- (a) look beyond common sense or public perception in understanding social problems in Hong Kong
- (b) analyze social problems in Hong Kong from sociological perspectives
- (c) propose and draft policy responses to these social issues

<b><u>Grade</u></b>	<b><u>Descriptors</u></b>
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B+/B/B-	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C+/C/C-	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D+/D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirement.

\* This set of grade descriptors will be subject to review in future.

**Note:**

- Late submission for assignments: deduct one half grade for one day (e.g. B → B-)
- Students are required to submit all assignments in the form of a computer-generated document via VeriGuide (the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine System). Please email the signed VeriGuide acknowledgement form to the TA of the course. Submission without a signed VeriGuide acknowledgement form will not be marked.
- Students must closely observe the academic honesty guidelines (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty>). Our Department also has a detailed guideline on academic citations (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf>)