

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

Second Term, 2023-24
Tuesday, 2:30pm – 4:15pm

Lee Shau Kee Archi Bldg G03

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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. (4th 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 (7th 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>

* Required text / # Supplementary text

Course Schedule

Topic 1: Introduction

Topic 2: Functionalism: examining crime and delinquency

- Topic 3: Symbolic interactionism and conflict perspective: NEET and social censure
- Topic 4: Drug addiction and policy in the risk society
- Topic 5: The medicalization of deviance: gambling and the casino state
- Topic 6: The housing problem – subjective well-being and social exclusion
- Topic 7: Poverty and social exclusion – working poor in Hong Kong
- Topic 8: Welfare and social security – an introduction
- Topic 9: Gender and sex work – occupational identity and risk mitigation
- Topic 10: Healthy aging and ageism
- Topic 11: Racial inequality in the global city
- Topic 12: Environmental problems and animal – eating green for climate?
- Topic 13: Approaching disability, and conclusion

Course Assessment

Individual tutorial participation (12%):

- There will be five tutorials, each lasts for two sessions. For details please refer to handout “Tutorial Guideline”.

Class participation (8%)

- There will be four in-class activities (6, 27 Feb, 26 Mar, 9 Apr), each contributing to a maximum of 2 points. Please refer to course schedule for the dates of the class activities

Group project (45%)

- Students will form groups of three to four people to study a social problem and to propose preliminary policy responses (based on literature and analysis of data collected). Students will first submit a group project proposal in the first week of Mar. The final report will then be presented by the group in the last tutorial before being submitted in mid-Apr. 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 in English or 850-1500 in Chinese; submitted on or before: 15 March (Friday), 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 in English or 4,500 words in Chinese; can recycle content of the proposal; submitted on or before: 28 Apr (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 **19 Apr, 6pm**. (*maximum* 3000 words English submission or 4500 for Chinese submission, excluding references and footnotes).
- Students **must** refer to lecture and tutorial reading materials, including materials discussed in class or tutorials. As students are expected to demonstrate a reflection of lecture and tutorial content, you are encouraged to keep a log/notes of what you’ve learnt through out the course.
- Students can expand their arguments by looking for relevant literatures via Google Scholar.
- Take home essay must be submitted to VeriGuide on or before **22 Apr 11:59pm**. No hardcopy is required. Detail of the take home essay will be released later.

Policy concerning the use of AI

Use only with prior permission. Please obtain permission from me before collaborating with AI chatbots (like ChatGPT) on assignment(s) for this course. Explicit acknowledgement is required if permission is granted. Specifically:

- You are permitted to consult generative AI for ideas, treating it as your personal assistant for learning.
- You are NOT permitted to use generative AI to generate the written content of your academic work. You MUST write the first draft yourself, individually or in collaboration with project team members.
- You are permitted to use writing assistant, such as Grammarly or other platform, to help you improve your own draft of writing.
- You are permitted to use generative AI to generate the image for use in your poster design.

Students should refer to the following APA Citation Style for how to cite ChatGPT (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>). However, students must exercise caution when using AI tools and be aware of their limitations. It is the responsibility of students, not the AI tools, to ensure the accuracy of the content submitted. Any errors or inaccuracies in the submitted work will be the sole responsibility of the students. According to the 'Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessments', unauthorized use of AI tools in coursework are treated as academic dishonesty case and will be handled by the disciplinary committee accordingly.

Learning outcomes:

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

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Descriptors</u>
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>)