The Liberal Studies program at Florida State University has been designed to provide a perspective on the qualities, accomplishments, and aspirations of human beings, the past and present civilizations we have created, and the natural and technological world we inhabit. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for Liberal Studies Area III, History and social sciences, and in combination with your other Liberal studies courses, provides an important foundation for your lifelong quest for knowledge.

This course also has been approved as meeting the requirements for the “Y” designation of (“Diversity in Western Cultures”) for the Multicultural Understanding credit at FSU

SYLLABUS

Welcome to SYG2010 (Social Problems, a 3 credit-hour course). I extend this initial greeting to all of our twice-a-week meetings in the semester (9 total class lectures) during which we will learn about the problematic social conditions American people live in. Hopefully, our working together will make us realize more that we are both the product and the makers of the society we live in. This syllabus describes the expectations, responsibilities, and content of the course. Retain it in your SYG2010 folder and bring it to each class. We will consult it as often as it is necessary to clarify, restate or change the above parameters of the course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course entails a sociological approach to a diverse number of contemporary social problems. Issues of study include conditions deemed critical in social institutions i.e., education, the economy, and polity as well as perceived problematic behaviors such as crime, war and terrorism, and sex-related practices.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course you will be able to:

1. Identify, define, and illustrate basic concepts, theories, and research techniques and findings to analyze and discuss social problems.
2. Compare and contrast the different theories and methods used to examine and explain varied social problems.
3. Critically examine your social environment and realize that social problems are embedded in and influenced by structural factors such as gender, race, age, class, etc.
4. Acquire an increased awareness of the inequalities affecting human groups and their choices.
5. Write and think critically via class discussions, written assignments, and exams about the concepts, theories, and research techniques in the field.
REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1) Leon-Guerrero Anna *Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action.* (5th Edition) Los Angeles, CA: Sage. This textbook is identified in the Course Outline below as ALG.

2) Additional readings for specific topics (described in the Course Outline) will be posted on Bb/CourseLibrary

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Reading Assignments:** Students are expected to have active and constructive class participation. *Hence, assigned readings should be read prior to and during the corresponding class dates as depicted in the Course Outline* below. Of course, additional reading of the materials may be needed before the midterm. The complexity of the reading materials is appropriate for college freshmen/sophomores. Thus, if at first you do not understand them, you must read them as many times as it is necessary to accomplish understanding. In order to know whether you fully grasp the concepts and arguments presented in the readings I suggest to: 1) Write down summaries of the material read, 2) make questions out of the information presented, and 3) specify the particular issues that remain unclear. At any rate, whatever study method you use that brings you understanding of the readings is the best to follow. Make a habit of consulting a college-level dictionary and the glossary in the textbook to acquire familiarity with scientific terms and expand your vocabulary. Very important for this class is your participation and note taking of activities scheduled outside the classroom. As a rule of thumb, while you are visiting sites, listening to speakers, seeing events, or doing something in Valencia and other cities, think how your American experience compares and contrast with your experience in Spain. Is your experience with education, voting, pan-handlers, or gender and race-relations similar, different? Does your view support or oppose the sociological literature? In short, use your sociological imagination to connect biography and history.

In order to monitor the regularity of the reading assignments and attendance, you will be given study guide questions to answer and to turn in on specified due dates as part of your grade in the course. Your grade, of course, depends on the quality of your answers.

**Class Participation:** The study of social problems makes more sense when it is done interactively. Hence, you are to be an active participant during each class. Attend class having done the readings and other work assigned as described in the Course Outline (pp: 5-7 in this syllabus). As mentioned above, *you will work on the questions of a study guide for each exam topics which will be answered during my lectures.* However, questions not covered in lectures can be inferred from the readings and they remain your responsibility.

I expect each of you to come to class prepared to discuss the material. My role is to generate and steer the discussion of the material always within a civil and respectful atmosphere. Therefore, do not fail to participate for fear of what others may think. Remember there are always other students who are in your same situation. If uncertainty and nervousness take over the class the course will be a total loss. Nothing will be gained from silence, passivity, apathy and lectures turned into monologues.

Ask questions, answer questions, volunteer your views, make comments, be attentive to what others say, avoid using the class as a forum for your own agenda. Overall, cooperate in building a supportive learning environment that benefits us all. Talk to me when you need help before it is too late.

**Essay Papers:** There are three potential activities involving visits to site, presentations by speakers and/or a combination of both to expand your academic experience in Valencia.

Each of these events is an essay topic for applying concepts and theories about the social problem under discussion. The essay, in other words, requires your prior reading of the material assigned and taking notes on relevant factors of the problem as described in the sociological
literature and they are manifested in the sites visited or explained by the speakers. The essay is a means to express your research-based views rather than personal opinions. Make sure your written work is expressed in your own words and contain the appropriate references. Abide by the rules of honesty when doing your work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated (see below for policy on academic honor and honesty).

The instructions for the paper are as follows:

a) Read the class materials assigned
b) Choose three concepts, propositions or findings on the social problem that you would like to elaborate in your essay. For instance, assume we visit the red light district in the evening and find children playing in the same plazas where the women market their services. You can observe the process of the trade or you can take notes on the interaction between families and prostitutes. Your notes will then apply the concept of crime as a process, the concept of crime as functional to society, or the concept of crime as a reflection of social inequality. You will use your data to illustrate or describe the three approaches to prostitution in a way that clearly convey your full understanding of the sociological arguments.

c) The essays should be two-page long, typed, double spaced, with proper margins and font for college papers, spell-checked, and proof-read.
d) Make sure to cite your references as both parenthetically in the body of the paper as well as in full following APA format
e) Turn in papers on time. See due dates in Course Outline below. Failure to turn in work means 10% loss from your final grade. Each day, (including weekends), delay is 10 points off; maximum delay allowed is 3 days or 30 points off a. Remember, missed work requires proper documentation to legitimate the late submittal.
f) The rubric for grading essays is the one depicted in the equivalence of alpha and numerical scales below.
g) Additionally, excessive typos, misspellings, sentences unfinished, punctuation problems, and paragraph construction can decrease your grade by 10 points.

**Exams:** There are three exams; each covers the assigned material listed in the Course Outline below. All exams are a combination of multiple-choice and true-false questions and will be given at the beginning of each class, i.e. 9:00-10:15 PM. Please attend class on time to optimize the time allowed of 75 minutes to answer the questions of the test.

All assigned readings and lectures are potential exam materials. To facilitate the learning process you will be given a set of study-guide questions to work on before each test. Work on these questions; doing so will help you study the material, meet the objectives of the class, and earn you up to 10% of your final grade. The questions are in essay forma because they cover the sociological materials from different angles, and relate issues in a way that complement the text. Use the class time and office hours to talk to me about your progress in preparing for the coming test. The study guide is **NOT a contract that defines the exam!** Rules regarding missing exams are discussed below

**Grading Method:** Each exam is worth 10% of the final grade or 30% from the three tests. The answers to the study guides is 15% for each or a total of 45%. In turn, 15% is accounted for by three essay papers of 5 points each, and the remaining 10% comes from perfect attendance.

Regardless of number of questions, all exams are graded on a scale of 0-100. The equivalent letter grade and the meaning of the grade are shown as follows:

| 95-100 | A | Excellent, creative and superb command of the subject matter |
| 90-94  | A- | Creative and outstanding command of the subject matter |
| 87-89  | B+ | Above average level but not outstanding grasp of the material |
| 84-86  | B  | Above average but thin understanding of some readings |
| 80-83  | B- | Above average but misses some parts of the readings and thus is |
unable to apply subject matter at all levels

77-79 C+ Average level of achievement with some mastering yet narrow application of the material

74-76 C Average level of achievement; it refers to the readings in a superficial way suggesting spotty understanding of the material

70-73 C- Close to average due to spotty understanding of the material and inability to apply readings

67-69 D+ Below average understanding, showing little knowledge of the material

64-66 D Below average level with multiple contradictory arguments

60-63 D- Below average understanding thus failure to apply readings

59 and below F Fails to understand and address the readings on the subject matter

When scores include decimals, the rule is to round up from .45 and above; and to round down from .44 and below.

All exam and assignment grades as well as class announcements will be posted on SYG2010-09 Blackboard.

Talk to me when you need help before it is too late.

COURSE OUTLINE
Dates of topics, objectives, assigned readings, surveys, and exams are depicted here. We will accommodate to this outline as much as discussion and participation allow it. Any needed changes made to the information below will be announced in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Class Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>ALG Ch.1, Bb Notes</td>
<td>Answer Study Guide #1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Write analytical paper</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
<td>Inequality</td>
<td>Bb Notes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poverty and Class</td>
<td>ALG Ch. 2, 9</td>
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<td>Visit to Partido Socialista PSOE</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Inequality</td>
<td>ALG Ch. 3, Bb Notes</td>
<td>Turn in analytical paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Answer Study Guide #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>Bb Notes</td>
<td>Turn in Study guide #1</td>
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<td>TEST #1, 9:00-10:45 AM</td>
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<td>Visit to the Centro de Primera Ayuda al Immigrante</td>
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<td>May 24</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>ALG Ch. 4, Bb Notes</td>
<td>Answer Study Guide #2</td>
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<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>ALG Ch.5, Bb Note</td>
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<td>May 26</td>
<td>Age and Ageism</td>
<td>ALG Ch. 7, Bb Notes</td>
<td>Turn in Study Guide #2 A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Test #2, 9:00-10:45 AM</td>
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<td>Write reaction paper on “Separatismo”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
<td>Assignment/Notes</td>
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| June 7     | Crime                  | ALG Ch 13        | Answer study guide # 3
|            |                        |                  | Turn in paper on separatism       |
| June 9     | War and Terrorism      | ALG, Ch 16       | Write analytical paper on gender and crime |
|            |                        |                  | Potential visit from Law Enforcement and visit to the Red District of Valencia |
| June 14    | Social Action          | ALG CH.17        | Turn in Study Guide #3
|            |                        |                  | Turn in analytical paper         |
|            |                        |                  | Test#3 9:00-10:45 AM              |

**ESSENTIAL POLICY INFORMATION**

**Attendance:** Students are required to attend class on time. Attendance will be taken in each class. You are allowed one excused absence. Perfect attendance earns you 10% of your final grade. Missing one excused class is 9 points.

**Excused Absences:** The following AND only the following absences are eligible to be excused:
- Religious holidays specified by FSU administrators
- Representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events
- Legitimate emergencies
- Legitimate medical illnesses requiring continued treatment by medical practitioners because of its seriousness (i.e., colds, flu, stress, etc. do not qualify as medical illnesses). If you have a chronic illness that could affect your attendance, let me know at the beginning of class.

In order to excuse an absence you need to present documentation, such as, copy of obituary, doctor’s note legitimating the seriousness of illness and need for continued treatment, court hearing date, or police citation. Do so before or immediately after your absence.

**Courtesy:** Coming in late or leaving before class dismissal is rude and disruptive for all, more so in a mass class as this. Be courteous and avoid these behaviors. However, if for some legitimate reason you foresee to be late for class or to leave class early let me know in advance. In this occasion enter or leave the classroom as inconspicuously as possible. Otherwise, chronic tardiness and early departures are not accepted and will be penalized at my discretion.

A final rule concerns the use of cellular phones, pagers, beepers, laser pointers, and any electronic gadget unrelated to the class. **Turn them off before entering the classroom and abstain from using them while attending class.**

**Makeup Exams:** In order to justify an absence from the test, from an activity or from turning in written work, students need to show a legitimate document of its cause. Get in touch with me to learn about the date, time, and location of the make-up exam. The make-up exam may have a different format from the original i.e., essay questions.

**Student Conduct:** My many years of college experience, both as student and as instructor, have shown me that for the most part students are bright, good-natured and amiable toward others. In general you are expected to comply with the FSU Code of Conduct at all times while participating in FSU-related activities. Your behavior during class should be courteous, respectful and professional. In short, anyone who ignores my authority to protect the integrity of the classroom will be asked to cease his/her disruptive behavior, may be asked to leave the classroom, and or to drop the course.
Failure to abide by these rules can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.
http://e-soc.net/

Academic Honor Code: Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook. The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Please see the following website for a complete explanation:
http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/codes/honor.html

Academic Dishonesty: Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a “zero” for that particular assignment or an "F" for the course, at the instructor’s discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the University Judicial Office for official adjudication.
http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring me a letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. Please feel free to see me in case of any problems or concerns and I will be only happy to help! For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities contact:
Student Disability Resource Center, Dean of Students, 08 Kellum Hall
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4400, (850) 644-9566 (voice),
(850) 644-8504 (TDD), SDRC@admin.fsu.edu,
http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/

Incomplete Grades: Missing work or uncompleted assignments are not sufficient reasons for requesting an incomplete Grade. A grade of Incomplete is given only under extenuating circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. Note that College of Social Sciences guidelines require that students seeking an "I" must be passing the course.