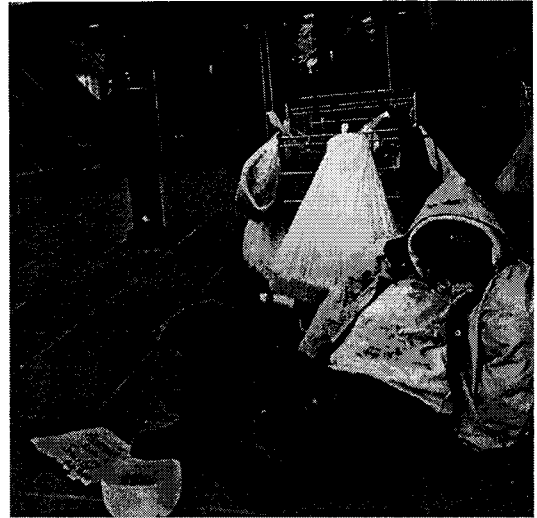


## SOCIAL PROBLEMS - Sociology 250



### **Dr. Michèle Companion**

Office: Columbine 1015

Phone: 255-4141

Office Hours: MW 2 – 3

Email: [mcompani@uccs.edu](mailto:mcompani@uccs.edu)

### **Course Objectives:**

The goal of this course is to analyze contemporary social problems in American and larger global contexts using critical sociological perspectives. This will involve an examination of the definitions of social problems and how these relate to and affect the social position of certain groups in society. We will discuss how one's position or location in various groups in society will affect how problems are defined (i.e., race, gender, social class, power). Lastly, we will look at responses to social problems and the implications for potential solutions and prospects for genuine social change.

### **Required Readings:**

1. *Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action*. Leon-Guerrero
2. *Down On Their Luck*. Snow and Anderson
3. *The New York Times* Daily Newspaper Monday through Friday

Most of the sociological theory and background information will be discussed in lectures. Therefore, class attendance is imperative. The course reader will highlight some of the more persistent and current social issues, while Snow and Anderson will provide a detailed examination of a specific problem. You should come to class prepared to discuss the issues raised in the readings, newspaper and to ask and answer questions.

## Required Videos:

1. "Roger and Me,"
2. "A Dangerous Business"

As these videos are assigned in lieu of additional readings, questions from these videos will appear on your exams.

## Course Assignments:

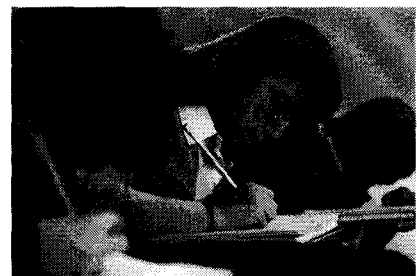
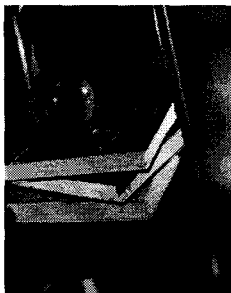
Mid-term exam	25%
Journal	40% (total – 20% for each half)
Quizzes/Class Projects	10%
Final Exam	25%

## Additional Course Requirements:

1. **Attendance:** You are required to attend all class meetings as materials not in the texts will be presented and included in the exams. Please try to be punctual: coming into class late disrupts other students and myself. Absences may be excused with a doctor's note or verification of family emergency. However, you are still responsible for obtaining the materials presented in class. **Cell Phones MUST be OFF during the lecture period.**



2. **Class Participation:** This class provides a great opportunity to be exposed to a wide array of values and opinions on a number of important social issues. Please come to class prepared having done the readings and/or watching the videos. Given the diversity of backgrounds and opinions in the class, not everyone will agree on many things. I remind you that discussions should be kept civil at all times.



3. **Make-up Exams:** I will only schedule a makeup exam with a confirmed excuse from the doctor or with proof of a family emergency. I must be contacted *prior* to the exam.

4. **If you are a military student** with the potential of being called to military service and /or training during the course of the semester, please contact me no later than the first week of class to discuss the class attendance policy.

**Tentative Course Schedule:** (Subject to Change) – Regardless of where we are in lecture content, you are still responsible for keeping up with the weekly readings. These will be on the exams.

<b>Module</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Introduction	1	Chapter 1 in L-G
Sociological perspectives	2	Chap 1 & 2 in S & A
Sociological perspectives <i>September 7 – Labor Day Holiday, no classes</i>	3	6 in L-G; 3 in S & A
Sociological perspectives	4	9 in L-G; 4 in S & A
Sociological perspectives	5	2 in L-G
Political Economy <i>*First Critical Writings Due at the beginning of class Wednesday* - September 30</i>	6	3 in L-G;
Political Economy	7	14 in L-G; 5 in S & A <i>"Roger and Me" due</i>
<b>Exam Review/Testing</b> Exam Wednesday October 14	8	6 in S & A
Political Economy	9	12 in L-G, 7 in S & A
Political Economy	10	7 in L-G; 8 in S & A
Political Economy	11	9 in S & A, 4 in L-G
Workers and the Workplace	12	8 in L-G <i>"A Dangerous Business" due</i>
Workers and the Workplace	13	10 & 13 in L-G

Workers and the Workplace                    **14**  
*No Class Wednesday November 25 – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!*

Poverty and Wealth                            **15**    15 in L-G  
*\*Critical Writing Due at the Beginning of Class on Monday November 30\**

Poverty and Wealth                            **16**  
Wednesday: Exam review

***FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY December 16, 8:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.***

***HAPPY HOLIDAYS!***

## Dr. Michèle Companion – Sociology 250: Social Problems

### Critical Writings

For this assignment, you are required to write a critical evaluation of an article found in the *New York Times*. This exercise is designed to help you hone your critical thinking skills by applying sociological theory to current social issues in the news.

1. It must be typed and double-spaced. Grammar and spelling count, so proof-read!
2. The article to which you refer must be attached to your entry. Make sure, for the sake of proper citation, that the date and page of the article are included.
3. You may NOT use editorials or opinion pieces or ads.
4. Each analysis should be ***no more than 3 pages***. This means that you must present your analysis in an organized and concise manner, essay format – NO FLUFF!
5. Please do not use binders. Staple your essays together with a cover sheet.

What I expect from these entries is a critical evaluation of the topic addressed in each article you choose. The critical thinking approach and the theoretical background presented during the first two weeks of class are essential here. I am looking for a well thought out, concise evaluation of the social problem. Thus, you will be graded on the process by which you apply key sociological concepts to different arenas and topics and how well you support these applications. This is the essence of critical thinking. You will not be graded on the opinion portion.

You should:

- 1. Apply sociological concepts that we have been developing in the class to the topic.** Look for any core value perspectives being used to evaluate the problem. Are there obvious biases in the presentation? How would the major paradigms/social theorists evaluate this problem? You don't need to apply all three paradigms. However, you need to back up your arguments. You need to explicitly detail and support your argument for WHY and HOW this is a functionalist or conflict or Symbolic Interactionist argument. Be Specific!! Use quotes from the articles to support your application. Look for what aspect of the problem is being discussed. Are they slanting the interpretation of the argument by only addressing one aspect of it? Do they indicate whether that it is related to other social problems or is it presented in isolation?
- 2. Briefly** (no more than one paragraph) tell me why you chose this article. Is it something that you feel strongly about? Does it relate to you or someone you know personally? Is it just an interesting issue?

*\* A word of advice:* don't wait until the weekend before it is due to write these out. If you are doing them properly, they will take some time to think about, develop, and write up.