INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Katheryn Dietrich
306 Academic Building
Office Phone: 845-9223
e-mail: kdietrich@tamu.edu

OFFICE HOURS: MW 2:00-4:30, T 2:30-4:00, or by appointment

REQUIRED READINGS are posted online on our eLearning site

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Survey and exploration of causes and consequences of major social problems in American society such as poverty, unemployment, energy, alcohol, other drugs and sexual abuse.

OBJECTIVES:
This course will examine major social problems confronting the world and American society in the 21st century. We will discuss the magnitude, severity, and ramifications of the problems, sociological explanations, and issues regarding how to solve or mitigate these problems. NOTE: The nature, explanations, and solutions we will discuss are very controversial. The selected readings are meant to focus your attention on relevant issues, NOT as doctrinaire statements. We will discuss the controversies regarding these readings in class. During the discussions, I encourage you to argue other points of view relevant to the issues.

GRADING:

Class Participation 20%
3 Exams 60% (20% each)
Term Project 20%

EXAMS
The exams will consist of both multiple choice and essay questions. They will cover assigned readings AND CLASS LECTURES. Make-up examinations will be given only for university excused absences (i.e., a written and signed excuse by a medical doctor or TAMU official). MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE ALL ESSAY EXAMS.

To receive a grade on an examination, the student must write his or her name and ID number on the examination packet and return it to the instructor before leaving the classroom. Any student who receives more than one examination packet must return the extra exam immediately to the instructor.

Your graded exams will be returned for your perusal ONLY IN THIS CLASSROOM OR MY OFFICE. A graded or ungraded exam that has been removed by a student from this classroom is considered stolen property and the student will be referred to the Dean for appropriate disciplinary action.

TERM PROJECT
Choose a specific social problem about which you can obtain MUCH more detailed information than presented in your readings. Plan to use about 15 scholarly sources of information, which may include professional books, journal articles, government documents, and no more than one interview with an expert on the problem. By FEBRUARY 14, submit via eLearning a proposal stating this problem in one page or less plus an annotated bibliography of the sources of information you will use to study the problem. The latter should include a complete bibliographic citation for each information source AND about two sentences describing how this particular source will contribute to your analysis. NOTE: You must follow the instructions in the Term Project Guide posted on eLearning. This includes acceptable sources of information and formatting of the references.

The paper should be about 15 double-spaced typed pages; however, there is no maximum page limit. All papers MUST BE IN THE FOLLOWING FORMAT: (1) statement of social problem, (2) statistical and narrative description of the magnitude, severity, and ramifications of the problem, (3) possible sociological
explanations for the problem, (4) solutions to the problem that have been proposed by others and your informed opinion of how the problem should be solved. Include in your discussion any controversial issues regarding definitions of the problem, its causes, or solutions. In discussing these issues, thoroughly present ALL controversial arguments (i.e., all sides of the issues). Again the paper must follow the instructions in the Term Project Guide, including acceptable sources of information and formatting of references. Your term-project grade will reflect whether you have followed my instructions and the thoroughness with which you have researched and discussed the problem.

The term paper is due APRIL 16. You are required to submit BOTH a hard copy AND electronic copy (via eLearning) of your paper on this date. I will grade the hard copy of your paper. The electronic copy will be used for a computerized plagiarism check. LATE PAPERS WILL RECEIVE A 10 PERCENT PENALTY FOR EVERY CLASS DAY THEY ARE LATE unless due to a university excused absence. Also, YOU NEED TO KEEP A HARD COPY OF YOUR COMPLETED PAPER. In the unlikely event that the paper is misplaced by me or an assistant before it is graded, it will be your responsibility to provide me with another copy of the paper.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System.

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc. which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and submit it as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. Any student in this class who copies the work of another person and turns it in as his or her own will receive a grade of zero on the paper or examination and be referred to the Dean for appropriate disciplinary action. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules under the section "Scholastic Dishonesty."

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

If I have scheduled an exam during a day that is designated a holy day by your religion, you are entitled to take a makeup exam if you desire. Please notify me prior to the regularly scheduled exam.

THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services at Cain Hall, Room B118, phone: 845-1637.

eLearning

I will use eLearning (elearning.tamu.edu) to post exam review questions, the term project guide, drop boxes for your project proposal and final project, and any changes to the schedule and other important information or announcements.
TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

I. APPROACHING THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Assessing Causes, Consequences, and Ways to Intervene in Social Problems

I. APPROACHING THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

JAN 17

II. GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Population Growth and Urbanization

JAN 22, 24

Globalization, Poverty and Hunger

JAN 29-FEB 5
* "Does Globalization Help or Hurt the World’s Poor?" by Pranab Bardhan. Pp. 84-91 in Scientific American, April 2006.

Sweatshops and Modern Slavery

FEB 7, 12

Immigration

FEB 14, 19
III. INEQUALITY IN AMERICA

The State of Poverty
FEB 26

Causes of Poverty
FEB 28

Alleviating Poverty
MAR 5

Education: Does It Reduce or Reproduce Inequality in America?
MAR 7

Health and Health Care
MAR 19

IV. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Racial and Ethnic Inequalities
MAR 21
* "Factbox: Racial Inequality in the United States." Reuters, January 18, 2009

Prejudice and Hate
MAR 26

**Alleviating Racism & Its Effects**

MAR 28

***APR 2 EXAM 2***

**V. GENDER RELATIONS**

*Gender Inequalities*

APR 4

*Sexual Harassment and Gendered Violence*

APR 9-11

**VI. DEVIANCE**

*Theories of Deviance*

APR 16

*Controlling Crime*

APR 18

*Drug Abuse*

APR 23

*Child Abuse*

APR 25
* "The Physical Abuse of Children." Pp. 96-102 in Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect
* "The Long-Term Psychological Consequences of Abuse." Pp. 90-101 in Child Abuse
****WEDNESDAY, MAY 8  8:00AM  EXAM 3