

223.41 • Social Problems and Change (3 hrs.)
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Providence College
Fall Session, 2008
Mondays 3:20 & Thursdays 9:50

SYLLABUS

A. Calendar Description of the Course

An examination of the nature and processes of contemporary social problems and change at both the societal and global levels. Special attention will be given to issues of economic, political, and cultural globalization, and their effect on selected social problems such as technology, environment, war, crime, addictions, poverty, and human trafficking.

“For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, there is one striking at the roots.”

- Henry David Thoreau

B. Purpose of the Course

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. summarize and characterize the sociological sub-disciplines of social problems, social movements, and social change;
 2. compare the various theoretical perspectives that sociologists use to study social problems and change, in contrast to other academic disciplines;
 3. outline various dimensions and consequences of globalization as the predominant current form of social change;
 4. identify and describe the social dynamics of selected social problems both in Canada and globally, and the implicit ideological debates within them;
 5. overview the role and effectiveness of various social activist organizations seeking to address social problems, demonstrating particular familiarity with one;
 6. articulate a Christian perspective of social problems and change, that both critiques sociological perspectives of the same, and in turn is critiqued by sociological perspectives;
 7. interpret the extent to which his or her own life is both affected by and a contribution to social problems and change, and thereby enhance self-understanding;
 8. express encouragement toward her or his own potential for more enlightened, constructive, and sustainable living as a Christian citizen-activist;
 9. display an appreciation for the interconnectedness of human life, and a deep sense of responsibility for the well-being of human life.
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Note re. Syllabus:

It is the student's responsibility to retain their course syllabi for use as support for possible future applications to other educational institutions for transfer of credit.

C. Textbooks

REQUIRED:

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Maxine Baca Zinn, eds. 2009. *Globalization: The Transformation of Social Worlds* 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Social Problems and Change Course Reader. Providence Bookstore, 2008.
- a bound compilation of photocopies of assigned readings

ONE OF:

Brown, Tricia Gates. 2004. *Free People: A Christian Response to Global Economics*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

Goudzwaard, Bob, Mark Vander Vennen, and David Van Heemst. 2007. *Hope in Troubled Times: A New Vision for Confronting Global Crises*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

RECOMMENDED:

Barber, Benjamin. 2007. *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Bornstein, David. 2004. *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Bouma-Prediger, Steven. 2001. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Brown, Lester. 2007. *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Claiborne, Shane. 2006. *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. HarperCollins Canada.

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Kenneth Stewart, eds. 2007. *Solutions to Social Problems: From the Bottom Up: Successful Social Movements*. Toronto: Pearson.

Haugen, G. 2006. *Good News about Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Hawken, Paul. 2007. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*. Viking Press.

- Kendall, D., V. Nygaard, and E. G. Thompson. 2008. *Social Problems in a Diverse Society* 2nd Canadian ed. Toronto: Pearson.
- Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Kraybill, Donald B. 2003. *The Upside-Down Kingdom* rev. ed. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.
- Laxer, Gordon and Dennis Soron. 2006. *Not for Sale: Decommodifying Public Life*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.
- Lechner, Frank J. and John Boli, eds. 2008. *The Globalization Reader* 3rd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- McKibben, Bill. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. Times Publishing.
- Robbins, Richard H. 2008. *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism* 4th ed. Toronto: Pearson.
- Smith, Miriam, ed. 2008. *Group Politics and Social Movements in Canada*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.
- Speth, James. 2004. *Red Sky at Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stackhouse, Max. 2007. *God and Globalization: Volume 4: Globalization and Grace*. Continuum.
- Staggenborg, Suzanne. 2008. *Social Movements*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tilly, Charles and Lesley J. Wood. (2009). *Social movements, 1768-2008*. 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Vago, Steven. 2004. *Social Change* 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

NOTES:

A **Selected Bibliography** for the course is posted on the instructor's Providence College Faculty webpage at:

<http://prov.ca/profiles/profile.aspx?name=Dennis%20Hiebert>

A list of **Social Dissent Websites** is also posted on the instructor's webpage.

Students should familiarize themselves with the following websites:

Society for the Study of Social Problems, at <http://www.sssp1.org/>

This organization also publishes the leading journal: *Social Problems*

Sojourners: Christians for Justice and Peace, at <http://www.sojo.net>

This organization also publishes the magazine: *Sojourners*

Globalization101.org, a project of the Carnegie Endowment

at <http://globalization101.org>

The Veritas Forum: Social Justice at <http://veritas.org/media/topics/45>

D. Course Requirements

1. Class Attendance and Participation (10%)

This course does not have exams to hold students accountable for class material, so class attendance will be recorded, and one mark subtracted for every absence after the third, to a maximum of five marks subtracted. This course is also not given entirely to lectures, so you will have increased opportunity to participate in class, and to develop your own ability and ease in conversing intellectually. The quality of the class experience will be partially socially constructed by what the members of the class bring to it; the better prepared and more willing to participate each student is, the richer the course will be for all. The instructor will monitor the overall quantity and quality of each student's interactions in class during the semester and, taking their attendance record into account, assign a final grade for this component.

2. Reading Checks (15%)

At the beginning of 15 random classes, the instructor will ask one question about the reading assigned for the previous class that you will answer by writing a phrase or sentence. The question will be designed to enable you to demonstrate that you have completed the reading on time with rudimentary comprehension. Each question will be worth one mark, and can only be answered at the time it is given to the whole class.

3. Book Review (15%)

Due Date: September 22

Write a formal book review (i.e. 3rd person, etc. – 4 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font) of either Brown's *Free People* or Goudzwaard, Vander Vennen, and Van Heemst's *Hope in Troubled Times*. Your review should **not** focus on outlining the contents of the book, but rather should demonstrate that you have interacted critically with the material, identifying its strengths and weaknesses while bringing fresh observations or applications to it. Though none of the

authors are writing as a sociologist, what ideas, principles, or perspectives do they add to the issues addressed in this course?

4. Personal Reflections and Closing Exercise 15% (3 x 5%)

For the two Personal Reflections, write a 2-3 page informal reflection on selected course material that demonstrates your personal interaction with it, and functions as a form of journaling. No further study beyond doing the assigned readings and participating in class discussion is required. Comment on ideas or analyses presented in the preceding section of the course that have interested or impressed you the most, explaining why you think they are significant. In order to develop your reflections meaningfully, you should limit your focus to the topics of one or two classes/readings in the preceding section of the course. For the Closing Exercise, which will be similar to a reflection but also presented orally in class, instructions will be given in class a week in advance of the due date.

Reflection Paper on Unit I: Theory	September 25
Reflection Paper on Unit II: Globalization	October 27
Closing Exercise after Unit III	December 4

5. Panel Participation (5%)

The second unit of the course (Globalization) will proceed primarily through panel discussions, in which all students will do all the basic reading for each topic, but a subgroup of students will do extra reading from Lechner & Boli, *The Globalization Reader* (2008, 3rd ed.). That subgroup of 3-4 classmates, together with the instructor, will then discuss both the basic reading and the extra reading for that particular class in a seminar style or panel manner in front of the rest of the class. Though the rest of the class will be primarily an audience to the discussion, it will nevertheless be encouraged to interact with the panel in a supplementary manner. How many panels each student serves on, and how much reading each panelist is assigned to represent on the panel, will depend on course enrolment. Further details will be provided and sign-up will occur in the second class of the course.

6. Christian Position Paper (15%)

Due Date: October 30

Write a 5-6 page position paper articulating a Christian perspective of social problems and/or change in general, or one social problem in particular. Your paper should demonstrate that you have read the collection of Christian articles at the end of the Course Reader, and have brought further references to bear on the question. ASA format is required.

7. Public Advocacy Paper (10%)

Due Date: November 13

Research any local or global social problem/issue of your choice. Then write a 500 word article expressing your concern and/or perspective about the problem/issue, and send it as one of the following:

- a) a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine
- b) a letter to an organization or elected/public official
- c) an opinion piece that you submit to a newspaper or magazine

The Providence College administration or student newspaper do not qualify as acceptable recipients! Many organizations such as Amnesty International have many letter-writing helps on their websites.

After you have emailed your submission to the organization or official, forward your email to the course instructor for your course assignment credit. Attach to your forward the sources you consulted in researching your submission. Your grade for the assignment is not dependent on whether your submission is published, or whether it draws a response, but your instructor will nevertheless be curious, and would like to know – please keep me informed!

8. Organization Analysis (15%)

Due Date: December 1

Write a 5-page research report about one particular organization (e.g. Greenpeace), social movement (e.g. micro-finance), event (e.g. Quebec City Summit of the Americas protest), or social activist (e.g. Vandana Shiva) involved in addressing a particular social problem. Your report should describe the problem (which could be one not covered in the classes of this course), the history of the organization, what they are doing about the problem, how they compare to other organizations involved in the same field, who joins the organization and how they do so, how effective the organization has been, what else could or should be done about the problem, etc. Each student will also give a 10 minute oral report to the class on the due date, during which you are expected to use a PowerPoint presentation and distribute a one-page summary of your report to your classmates.

Sample sources for ideas include the Social Dissent Websites listed on the instructor's website, and the following books on reserve in the library:

Bornstein, David. 2004. *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*.

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Kenneth Stewart, eds. 2007. *Solutions to Social Problems: From the Bottom Up: Successful Social Movements*.

Robbins, Richard H. 2008. *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism* 4th ed. Chapters 10-12.

Tilly, Charles. 2004. *Social Movements, 1768-2004*.

E. Grading Summary

1. Grade Components

Class Attendance/Participation	10%
Reading Checks	15%
Book Review	15%
Personal Reflections (3 x 5%)	15%
Panel Participation	5%
Public Advocacy Paper	10%
Christian Position Paper	15%
Organization Analysis	15%

Note: The last date for **Voluntary Withdrawal** from this course is Friday, Nov. 13.

2. Grading Scale

Final course letter grades and their Grade Point equivalents will be calculated using the following scale:

<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>
91 – 99 = A+	4.0	Exceptional	67 – 69 = C+	2.5	Satisfactory
85 – 90 = A		Excellent	63 – 66 = C	2.0	Adequate
80 – 84 = A-			60 – 62 = C-		
77 – 79 = B+	3.5	Superior	57 – 59 = D+	1.0	Marginal
73 – 76 = B	3.0	Good	53 – 56 = D		Poor
70 – 72 = B-			50 – 52 = D-		
			< 50 = F	0.0	Failure

F. Course Policies

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the complete academic policies, procedures, and regulations of Providence College can be found online (http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx), or in the Library, Admissions Office, or Dean's Office.

1. Class Attendance

Full attendance at all classes is expected, because active listening, thinking and discussing are primary learning experiences in this course. While the instructor is committed to making the classes as interesting and informative as possible, it is neither his role nor his gift to be an entertainer. Students who find themselves struggling with course material are welcome to seek additional individual assistance from the instructor outside the classes, but only if they have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

2. ICTs in Class

Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities. Use of cell-phones or ipods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, write blogs, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

3. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (<http://prov.ca/studentLife/handbook.aspx>). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Providence Bookstore, or in the Providence College "Academic Policies, Procedures, and Regulations" (http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx).

4. Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week after their due date, but their grades will be reduced by 10%, which equals one letter grade. Late papers will **not** be accepted more than one week after their due date, and students who do not submit a paper by at most one week after the due date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. The instructor will not receive requests for

extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and a decision will be made by the instructor when your paper is graded. A waiving of the 10% late reduction, or the one week deadline, will be granted only in the cases of personal or medical emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, competition for library resources, and/or long weekends before or after due dates do not constitute such emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

G. The Bare Basics of American Sociological Association (ASA) Documentation

For the complete ASA Quick Style Guide for students writing sociology papers, see <http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?name=Quick+Style+Guide§ion=Sociology+Depts>

1. In-text Citations

a) For ideas or information contained in a sentence:

Basic Format:

This is what you should do at the end of the sentence (Author Year-of-Publication).

Example:

This is what you should do at the end of the sentence (Smith 2008).

Basic Format:

According to Author (Year-of-Publication), this is what you should do in the middle of a sentence.

Example:

According to Smith (2008), this is what you should do in the middle of a sentence.

b) For direct quotations contained in a sentence:

Basic Format:

This is what you should do for a quotation “at the end of the sentence” (Author Year:page#).

Example:

This is what you should do for a quotation “at the end of the sentence” (Smith 2008:35).

Basic Format:

For a quotation “in the middle of a sentence” (Author Year:page#), this is what you should do.

Example:

For a quotation “in the middle of a sentence” (Smith 2008:35), this is what you should do.

2. Notes

ASA format does **not** use footnotes at the bottom of the page where a reference occurs. Endnotes numbered consecutively at the end of the whole document are permissible for material that explains or amplifies the main text.

3. References

Full bibliographic information for all citations in the text must appear at the end of the essay in alphabetical order under the centered title of “References” as follows:

a) Books:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Year. *Title Italicized and in Title Case*. City: Publisher.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. *How to Document a Paper: The ASA Style*. Toronto: Academic Publishers.

b) Edited books, and editions other than the first:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial., Editor. Year. *Title Italicized and in Title Case*. Edition. City: Publisher.

Example:

Smith, John Q., ed. 2008. *How to Document a Paper: The ASA Style*. 5th ed. Toronto: Academic Publishers.

c) Journal articles:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Year. “Title of the Article in Title Case and Quotations.” *Title of the Journal in Title Case and Italicized* Volume Number:Pages.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. “How to Document in ASA Format.” *Journal of Documentation Styles* 27:44-51.

d) Articles from edited collected works:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Year. "Title of the Article in Title Case and Quotations." Pages xx-yy in *Title of the Book in Title Case and Italicized* edition, edited by First and Last Name. City: Publisher.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. "How to Document in ASA Format." Pp. 65-76 in *A Comparison of Documentation Styles* 3rd ed., edited by Jane X. Doe. New York: Scholar's Press.

e) Internet sites:

Basic Format:

Last Name, First Name and Second Initial. Publication or update date. "Title in Title Case and Quotations," Access date. Internet address.

Example:

Smith, John Q. 2008. "A Quick Style Guide for Students Writing Sociology Papers." Washington, DC: American Sociological Association, Retrieved July 1, 2008.
<http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?name=Quick+Style+Guide§ion=Sociology+Depts>

H. Class Schedule

The readings listed under each class topic are to be read prior to that class. All assigned readings are from either the course text (Eitzen & Zinn = E&Z) or the *Course Reader*. The instructor reserves the right to assign additional readings during the course of the term or to alter the schedule of topics as he sees fit.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u> <u>Reading</u>
Sept. 4	Orientation to the Course
UNIT I: Theory	
Sept. 8	Introduction to Social Problems, Part One Eglitis, Daina Stukuls. 2007. "The Uses of Global Poverty."
Sept. 11	Introduction to Social Problems, Part Two Batten, Manlove, & Gryll. 2009. "Climate Refugees." In E&Z, #35 Field. 2009. "Global Warming." In E&Z, #36

- Sept. 15 Overview of Social Change, Part One
Lemert & Elliot, 2006. "Introduction."
- Sept. 18 Overview of Social Change, Part Two
Lemert. 2005. Ch. 9.
"If There is a Global WE, Might We All be Dispossessed?"
- Sept. 22 Strategies of Social Change **Book Review Due**
Meyer. 2007. "How Social Movements Matter."
Loeb. 2007. "The Impossible Will Take a Little While."

UNIT II: Globalization

- Sept. 25 Introduction to Globalization **First Reflection Due**
Eitzen & Zinn. 2009. Ch. 1-2.
- Sept. 29 Economic Globalization (student panel discussion)
Eitzen & Zinn. 2009. Ch. 4.
Ritzer. 2008. "Economic Theory."
- Oct. 3-5 Food and Globalization: "Take and Eat" Creation Care Conference
Halweil. 2009. "The Rise of Food Democracy." In E&Z, #41
Robbins, 2008. "Environment and Consumption:
The Stories of Sugar & Beef"
- Oct. 6 Video: *China Blue*
Ghemawat. 2009. "Why the World Isn't Flat." In E&Z, #6
- Oct. 9 Political Globalization (student panel discussion)
Eitzen & Zinn. 2009. Ch. 5.
- Oct. 13 **Thanksgiving Break (classes cancelled)**
- Oct. 16 Cultural Globalization (student panel discussion)
Eitzen & Zinn. 2009. Ch. 6.
Finsterbusch, ed. 2008. Issue 22
"Will the Clash of Civilizations be the Dominant Struggle
of the Twenty-First Century?"

Nov. 17	Human Trafficking Stein. 2009. "No Way Out." In E&Z, #33 Gutnick. 2008. "Fishing for My Master in Ghana."	
Nov. 20	Video: <i>Sex Slaves</i> Cockburn. 2009. "21 st Century Slaves." In E&Z, #34	
Nov. 24	Drug Abuse Finsterbusch, ed. 2008. Issue 17. "Should Drug Use be Decriminalized?"	
Nov. 27	Video: <i>Fixx: The Story of an Addicted City</i> Bornstein. 2004. "Restless People." Schultz. 2006. "Bringing It All Back Home."	
Dec. 1	Student Presentations Robbins. 2008. "Constructing the Citizen-Activist."	Organization Analysis Due
Dec. 4	Closing Class Discussion	Final Reflection Due