



Course Code:	1008CCJ
Course Name:	Understanding Social Problems
Trimester:	Trimester 1, 2019
Program:	Diploma of Criminology & Criminal Justice
Credit Points:	10
Course Coordinator:	Sheena Fleming
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Teaching Team

Your lecturer/tutor can be contacted via the email system on the portal.	
Name	Email
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Staff Consultation

Your lecturer/tutor is available each week for consultation outside of normal class times. Times that your lecturer/tutor will be available for consultation will be given in the first week of lectures. A list of times and rooms will be published on the Griffith College Portal under the "myTimetable" link.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course

Brief Course Description

This course introduces students to the importance of understanding social problems, such as crime, in social context. It addresses key questions about the society we live in and provides a critical analysis of the ways in which social problems become defined. This includes an exploration of the combination of objective and subjective criteria that vary across societies, among individuals and groups in society, and across historical time periods. In so doing, it will demonstrate that social problems may be seen as socially and historically constructed categories. Students will be introduced to different ways of thinking about social problems and these different perspectives will be applied to a variety of social concerns (for example, illegal drug use, domestic violence, terrorism, environmental pollution). Students will develop skills in understanding and analysing a range of concepts, theories and perspectives on social life. A key objective is to foster a critical and interpretive understanding of the dynamic relationship between the individual and society.

Rationale

The design of this course creates opportunities for students to explore some of the underlying reasons, theories and explanations of social problems. The course provides critical engagement with literature and theory that aims to understand the complex relationship between social problems and societal arrangements. Students will explore key sociological theories and approaches which they will be able to use in further study in criminology.

Aims

This course aims to introduce students to the broad spectrum of social theory and emphasises critical analysis of established theories that explain human experience. The course is divided into four parts. Part 1 (weeks 1-4) introduces the central themes and concerns that define ways of thinking about social problems. It explores competing definitions of social problems and outlines the major theoretical perspectives employed by sociologists to understand social life and problems in the social world. Part 2 (weeks 5-7) focuses on, and attempts to explain, the social problems that people experience in their day-to-days lives. This includes, problems of health and well-being, family problems and the so-called 'problem of crime'. Part 3 (weeks 8-10) explores social inequalities, examining how inequality pervades the social world and how this has an impact on people's lives. Part 4 (weeks 11-12) explores the nature of social change in the 'global village'. It examines how and why our world is changing so rapidly and considers the implications of this for the future. Globalisation has complex consequences and the course will conclude with a critical consideration of how the sweeping forces of globalisation affect our everyday lives, for better or worse.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts in sociology and the study of social problems
 2. Apply these concepts and perspectives to an analysis of social problems in everyday life, problems of social inequality and problems associated with globalisation.
 3. Demonstrate how a sociological imagination might be applied to key concerns within criminology and criminal justice
 4. Provide evidence of effective research and information searching skills
 5. Present work clearly in accordance with appropriate academic standards
 6. Undertake positive and productive study skills and effective time management
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Texts and Supporting Materials

Lecture notes, notices and other issues relating to the course will be made available through the Griffith College portal.

Recommended Textbook & Resources:

Bessant, J and Watts, R (2007). *Sociology Australia*, 3rd edition. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin.

Organisation and Teaching Strategies

Each week, you are required to attend 4 hours of contact time in class consisting of lectures, and tutorials. To achieve the course objectives, a lecture complemented by the required text will deliver the primary course content. The **lecture** will develop your understanding of the topics covered within the course. The **tutorials** are oriented towards solving problems that are related to concepts and issues that have been introduced in lectures and the required reading. The tutorial will also provide you with the opportunity to ask any unresolved questions and develop a solid foundation for understanding the lecture, textbook and other material.

Class Contact Summary

Attendance:

Your attendance in class will be marked twice during a four hour class. To receive full attendance, you must be present in the classroom on both occasions.

Program Progression:

You are reminded that satisfactory Program Progression requires that attendance in classes is maintained at equal to or greater than 80%, and that GPA is maintained at equal to or greater than 3.5 [please see Griffith College Policy Library - Program Progression Policy - for more information].

Lecture Notes & Course Materials:

You are required to bring a copy of the lecture notes printed from the Griffith College website and any other required course materials to classes each week.

Independent Study:

You are expected to reinforce your learning gained during class time by undertaking sufficient independent study. For this 10 CP course, you will need to spend at least 10 hours per week engaged in activities that will help your learning and fulfil the course objectives. Thus, provided you have well used the 4 hours per week of formal contact, you would then complete at least 6 hours per week of independent study.

Content Schedule

Weekly Teaching Schedule

Week	Topic	Activity	Readings
1	What is sociology? What is a social problem?	Class	Bessant (Chapters 1 & 2); Reading (1)
2	Thinking about social problems 1	Class	Bessant (Chapter 3); Reading (2)
3	Thinking about social problems 2	Class	Bessant (Chapter 3); Reading (3)
4	Thinking about social problems 3	Class	Bessant (Chapter 3); Reading (4)
5	Problems of health and well-being	Class	Bessant (Chapter 16); Reading (5)
6	Family problems	Class	Bessant (Chapter 7); Reading (6)
7	Crime and social control	Class	Bessant (Chapter 17); Reading (7)
8	Poverty and economic inequality	Class	Bessant (Chapter 13); Reading (8)
9	'Gender', 'sexuality' and the problem of equality	Class	Bessant (Chapter 9); Reading (9)
10	'Race', ethnicity and marginalisation	Class	Bessant (Chapter 11); Reading (10)
11	Environmental problems	Lecture	Bessant (Chapter 19); Reading (11)
12	Conflict, war and terrorism	Lecture	Bessant (Chapter 20); Reading (12)

Assessment

This section sets out the assessment requirements for this course.

Summary of Assessment

Item	Assessment Task	Weighting	Relevant Learning Outcomes	Due Date
1	Quiz	20%	1,2,3	Week 5
2	Written Assignment - Essay	40%	1,2,3,4,5,6	Week 9
3	Final Exam	40%	1,2,3,4,5,6	Exam Period

Assessment Details

Quiz

Learning Objectives Assessed: 1, 2, 3

Due Date: Week 5

Weight: 20%

Task Description:

Students will undertake an in-class quiz to test knowledge of sociological concepts and theories presented in Weeks 1-4

The quiz consists of multiple choice, true/false questions, and short-answer questions.

Further information about the quiz will be provided in class.

Essay

Learning Objectives Assessed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Due Date: Week 9

Weight: 40%

Length: 1,500 words.

Students will be required to choose ONE of the following social problems: unemployment, binge drinking, homelessness.

And then choose ONE of the three key sociological perspectives discussed in weeks 2-4 to explain the phenomenon (i.e. functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism).

In your answer, you will need to demonstrate an understanding of the nature and extent of the “problem” before applying your chosen sociological theory to explain the causes and experiences of the problem in society.

Final Exam

Learning Objectives Assessed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Due Date: Examination Period

Weight: 40%

Duration: 150 minutes

Format: Closed Book

The weekly review / revision questions (Weeks 1-12) indicate the types of questions asked in the exam.

- Students are expected to answer 4 questions in 2 ½ hours.
- The exam contains four (4) sections corresponding to the four parts of the course.
- A choice of questions is provided in each section. Students are to answer one question from each section.
- Students usually write between one to two pages per question. Each answer is marked out of 10 marks (total of 40).

End of Trimester Exam will be held in Exam Period, and results posted to the Griffith College portal in the following week.

Submission and Return of Assessment Items

Retention of Originals

You must be able to produce a copy of all work submitted if so requested. Copies should be retained until after the release of final results for the course.

Extensions

To apply for an extension of time for an assessment item you must submit a written request to your lecturer via the Student Website at least 48 hours before the date the assessment item is due. Grounds for extensions are usually: serious illness, accident, disability, bereavement or other compassionate circumstances and must be able to be substantiated with relevant documentation [e.g. medical certificate]. Please refer to the Griffith College website - Policy Library - for guidelines regarding extensions and deferred assessment.

Penalties for late submission without an approved extension

Penalties apply to assignments that are submitted after the due date without an approved extension. Assessment submitted after the due date will be penalised 10% of the TOTAL marks available for assessment (not the mark awarded) for each day the assessment is late. Assessment submitted more than five days late will be awarded a mark of zero (0) For example:

- > 5 minutes and <= 24 hours 10%
- > 24 hours and <= 48 hours 20%
- > 48 hours and <= 72 hours 30%
- > 72 hours and <= 96 hours 40%
- > 96 hours and <= 120 hours 50%
- > 120 hours 100%

Note:

- Two day weekends will count as one day in the calculation of a penalty for late submission.
- When a public holiday falls immediately before or after a weekend, the three days will count as one day in the calculation of a penalty for late submission.
- When two public holidays (e.g. Easter), fall immediately before or after, or one day either side of a weekend, the four days will count as two days in calculating the penalty for late submission.
- When a single public holiday falls mid-week, the day will not be counted towards the calculation of a penalty.

Please refer to the Griffith College website - Policy Library > Assessment Policy for guidelines and penalties for late submission.

Assessment Feedback

Marks awarded for assessment items, except those being moderated externally with Griffith University, will be available on the on the Student Portal within fourteen [14] days of the due date

Generic Skills

Griffith College aims to develop graduates who have an open and critical approach to learning and a capacity for lifelong learning. Through engagement in their studies, students are provided with opportunities to begin the development of these and other generic skills.

Studies in this course will give you opportunities to begin to develop the following skills:

Generic Skills	Taught	Practised	Assessed
Written Communication	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oral Communication	Yes	Yes	Yes
Information Literacy		Yes	Yes
Secondary Research	Yes	Yes	Yes
Critical and Innovative Thinking	Yes	Yes	Yes
Academic Integrity		Yes	Yes
Self Directed Learning		Yes	
Team Work			
Cultural Intelligence	Yes	Yes	Yes
English Language Proficiency		Yes	Yes

Additional Course Generic Skills

Additional Course Information

In addition to formal contact hours, you are provided with extra support through individual consultation with teaching staff, tutorials in English language, and self-access computer laboratories.

Teacher and Course Evaluations

There is no available data for this course.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct covers, but is not limited to, acts of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication of data or research, unauthorised collaboration [e.g. collusion], misrepresentation of student status, and academic qualifications falsification. Breaching any of the standards outlined in the Conduct During Examinations policy is also considered to be academic misconduct.

The College Assessment Committee, or a member there of (usually the relevant Program Coordinator) is responsible for deciding on action to be taken on an allegation of academic misconduct and, where a student has been found to have engaged in a form of academic misconduct, may apply one or more of the following penalties:

- A formal warning to the student;
- Requirement to attend compulsory academic skills workshop prior to resubmission of the assessment in which the academic misconduct occurred;
- A mark reduction or a mark of zero [0] awarded for the assessment list in which the academic misconduct occurred;
- A Fail [F] grade for the course within which the academic misconduct occurred;
- Exclusion from enrolling in the program of study for a specified period of time;
- Expulsion from the College (readmission to the College is at the discretion of the Academic Director on consideration of the students case for readmission);
- Any other academic penalty as decided by the Academic Director.

For further information please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy on the Griffith College website - Policy Library.

Plagiarism Detection Software

Griffith College uses plagiarism detection software. Students should be aware that your Course Coordinator may use this software to check submitted assignments. If this is the case your Course Coordinator will provide more detailed information about how the detection software will be used for individual items.

Risk Assessment Statement

There are no out of the ordinary risks associated with this course.

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