COURSE PROPOSAL FOR REVISED GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE
Sociology 2750G - Social Problems in Contemporary Society

1. Catalog Description
   a. Course level: SOC 2750 G
   b. Title: Social Problems in Contemporary Society
   c. Credit: (3-0-3)
   d. Term to be offered: (F, S, Su)
   e. Short title: Social Problems
   f. Course description: Sociological considerations of the historical development, definitions and nature of social problems, ranging from the global to the interpersonal, and grounded within theoretical frameworks. S7 901
   g. Prerequisites: None
   h. The course is: Writing active

2. Student learning objectives
   a. Student learning objectives that are designed to help students achieve one or more of the following goals of general education and university-wide assessment.
      (1) EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively.
      (2) EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to think critically.
      (3) EIU graduates will function as responsible citizens.

      In successfully completing this course, students will:
      (1) recognize the role of power (social, political, economic) in defining and addressing social problems (critical thinking, citizenship).
      (2) recognize that the study of social problems is not value-free and objective, but socially constructed and political (critical thinking, citizenship).
      (3) realize the essential link between “private troubles” and “public issues,” between the fate of individuals and the social forces surrounding them (critical thinking, citizenship).
      (4) recognize the stereotypes and myths commonly held about the social problems considered (critical thinking, citizenship).
      (5) realize that social problems possess the following characteristics: caused by multiple factors operating at multiple levels of social life; involve intergroup conflict; require resolution through social action (critical thinking, citizenship).
      (6) complete four, three-minute “writing the wrongs” exercises which will require students to address the social problem covered that day by briefly identifying their own perceptions (including myths and stereotypes) of the problem, the impact of the problem in their own lives (directly or indirectly) or their own witness of the problem in their lives, and any single action or recommendation they might offer to improve or reduce the problem (writing, critical thinking, citizenship).

Or Alternative 2 a (6)
(6) complete a 5-7 page paper reflecting social problems in songs. Music is not merely entertainment in society, but reflects issues and concerns germane to that society. Music can become the interface between students and social problems in everyday life. Students must select a particular song dealing with or reflecting a social problem, and identify and interpret the main thesis of the song’s lyrics, explaining whether the song addresses the problem from a social structural perspective (systemic attribution) or an individual perspective (personal attribution), and incorporating appropriate sociological concepts in the analysis (writing, critical thinking).

Or Alternative 2 a (6)

(6) complete a 5-7 page paper or some dimension/aspect of the internet as a social problem. Examples of such problems might include, but are not limited to issues of censorship, freedom of speech/expression, hate groups/sites, pornography, violence, and so on. Students must explicitly identify the particular problems of their focus, discuss its extent, its potential harms, offer examples from the internet, and solutions that might be implemented. This assignment will compel students to become more familiar with the internet and more skilled at searches (writing, critical thinking).

(7) have the opportunity to debate, dissent, or offer competing perspectives of material presented and to express their own perceptions of, and experiences with social problems covered (speaking, critical thinking).

b. Indicate additional student learning objectives, if any, that are designed to help students achieve the goals of the course and/or the discipline or program.
(1) Students will be exposed to distinctions between social problems and sociological problems so that they realize that this course is not the breadth and substance of the discipline.
(2) When relevant and applicable, the variable of education will be invoked so that students recognize their own stake and benefit in higher education, the privilege it extends and the responsibility it entails (participating in, and contributing to society).

3. **Course outline**
Social problems are pervasive, yet often subtle, ranging from global to interpersonal proportions. Social problems may include societally-induced conditions which cause psychic or material suffering for given segments of the population, as well as acts and conditions that violate norms and values. The following outline identifies the major topics covered in a social problems course (based on 150 minutes of class per week, for 15 weeks). The first section, in addition to including an introduction and orientation to the study of social problems, includes global/macro social problems. The second section addresses problems of inequality, sometimes referred to as the “isms” of society. The third section addresses institutional problems, and the final section examines individual deviance.
WEEK | CONTENT*
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Orientation and Introduction
1 | Review of class syllabus, class expectations, course objectives; orientation and introduction to conceptions and study of social problems

Global/Macro Social Problems
2 | Biases of wealth and power within the political economy
3 | International relations and the global economy
4 | Environmental matters

Problems of Inequality
5 | Racial and ethnic inequality
6 | Gender inequality
7 | Age discrimination
8 | Sexual orientation

Institutional Problems
9 | Poverty and affluence
10 | Employment and work settings
11 | Health care and access
12 | Problems in family and education

Individual Deviance
13 | Crime and justice
14 | Violence
15 | Drugs

*Individual instructors assume the latitude to emphasize some problems within each grouping by minimizing others.

4. **Evaluation of student learning**
   a. Achievement of student learning will be evaluated based on the following:

   Exams: Four exams, including the final, will be administered during the semester. Each exam is weighted 22.5% for a total of 90%.

   Writing exercises: completion of appropriate writing exercises

   b. “Writing the Wrongs”: Four, three-minute impromptu writing exercises will be conducted, unannounced, during the semester. All four must be submitted, but only
two from each student will be evaluated. The student will choose one of the two to be evaluated and the instructor will randomly select one to evaluate. Each evaluated exercise is weighted 5%: 5% - A writing; 4% - B writing; 3% - C writing; 2% D writing; 1% - high F writing; 0% - low F writing.

Or Alternative 4 b.

The paper will be evaluated on a ten-point scale that will be added to the four test scores to determine the final grade. Students will be informed that both content and context are to be evaluated.

5. **Rationale**
   a. Social and behavioral sciences; the course is typically offered by departments of sociology, one of the social sciences, and the subject matter of the course is consistent with the segment.
   Cultural diversity; the course subject matter is also appropriate as a cultural diversity course.
   b. Diversity of topics and coverage make the course a lower-level, survey-type class; no prerequisites.
   c. This is a revision of SOC 2750C and should maintain the same curriculum identification as the current SOC 2750C.
   d. The course is currently part of the course requirements or options for journalism; family and consumer sciences, dietetics and family services; early childhood education; elementary education; health studies, teacher certification; middle level education; pre-law. No changes are anticipated as a result of this re-approval.

6. **Implementation**
   a. Faculty members to whom this course will initially be assigned include: Janet Cosbey; Craig Eckert; Karen Hartbank; Max Kashefi; Diane Schaefer.
   c. Additional costs: none

7. **Community College Transfer**
   A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course.

8. **Date approved by the department:** 2-28-00
9. **Date approved by the college curriculum committee:** 3-24-00
10. **Date approved by CAA:**