Introduction to Social Problems (SOC 218)

Fall 2026
3 credits

About Windward Community College

Mission Statement

ʻO keia ka wā kūpono e hoʻonui ai ka ʻike me ka hoʻomaopopo i kō Hawaiʻi mau hoʻoilina waiwai. Aia nō hoʻi ma ke Kulanui Kaiāulu o ke Koʻolau nā papahana hou o nā ʻike ʻake akamai a me nā hana noʻeau. Me ke kuleana koʻikoʻi e hoʻohiki ke Kulanui e kākoʻo a e hoʻokumu i ala e hiki kē kōkua i ka hoʻonui ʻike a nā kānaka maoli. Na mākou nō e hoʻolako, kākoʻo a paipai i nā Koʻolau a kō Oʻahu aʻe me nā hana noʻeau ākea, ka hoʻonaʻauao ʻoihana a me ka hoʻonui ʻike ma ke kaiāulu— hōʻaʻano a e hoʻoulu i nā haumāna i ka poʻokela.

Windward Community College offers innovative programs in the arts and sciences and opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of Hawai'i and its unique heritage. With a special commitment to support the access and educational needs of Native Hawaiians, we provide the Koʻolau region of Oʻahu and beyond with liberal arts, career and lifelong learning in a supportive and challenging environment — inspiring students to excellence.

ʻĀina

Windward Community College is located in the ahupuaʻa of Kāneʻohe and Heʻeʻia in the moku of Koʻolaupoko on the island of Oʻahu. Both ahupuaʻa are directly connected to the moʻo ʻōlelo of Pāpa and Wākea, who are seen as the ancestors of the Hawaiian nation. The campus sits beneath the puʻu of Keahiakahoe, which is also connected to many moʻo ʻōlelo of this ʻāina. Because wind names and rain names are associated with specific ʻāina, the rain name of Kāneʻohe is known as the ʻĀpuakea and the rain name of Heʻeʻia is the Ulumano.

Instructor Information

How to Contact Your Instructor

Kathleen French (she/her), Professor of *Sociology* and *Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*; Social Sciences Department

- Office Hours: Before class and after class
- Email: kfrench@hawaii.edu

Catalog Description

SOC 218 is a theoretical and substantive survey of the nature and causes of social problems; selected topics may vary from semester to semester. (WCC: WI; S-Focus; DS)

Writing Intensive (WI)

Writing Intensive (WI) Courses are part of a University of Hawai'i system-wide movement to incorporate more writing in courses from all disciplines. A WI course is a discipline-specific course in which writing plays a major integrated role. Students in course sections designated as a "WI" (preceding the course title in the Schedule of Classes) learn to understand course content through writing and to write in ways appropriate to that discipline.
Passing English 100 with a "C" or better is a prerequisite before students take the required WI courses for the Associate in Arts degree. Students transferring to some bachelor's degree campuses in the UH system may bring two or three WI courses with them to count for the bachelor's degree.

The hallmarks of a writing intensive course are:

1. The class uses writing to promote the learning of course materials.
2. The class provides interaction between the instructor and students while students do assigned writing. At least one student-teacher conference on a writing assignment is required in writing intensive courses.
3. Written assignments contribute significantly to each student's course grade.
4. The class requires students to do a substantial amount of writing—a minimum of 4,000 words, or about 16 pages.
5. To allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing, the class is restricted to 20 students.

The course has been designed to allow students to find meaning in what they write, which makes learning more fun. Enjoy!

Student Learning Outcomes

Students can expect to attain the following outcomes as a result of taking this course:

1. Identify and utilize sociological perspectives to analyze social problems in society.
2. Use critical thinking skills to evaluate the causes of social problems.
3. Evaluate proposed solutions to social problems.

Sustainability Focused (SF)

Following three years of intense negotiations, world leaders adopted on September 25, 2015 the new Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This universal agenda is a call to action for low, middle, and high-income countries alike. It lays out a set of comprehensive goals that focus on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership for the next 15 years. It integrates the vision of "leaving no one behind" which can likely be accomplished through expanded partnerships for both traditional and nontraditional actors such as Governments, Civil Society, private sector, and the United Nations system.

As you'll see when you explore the various topics shown on our class calendar, the Introduction to Social Problems (SOC 218) course explores some of the important social issues in society and considers possible solutions to those social problems. In this way, the aim is to contribute to "... a more equitable and sustainable future for all".

Course Materials

All readings are provided free to students and are bound together in a course packet

Students are required to use the readings to support the ideas they write about in their papers.

Grading Policy

Grading Scale

Course Activity	Points/Percentage of Final Grade
Papers (500 points)	50%
Quizzes (300 points)	30%
Attendance (200 points)	20%
TOTAL (1,000 points) **(Continued below)**	100%

Course Grading

ATTENDANCE (20% of Grade)

Class Protocol

As a sociology class, we will discuss a variety of sensitive topics related to human behavior, culture, power, racism, sexism, social class inequality, and more. These discussions are essential to understanding sociological concepts, but they require a respectful and open-minded environment.

Windward CC is dedicated to providing a safe, civil, and supportive learning environment where everyone's dignity is respected. Each of us shares the responsibility for maintaining this environment. To ensure this, students must:

- Participate with an open mind
- Show mutual respect
- Avoid being judgmental
- Refrain from personal attacks
- Agree to disagree in a constructive manner

Sociology is inherently relatable to our everyday lives, making class discussions lively and engaging. To ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute, please remember:

"Participate, don't dominate."

If you find yourself frequently answering questions during discussions, take a step back to allow others the chance to share their thoughts and ideas. Thank you for your cooperation in creating a balanced and inclusive learning environment!

Attendance and Make-Up Policy

- If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up missed work and review missed material. Refer to the reading packet and ensure you understand what was covered in class.
- Active participation in class discussions and activities is essential for your learning and success.
- *In the event of a lockdown and/or any other unforeseen circumstances that lead to us not having class, please refer to the calendar of assignments and continue working independently. Complete the assigned readings and begin writing your next paper as outlined in the paper instructions. Since you have access to all course materials and the schedule, you can stay on track with the class, even if you are unable to attend a session.*

PAPERS (50% of Grade)

Instructions and Grading Criteria

- Please refer to the Paper Instructions page for detailed instructions, the required word count, the grading rubric, and the list of five paper topics.
- Purpose and Structure:
    - The papers are formal writing assignments designed to encourage thoughtful engagement with course material.
    - Each paper will be based on readings, class assignments, and films from the corresponding section. To succeed, complete all readings and watch the assigned films before beginning your paper.
- Drafts and Feedback:
    - You will have opportunities to submit drafts throughout the course for constructive feedback. Refer to the Course Calendar for submission dates.
- Writing Tips:
    - Spend time reflecting on what you want to communicate in your paper. Thoughtful, well-developed responses earn higher scores.
    - Organize your work: Start with an outline to structure your ideas, draft your paper on separate sheets, and submit your final draft in the provided Sociology 218 Paper Journal packet.
    - Refer to the grading rubric to understand how your work will be evaluated.
- Early Submissions:
    - Papers submitted ahead of the due date are welcome and will receive feedback to help you improve before final submission. I am here to help!
- Grading and Points:
    - There are five papers in this course, each worth 100 points, for a total of 500 points.
    - Follow the Course Calendar for all due dates to avoid late penalties.

Take advantage of the resources and feedback opportunities provided to help you succeed. Thoughtful preparation and thorough writing will make a significant difference in your performance.

Grading and Policies

- Each Paper= **100 points**
- There are **5 Papers total** (500 points possible).

QUIZZES (30% of Grade)

Overview

Quizzes test your understanding of assigned readings and films. Complete all materials before attempting a quiz. Each quiz can be taken **once**, so preparation is essential.

How to Prepare and Take Quizzes

- Complete all readings, films, and notes
- Each quiz = **5 multiple-choice questions**

Important Details

- See the **Course Calendar** for due dates. (We might need to make changes, depending on unforeseen changes in our schedule.)
- There are 11 quizzes total, worth 30 points each. The lowest quiz score will be dropped, leaving a maximum of 300 quiz points.

By preparing early and managing your time well, you'll do great on your quizzes!

Academic Integrity

Work submitted by a student must be the student's own work. The work of others should be explicitly marked, such as through the use of quotes or summarizing with reference to the original author.

In this class, students who commit academic dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism will have the following consequence(s):

- Students will receive a failing grade for plagiarized assignments.
- All cases of academic dishonesty are referred to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Academic integrity is important not only because plagiarism violates college policy, but because genuine learning comes from engaging with ideas yourself. The most rewarding part of these assignments is exploring ideas that matter to you and discovering how sociology helps us see our lives in new and fascinating ways. That's the purpose of these papers—to give you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences through the lens of sociology.

Take this chance to engage with the material in your own voice. The process is not just about earning points but about finding joy in the exploration and learning. Let your work reflect your individuality—something no AI tool can replicate!

College Policies & Support Services

LGBTQ+

The University of Hawai'i system and Windward Community College are committed to building an inclusive community that supports and advocates for all students, staff, and faculty. We welcome all members of our campus community to our campuses: transgender, māhū, and people of all gender identities. All members of our campus community deserve a work and educational environment free from harassment or bullying based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. For more information, see the University of Hawai'i Commission on LGBTQ+ Equality. Windward Community College Commissioner: Scott Sutherland, scottjks@hawaii.edu