

FYS: Social Problems (TRU 120 - 05)

Fall 2026
BH212, TR 9:00-10:20

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Course Description

We are facing a wide variety of urgent and pressing social problems from Trump's attempts to undermine democracy and Republican efforts to ban access to reproductive rights and transgender care. This class will engage in depth discussions of these and a wide variety of other topics including racism, economic inequality, climate change, immigration, drug abuse, gun violence, housing, and student debt.

Unless you are leading discussion or running stack, please leave your devices at home.

Readings

All readings for this course will be posted to Brightspace.

Assignments and grades

Grades are calculated out of a percentage total possible points for the class, and not of the completed assignments: 90-100 percent is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, and 60-69 is a D. Below 60 percent is an F. Successful completion of all assignments, including leading discussion and running stack when signed up to do so, is required to receive credit for this class.

Reading responses: Post a comment, question, response, or reaction for each daily reading to the discussion board on Brightspace by midnight the day before each class period. 1 pt each.

Participation: Physical presence and active engagement with the discussion in the classroom. 1 pt each.

Reflection: After each class period, post to the discussion board on Brightspace an analysis of the classroom discussions for that day. Due by midnight the night before the next class period. 1 pt each.

Class discussion leader: For each class period, one student will sign up to lead the discussion (organize the reading responses in Brightspace into a logical flow). 5 pts.

Running stack. For each class period, one student will sign up to moderate discussion (run stack) to assure that everyone has equal space to speak. This student should also mark off students who have participated actively in class discussion. 5 pts.

Each student must either lead discussion two times or run stack two times, for a total of three times leading discussion and running stack (for 15 pts in total).

Class schedule: will be posted to Brightspace.

Tuesday, September 8: Career Center Workshop. Meet at Kirk Building Forum (2nd Floor)

Thursday, September 17: Academic planning workshop. Meet at Kirk Building Forum (2nd Floor).

Thursday, September 24: Library workshop. Meet at PL-103 in the library.

Final Exam: Thursday, December 10, 7:30 a.m.-9:20 a.m.

Possible topics for discussion:

Racism
Inequality
Abortion/Reproductive rights
LGBTQ/Trans rights
Pronatalism
Sexual assault
Manosphere
Immigration
Prison abolition
Gun violence
Policing
Death penalty/capital punishment
Substance abuse
Housing/Homelessness
Voting rights
Student debt
Climate/Environment
Culture Wars
Israel/Palestine
Unemployment and Underemployment
Malnutrition
Healthcare access
Ageism
Digital Divide
Book bans
AI
School vouchers
Vaccines
Banking/credit
Survivalists
Data centers