



KIIS Costa Rica Program, Summer 2022

SOCIOLOGY 240: GLOBAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Instructor: Dr. James Kanan

Email: james.kanan@wku.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

A course on social problems is really a course on the world around us, so it is very fitting that we address the material from this course in a part of the world with which most of us are unfamiliar. A simple perusal of the latest news, social media feeds, or any other information source quickly reveals the extent to which social problems occupy our individual and collective consciousness. Luckily (haha), Sociology provides useful tools for considering and analyzing prominent social problems at the local, national, and global levels as well as providing insights into the social contexts in which they emerge and are responded to. The real benefit of an academic and sociological approach comes in the form of more in-depth and critical discussion and examination beyond what one might typically find in media and social media accounts.

One of the greatest benefit of this particular program and course is to be able to see the local and global nature of several social problems from an international perspective. While Costa Rica is a relatively stable nation, its location in Central America will provide a different and diverse perspective from that experienced within the confines of the U.S. We'll be able to look at how another nation, one that is not as wealthy or large as the U.S., addresses both local and global challenges.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

There are several course objectives that overlay the experience of taking this Social Problems class in another country. Upon the successful completion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Explain how sociologists approach the study of social problems, at the local, regional, national, and global levels.
- Develop the ability to describe how social problems are simultaneously personal troubles and public issues at local, regional, national, and global levels.
- Apply sociological perspectives and theories to the understanding of social problems.
- Critically evaluate current international and U.S. – focused policies, interventions, and proposed solutions to social problems and be able to assess the consequences for different actors at local and global levels.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE

Dates	Topic	Reading Assignment
May 26 – 31	1. Developing a Sociological Imagination	• Chirico Ch. 1
	2. Inequality, Poverty, and Development	• Chirico Ch. 2
	3. Food and Nutrition	• Chirico Ch. 3 • “The Global Food Crisis” (Blackboard)
	4. Global Health	• Chirico Ch. 4
Tues May 31	EXAM 1	
Jun 1 – 6	5. Race, Ethnicity, and Religion	• Chirico Ch. 6
	6. Gender	• Chirico Ch. 7
	7. Human and Wildlife Trafficking	• Chirico Ch. 8
	8. Transnational Property Crimes	• Chirico Ch. 9
Mon Jun 6	EXAM 2	
Jun 7 – 11	9. Political Violence	• Chirico Ch. 10
	10. Global Flows of Refugees	• Chirico Ch. 11

- 11. Destruction of Natural Environment • Chirico Ch. 13
- 12. Global Warming • Chirico Ch. 14

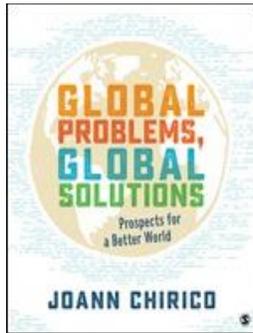
Sat, Jan 11 EXAM 3

5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement:

This course fulfills the *Local to Global* subcategory in the Connections section of the Colonnade general education program at WKU.

6. Required Readings and Materials:

Global Problems, Global Solutions



JoAnn Chirico, *The Pennsylvania State University*

- The textbook should be available as an ebook. Through the WKU/Barnes & Noble Bookstore, it will be available as a Day One Access book.
- Additional readings, where assigned, will be available through Blackboard or will be provided by instructor.

7. Graded Assignments:

Final grades will be calculated according to the following point scale presented below.

• Exam 1	100 points
• Exam 2	100 points
• Exam 3	100 points
• <u>One-page Reflection Papers (20 pts x 5)</u>	<u>100 points</u>
Total	400 points

The **final grade scale** is:

A = 90 – 100%	B = 80 – 89%
C = 70 – 79%	D = 60 – 69%
F = < 60%.	

Exams: You will be required to complete three exams during this course, each covering roughly one-third of the course materials. The exams are not cumulative, will be similar in format, and will consist of multiple-choice, short answer, and/or essay questions drawing on the recorded lectures, textbook chapters, and any additional assigned readings. The exams will fall at the end of each of the three weeks of the course.

Written Assignments: You will be expected to write a five one-page reflection papers in which you apply the sociological imagination of Costa Rica to one of the social problems discussed in the class. You may use the textbook and class materials as a foundation for developing your paper, but the nexus of the paper should revolve around how your perspective on the given problem has been influenced by what you've seen, heard, and experienced while in Costa Rica. More information on the paper expectations will be available on the Blackboard course site. The due date for the paper will be posted on Blackboard.

8. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

9. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Deborah Wilkins (270-745-5396 / deborah.wilkins@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / joshua.hayes@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eo/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.