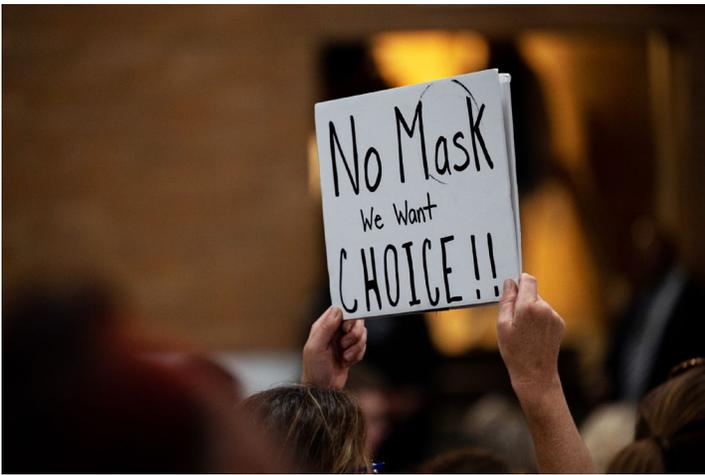
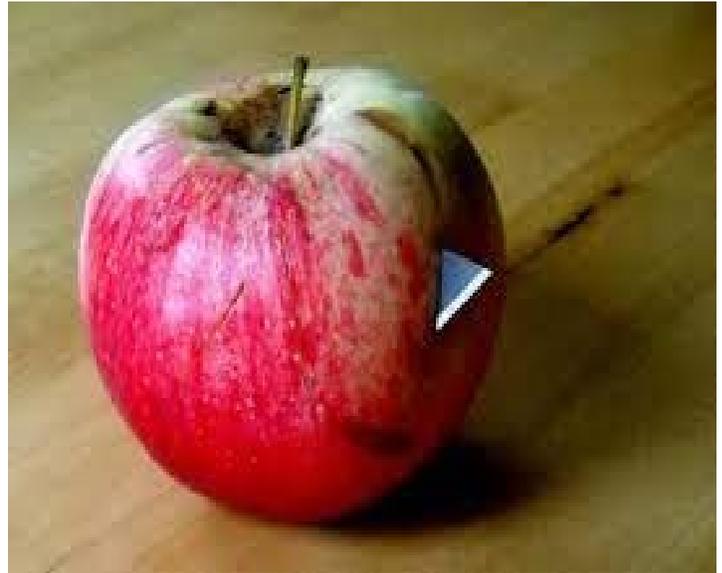


# Constructing Social Problems (SOCI 202)



## Online Course Offering

May 9 – June 24

SOCI 202 is a fully online course. Weekly lectures consist of short pre-recorded lecture videos. The lecture videos are edited with images and text to facilitate learning and understanding. Lecture videos will be available for viewing on your own schedule.

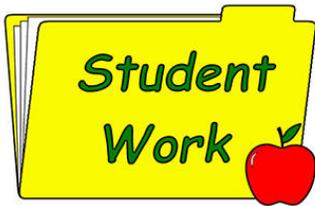
# Course Details



## What is the Course About?

Soci 202 focuses on how social problems are socially constructed. The social construction of social problems is not about people making problems up. It's not even about subjective interpretations of otherwise objective problems. The social construction of social problems is about the ways in which human beings identify and come to think about certain issues as social problems at particular times, in specific places, and with different levels of intensity. It's also about how we avoid thinking about otherwise problematic issues as social problems by denying, rationalizing, justifying or downplaying their significance.

We will examine the social construction of the following social problems: popular hazards, terrorism and torture, the fight against breast cancer, asylum seekers, serial killing, Halloween sadism, infectious disease, public surveillance, and public shaming. We will also consider different kinds of media messaging and how perceived problems that at some points in time occupy a considerable amount of attention and debate habitually decline in importance (only to be replaced by new issues and concerns).



## Readings and Exams

6 Online Quizzes      66%

Students will complete 6 online quizzes worth 11%. Quizzes will be completed most Fridays at 1:30pm PST. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions (approximately 30 questions per quiz). Quizzes will be written on May 20, May 27, June 3, June 10, June 17, and June 24.

Take-Home Final Exam/Short Essay      34%

Students will complete a 6-8 page take-home final based on course material. The question will likely be presented at the start of term.



## Anticipated Course Schedule

Week 1 May 9-13	Introduction Constructing Social Problems Popular Hazards, the Problem of Synchronization, and Harm
Week 2 May 16-20	The Constructionist Perspective Terrorism, Media Logic, and Denial Quiz 1
Week 3 May 23-27	Victoria Day Breast Cancer, Survivors, and the Social Problems Industry Quiz 2
Week 4 May 30-June 3	Refugees, Irregular Arrivals, and Context Work Urban Legends, Halloween Sadism, and Missing Children Quiz 3
Week 5 June 6-10	The Social Construction of Infectious Diseases: Ebola The Social Construction of Infectious Diseases: COVID-19 Quiz 4
Week 6 June 13-17	Framing Modern Serial Killers Stigma, Stereotypes, and Single Mothers Quiz 5
Week 7 June 20-24	Social Problems and Public Video Surveillance Surveillance, Shaming, and Social Media Quiz 6

## Course Instructor



Professor Sean Hier  
shier@uvic.ca

## What Did Students Say About This Online Course in Summer 2020?

The format of the course, the responses to questions, and the examples used in class allowed me to form a strong understanding of course concepts.

He opens up a lot of reading regarding social problems

This is the third time that I have had Sean Hier as my professor, I enjoyed how he would go on semi little 'rants' because it showed me that he was passionate about what he was teaching. I liked how organized he was on Brightspace because I have had some professors who were not and it was kinda annoying.

Was very helpful and quick to respond to emails.  
Made his expectations clear.

Provides interesting facts. Used some props and switched up setting of online class

Professor Hier is extremely passionate and knowledgeable in the field of social problems. He always made each of the pre-recorded lectures interesting, engaging and full explanations of concepts. Professor Hier's weekly quiz (worth 66% of the course total) ensured that I stay on top of the weekly content and truly understood the main components/takeaways of each module.

The varied course material was really helpful to explore the different ways that social problems are constructed. The videos were engaging and it was helpful to be able to rewatch them; and he explains course material and concepts really well. The overview of the quizzes was also really helpful. One of the best (if not the best) profs I have had yet.

## What Did Students Say About This In-person Course in Fall 2021?

### Comments

Very passionate and knowledgeable about the topics we talked about. Also provides a study guide for the exams which were extremely helpful. There were never any surprises on the exams and he made his expectations quite clear.

The instructor was very engaging, especially through his use of interesting examples and the props that he brought in to relate to his points. The theories, while somewhat confusing, were clearly explained and he made them understandable.

Sean was a hilarious professor and I really enjoyed how unbiased his material was. Sean was also extremely kind

Sean was an extremely enjoyable professor, I looked forward to attending his lectures. Sean was not scared to dive into the root of constructing social problems, and taught this subject in an unbiased manner. This is harder said than done, as this course inherently covers social problems many students are deeply passionate about. Sean was a very refreshing professor who clearly knows the material.

Sean is always really receptive to class discussion. He's willing to dive into course material and explain, with examples, the more complicated concepts.

Really into the content that he taught, I would definitely recommend him and the course to other people.

Professor Hier, was incredibly engaging in the material of his lectures and made it enjoyable to want to study and learn the material.

Overall, I really enjoyed this course. I thought that there were an appropriate amount of required readings and that they were all relevant and interesting. I also really enjoyed the teaching style, it was clear that the instructor was passionate about each subject and it kept me interested and engaged.

Prof. Hier was lovely. He was very passionate and educated. He was also incredibly articulate.

preparation and teaching the course material in sequence that build upon previously discussed topics. Sean was great at relating topics to each other and getting his point across.

Super passionate about the course content, made lectures really engaging. Explained concepts thoroughly with lots of examples.

He was a very approachable instructor. He always showed up ready to engage with his students and the material. He took his time to explain concepts and would dive deep into the meaning of the readings he provided. Despite not personally being interested in the material this class provided, he made it something that was an enjoyable experience. He was fair with course expectations and lecture recordings.

Dr. Hier is clearly knowledgeable about the content and passionate about this field, which made the content more engaging and relevant to students.

I like Dr. Hier because he doesn't have—or at least doesn't show—obvious political agendas, which is so refreshing when taking a SOCI course. He seems very open to opinions and I think he knows his material well. I loved his class because every time I would learn something new.

Professor Hier's syllabus and topics were very thoughtfully created, and it was evident of his knowledge and passion for the subject. Additionally, the recording of classes to be made available online was very helpful and made the content more accessible.