**SOCI 202**  
**Constructing Social Problems**  

**Course Description**

Sociology 202 examines how social phenomena, sometimes having persisted for decades (e.g., sex, murder, sport concussion, infectious disease), become popularly understood as social problems only at certain moments in time, in particular places, and among members of specific social groups. The course focuses on the ways in which social phenomena, once widely recognized as social problems, are sustained over time through a variety of human activities, strategies, and interactions (e.g., reports, advertisements, websites, mass media stories, social media conversations, documentaries, celebrity activism). The course also focuses on how perceived problems that at certain times occupy a considerable amount of attention and debate decline in importance (only to be replaced by other issues that become widely perceived as significant social problems).

**Topics**

This term’s topics will likely include popular hazards (like driving), terrorism, breast cancer awareness campaigns, poverty, sadism, serial killers, public shaming, and digital media claims and frames.

**Readings**

There is no textbook for this course. There are several academic papers assigned for weekly reading.

**Evaluation**

- 3 non-cumulative in-class unit exams  55% (20%-20%-15%)
- Term Paper  45%