The University of South Dakota  
Department of Anthropology and Sociology  

SOC 150 – Social Problems  
Desire2Learn online course  

Spring 2018 Syllabus  

Instructor: Dr. Stephanie Spars  

Undergraduate Credit Hours: 3  
Lessons: 14  
Discussion: 8  
Quizzes: 8  
Essays: 4  

Required Text  

Course Prerequisites  

There are no prerequisites for this course.  

Course Description  

The course will present basic concepts and analysis of the major problems of contemporary society, including the social causes of these problems and the public policy consequences of solutions. We will learn how to interpret social problems within the context of sociological theory, and learn about sociological research on social problems. We will identify programs and policies designed to mitigate the negative consequences of social problems.  

Sociology is the study of the principles and problems pertaining to group behavior, the relationships among human beings, the development and nature of institutions, and the structure of society. The course objectives are to: 1) apply the general sociological perspective to the examination of both routine patterns of human interaction and major social issues; 2) understand several persistent and widespread social problems; 3) analyze the impact of social problems; and 4) comprehend various sociological viewpoints taken on contemporary social problems.
Topics covered include:

- What makes an issue a social problem
- The effects or consequences of social problems
- What social factors are involved?
- The relationship between wealth and power
- Population problems
- Threats to the environment
- Problems in inequality
  - Poverty, Racial and ethnic, Gender, Sexual orientation, and Disabilities
- Deviance
- Institutional Problems
  - Work, Families, Education, Health Care
- National Security
- Solutions to social problems

Course Expectations

Successful completion of this course will enhance the student’s ability to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the study of and the content of social problems in the modern world
- Interpret and synthesize information and ideas
- Analyze and evaluate arguments
- Select and apply scientific and other appropriate methodologies
- Explain how social problems interact and react with the larger society.
- Identify policies for alleviating the negative consequences of social problems.
- Communicate clearly, precisely, and in a well-organized manner
- Learn to recognize patterns of social inequality and stratification and their implications in their multiple forms
- Learn to recognize various patterns of social structure, such as norms, roles, relationships, and institutions
- Become familiar with research methods
- Develop a basic understanding of sociological theory
- Recognize that differences exist in the world regarding the ideas of family, religion, rights, and other aspects of our lives

These expectations will be assessed using a series of short discussions, quizzes, and two exams.

Course Structure, Assignments, and Evaluation

The course structure follows the structure of the textbook. We will divide the semester into 13 Chapter Weeks, with Mondays as day 1 and Sundays as day 7. Each Week I will expect you to follow the traditional textbook routine – read the chapters, ponder the issues, answer the questions, learn the key words – so that you gain some insight and understanding into the subjects under discussion. Spend time at the textbook’s online student website. It has many
very useful study aids, including chapter summaries, research questions, and multiple choice tests. While the following may look like a lot of work – they are all smaller tasks that can be accomplished in a week along with the work from your other courses as long as you stay on top of it all.

There is no Extra Credit for the course.

Summary and Assignments
Each week (in the course Content Section) is a document “Summary and Assignments”. This document outlines what needs to be done each week (such as quizzes, essay, online discussions, and videos) and the deadlines. It also highlights some of the main concepts from the chapter. Make sure you read this document.

Objectives and Activities
In addition to “Summary and Assignments”, each week and/or chapter has a “Objectives and Activities” document. This document outlines the learning objectives and highlights a topic (paired with an optional activity) for each chapter of your text. You might think of this document as a type of lecture notes.

Evaluation
• 4 short essays (20 points each=80 total) – 25% of your grade will come from four short essays (two due during midterm and the other two due during finals). Pick four out of eight topics to write four short essays (minimum 800 words each (not including citations and bibliography) to be submitted by the end of the exam periods (i.e. by March 4th (first two essays due) and April 29th (second two essays due). You can submit essays early.

• 8 On-line Discussion Board Assignments (10 points each=80 total) – Students are required to participate in online discussions with their classmates (minimum of 250 words). I will post questions for you to respond to almost every week. You will need to respond thoroughly to my questions (for a maximum of 5 points) by Thursday 11:59 pm and then respond briefly to at least 1 of your fellow group’s posts no later than 11:59 pm (CT) on Sundays. This discussion board participation is worth up to 10 points each.

• In order to get your points, be sure your responses are of substance and do not wait until the last minute to make your posts.
• Be sure to check in with the discussion board frequently as the discussions may be helpful to your study of that week’s chapter.
• I will presume that you have read all of the discussion board posts for your group.
• The idea is for you to take away sufficient information that you can go on the web and find resources that will help you with your task.

You should treat all communications in this class as you would in the business world. In other words, I expect communication to be formal, using proper grammar, spelling and netiquette. For examples of proper netiquette, please refer to the Online Student Handbook. The eight discussion weeks will therefore score 80 points maximum. Feedback and grades will be returned within one week after the conclusion of the discussion topic. Grades and feedback can be found in the Grades section of the course and will be designated by “OLD#,” where the “#” will be replaced by the discussion number.
The eight discussion weeks will therefore score 80 points maximum. Feedback and grades will be returned within one week after the conclusion of the discussion topic. Grades and feedback can be found in the Grades section of the course and will be designated by “OLD#,” where the “#” will be replaced by the discussion number.

| Posting a response to instructor’s question by Thursday @ 11:59 PM CT. Including the Substantiveness of initial posting, minimum word count (250) and citing your textbook | Up to 5 points |
| Posting a response to instructor’s question by Friday @ 11:59 PM CT. Including the Substantiveness of initial posting, minimum word count (250) and citing your textbook | Up to 4 points |
| Posting a response to instructor’s question by Saturday @ 11:59 PM CT. Including the Substantiveness of initial posting, minimum word count (250) and citing your textbook | Up to 3 points |
| Posting a response to instructor’s question by Sunday @ 11:59 PM CT. Including the Substantiveness of initial posting, minimum word count (250) and citing your textbook | Up to 2 points |
| Responding to peer posting | 1 point |
| Substantiveness of peer posting response Including citing your textbook | 3 points |
| Reading all other peer postings | 1 point |

An Important Note: Discussions can be a bit difficult, as you have to know something of the subject in order to discuss it (thus, the emphasis on reading each week’s chapter and doing some work in the online student learning center). With this in mind, you should not be surprised that certain answer types will get no grade points in discussions:

1. Simply parroting someone else’s statement (that is, using the same ideas/words as an answer – like a talking parrot does when you speak to it).

   If you respond by simply agreeing/disagreeing, e.g.: “I agree/disagree with X’s statement that SD will always be mainly agricultural” and you don’t add any new information that is not in the original poster’s text, you get no grade points.

2. Merely copying the definition from the text.

   For example, if you include the definition without any context or interpretation as to what it means, you don’t get any grade points for merely proving you have the text.

- 8 Quizzes (20 points each= 160 total) – Eight 20 point quizzes (multiple choice) will be given which cover the assigned readings and possible video for that week. The quizzes will be available for you to take on-line and must be completed within a 20 minute time period. Any quizzes that are not received within the 20-minute limit will receive a zero. The quiz will allow only one minute per question. These quizzes will be open between Thursdays (12:01am) and 11:59pm (CT) on Sundays. To be successful on these quizzes you should have read the chapter, read any lecture notes and watched any videos.
assigned. Be sure that you are not only familiar with the definitions of any terms at the end of each chapter, but have thought about them so that you are able to apply them to real situations. Feedback and grades will be returned within one week after the conclusion of the quiz. Grades and feedback can be found in the Grades section of the course and will be designated by “Quiz#,“ where the “#” will be replaced by the Quiz number. These are not open-book quizzes and you get one attempt.

To summarize: 1) participation points from eight (8) online class discussions = 25%; 3) eight (8) bi-weekly quizzes=50%; four short essays = 25%. Feedback and grades will be returned within one-two weeks after the essay deadline. Grades can be found in the Grades section of the course and will be designated by “X Past quizzes will be visible no later than one week after closing. For essay feedback, email me following the end of the deadline.

I do not offer Extra Credit in any form

Grading Scale (points): A (90-100%) = 320-288; B (80-89%) = 287-256; C (70-79%) = 255-224; D (60-69%) = 223-192; F (59% - <) = 191-0

Typical Week:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Start of week. Reading assignments given.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>On-line discussion topic assigned and forum opened.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Open for independent work and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Respond to initial On-line discussion posting Quiz opens at 12:01am (CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Open for independent work and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Open for work/ quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>All weekly assignments due by 11:59 CT Sunday night</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion/Exercise (Monday-Sunday)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>Sociology and the study of Social Problems</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
<td>Introduce yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 8-14</td>
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<td>Online Discussion 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>Social Class</td>
<td>Ch. 2</td>
<td>Quiz 1 ( Chapters 1 &amp; 2) Due</td>
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<td>January 15-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td>The Media Race and Ethnicity</td>
<td>Ch. 11</td>
<td>Online Discussion 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22-28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch. 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>Age and Aging</td>
<td>Ch. 6</td>
<td>Quiz 2 (Chapters 11,3,6) Due</td>
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<td>Jan.29-Feb.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Five</td>
<td>Gender Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Ch. 4</td>
<td>Quiz 3 (Chapters 4 &amp; 5) Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch. 5</td>
<td>Online Discussion 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Six</td>
<td>The Economy and Work</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 12-18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Online Discussion 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Seven</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Ch. 7</td>
<td>Quiz 4 (Chapters 9 &amp; 7) Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19-25</td>
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### Contacting the Instructor/Instructor Availability

If you may have questions or concerns, you can contact me by my USD email address or the course email (not the course pager): Stephanie.spars@usd.edu. I will be happy to respond and will do so within a reasonable time (from instantly to around 48 hours, depending on my schedule and my proximity to a computer). As this is an online course contact is solely through email or D2L.

### Study Suggestions

How can you successfully complete this course? The following guidelines will help you achieve your goals.

*Read your syllabus.* The lesson introduction and reading assignment are your “lecture” for a lesson. I suggest reading the introduction twice, before beginning your assignment and then once again after reading the chapter to help clarify key points.

*Read each text assignment carefully.* Many students find it helpful to take notes as they read and reread their assignments. In these notes, include any points that are unclear or about which you have questions. If you cannot find the answers to these questions, feel free to e-mail me.

*Refer to outside sources* such as books on art, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and the Internet to supplement your text and help you understand the course material.

*Study the text illustrations.* The author has included many illustrations throughout the text to lend further explanation to the points he is making in each chapter.

*Answer the Study Questions.* These questions are designed to help you identify key ideas and analyze the information from the lesson. Some will require one or two word answers while others will require a

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Midterm Essays Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>Feb. 26 - March 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>March 5-11</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>March 12-18</td>
<td>Education Ch. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>March 19-25</td>
<td>Health and Medicine Ch. 10 Quiz 5 (Chapters 8 &amp; 10) Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twelve</td>
<td>March 26-April 1</td>
<td>Crime and Justice  Ch 13 Online Discussion 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thirteen</td>
<td>April 1 - 8</td>
<td>Drugs Ch. 12 Quiz 6 (Chapters 12 &amp; 13) Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourteen</td>
<td>April 9 - 15</td>
<td>Urbanization Ch. 14 The Environment Ch. 15 Quiz 7 (Chapters 14 &amp; 15) Due Online Discussion 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifteen</td>
<td>April 16 - 22</td>
<td>War and Terrorism Ch. 16 Online Discussion 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sixteen</td>
<td>April 23 - 29</td>
<td>Social Problems and Action Ch. 17 Quiz 8 (Chapters 16 &amp; 17) Due Quiz open April 23 - April 29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Final Essays Due April 29.*
more in-depth answer. These questions are similar to and meant to prepare you for questions on your exams. The publisher offers access to online resources (Sage edge). Here you can test your knowledge with a variety of learning resources: practice quizzes, critical thinking questions, internet exercises, and case studies; and links to other relevant websites.

*Ask questions by e-mail.* Since we will not be meeting each week as we would in a course taken in residence, I cannot see the puzzled look on your face when a concept is unclear. Please feel free to ask me to clarify anything you do not understand.

*Set aside time for the class.* Online study courses require you to take the responsibility for completion of the course. This takes self-discipline and time. Set aside time each week to work on this course just as you would for a course take in residence. You will successfully complete this course once you make a commitment to it.

**Technical Standards and Issues**

To take the course successfully, you will need to use a computer with the appropriate technology to access D2L. Of course, if you are reading this now, you probably do! If you need other technological help, contact the ITS Help Desk at 877-269-6837, 605-658-6000, or through the HelpTicket system: https://apps.usd.edu/helpdesk/requests

Please remember that it is up to you to sort out any technological problems, so I would advise you to test the system as soon as you sign up so that you are ready to go on the first day of the semester. Just to give you a sense of balance, please be aware that the D2L system is not perfect either (e.g., see suggestions on the D2L site about using a Firefox browser if you have Internet Explorer 10+ on your computer, and comments about the server being either slow or down at certain times). So make sure in advance that you have the right computer and know the quirks of the system.

I also expect you to save and back up any files you create out of D2L for this course as you work on them. Your word processor will have several options for doing this. The simplest is to hit that little floppy disk icon (or other icon for saving a document) on your word processor now and again. You can usually recover a document that you have saved at least once, but if you have not saved a version, it’s gone (well, there are programs that will find data outside files on a hard drive)! We have all had the horror of computer hang-ups, crashes and other glitches, and so you are forewarned – no ‘virtual dog/cat ate my virtual homework’ excuses allowed.

**Examinations**

There are no exams for this course.

**University Course and Exam Policies**

The University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected.

**Early Alert and Deficiency Grades**

University policy requires instructors to submit Early Alert and Deficiency grades for students performing at the D level or below in a course. A student will receive an Early Alert report if the student has not completed the required postings by the Early Alert deadline. A student will receive a Deficiency
at midterm if the student has not completed the required postings and/or received a grade of D or less on the midterm exam.

**Instructor Initiated Drop**
An Instructor Initiated Drop will take place if the student has not submitted required coursework as per the syllabus schedule by Sunday, January 31, 2018. A student may also be dropped by the instructor for plagiarism or cheating as per College of Arts and Science policy.

**Incomplete**
The grade Incomplete (I) is given at the discretion of the instructor and only if arrangements are made by the student with the instructor for completing the course before the last day of the semester. The student must have completed all course requirements except for the final examination to be considered for the grade of Incomplete. A student then must complete the course before the end of the next semester or the grade automatically changes to F.

**Course Evaluation**
Students may be asked to evaluate the course using the institutional form as per the directives of the University.

**Other Course Policies**
I do not accept late submissions. If your request is due to extenuating circumstances which are medically related, you will be required to submit supporting documentation.

Policies and procedures covering this course are detailed in the *Internet Study Student Handbook* [University’s Academic Dishonesty Statement](#)

The University of South Dakota considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The University supports the imposition of penalties on students who have been adjudicated to have engaged in academic dishonesty, as defined in the “Conduct” section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook, and South Dakota Board of Regents policy 2-33 [www.sdbor.edu/policy/Documents/2-33.pdf](http://www.sdbor.edu/policy/Documents/2-33.pdf).

No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. A student found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty may, at the discretion of the instructor, be:

- Given a zero for that assignment;
- Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit;
- Assigned a reduced grade for the course;
- Reported to the program which the student is majoring and that department may take additional action
- Dropped from the course; or
- Failed in the course.

**Academic Dishonesty:** acts of dishonesty, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Cheating, which is defined as, but not limited to, the following:
   a. use or giving of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examination;
b. use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or
c. acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the institutional faculty or staff.

2. Plagiarism, which is defined as, but not limited to, the following:
   a. the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment consistent with the practices of the discipline;
   b. the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers of other academic materials.

3. Other forms of dishonesty relating to academic achievement, research results, or academically related public service.
4. Furnishing information known or believed to be false to any institutional official, faculty member, or officer.
5. Forgery, fabrication, alteration, misrepresentation, or misuse of any document, record, or instrument of identification, including misrepresentations of degrees awarded or honors received.
6. Tampering with the election of any institutionally recognized student organization.
7. Claiming to represent or act in behalf of the institution when not authorized to represent or to act.

Goals of the South Dakota System General Education Requirements
This class fulfills the following Goals of the South Dakota System General Education Requirements:

SGR Goal 3, Social Sciences: Students will understand the organization, potential, and diversity of the human community through study of the social sciences.
As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify and explain basic concepts, terminology and theories of the selected social science disciplines from different spatial, temporal, cultural and/or institutional contexts;</td>
<td>Weekly readings, online discussion group, four essays, and eight quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Apply selected social sciences concepts and theories to contemporary issues;</td>
<td>Weekly readings, online discussion group, four essays, and eight quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify and explain the social or aesthetic values of different cultures.</td>
<td>Weekly readings, online discussion group, four essays, and eight quizzes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, as a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of at least one of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. The origin and evolution of human institutions;</td>
<td>Weekly readings, online discussion group, four essays, and eight quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The allocation of human or natural resources within societies;</td>
<td>Weekly readings, online discussion group, four essays, and eight quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The impact of diverse philosophical, ethical or religious views.</td>
<td>Weekly readings, online discussion group, four essays, and eight quizzes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Freedom in Learning**

Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should first contact the instructor of the course. If the student remains unsatisfied, the student may contact the department head and/or dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

**Disability Accommodation**

Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class or as soon as possible after the diagnosis of a disability. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

Please note: if your home institution is not the University of South Dakota but one of the other South Dakota Board of Regents institutions (e.g., SDSU, SDSMT, BHSU, NSU, DSU), you should work with the disability services coordinator at your home institution.

Ernetta L. Fox, Director  
Disability Services, Room 119 Service Center  
(605)677-6389  
Web Site: [www.usd.edu/ds](http://www.usd.edu/ds)  
E-mail: disabilityservices@usd.edu

**Diversity and Inclusive Excellence**

The University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected. To learn more about USD's diversity and inclusiveness initiatives, please visit the website for the [Office of Diversity](http://www.usd.edu/diversity).

The Division of Continuing & Distance Education has the following student support services:

For information about the university's technical, academic, and student support services, as well as how to take advantages of these services, please refer to the Online Student Handbook (see below). This document also contains important information pertaining to minimum technology requirements, registration information, as well as other university services and policies.

The Division of Continuing and Distance Education (CE) also offers a comprehensive guide and other guides/aids to the many student services available to distance learners:  
[http://www.usd.edu/continuing-and-distance-education/student-resources.cfm](http://www.usd.edu/continuing-and-distance-education/student-resources.cfm)  

To access the course:  
[https://d2l.sdbor.edu/](https://d2l.sdbor.edu/) or [https://my.usd.edu/uPortal/f/welcome/normal/render.uP](https://my.usd.edu/uPortal/f/welcome/normal/render.uP)