



Thomas Webster, above, the originator of the course described here has been a member of the Avila faculty since 1962. Prior to coming to Avila, Professor Webster taught at Central Junior High School, Kansas City, Mo., and at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Mo. For many years he held the position of executive director of the Urban League of Kansas City. Now chairman of the department of social studies at Avila College, Professor Webster has his graduate degree from the University of Kansas. Last summer he received a grant from the University of Colorado for study of early American Indian cultures, a study done on a location in the southwestern portion of the United States.

Students in the sociology class visit K-9 headquarters at Leeds, Ma. Shawn with the commanding officer are Patricia Chattertan, center, and Dianne Zahner, right.



## Focus: Contemporary Social Ills

Current Social Problems or Sociology 12 is listed several times in the Avila College catalog. Noted on one set of pages is the fact that Sociology 12 is required of students before graduation. On another page the course is described as "an analysis of the nature, causes, and types of social problems of contemporary society, efforts to eliminate or alleviate the problems."

The course, while not new on the Avila class rosters, was revised several years ago when it was placed on the required list. Its present structure is a result of faculty awareness that women need knowledge of the society into which they will graduate and in which they are expected to take an active part. The professor responsible for the course is Thomas A. Webster who came to Avila in 1962 with all the knowledge necessary to organize and teach the required course.

Using the total of Western civilization as a background for the growth of social problems, Professor Webster directs his students into examinations of juvenile delinquency, crime, chronic alcoholism, narcotic addiction, suicide, mental disorders, divorce, desertion, unemployment, chronic dependency, health and medical care, education, the expanding population problem, group prejudice and discrimination, the aged and aging, Catholic-Protestant relations, and automation. Students explore the historical reasons for these problems, how they are aggravated, and how society copes with them.

To increase student understanding, Professor Webster uses various teaching methods. His classes make visits to organizations and agencies which deal with these problems. Guest lecturers are invited to classes. Films, debates, discussions, and role playing are used.



Another field trip was to the Police Department Headquarters in Kansas City, Ma. In the show-up room are Margie Martin, left, and Marie Anderson, right.

## Aim:

# Understanding and Commitment

A course such as Current Social Problems answers a need, Sister Patricia Marie, the academic dean of Avila, says. "Our approach to preparing women for their place in today's society is somewhat unique," Sister explains. "Most colleges are offering courses directed toward students understanding their role as women. We want students to understand the world in which they must live and to become involved through service," Sister says.

By helping students know what they as women can do for society, Sister believes that the college graduate finds joy and fulfillment through using her abilities to help others. In practice, the college is turning the modern question concerning woman's place in society away from the personal soul-searching to the broader concept of what woman can contribute.

## Student Reaction

Varying degrees of appreciation were expressed by students who completed the course this past June. One student's reaction was typical. When first asked her opinion of the Current Social Problems class she replied "It's all right." Then on being asked if it accomplished the stated aims, the student went into detailed exclamations.

To this student, the course meant new dimensions in understanding present-day problems. "Mr. Webster was able to make us really see what poverty was like and the many problems involved in solving the poverty problem, for example," she said. "Probably the best thing about the class was the realness of everything we studied. You know how much of college study is theory. Well this course makes us see the problems for what they are in everyday living," the student continued. "Now I have a good idea of what needs to be done to solve some of these problems, how hard this might be, and what I can do as a voting adult and citizen," she finished.



Borboro Nickle '64, above, and Marcia O'Neil '64, below, begin a year with the Lay Extension Volunteers in August. Miss Nickle and her co-worker will be the first volunteers in California. She will live at Honford, California, in the San Joaquin Valley where she will do parish work. Miss O'Neil will work with the Newmon Club of South Colorado State College of Pueblo, Colorado.



Mary Kostoryz, left, and Joan Le-lond Krupco, center, both 1963 graduates with majors in sociology, are coworkers with the Jackson

County, Missouri, Welfare Office. Eloine Huffmon, right, a classmate, is also a co-worker of the welfare office.

