

Social Problems (SOC 102-80)
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Blackboard Support:

http://bb.wpunj.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_group_id=161

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Course Description:

Who or what started social problems?

The Book of Genesis According to St. Miguelito:

<http://oldpoetry.com/opoem/37169-Miguel-Pinero-The-Book-of-Genesis-According-to-St-Miguelito>

We Didn't Start the Fire:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKu2QaytmrM>

Identify and analyze the following social problems.

Disclosure

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0i9je0Embl8&feature=related>

When the Levees Broke

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pD1aVJaRsM&feature=fvw>

This course examines contemporary social problems and modes of conflict resolution. This requires, at a minimum, accepting two fundamental assumptions: (1) Individuals are products of their social environments. Who they are, what they believe, what they strive for, and how they feel about themselves are all dependent on others and the society in which they live. We will examine the individual and structural components of society that contextualize behavior while exploring topics such as; the social construction and dissemination of power, poverty, racism, drugs and crime, social deviance, health and body-related issues, and educational inequality. (2) We will be adopting, in essence, a critical stance toward social forms. We will attempt to demystify myths, stereotypes, and official dogma. We will examine "facts", theories, and methods Sociologists use in the study of social problems. We will

also consider how other Nations address problems that are familiar in the United States.

Course Prerequisites: None

Course Objectives:

1. To increase students' sociological imagination;
2. To orient students to the most prevalent social ills and how they are conceptualized within the American value system;
3. To enable students to differentiate and utilize the primary sociological interpretations toward the analysis and resolution of social problems;
4. To provide students with a "sociological eye";
5. To teach students about social institutions and their role in shaping society;
6. To demonstrate the considerable variation in what individuals and groups define as social problems;
7. To examine the major social issues and behaviors identified as social problems in the contemporary U.S. and elsewhere, especially in the context of globalization;
8. To encourage students to generate proposed solutions to social problems and to think about how more perfect societies might be brought about.

Student Learning Outcomes:

After completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the connection between personal troubles and public issues via discussion and written assignments;
2. Discuss the major social problems in contemporary U.S. society and how they have evolved throughout history;
3. Critique various explanatory sociological paradigms for understanding social problems;
4. Show evidence through written and oral forms what it means to see and think sociologically;
5. Show evidence that they recognize and understand the influence of the basic institutions in U.S. society (family, education, political, government, media, and religion);
6. Describe when and how social behavior is likely to be defined as a social problem, and to describe how perceived social problems vary across social locations;
7. Describe the principal social problems identified in the contemporary world, as well as several proposed solutions to these problems;
8. Have designed, presented, and defended their own plans for how utopian, problem-free society might be brought about.

Required Texts:

*Social Problems, 11th Edition, by D. Stanley Eitzen and Maxine Baca Zinn.
Boston and New York: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.*

See my Welcome Letter for instructions on how to order this book. My Welcome Letter is under the course Syllabus button and also under the Distance Learning Welcome Letters on the main bb website at WPU.

Topical Outline and Course Content:

See Assignments in Blackboard for due dates and assignments.

Week 1 (Defining and Analyzing Social Problems, and Conflict Resolution)

Module #1 (12/26/09-1/1/09)

Week 2 (Social Inequality, Deviance, Drugs, and Crime)

Module #2 (1/2/10-1/6/10)

Week 3 (Race and Gender)

Module #3 (1/7/10-1/11/10)

Week 4 (Marriage and Family & Education)

Module #4 (1/12/10-1/15/10)

Method of Instruction and Student Learning Activities:

This is an online course, which means all lessons/lectures, discussions, writing, activities etc. will be transmitted via the computer. Discussion board, mini writing assignments which will include individual responses to the weekly readings along with a traditional essay final exam, and a group project will be a part of this online course. Again, it is important that students be on discussion board regularly and respond to all deadlines. You cannot be absent from the course and then all of a sudden appear and submit back/late work.

Make up exam policy, Plagiarism, and Other Important Notes:

The need to make up the final exam will have to be verified. All work submitted automatically goes into a shell where I run it to check for plagiarism/past submissions. Again, you will not be allowed to make up late work or post discussions late. All cases of academic dishonesty will be turned over to the Dean's office.

Method of Evaluation/Assessment – Grading:

Discussion Board (25% + 25%) =	50%
Group Project (10%+10%) =	20%
Final Exam =	20%
Reaction Papers =	10%
Total =	100%

REQUIRED COURSE PRACTICES:

A) Reading: Students are required to complete the reading assignments in advance of class time/ due dates. Our discussions are based in part on the assigned reading for each week.

B) Writing: Students are expected to employ college-level writing skills in preparing all written assignments. You should edit your work in Word first before posting it.

C) Critical Thinking: While enrolled in this course, students are expected to put aside their preconceived notions of social life and to engage in the activity of looking at and thinking critically about the world around them. This involves taking nothing for granted and being able to look below the surface in order to understand why we do what we do within our society.

Classroom Norms:

This is a social science so let's be respectful while challenging ideas and ideals that are presented. Make sure that questions and examples are relevant to the topics and ideas that are being discussed. Remember to follow all rules of Netiquette. You can find them on the WPU bb webpage. Let's enjoy our collective experience. "See" you soon.

Recommended Websites

<http://www.alternet.org/>
<http://www.clasp.org/>
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/>
<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/>
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>
<http://www.sociolog.com>
http://dir.yahoo.com/Social_Science/sociology
<http://www.cnn.com>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk>
<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2000/en>

<http://www.bls.gov/home.htm>
<http://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>
<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>
<http://www.bls.gov/cpi/>
<http://www.bls.gov/search/search.asp>
<http://www.dol.gov/>
<http://www.state.nj.us/labor/>
<http://www.aflcio.org/>
<http://www.brookings.edu/>
<http://www.asanet.org/index.wv>
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>
<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/sociology/index.html>
<http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>
<http://www.demos.org/inequality/>
<http://www.un.org/english/>

Other Fun and Important Links

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTU2He2BIc0>
<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtolbLkRniM>
http://www.youthvote.org/voter/other_facts.cfm
