Social Problems
Course Outline

Course Information
Organization Mercer County Community College
Developers Gianna Durso-Finley
Course Number SOC 107
Instructional Level 100 Level
Division Liberal Arts
Department Social Science
Credits 3
Revision Date Fall 2014

Description
This course is designed to give the student an introduction to sociological theory and methods and a background in the nature, causes of, and possible solutions to major social problems facing large, complex societies. Among the possible topics discussed are poverty and inequality, drug addiction, crime, health care, racial and minority group issues, and environmental concerns.

Types of Instruction

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<tr>
<th>Instruction Type</th>
<th>Contact Hours</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>Lecture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet Activities</td>
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</table>

Textbooks

And other Readings as assigned.

Learner Supplies

Prerequisites
Students must be academically eligible for college level work
Exit Learning Outcomes

General Education Outcomes

A. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

B. Ethical Decision-Making: Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

C. Information Literacy: Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

D. Collaboration and Cooperation: Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

E. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility: Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

F. Written and Oral Communication in English: Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading. *USE CORE COMPETENCY A.

G. Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.

H. Diversity and Global Perspective: Students will analyze the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

Competencies

1. Appreciate the "journey" that a social condition makes - through perceived harm - in order to become identified as a social problem, emphasizing the role of the social construction of reality

   General Education Outcomes

   Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.

You will demonstrate your competence:

   o by developing a flowchart of the process of moving from social condition to social problems

Your performance will be successful when:

   o flowchart depicts all of the items in the process
   o flowchart shows the relationship of one step to another
   o flowchart shows a clear understanding of the topic

Learning Objectives

a. Examine the ways in which sociologists study and understand social problems

b. Appreciate the value of sociology versus common sense

c. Acquaint self with the concept of the sociological imagination
2. **Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in the US and global context**

**General Education Outcomes**
- Collaboration and Cooperation: Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.
- Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility: Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.
- Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.
- Diversity and Global Perspective: Students will analyze the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**
- by participating in the class

**Your performance will be successful when:**
- you enter into class discussions
- you offer questions or comments during class
- you attend class regularly
- you arrive for class on time
- you listen attentively during class

**Learning Objectives**
- a. Describe social problems in the US and global context
- b. Describe the impact of social problems in sociological and personal terms

3. **Describe the Sociological Imagination as it applies to social problems - the links between and the differences between private troubles and social problems**

**General Education Outcomes**
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
- Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility: Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.
- Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**
- by preparing a reflection paper on the sociological imagination

**Your performance will be successful when:**
- reflection describes learning goals
- reflection presents a realistic picture of the learner's skill prior to the learning experience
- reflection accurately describes the learner's new skill level
- reflection includes strategies for continued improvement

**Learning Objectives**
Apply the sociological imagination to social problems to explore causes and effects

Demonstrate your understanding of problems with blaming the victim

Discuss ways in which your understanding of social problems may have changed in light of the sociological imagination

4. Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict functional and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels (micro, mezo and macro)

General Education Outcomes

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Ethical Decision-Making: Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

Collaboration and Cooperation: Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility: Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.

Diversity and Global Perspective: Students will analyze the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

You will demonstrate your competence:

○ by writing a problem/solution report about social problems

Your performance will be successful when:

○ report includes a definition of the problem

○ report sketches the history of the problem

○ report includes an analysis of the problem

○ report includes a description of viable solutions

○ report identifies the solution most likely to solve the problem

○ report includes an explanation of why the solution is the best

○ report is well organized

○ report evidences correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Learning Objectives

a. Acquaint self with the three sociological perspectives - conflict, functionalism, and interactionism

b. Apply the three perspectives to social problems

c. Apply the three sociological perspectives to solving social problems

d. Acquaint self with the three levels of analysis - macro, mezo and micro

e. Apply the three analytic levels to solving social problems

f. Assign sample solutions to the proper theoretical perspective and level
5. **Investigate a social problem of relevance to the student**

**General Education Outcomes**
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
- Ethical Decision-Making: Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.
- Information Literacy: Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.
- Collaboration and Cooperation: Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.
- Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**
- by completing a research paper on social problem of your choice

**Your performance will be successful when:**
- research paper topic is directly relevant to the project assigned and is approved by the instructor
- research paper contains an introductory paragraph
- research paper contains clearly written main points
- each main point is supported with evidence
- direct quotes are documented correctly
- evidence is included in the Works Cited Page
- Works Cited page is formatted correctly according to APA documentation style
- research paper includes a conclusion
- research paper evidences correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

**Learning Objectives**
- a. Acquaint self with electronic resources available through MCCC library
- b. Investigate social problems of interest and select one for focus

6. **Develop proposed solutions to the chosen social problem that reflect each of the three sociological perspectives and the three levels of sociological analysis**

**General Education Outcomes**
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
- Ethical Decision-Making: Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.
- Collaboration and Cooperation: Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.
- Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility: Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.
- Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.
- Written and Oral Communication in English: Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading. *USE CORE COMPETENCY A.*
You will demonstrate your competence:
- by writing a problem/solution report about a social problem of your choice

Your performance will be successful when:
- research paper topic is directly relevant to the project assigned and is approved by the instructor
- research paper contains an introductory paragraph
- research paper contains clearly written main points
- each main point is supported with evidence
- direct quotes are documented correctly
- evidence is included in the Works Cited Page
- Works Cited page is formatted correctly according to APA documentation style
- research paper includes a conclusion
- research paper evidences correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Learning Objectives
a. Apply the three perspectives to your chosen social problem
b. Apply the three sociological perspectives to solving your chosen social problem
c. Apply the three analytic levels to solving your chosen social problem

7. Evaluate their own understanding of social problems by operationalizing (as much as possible) a student-directed solution to a chosen social problem

General Education Outcomes
Social Science: Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science.
Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
Information Literacy: Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

You will demonstrate your competence:
- by writing a problem/solution report about your topic

Your performance will be successful when:
- report includes a definition of the problem
- report sketches the history of the problem
- report includes an analysis of the problem
- report includes a description of viable solutions
- report identifies the active solution most likely to solve the problem
- report includes an explanation of why the solution is the best
- report clearly defines the student role
- report evidences correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Learning Objectives
a. Appraise your growth as a student of social problems through reflection on your course materials and student-generated products
b. Assess through a reflection paper
c. Develop and operationalize (be specific) a plan to solve the social problem you have investigated
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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Target Competencies</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 1 - Understanding Social Problems Week 1</td>
<td>Appreciate the “journey” that a social condition makes - through perceived harm - in order to become identified as a social problem, emphasizing the role of the social construction of reality Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in society</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Describe the Sociological Imagination as it applies to social problems - the links between and the differences between private troubles and social problems Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict functional and symbolic) to social problems</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 2 - Social Solutions Week 3</td>
<td>Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict functional and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels (micro, mezo and macro)</td>
<td>Chapter 18</td>
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<td>Unit 3 - Social Problems in Inequality Week 4</td>
<td>Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict functional and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels (micro, mezo and macro) Evaluate their own understanding of social problems</td>
<td>Chapter 2 Exam 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in the US and global context Investigate a social problem of relevance to the student</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Evaluate their own understanding of social problems by operationalizing (as much as possible) a student-directed solution to a chosen social problem</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in the US and global context Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict functional and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in the US and global context Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict functional and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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| Unit 4 - Social Problems in Institutions | Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in the US and global context. Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict, functional, and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels. | Chapter 9  
Exam 2 |
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Investigate a social problem of relevance to the student.</td>
<td>Library session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Investigate a social problem of relevance to the student. Evaluate their own understanding of social problems by operationalizing (as much as possible) a student-directed solution to a chosen social problem.</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in the US and global context. Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict, functional, and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels.</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Identify the magnitude and impact of major social problems in the US and global context. Apply the three sociological perspectives (conflict, functional, and symbolic) to understanding and developing possible solutions to social problems using the three analytic levels.</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
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| Week 14 | Develop proposed solutions to the chosen social problem that reflect each of the three sociological perspectives and the three levels of sociological analysis. Evaluate their own understanding of social problems by operationalizing (as much as possible) a student-directed solution to a chosen social problem. | Chapter 18  
Term Projects due |
| Week 15 | Evaluate their own understanding of social problems by operationalizing (as much as possible) a student-directed solution to a chosen social problem. | Exam |