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Sociology (SOC) 2120 American Social Problems (3 Units) CSU:UC
[formerly Sociology 2]

Advisory: Eligibility for English 1500 strongly recommended

Total Hours: 48 hours lecture

Catalog Description: This course includes identification and analysis of contemporary social problems including (1) the role of power and ideology in the definition of social problems, (2) their causes and consequences, (3) evaluations of proposed solutions, and (4) methods of intervention. C-ID: SOCI 115

Type of Class/Course: Degree Credit

Texts such as:

Henslin, James M. *Social Problems: A Down-To-Earth Approach*. 10th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2011. Print.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, a successful student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of major social problems concerning the U.S.;
2. Place local, regional, and national social problems in global context;
3. Identify and distinguish between causes and consequences of social problems;
4. Analyze social problems using sociological approaches and concepts;
5. Analyze and interpret qualitative and quantitative information about social problems;
6. Identify and evaluate policies that address social problems and assess the policies' impact on society.

Course Scope and Content:

Unit I The Social Construction and Consequences of Social Problems

- A. Different theoretical perspectives on the process of defining social problems
- B. The roles of social movements in creating social problems
- C. Consequences of social problems
 1. Institutional Inequality
 - a. Racial

- b. Economic
- c. Gender
- d. Environment
- e. Education

Unit II The Role of Power and Ideology in the Definition of Social Problems.

- A. Different theoretical perspectives on inequality
- B. The role of the media in defining social problems

Unit III Causes of Social Problems

- A. Individual
- B. Cultural
- C. Social

Unit IV Evaluation and Consideration of Proposed Solutions to Social Problems

- A. Ways to strengthen social institutions as a means to solve social problems
- B. The criteria for evaluating the claims made about social problems
- C. Critical analysis of competing visions of social problem solutions

Unit V Consideration of Methods of Research and Analysis

- A. Methods used by sociologists to study social problems
- B. Statistical literacy – understanding the social construction of statistics and their use in public discourse of social problems

Learning Activities Required Outside of Class:

The students in this class will spend a minimum of 6 hours per week outside of the regular class time doing the following:

1. Studying
2. Answering questions
3. Completing required reading
4. Completing written work
5. Working on:
 - a. Application project(s)
 - b. Field notes
 - c. Research project

Methods of Instruction:

1. Lectures
2. Class discussions

3. Audiovisual presentations
4. Group and/or individual activities
5. Guided application project

Method of Evaluation:

1. Substantial writing assignments including:
 - a. Essay exams
 - b. Research paper using APA or a generally accepted Social Science format
2. Objective examinations/quizzes
3. Application exercises
4. Research project
5. Field journal
6. Oral presentations
7. Reflection and discussion
8. Small group activities