

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
CANTON, NEW YORK**



COURSE OUTLINE

SOCI 105 - AMERICAN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Prepared By: DIANE MUEHL, Ph.D.

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS
SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT
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SOCI 105-AMERICAN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- A. TITLE: American Social Problems
- B. COURSE NUMBER: SOCI 105
- C. CREDIT HOURS: 3
- D. WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE (OPTIONAL): No
- E. COURSE LENGTH: 15 weeks per semester
- F. SEMESTER(S) OFFERED: Fall/Spring
- G. HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:
3 hours lecture per week
- H. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION: This course provides a sociological perspective on the origin, nature, impact and policies which address contemporary American social problems. Emphasis is placed on institutional/macro sociological analysis, interrelationships, and the global context of American problems.
- I. PRE-REQUISITES/CO-COURSES: None
- J. GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):

By the end of this course, the student will:

<i>Course Objective</i>	<i>Institutional SLO</i>
a. Identify the differences between a “personal trouble” and a “social problem”	2. Crit. Thinking
b. Discuss situations that are social problems, recognizing the social changes that have affected the nature of social problems in American society.	2. Crit. Thinking
c. Compare how different sociological theories are employed to explain a particular social problem.	2. Crit. Thinking
d. Illustrate the major issues of American social problems, including such topics as the economy, poverty, education, urbanization, the environment, family problems of divorce and violence, the old and the young, gender and sexuality, health and illness.	1. Communication 2. Critical thinking

- K. TEXTS: choice at the discretion of the professor:

Mooney, L., Knox, D., and Schacht, C. (2014). *Understanding social problems* (9th ed.).

Boston MA: Cengage Publishers.

L. REFERENCES:

- Doodoo F.N. & Beisel, N. (2005) Africa in American Sociology: Invisibility, Opportunity and Obligation
Social Forces 84: 595-600.
- Jacobson, M. & Chancer<l. (2010). From left realism to mass incarceration: the need for pragmatic vision in criminal justice policy. *Crime, Law and Social Change* (54)2: 187-196.
- Peguero, A.A., Popp, A., Latimore, T.L., Shekarkhar, Z. & Koo, D.J. (2011). Social Control Theory and School Misbehavior: Examining the Role of Race and Ethnicity. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*: 259-275.
- Thomson, I. T. (2005). The Theory That Won't Die: From Mass Society to the Decline of Social Capital. *Sociological Forum*, 20 (3), 421-448.

M. EQUIPMENT: Computer, overhead projector,

N. GRADING METHOD: A-F

O. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS: at discretion of instructor.

Current methods include: class participation, writing assignments, quizzes, hourly exam, term paper, and final exam.

P. TOPICAL OUTLINE: Attached.

Q. LABORATORY OUTLINE: Not applicable.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

SOCI 105 - AMERICAN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

I. Introduction

- A. Identifying Sociology and Social Problems
 - 1. Definition of Sociology
 - 2. C.W. Mills differentiates between a “personal trouble” and a “social problem”
 - 3. Definition of “Social Problem”
 - 4. Examples and student exercise
 - 5. The Role of Social Movements
- B. The Sociological Framework for discussing Social Problems
 - 1. Facts: historical background, contemporary social context, and cross-cultural comparison
 - 2. Theories: structural-functionalist, social-conflict, and symbolic-interactionist perspectives
 - 3. Research Process and Research Methods

II. Macro Level Social Problems: the Economy

- A. Historical Background: 6 types of economic systems – Lenski
 - 1. Hunting and Gathering
 - 2. Herding
 - 3. Horticulture
 - 4. Settled Agriculture
 - 5. Industrial
 - 6. Service/Technology
- B. Industrial Economy – Beth Rubin
 - 1. Shift from settled agricultural economy to industrial economy
 - 2. Post WWII Labor-Capital Accord Period
 - 3. Characteristics of Labor-Capital Accord
 - 4. The 4 accomplishments of the Accord Period
- C. Shift to Service/Technology Economy
 - 1. 4 factors in the decline of industry and the shift to service/technology
 - 2. Effects of the economic shift to service/technology
 - 3. 4 players in the contemporary US economy
- D. Film “Roger and Me”
- E. Student Exercise - Application of Theories to “Roger and Me”
 - 1. Durkheim’s Theory of Anomie
 - 2. Merton’s Five Responses to Anomie
 - 3. Marx Class Conflict Theory
 - 4. Becker’s Labeling Theory

- II. Macro Level Social Problems: Poverty
 - A. Cross-Cultural Comparisons and Historical Background in the US
 - 1. Comparison of the US and other countries today
 - 2. Basic issues in the history of poverty in the US
 - B. Identifying Poverty and the Poor in the US
 - 1. US poverty line for a family of 4
 - 2. Poverty found in all social groups
 - 3. Statistics
 - C. Causes of Poverty
 - 1. Economic shift issues
 - 2. Political policies and responses
 - 3. Culture of Poverty – Oscar Lewis
 - D. Effects of Poverty
 - 1. Homelessness
 - 2. Underclass
 - 3. Working Poor
 - E. Responses to Poverty
 - 1. Cultural values – ideology of individualism
 - 2. The Welfare System
 - 3. Criticisms of the current system
 - F. Theories
 - 1. Structural-functionalist perspective
 - 2. Social-conflict perspective
 - 3. Social-psychological perspective

- III. Macro Level Social Problems: Education
 - A. Historical Background and Cross-Cultural Comparisons
 - B. Comparison of Japan and US
 - C. Educational Problems in the US
 - 1. Crisis of quality and reasons for concern
 - 2. Factors contributing to the problem
 - 3. Crisis in quantity
 - D. Theories
 - 1. Structural-functionalist perspective
 - 2. Social-conflict perspective

- IV. Macro Level Social Problems: Urbanization
 - A. Historical Background and Cross-Cultural Comparison
 - 1. Problems in 3rd world cities
 - 2. Overall problems in US cities 1970's – present
 - B. Specific Problems in Contemporary Cities
 - 1. Lack of Work – William Julius Wilson
 - 2. Homelessness
 - 3. Street Gangs – facts, theories, and cross-cultural comparison

- V. Macro Level Social Problems: The Environment
 - A. Historical Background of Environmental Pollution
 - 1. Natural pollution
 - 2. Man-made pollution
 - B. Contemporary Environmental Problems in the US
 - 1. Air Pollution
 - 2. Water Pollution
 - 3. Deteriorating Land
 - 4. Chemicals and Radiation
 - C. Theories
 - 1. Structural-functionalist perspective
 - 2. Social-conflict perspective
- VI. Micro Level Social Problems: Divorce
 - A. Defining the Family
 - 1. “De Jure” – the legal family
 - 2. “De Facto” – The family of fact or reality
 - B. Historical Background in the US and Demographic Trends
 - 1. Life Expectancy Trends
 - 2. Fertility Trends
 - 3. Divorce Trends
 - C. Contemporary Facts about Divorce in the US (Handout)
 - D. Single Parenting Following Divorce
 - 1. Two types of reorientation following divorce
 - 2. Economic effects of divorce
 - E. Stepfamily
 - 1. Myths
 - 2. Practical problems
 - 3. Differences between 1st marriages and stepfamilies
 - F. Theories
 - 1. Structural-functionalist perspective – 6 Functions of the Family – Ogburn
 - 2. Social-conflict perspective theories
 - 3. Symbolic-interactionist perspective theories
- VII. Micro Level Social Problems: Spouse and Child Abuse
 - A. Historical Background of Family Violence in the US
 - 1. Early New England Colonies
 - 2. Late 1800’s
 - 3. 1900 – present
 - B. 4 Types of Abuse
 - 1. Physical Abuse
 - 2. Physical Neglect
 - 3. Sexual Abuse
 - 4. Emotional Abuse
 - C. Myths and Facts (Handout)
 - D. Early Warning Signs (Handout)

E. Theories

1. Structural-functionalist perspective – look at how abuse affects the 6 Functions of the Family – Ogburn
2. Social-conflict/Feminist perspectives
3. Symbolic-interactionist perspective theories

VIII. Micro Level Social Problems: The Old and the Young

A. Aging and the Family

1. Historic trends and cross-cultural comparisons
2. The sandwich generation – middle age

B. 2 New Family Functions for the Middle Aged

1. Providing support for adult children during divorce or other crises
2. Caring for their own frail, aged parents

C. Youth

1. Historical and cross-cultural comparisons
2. Contemporary facts

IX. Micro Level Social Problems: Gender Roles and Human Sexuality

A. Social Causes of Differing Gender Roles and Sexual Behavior – William Goode

1. Type of economy
2. Presence or absence of war on a regular basis
3. Religious or secular cultural traditions

B. Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Gender Roles and Sexuality – Margaret Meade

1. Arapesh
2. Tchambuli
3. Mudugnmore

C. Social Change in the U.S.

1. Early colonies – agricultural economy up to 1850
2. Industrial economy 1860-1950's
3. 1960 – Present – service/technology economy

D. The Social Problem of Teenage Pregnancy in the US and cross-cultural comparison – a case of failed socialization

1. Demographic trends in the U.S.
2. Cross-cultural comparison
3. Agents of socialization in the U.S.