San Diego State University

Sociology 150 Instructor: Tom Semm

Introduction to Social Problems Spring 2008

Class Meets: Office: NH232

M,W,F in WC220 11:00AM-11:50AM Phone:594-5906

Office Hours:

M, W 10AM to 11AM

Or by appointment

TEXTS:

Eitzen, D. Stanely and Zinn. Social Problems. 10th Ed. New York: Pearson: 2006.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The perspective from which this course is going to examine social problems is called conflict theory. The basic assumption of this theory is that social arrangements of inequality in American society, and globally, give power to a few who determine the shape of society’s institutions and policies to their advantage. These arrangements of inequality cause significant social problems for millions.

All of the social problems that will be examined in this course are having, or will have, an effect on your lives, your opportunities, and, literally, your life chances. Several of the problems that will be examined are the increasing disparity in wealth and income, the bias of the political system, downward mobility of the middle class, poverty, the war on terror, increasing cost of education, and the destruction of the environment.

COURSE GOALS:

The student should have learned how to analyze social problems from the

conflict perspective and have gained a better understanding of American society,

especially its institutions and social arrangements. The student should have also

gained an understanding of the ways in which social forces and political policies

affect individual lives.

EVALUATION PROCESS:

There will be three exams during the semester. The schedule, day and date, is on the Class Schedule (see opposite page). The exams will consist of approximately seventy (70) questions, true/false, multiple choice, and matching. The questions will be from lectures, in-class videos, and the reading assignments (65%/35%). Students may miss taking one exam at its scheduled time, but must make it up at my convenience. All make-up exams must be taken by Friday May 9. The total number of points for the course is 210.

I am a lecturer and not a disciplinarian. I will treat you as adults and with

respect and expect to be treated likewise. This means do not talk while I am lecturing or read the Daily Aztec during class, or engage in any other non-course related technological activity. I will give a single polite warning, and then I will deduct enough “negative” class participation points that you will flunk the class.

**Class Schedule**

**Date Topic Reading Assignment**

**I. Inequality and Power**

Week 1 Intro: Vital Needs Eitzen Ch 1

Week 2 Inequality Eitzen Chs 2 (pp 23-37), 8 View: *The Corporation*

Week 3 Wealth and Power Eitzen Chs 2 (pp 38-55), 9 View: *Bulworth*

Week 4 Mass Media and Democracy Internet assignment View: *Media Monopoly*

Week 5 Mass Media and War Internet assignment

**II. Inequality and American Institutions**

Week 6 Work and Poverty Eitzen Chs 7, 14 **EXAM #1 Mon Feb 25**

Week 7 Education Eitzen Ch 16

View: *Supersize Me*

Week 8 Health and Health Care Eitzen Ch 17 View: *Supersize Me*

Week 9 Marriage and Family Eitzen, Ch 15

View: *The View from Mainstreet*

**III. Deviance and Social Problems**

Week 10 Crime and the Criminal Justice System Eitzen Ch 12

View: *Death Penalty*

**EXAM #2 Wed Mar 26**

Week 11 Sex and Drugs Eitzen Ch 10,13

View: *Purity Ball*

**IV. Global Social Problems**

Week 12 Global Inequality Eitzen Ch 3

Week 13 Threats to the Environment Eitzen Ch 4

View: *Earth on Edge*

Week 14 War on Terror Eitzen Ch 18

Week 15 Solving Social Problems Eitzen Ch 19

**Exam #3 Wed May 7**

Sociology 150 Instructor: Tom Semm

Introduction to Social Problems Summer 2005

Class Meets: Office: NH219

M,T,W,Th in SH 346 2PM-3:45PM Phone:594-5906

Office Hours:

M 1PM-2PM

Or by appointment

TEXTS:

Eitzen, D. Stanely and Zinn. *Social* *Problems* (Ninth Edition).

Web Sites:

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting at fair.org

Center for Media and Democracy at prwatch.org and disinfopedia.org

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The perspective from which this course is going to examine social problems is called conflict theory. The basic assumption of this theory is that social arrangements of inequality in American society give power to a few who determine the shape of our institutions and their policies, domestic and foreign, to their advantage. These arrangements of inequality cause significant social problems for millions of Americans.

All of the social problems that will be examined in this course are having, or

will have, an affect on your lives, your opportunities, and, literally, your life chances. Several of the problems that will be examined are the increasing disparity in wealth and income, the bias of the political system, downward mobility of the middle class, poverty, the war on terror, and the destruction of the environment.

COURSE GOALS:

The student should have learned how to analyze social problems from the

conflict perspective, and have gained a better understanding of American society,

especially its institutions and social arrangements. The student should have also

gained an understanding of the ways in which social forces and political policies

affect individual lives.

EVALUATION PROCESS:

There will be three exams during the semester. The schedule, day and date, is on the opposite page. The exams will consist of between sixty and seventy questions, true/false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, and possibly short essay. The questions will be from lectures, in-class videos, and the reading assignments. There also will be seven quizzes; the questions will be mainly from the reading assignments. The schedule is on the opposite page. Students may miss one exam, but must take the make-up at my convenience. Quizzes cannot be made-up.

For computing the final grade, I will average the three exams with the average of the five highest quiz scores. (I will drop the lowest two quiz scores.)

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respect and expect to be treated likewise. This means do not talk while I am lecturing or read the Daily Aztec during class. I will give a single polite warning, and then I will deduct enough “negative” class participation points that you will flunk the class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK TOPIC Exam/Quiz ASSIGNMENT/Due

Th May 26

Mo May 30 Memorial Day: No Class

Tu May 31 Introduction to Social Problems Chapter 1

We Jun 1 Inequality in American Society Chapter 2

Th Jun 2 American Democracy and Inequality Quiz 1

Mo Jun 6 Mass Media in American Society fair.org

Tu Jun 7 News as Entertainment/Propaganda prwatch.org

We Jun 8 Media, War, and the Environment

Th Jun 9 Media, Advertsing, and Consumerism **Exam 1**

Mo Jun 13 Education Chapter 15

Tu Jun 14 Education Quiz 2

We Jun 15 Health Chapter 17

Th Jun 16 Health Care Quiz 3

Mo Jun 20 Work Chapter 14

Tu Jun 21 Downward Mobility Quiz 4

We Jun 22 Marriage and Family Chapter 15

Th Jun Marriage and Family Quiz 5

Mo Jun27 Global Social Problems **Exam 2**

Tu Jun 28 Global Social Problems Chapter 3

We Jun 29 Environment Quiz 6 Chapter 4

Th Jun 30 War and Social Problems

Mo Jul 4 Forth of July: No Class

Tu Jul 5 Criminal Justice Chapter 12

We Jul 6 Drugs Quiz 7 Chapter 13

Th Jul 7 Sex **Exam 3**