Sociology 102

Introduction to Social Problems

Instructor: Tom Semm Spring 2011

Office: NH204 E-mail: psemm@mail.sdsu.edu

Class Meets:

Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45 NH100

Office Hours: Thursday 3:15-4PM, Tues11:30 to 12:00

TEXTS:

*Social Problems: The Intersection Collection. Pearson Custom Publishing.*

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 the institutions and their policies and they do so 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 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, the downward mobility of the middle class, poverty, and the increasing cost of education. Global social problems will also be examined; among these will be the problems of increasing global inequality, the destruction of the environment, and the war on terror.

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 next page). Each exam will consist of approximately sixty-five (65) questions, true/false, multiple choice, and matching. The questions will be from lectures, in-class videos, and the reading assignments. Students must have an authorized excuse for missing an exam. An excused exam must be made up at my convenience. All exams must be made up by the last regularly scheduled class Friday Dec 10. There will be opportunities for extra credit both in class and outside of class. The total number of points for the course will be approximately two hundred (200). The course is officially over on Friday Dec 10 and there will be no make-up exams, or extra credit after that date.

I am a lecturer and not a disciplinarian. I will treat you as adults and with respect and expect to be treated likewise. I consider disrespectful behavior activities such as, but not limited to, talking while I am lecturing or reading the Daily Aztec during class, or engaging in any other non-course related technological activity. Cell phones must be turned off and put away, meaning not on your desk and not in your hands or lap. Students are allowed to use computers, but only for taking notes. I will deduct ten points from your grade the first time violation. If there is a second violation I will deduct a further twenty points and report you to Judicial Affairs. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of computers even for note-taking.

**Class Schedule**

**Date Topic Assignment (Chapter “Title”)**

Week 1 Introduction “The Sociological Approach”

Jan 20

Week 2 Vital Needs “Work” and “Poverty”

Jan 25 -27

Week 3 Inequality “Racial and Ethnic Inequality”

Feb 1-3 “Gender Inequality”

Week 4 Wealth and Power “Wealth and Power . . .”

Feb 8-10

Week 5

Feb 15-17 **EXAM #1 Thursday Feb 17**

Week 6 Mass Media “Global Media . . .”

Feb 22-24

Week 7 Mass Media fair.org

March 1-3

Week 8 Education “Education”

March 8-10

Week 9 Health and Health Care “Health and Health Care Delivery”

March 15-17

Week 10 **EXAM #2 Thursday March 24**

March 22-24

Week 11 **SPRING BREAK**

March 28-April 1

Week 12 Marriage and Family “Families”

April 5-7

Week 13 Crime “Crime and Justice”

April 12-14

Week 14 Sex and Drugs “Drugs”

April 19-21

Week 15 Global Inequality “World Population and . . .”

April 26-28

Week 16 War and Social Problems “National Security . . .”

May 3-5 **EXAM #3 Thursday May 5**

Week 17 Student Conferences

May 9