Sociology 102

Introduction to Social Problems

Instructor: Tom Semm Office: NH 211

psemm@mail.sdsu.edu

Class Meets:

MWF: 12:00PM-12:50PM

Office Hours:

MW 10:30-11:30AM

TEXTS:

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Maxine Baca Zinn. Social Problems.

Documentaries.

Friday Assignments

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 the millions who are not the privileged few.

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 in the United States and globally, the undermining of the American political system by undemocratic forces, the downward mobility of the middle class, increasing poverty, the war on terror, the increasing cost of education, and consumer society’s destructive impact on the environment.

COURSE GOALS:

Students 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. Students 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 day and date are on the Class Schedule (see second page). The exams will consist of approximately sixty (60) questions, true/false, multiple choice, and matching. The questions will be from lectures, in-class videos, Friday assignments, and the reading assignments. Exams must be taken at the time that they are scheduled (see Class Schedule). The only acceptable excuses for not taking an exam at the scheduled time are medical or family emergencies. Each requires written documentation. There will be three opportunities for extra credit.

STUDENT CONDUCT

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 carry on conversations while I am lecturing, or engage in any other non-course related technological activity. This includes talking on or checking your cell phone, texting, and/or social networking of any kind. Leaving class early is disrespectful and disruptive. If you need to leave class early, I need to be informed before class, and you need to sit in the back of the room. A first violation of the any of the above will result in a fifteen point grade deduction. A second violation will result in the student being failed for the semester and his/her name submitted to Judicial Affairs. The class begins when I begin speaking and it ends at 12:50.

Class Schedule`

Date Topic Reading Assignment by Chapter Title

Week 1 Introduction

I. American Society and Social Problems

Week 2 Vital Needs “The Sociological Approach . . .”

(No class Monday Sept 1 Labor Day)

Week 3 Inequality “Poverty” and

“Racial and Ethnic Inequality”

Week 4 Economy and Work “Economy and Work” and

“Gender Inequality”

Week 5 Political System “Wealth and Power”

Week 6 **Exam #1 Wed Oct 1**

Week 7 Mass Media “Global Media”

Week 8 Education “Education”

Week 9 Health and Health Care “The Health Care System”

Week 10 Crime and the Criminal Justice System “Crime and Justice”

Week 11  **Exam #2 Wed Nov 5**

II. Global Social Problems

Week 12 Global Inequality/Environment “World Population and

and Global Inequality”

Week 13 War and Social Problems “National Security . . .”

Week 14 War and Social Problems

(Thanksgiving Vacation Nov 27 and 28: No lecture Wed Nov 26)

Week 15 Solving Social Problems “Progressive Plan to Solve

Social Problems”

Week 16 **Exam #3 Wed Dec 10**

To: All SDSU Faculty

From: Pamela J. Starr, Student Disability Services Director

Subject: Syllabus Statement for Students with Disabilities

With the fall 2014 semester approaching, I would like to remind you to include the below statement in your syllabus. The University Senate now requires that all faculty include this statement as written. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

SYLLABUS STATEMENT

for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.