Sociology 102

Introduction to Social Problems

Instructor: Tom Semm Office: NH 211

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Class Meets:

Tuesday and Thursday: 12:30PM-1:45PM

Office Hour:

Tuesday 11:30-12:30

TEXTS:

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

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 schedule, day and date, is on the Class Schedule (see second 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%). The total number of points for the course is approximately two hundred and ten (210). 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 some 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, during, 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 when I say it does.

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 . . .”

Week 3 Inequality “Poverty”

Week 4 Economy and Work “Economy and Work”

Week 5 American Political System: Plutocracy “Wealth and Power”

Week 6 **Exam #1 Tuesday February 25**

Week 7 Mass Media “Global Media”

Week 8 Education “Education”

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

Week 10 **Exam #2 Tuesday March 25**

Week 11  **SPRING BREAK**

Week 12 Crime and the Criminal Justice System “Crime and Justice”

II. Global Social Problems

Week 13 Global Inequality/Environment “World Population and

and Global Inequality”

Week 14 War on Terror “National Security . . .”

Week 15 Solving Social Problems “Progressive Plan to Solve

Social Problems”

Week 16 **Exam #3 Tuesday May 6**