San Diego State University

Sociology 102 Instructor: Tom Semm

Introduction to Social Problems Fall 2009

Class Meets: Office: NH204

M,W,F in LT161 12:00PM-12:50PM

Office Hours:

M 11AM-12:00PM

Or by appointment

TEXTS:

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

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, the war on terror, 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 human rights.

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). 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 (75%/25%). Students must have an authorized excuse for missing an exam. One exam may be missed with an excuse, but it must be made up at my convenience. All exams must be made up by the last regularly scheduled class (12/11). 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 12/11 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. I will give a single polite warning, and then I will deduct enough “negative” class participation points that you will flunk the class. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of any e-technology, including computers even for note-taking.

**Class Schedule**

**Date Topic Assignment (Author/Ch “Title”)**

**I. Inequality and Power**

Week 1 (Aug 31-Sep 4) Intro: Vital Needs Eitzen (“The Sociological Approach”)

Week 2 (Sep 7-Sep 11) Education Eitzen (“Education”)

(Labor Day Mon 9/7) View: *Parkumentary*

Week 3 ( Sep 14-18) Wealth and Power Eitzen (“Wealth and Power”)

(Furlough Day Wed 9/16) View: *Bulworth*

Week 4 (Sep 21-25) Inequality Eitzen (“Racial and Ethnic Inequality”) View: *The Corporation* Eitzen (“Gender Inequality”)

Week 5 (Sep 28-Oct 2) Mass Media Eitzen (“Global Media . . .”)

(Furlough Day Fri Oct 2) View: *Media Monopoly*

**II. Inequality and American Institutions**

Week 6(Oct 5-Oct 9) Mass Media fair.org

**EXAM #1 MON OCT 5**

Week 7(Oct 12-16) Work and Poverty Eitzen (“Work” and “Poverty”)

(Furlough Day Mon 10/12) View: *Foreign Service*

Week 8 (Oct 19-23) Health and Health Care Eitzen (“Health and Health Care Delivery”) View: *Supersize Me*

Week 9(Oct 26-30) Marriage and Family Eitzen, (“Families”)

(Furlough Day Fri 10/30) View: *Supersize Me*

**III. Deviance and Social Problems**

Week 10 (Nov 2-Nov 6) Crime Eitzen (“Crime and Justice”)

( Furlough Day Fri 11/6) View: *Death Penalty*

Week 11(Nov 9-Nov 13) Sex and Drugs Eitzen (“Drugs”)

(NC Veterans Day Nov 11) View: Purity Ball

**EXAM #2 MON NOV 9**

**IV. Global Social Problems**

Week 12 (Nov 16-20) Global Inequality Eitzen (“World Population and . . .”)

Week 13 (Nov 23-27) Environment Eitzen (“Threats to the Environment”)

(Furlough Days Nov 23/25, View: *Earth on Edge*

NC Thanksgiving 11/26-27)

Week 14 (Nov 30-Dec 4) War and Social Problems Eitzen (“National Security . . .”)

Week 15(Dec 7-11) Solving Social Problems

**EXAM #3 WED DEC 9**