

Mizan-Tepi University
College of Social Science and Humanities
Department of Sociology
Course Outline

Background Information

Instructor's Name: **Demelash Belay**

Consultation Hours: **Monday (8:20-10:20 Local Time)**

Wednesday (8:20-10:20 Local Time)

Friday (8:20-10:20 Local Time)

Module Name: **Social Problems and Methods of Intervention**

Module Code: **SocM3141**

Course Name: **Social Problems and Methods of Intervention**

Course Code: **SOCI3141**

Module ECTS: **5 ECTS**

1. Course Description

The world is beset by problems which in numerous ways and to varying degrees undermine the well-being of our societies. These social problems constitute a wide range of topics that feature prominently and unceasingly in the news and in political debates. These include poverty; unemployment; homelessness; discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, crime, violence, human rights violations, environmental degradation and climate change, and much more. What is it about such issues that makes them problematic? And to whom—why are certain issues especially problematic for some but not others? How do we identify the causes of these problems and think about them in ways that can lead to helpful solutions? This course addresses such questions from a sociological perspective. It aims to apply sociological insights and techniques not only to examine the causes and consequences of some of the most troubling social problems—both locally as well as around the world—but also to take a critical look at perceptions of these problems.

2. Course Objectives

The primary goal of this course is to enable students to approach and analyze social problems from a sociological perspective. To that end, this course is designed to help students learn a number of perspectives, skills, and methods that have been developed in the social-scientific study of social problems. By the end of this course, therefore, students should be able to:

- ✓ demonstrate a working knowledge of prominent sociological approaches ;
- ✓ explain and critically evaluate studies on a number of pressing social problems;
- ✓ collaborate more effectively in peer groups to conduct research and communicate ideas;
- ✓ engage more productively in contentious discussions while respecting differences in perspectives and opinions;
- ✓ cultivate a habit of reflecting upon and articulating your own engagement with the social world and grappling with causes and potential solutions to social problems; and
- ✓ develop and carry out a collaborative project based on empirical research in the local community.

3. Course Content

Chapter One: Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Defining Social Problems<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Objective Definition○ Subjective Definition▪ Characteristics of Social Problems▪ Types of Social Problems▪ Defining Core Concepts
Chapter Two: Sociological Study of Social Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Sociological Imagination▪ Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Functionalist Theory○ Conflict Theory○ Symbolic Interactionist Theory○ Applying the Three Sociological Perspectives

Chapter Three: Major Social Problems – An Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problems of Inequalities – Poverty and Gender Inequality ▪ Crime and Social Control ▪ Alcohol and Drug Abuse ▪ Work and Unemployment ▪ Environment
Chapter Four: Troubled Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family ▪ Education
Chapter Five: A Survey of Social Problems in Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vulnerability to Famine and the Problem of Food Insecurity ▪ Prostitution ▪ Unemployment ▪ The Youth and Drug Addiction ▪ Rural to Urban Migration, the Refugee Problem and Health ▪ Population Explosions and Ecological Degradation ▪ Urbanization, Urban Poverty, Housing Problem, Homelessness and Begging
Chapter Six: Common Methods of Social Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common Methods of Social Intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Systems Approach ○ The Participatory Approach ○ The Behavioral Approach ○ The Feminist Approach ○ Crisis Intervention ○ Task-Centered Work ○ Community Work ○ Group Work ○ Case Work ▪ General Aspects of Social Intervention

- Areas of Social Intervention
- Steps for a Successful Implementation of an Evidence-Based Intervention
- Evaluating Social Intervention Programs

4. Mode of Assessment

Research Project and Presentation: Students will prepare a proposal on an issue which to them constitutes a social problem. The purpose of this assignment is to give students some experience in analytically studying a social problem, making reasoned arguments to support the acknowledgment of the issue as a social problem by policy makers, and how to present this information to a larger audience. Then students will conduct a small research based on the proposal they have developed and write a report on alternative ways of dealing with the social problem at hand. The assignment will account for 25% (Written Report 15% and Presentation 10%) of the total mark.

Tests: will account for 35% of the total mark.

Final Written Examination: will account for 40% of the total mark.

5. Reading Materials

Amanda Konradi & Martha Schmidt, 1998, *Reading Between the Lines: Toward an Understanding of Current Social Problems*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Brooks, J. Michael, and Kendal L. Broad. 1997. *Instructor's Resource Manual on Social Problems*. Second Edition. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Craig S. Leedham. 1998. *Solutions to Social Problems: Lessons from Other Societies*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Eitzen, D. Stanley and Maxine Baca Zinn. 2000. *Social Problems*. Eighth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Heiner, Robert. Editor. 1999. *Social Problems and Social Solutions: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Kendall, Diana. 1998. *Social Problems in a Diverse Society*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Kornblum, William, and Joseph Julian. 1998. *Social Problems*. Ninth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Levin, Jack, Kim Mac Innis, Walter F. Carroll, and Richard Bourne. 2000. *Social Problems: Causes, Consequences, Interventions*. Second Edition. Los Angeles: Roxbury.

Moulder, Frances V. Editor. 2000. *Social Problems of the Modern World: A Reader*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Scarpitti, Frank R., and F. Kurt Cylke, Jr. Editors. 1995. *Social Problems: The Search for Solutions*. Los Angeles: Roxbury.