

Saint Leo University

**SOC/SSC 222
Social Problems**

Course Description:

An introduction to such contemporary social problems as poverty, unemployment, energy, pollution, sexual deviance, delinquency, drugs, and alcohol. Emphasis will be placed on underlying causes and on pointing the way to solutions.

Prerequisite: ENG 122

Textbooks:

Kendall, Diane. 2016. *Social Problems in a Diverse Society, (Custom)* 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN: 978-1-323-57036-4

Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss how individual and group problems may be caused by institutional and social pathology, as well as individual pathology.
2. Recognize that social policy is a response to what members of society define as a social problem.
3. Discuss how society-wide values lead us to define certain social conditions as social problems and shape the social welfare response to that set of social problems.
4. Integrate an appreciation for and knowledge of how social institutions, formal organizations, and other social systems interact with individuals, groups, and communities, as well as with one another.
5. Describe how legislative, judicial, and administrative systems impinge upon the development and maintenance of social welfare programs.
6. Demonstrate an appreciation for the importance of diversity within society to think about and address social policy issues.
7. Demonstrate the ability to separate facts from beliefs when discussing social problem issues.
8. Discuss how values and beliefs affect how social problems are defined and "solutions" proposed to decrease the impact of the social problem or eradicate the social problem.
9. Discuss how the Saint Leo University core value of community affects how social problems are defined and addressed.

Core Value:

Community: Saint Leo University develops hospitable Christian learning communities everywhere we serve. We foster a spirit of belonging, unity, and interdependence based on mutual trust and respect to create socially responsible environments that challenge all of us to listen, to learn, to change, and to serve.

Evaluation:

Assignments (6)	10%
Discussion (8)	10%
Midterm & Final Exam	40%
Quiz (8)	5%
Service Learning Project	15%
Term Paper	20%
Total	100%

Service Learning Project:

Students will conduct 3 to 5 hours of community service in an organization of their choosing that addresses a social problem of their choosing. No later than Module 2, they should email their instructor their choice of organization for approval. After completing their community service, they will post a 10 slide PowerPoint presentation to the class and write a 3-page paper. The completed presentation and paper are due at the end of Module 7.

The paper and presentation should contain the following:

- Clear identification of the social problem
- Description of the organization
- Summary of the service learning experience
- Assessment of the organization's impact on the social problem
- List of outside sources

Term Paper:

Students will complete an 8-page paper (including title and reference pages) providing a critical look at the coverage of a social problem in the news media. This paper should include a combination of academic and other sources that analyze the coverage of the issue, and examples of such coverage that the student will collect in the course of the semester. Examples may come from newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio—preferably a combination of sources. Newspapers and magazines can be accessed online through the Cannon Memorial Library (see information about the library in this syllabus). This will be due at the end of Module 6.

Grading Scale:

Grade	Score (%)
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

Class Content/Topics/Schedule

Module 1: Characteristics of Social Problems

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Define and use in written discussions or assignments the basic vocabulary of theories and methods of research in the social problems field.
- Compare and contrast at least two different theoretical explanations for a single social problem.
- Apply their new concepts and terms to an evaluation of a social problem definition.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Post	Introduction to the Discussion Board	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Read	Chapters 1 and 2 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit	Assignment	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 2: Ascribed Statuses as Social Problems: Race, Gender, and Age

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify racial, gender, and age stereotypes in media content and advertising.
- Articulate how the three theoretical perspectives would explain these societal or institutional types of inequality.
- Craft a reasoned argument for their solution of choice to inequality based on ascribed statuses.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read	Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Email	Instructor with topic choice for Service Learning Project	
Submit	Assignment	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 3: Lifestyle Social Problems: Sexual Orientation, the Sex Industry, and Drug Abuse

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Distinguish genetic/medical (ascribed) arguments from lifestyle choice (achieved) arguments.

- Link those different argument types to political, policy, or program interests.
- Articulate a position and defend it regarding their own stance about one of the reading topics for the module.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read	Chapters 6, 7, and 8 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit	Assignment	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 4: Individual Problems or Societal Failures? Crime and Health

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Distinguish institutional explanations for crime and health from individual level frameworks.
- Analyze effects of social diversity or inequality on constructions of crime or health.
- Evaluate public policy solutions aimed at increasing health and decreasing crime.
- Discuss the concept of “deservingness” in the context of these topics.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read	Chapters 9 and 10 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Midterm Examination	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 5: Social Institutions and Social Problems

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify the level(s) of analysis appropriate to defining or addressing a social problem.
- Articulate the role of communities in mediating between the individual and society.
- Identify and evaluate the effects of different social identities on the definitions and proposed solutions to social problems.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read	Chapters 11 and 12 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit	Assignment	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 6: The Distribution of Social Power and the Definition of Social Problems

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe how social power is distributed.

- Provide examples of the effects of moral entrepreneurs.
- Distinguish fact from belief or feelings in accounts of social problems.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read	Chapters 13 and 14 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit	Topical Research Paper	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 7: Population, Environment, and Urbanization: The Balance of People and Places

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Articulate a vision of how service can support community.
- Identify the values underlying arguments about population location and density.
- Propose workable solutions for different sets of environmental values in society.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read	Chapters 15 and 16 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit	Assignment	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit	Service Learning Project	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 8: Sources, Substance, and Solutions for Social Problems

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify communities of interest in examples of social unrest or conflict.
- Apply the concepts of in-group and out-group to the explanation of a social problem.
- Explain when social problems can actually reinforce a sense of community.

Action	Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read	Chapters 17 and 18 of <i>Social Problems in a Diverse Society</i>	
View	Audio Visual Presentation	
Post	Initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post	Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit	Assignment	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete	Final Examination	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT