

# **Social Problems 1: A World in Crisis Course Syllabus**

## **What you will learn in this course**

### **Social Problems 1 : A World in Crisis**

Students will learn more about the challenges facing societies and the relationships between societies, governments, and individuals in these areas. Each unit will focus on a particular area of social concern, often with a global view, and examine possible solutions at both a structural and individual level.

#### **Unit 1: Analyzing Social Problems**

In this unit, you will be introduced to the topic of social problems. We will discuss what social problems are, some of the major elements of social problems, and the stages that social problems often go through. We will also examine different types of social problems and some of the issues that researchers and society have in studying and understanding social problems. Finally, we'll investigate several different approaches to social problems and how these approaches guide the possible solutions that are considered for a social problem.

##### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Understand social problems and what elements are commonly found in social problems.
- Review the different stages of a social problem.
- Discuss some of the issues in studying social problems.
- Examine the two types of social problems.
- Discuss two approaches to social problems.

#### **Unit 2: Mass Media**

In this unit, we will examine the mass media and its effect on social problems. The media both influences existing social problems and is seen as a social problem itself for the negative effects that it appears to have on some areas of social life. We will examine several ways that the media influences social problems and our awareness of them. We will also learn about how the media was used during the Rwandan genocide. Finally, we will discuss some of the areas that critics say the mass media has negative effects on, including increasing violence, giving stereotypical representations of minorities, and destroying cultures across the world.

##### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Understand what makes up the mass media.
- Discuss how the media affect what is seen as a social problem.
- Learn how gatekeeping, agenda setting, and framing affect the perceptions of social problems.
- Examine how the media was used in the Rwandan genocide.

- Investigate claims that the media are connected to social problems like violence and racism.

### **Unit 3: Poverty**

In this unit, we will discuss the social problem of poverty, both in North America and in other parts of the world. In doing so, we will examine different definitions of poverty and how these affect the solutions that are suggested for poverty. We will investigate the possible causes of poverty and the costs of poverty to both individuals and society. Finally, we will discuss possible answers to the problem of poverty.

#### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Understand the different ways of defining poverty and deprivation.
- Understand the extent of poverty in North America and around the world.
- Examine the possible causes of poverty.
- Investigate the costs of poverty for individuals and society.
- Discuss potential ways to decrease poverty.

### **Unit 4: Education**

In this unit, we will discuss some of the social problems in the educational system. We will discuss some of the issues that educators have identified, including cheating, school dropouts, illiteracy, and school financing. We will also examine the practices and effects of tracking, grade inflation, and social promotion. In addition, we will consider segregation, hidden curriculums, and school violence. Finally, we will discuss some of the suggestions that social scientists and others have made for addressing the education problems.

#### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Understand some of the social problems affecting the educational system.
- Discuss the benefits of desegregation and the issues in implementing desegregation.
- Understand what tracking is and the effects that this practice can have.
- Examine school violence and some of the solutions that have been suggested.
- Investigate some of the solutions that have been suggested for educational problems.

### **Social Problems 1 Midterm Exam**

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from the first four units in this course (Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

### **Unit 5: Health Care**

In this unit, we will examine some of the social problems connected with health care. We will discuss the connections between health and global economic development and examine the

AIDS epidemic across the world. We will also investigate several bioethics controversies, including abortion and euthanasia. Finally, we will discuss some of the social problems present in the health care system in the United States.

### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Understand the global AIDS epidemic and the patterns of transmission.
- Discuss the abortion and euthanasia controversies.
- Investigate how health is related to economics.
- Examine some of the problems in the United States health care system.
- Discuss how health care might become more equal throughout society.

## **Unit 6: Crime**

In this unit, we will discuss the social problem of crime in society. We will examine the history of crime and how crime is measured. We will also discuss different types of crime, including traditional street crimes and organized crime. Finally, we will investigate some different explanations for crime and suggestions from scholars on how to decrease crime around the world.

### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Review the different types of crime in society.
- Discuss the history of crime and how urbanization affects crime rates.
- Investigate theories on why individuals commit crimes.
- Understand how social issues like poverty influence crime rates.
- Think about how to decrease crime rates in society.

## **Unit 7: Population & the Environmental Crisis**

In this unit, we will discuss the related social problems of population growth and environmental issues. We will examine how fast the world's population is growing and the effects that overpopulation has on society. We will also look at some different approaches that countries have used to reduce their population growth. In addition, we will look at how society contributes to the environmental crisis and what we can do to reduce our environmental impact.

### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Examine the effects that overpopulation has on individuals and society.
- Investigate how many people the earth can support and feed.
- Discuss different ways to reduce population growth globally.
- Learn how cultural values and practices influence environmental problems.
- Discuss the social consequences of environmental issues.

## **Unit 8: War and Terrorism**

In this unit, we will discuss the social problems of war and terrorism. In doing so, we will consider various explanations for what causes war. We will also examine some of the costs of war and some suggestions on what might reduce war. We will also discuss terrorism, including some different types of terrorism. In addition, we will look at some of the weapons used by terrorists and how terrorism might be reduced globally.

### **What will you learn in this unit?**

- Examine various theories on what causes war.
- Understand the costs of war for individuals, societies, and countries.
- Discuss how the arms race began and what form it currently takes.
- Investigate some of the different types of terrorism.
- Look at the weapons that terrorists might use and what effects they might have on individuals and society.

### **Social Problems 1 Final Exam**

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from units five to eight in this course – the last four units. (Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

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