

Virginia Western Community College

SOC 268

Social Problems

Prerequisites

None

Course Description

Introduces the fundamental concepts underlying social problems construction with attention to how these problems are defined, understood and arbitrated. Examines a variety of topics such as researching social problems and policymaking. Lecture 3 hours. Total 3 hours per week. 3 credits.

SOC 268 is a course for students whose college and career paths require an awareness of the construction of social problems and how different groups are impacted by these problems. Emphasis will be placed on how social problems are constructed, defined, understood, and arbitrated. To achieve this, the following questions will be asked and deliberated: What is a social problem? Who defines social problems? Why do some social problems receive so much attention, while others are ignored? What impact does time and place have on defining and addressing social problems? In general, students will develop a broader understanding of the discourse of social problems through the following learning outcomes: Defining Social Problems, Understanding Social Problems, and Solutions to Social Problems.

Semester Credits: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Required Materials

1. Textbook
2. Internet access
3. Canvas

Textbook:

Mooney, Linda A., David Knox, and Caroline Schacht. *Understanding Social Problems*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 7th ed., 2011. ISBN: 9780495812968

Other Required Materials:

None

Course Outcomes

At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

Critical Thinking

- Evaluate evidence carefully and apply reasoning to make sense of complex issues as they relate to the understanding of social problems.
- Use theoretical models to help explain the construction of social problems.

Communication

- Demonstrate the ability to develop, convey, and exchange ideas in writing, as appropriate to a given context and audience.

Defining Social Problems/What are Social Problems

- Discuss the process behind identifying how an issue becomes identified as a social problem.

Understanding Social Problems

- Explain how social problems are understood in public discourse.
- Describe how social problems are experienced and understood differently by different groups in a society.

Dealing with Social Problems

- Discuss how the public and major social institutions address social problems

Major Topics to be Included

1	Critical Thinking
2	Communication
3	Defining Social Problems/What are Social Problems
4	Understanding Social Problems
5	Dealing with Social Problems

Notes to Instructors

None