Unit 3: Issues in Institutions

Course Objectives

CO2: Assess patterns and causes of social problems in social institutions in light of research findings.

CO3: Identify how social issues are impacted by local and global conditions.

CO4: Analyze the intersections of race, class, gender and other social dynamics to social problems.

CO5: Identify social policies and social changes/actions arising from social problems.

Module Objectives

MO8: Identify the social problems in relation to social institutions such as family, education, workplace, media and healthcare and the local/global factors influencing them

MO9: Evaluate primary and secondary research data in relation to social problems

MO10: Evaluate the cultural basis through which a social condition becomes a social problem

MO11: Discuss social policies and actions within social institutions

A. Student Readings:

**Families**

Barkan, Steven. "[Social Problems: Change and Continuity](http://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/Social%20Problems,%20Continuity%20and%20Change%20-%20Attributed.pdf)". Flat World Knowledge. Saylor.org. 2012. Web. 30 January 2012. Chapter 10

Bianchi, Suzanne M. and Casper, Lynn M. [“Population Bulletin: American Families.”](http://www.prb.org/Publications/PopulationBulletins/2000/AmericanFamiliesPDF458KB.aspx) Population Reference Bureau: Washington D.C. December 2000. Web.

[US Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Children and Families. Child Maltreatment 2010.](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm10/index.htm) Washington DC: United States Government. Web. 18 May 2012.

**Education**

Barkan, Steven. "[Social Problems: Change and Continuity](http://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/Social%20Problems,%20Continuity%20and%20Change%20-%20Attributed.pdf)". Flat World Knowledge. Saylor.org. 2012. Web. 30 January 2012. Chapter 11

McNamee, Stephen J. & Miller, Robert K. [“The Meritocracy Myth.”](http://www.ncsociology.org/sociationtoday/v21/merit.htm) Sociation Today 2.1 (2004): n.pag. Web. 18 May 2012.

**Workplace**

Barkan, Steven. "[Social Problems: Change and Continuity](http://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/Social%20Problems,%20Continuity%20and%20Change%20-%20Attributed.pdf)". Flat World Knowledge. Saylor.org. 2012. Web. 30 January 2012. Chapter 12

Keel, Robert. [“The McDonaldization of Society.”](http://www.umsl.edu/~keelr/010/mcdonsoc.html) University of Missouri. University of Missouri faculty web space. 7, Jul. 2010. Web. 18 May 2012.

American Association of University Women (AAUW). [“The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap.”](http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/simpleTruth.cfm) 2012 edition. Washington D.C.: AAUW. Web. 18 May 2012.

**Media**

Parenti, Michael. ["Monopoly Media Manipulation"](http://www.michaelparenti.org/MonopolyMedia.html). Michael Parenti Political Archive. michaelparenti.org. May 2001. Web 21 May 2012.

[Beckerman, Gail. "Tripping Up Big Media"](http://www.alternet.org/story/17178/tripping_up_big_media/). Alternet.org. Alternet.org. 13 Nov 2003. Web. 21 May 2012.

Hetsroni, Amir. ["Violent Crime on American Television: A Critical Interpretation of Empirical Studies](http://www.scirp.org/journal/PaperInformation.aspx?paperID=18431)”. Sociology Mind, 2, (2012). 141-147.

**Healthcare**

Barkan, Steven. "[Social Problems: Change and Continuity](http://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/Social%20Problems,%20Continuity%20and%20Change%20-%20Attributed.pdf)". Flat World Knowledge. Saylor.org. 2012. Web. 30 January 2012. Chapter 13

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). [“Disparities Report Highlights Healthcare Challenges for Racial and Ethnic Minorities.”](http://www.ahrq.gov/news/press/pr2012/qrdr11pr.htm) Press Release, AHRQ Webpage. 20 April, 2012. Web. 21 May 2012.

Bezruchka, Stephen. [“Health Equity in the USA.”](http://depts.washington.edu/eqhlth/pages/BezruchkaUSHealthInequality10Cor.pdf) Social Alternatives. 29.2, 50-56: 2010.

B. Resources for Lectures:

[Gapminder](http://www.gapminder.org/)

[The Clearing House on International Developments on Child, Youth and Family Policies](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.childpolicyintl.org%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFW5KETr0mFC5mJD94b5_omfPSNbA)

[US Census Bureau](http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/)

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bls.gov%2Fcps%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNG460-O0eLnCwFokuCCVpfGRsB6Kw)

C. Films:

[TEDGlobal: “Changing Education Paradigms”](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms.html) (Education)

Sir Ken Robinson uses RSA Animate technology to challenge the model of

our current education system and suggest a shift in paradigms.

[Youtube: “The Corporation”](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFA50FBC214A6CE87) (Workplace)

This film examines the rise of the corporation as a legal person and the

complexities that accompany this status.

[TEDGlobal: “The Power of the Informal Economy”](http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_neuwirth_the_power_of_the_informal_economy.html) (Workplace)

Robert Neuwirth speaks about his research on the powerful and vast

informal economy.

[PBS, "Unnatural Causes"](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.pbs.org%2Funnaturalcauses%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFo9AlDPrP9_Uim_gvOxQenAW9HMg)(Health)

This film uncovers to social and cultural structures that impact our health.

[PBS, "Doctor Hotspot"](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.pbs.org%2Fwgbh%2Fpages%2Ffrontline%2Fdoctor-hotspot%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNGdVfSKRySL-nZFf52yT92Thi1EtQ)(Health)

This film tells the story of a local physician who seeks out high cost health care patients and “hot spots” in an effort to provide health care to those in need and cut down costs at the same time.

D. Activities:

1. Participation: Small Group Discussion

Throughout the quarter, we frequently use small group discussion to elicit more in-depth examination of the course material. Small groups allow for a participatory learning environment. In our small groups, we find that explicitly stating the directive and the allotted time are key success factors. For this purpose, it may help to include a worksheet with guiding questions and/or instructions.

We recommend instructors choose these groups in order to ensure heterogeneity (i.e. a good mix of gender, ethnicity, skill level, and age). In our classes of 30-35 students, we generally assign groups of 4-5. We assess this small group work as part of the in-class participation points. Group activities range from 5 points – 20 points depending on the time and instruction.

2. Connected Knower

This assignment (done 3 times throughout the quarter) contains 3 sections. In section one, students will identify main arguments and claims from select lectures, readings, statistical data, films and guest speakers. In section two they will connect some of the claims through an overarching theme, explaining the significance of the theme in society. In the last section they will reflect upon how the theme has significance to their own lives and lived experience.

3. Media Analysis Assignment

From their concept mapping assignment, students will choose a particular social problem that interests them and then research related news articles from three different countries (one being the U.S.). After analyzing the content (words, images) in the different media, students will write a 4-5 page paper highlighting the sociological theory(ies) through which the problem and action/solution are framed and identify local and global social conditions to investigate further.