

Course: SOC 004: Social Problems

1. Date of Application: 12/2/2011
2. Name, Dept of Proposer: Cynthia Ganote, Sociology
3. Name of Dept/Program housing course: Sociology
4. Name of Chair/PD: Phylis Martinelli
5. How often is the course taught:semesterly
6. Course Prerequisites:None
7. Unit value of course:1
- 8: Normal Class Size: 28-30
9. Number of sections expected Fall 2012:2
10. Number of sections expected Spring 2013:2
11. Is the course appropriate for first-year students: Yes
12. Relevant Learning Goal(s):Common Good
13. Chair will oversee submission of student work: Yes
14. Chair will oversee instructor participation in norming/asst: Yes

15. Teaching: "For the Common Good learning goal, we have chosen to address the following two learning outcomes:

Students will???

1. Reflect and write substantively on ways in which human beings find fulfillment in community; and

3. Demonstrate a capacity for coherent, principled analysis of concrete social problems.

Teaching:

L0#1, Section 1 (Ely syllabus): In a seminar-style shared inquiry, students read the book *Plentitude* by Juliet Schor. Written after the 2008 economic collapse, Schor lays out four principles by which we can restructure our socio-economic system that will lead to less inequality and greater care of the environment. These are a reallocation of time (working fewer hours), self-provisioning (growing and producing more things ourselves), true materialism (truly valuing our things by not discarding them and knowing the conditions in which they were made), and reinvestment in community (increased volunteerism and increased use of social capital). Students reflect on the issues covered in the book by writing a paper in which they address the feasibility of implementing in these fundamentals in our society.

L0#1, Section 2 (Ganote syllabus): In another section of the course, students read the book *Deep Economy* by Bill McKibben. In this book, they learn about the health, well-being, and environmental problems caused by unchecked economic growth, particularly focusing his analysis on problems in the industrialized food system. As an intervention, McKibben lays out ways in which eating locally and spending more time immersed in local community issues can create much better health outcomes, drastically lessen environmental damage, and create a greater sense of fulfillment for Americans.

L0#3, both sections: In readings and class, students learn about C Wright Mills' concept of the sociological imagination. By using the sociological imagination we can analyze social problems by looking at connections between social structure (issues arising out of social forces in the broader social institutions of society, e.g. economy, polity, family, education, religion, etc.), history (how the social problem relates to its particular time and place in history), and biography (ways in which broader social forces intersect in our

own personal lives). Throughout multiple sections of the course, the sociological imagination is used as a tool for analyzing various social problems, their causes, and their possible solutions.

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16. Learning: "Learning:

L0#1, Section 1: The students' understanding is measured through the essays they write on the feasibility of implementing Plentitude in one section.

L0#1, Section 2: In another section, in an essay question on an exam, students critique McKibben's ideas for creating a "deep economy" through focusing on eating locally and spending more time immersed in local community. Within this critique, they address the feasibility of the interventions and add in their own ideas as well.

L0#3, both sections: Students write a paper in which they use the sociological imagination to analyze a social problem from the news (e.g. analyzing an article on the rise of homelessness by looking at how issues of one's own biography, broader social forces and our particular place in history have shaped it.)

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