Chapter 1

Studying Social Problems in the Twenty-First Century

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which statement below best describes social problems?
2. Social problems remain constant across cultures.
3. Social problems are contingent on the culture of the country in question.
4. Culture does not play a role in defining social problems.
5. Culture plays only a minimal role in defining social problems.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.1 Define the term social problem and identify reasons why some social conditions are labeled as social problems while others are not.

Topic: Using Sociological Insights to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. A large number of individuals who share the same geographic territory and are subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations is a(n)
2. culture.
3. society.
4. economic system.
5. gender.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.1 Define the term social problem and identify reasons why some social conditions are labeled as social problems while others are not.

Topic: Using Sociological Insights to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. According to sociologists, a social problem is a social condition or a pattern of behavior that
2. individuals typically bring upon themselves; therefore, they must take action to solve their own problem.
3. everyone agrees is harmful for all individuals and the society.
4. often is of relatively short duration but is problematic for those who are affected by it.
5. disadvantages or harms some individuals or all people in a society and that a sufficient number of people believe warrants public concern and collective action to bring about change.

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 1.1 Define the term social problem and identify reasons why some social conditions are labeled as social problems while others are not.

Topic: Using Sociological Insights to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. According to the text, some personal problems
2. are viewed as conditions that affect individual members of a population.
3. are related to the larger social issues in society.
4. rarely harm all of society's members.
5. rarely harm all of a culture’s members.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Of the fifty states in the United States of America, how many states do not have hate crime laws?
2. seven
3. twenty-three
4. five
5. fifteen

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 1.1 Define the term social problem and identify reasons why some social conditions are labeled as social problems while others are not.

Topic: Using Sociological Insights to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Which of the following best describes C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination?
2. the ability to see the world from one's perspective
3. the ability to create one's world through one's imagination
4. the ability to connect individual experiences to the larger society
5. the ability to disconnect the larger society from one's individual's experience

Answer: c.

1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. According to C. Wright Mills, widespread unemployment resulting from changes in the national economy is
2. a personal problem.
3. a public issue.
4. not a social problem since it will be corrected with the next change in the economy.
5. a problem for those who are unemployed but not for other people.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. The text defines discrimination as
2. a negative or unfavorable attitude towards a group or its individual members.
3. stereotyped beliefs that are not tested against reality.
4. actions or practices of subordinate group members that have a harmful impact on members of dominant groups.
5. actions or practices of dominant group members that have a harmful impact on members of subordinate groups.

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Microlevel analysis focuses on
2. small group relations and social interaction among individuals.
3. individual attitudes and behavior.
4. how large scale political decisions affect everyday people.
5. how economic systems affect cultures.

Answer: a

Learning Objective: 1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Which of the following is the best definition of social policy?
2. a plan or action of various government agencies that aims to improve or reform some aspect of society
3. a subjective awareness rooted in contemporary social events
4. cultural norms that are accepted by most members of a group
5. societal values that are passed down from generation to generation

Answer: a

Learning Objective: 1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. A theoretical framework, overall approach, or viewpoint towards some subject is a(n)
   1. norm
   2. hypothesis
   3. perspective
   4. theory

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Established rules of behavior or standards of conduct are
   1. norms.
   2. values.
   3. mores.
   4. anomies.

Answer: a

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Functionalists use which of the following terms to refer to unintended consequences of an activity or social process?
   1. dysfunctions
   2. latent functions
   3. manifest functions
   4. social disorganization

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. The functionalist explanation of violence which states that violence is part of the normative expectations governing everyday behavior among young males in the lower classes is called
   1. the subculture of violence hypothesis.
   2. the male hypothesis.
   3. the culture of youth hypothesis.
   4. lifestyle-routine activity approach.

Answer: a

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. According to critical-conflict theorists, social problems occur when
   1. there are discrepancies between the ideal and real culture in society.
   2. there is oppression due to class, race, gender and other social divisions.
   3. there is a high level of social disorganization.
   4. there are too few people following the rules of society.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.5 Describe the following social research methods and identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach: field research, survey research, and secondary analysis of existing data.

Topic: Using Social Research Methods to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. According to the conflict perspective, the problem of violence in societies such as the United States is linked to
   1. democracy.
   2. religion.
   3. capitalism.
   4. family values.

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Sociologist Howard Becker coined which of the following terms to describe people who develop individual views of right and wrong then label others as deviant?
   1. deviants
   2. moral entrepreneurs
   3. moral deviants
   4. moral relativists

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Which of the following types of research is used most by social scientists?
   1. field research
   2. survey research
   3. secondary analysis of existing data
   4. labeling theory

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.5 Describe the following social research methods and identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach: field research, survey research, and secondary analysis of existing data.

Topic: Using Social Research Methods to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. Symbolic Interactionist Solutions to violence include which of the following?
   1. reinforcing the importance of conformity to society’s rules and laws
   2. pushing for major changes in our nation’s political and economic institutions
   3. emphasizing that oppression is a major factor that contributes to social problems
   4. teaching people of all ages to engage in nonviolent conflict resolution

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 1.6 Apply functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist approaches to solving a specific social problem, such as gun violence.

Topic: Is There a Solution to a Problem Such as Gun Violence?

Difficulty: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

1. The study of social problems involving the economy or the government would take place at the:
2. mesolevel.
3. macrolevel.
4. microlevel.
5. symbolic level.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

1. Rico has been labeled “delinquent” since he was a child; now in high school, he is close to dropping out and has participated in activities that have also been termed as deviant. If Rico is arrested in the future, his situation will fit which of the following terms?
   1. norm
   2. situational approach
   3. subculture of violence
   4. self-fulfilling prophecy

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

1. Deborah is studying the effects violent video games have on youth by observing children after they have played video games to see if their behavior is more violent as a result of gaming. Deborah is using which kind of research in her study?
   1. field research
   2. survey research
   3. labeling theory
   4. subculture of violence hypothesis

Answer: a

Learning Objective: 1.5 Describe the following social research methods and identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach: field research, survey research, and secondary analysis of existing data.

Topic: Using Social Research Methods to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

1. In order to conduct a study of population growth among various religious and ethnic groups, Walter collects U.S. Census Bureau data for analysis. Walter is using which of the following for his research?
   1. primary observational data
   2. secondary analysis of existing data
   3. secondary analysis of observational data
   4. primary field notes

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 1.5 Describe the following social research methods and identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach: field research, survey research, and secondary analysis of existing data.

Topic: Using Social Research Methods to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

1. Researchers who use data collected by the FBI and published as the UCR (Uniform Crime Report) are using which of the following?
   1. evolutionary methodology
   2. field research
   3. survey research
   4. secondary analysis of existing data

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 1.5 Describe the following social research methods and identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach: field research, survey research, and secondary analysis of existing data.

Topic: Using Social Research Methods to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

1. David was physically attacked by a group of students in his college dorm. The assailants attacked David because they believed he was homosexual. David was a victim of a(n)
2. simple assault.
3. crime of passion.
4. assault with malice.
5. hate crime.

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 1.1 Define the term social problem and identify reasons why some social conditions are labeled as social problems while others are not.

Topic: Using Sociological Insights to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

1. Jane is a sociologist who prefers to conduct research that focuses on small groups such as individual families and children living in group home residential facilities. Which type of analysis does Jane prefer?
2. quantitative
3. qualitative
4. microlevel
5. macrolevel

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 1.2 Explain the term sociological imagination and discuss its relevance to the study of social problems.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination: Bringing Together the Personal and the Social

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Essay Questions (Answers will vary.)

27. Describe how you would develop a study on violence using field research.

Ideal answer should include:

1. Field research is the study of social life in its natural setting:
2. Study should include observing and interviewing people where they live, work, and play

Learning Objective: 1.5 Describe the following social research methods and identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach: field research, survey research, and secondary analysis of existing data.

Topic: Using Social Research Methods to Study Social Problems

Difficulty: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

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1. Compare and contrast functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives on social problems. Select a specific problem such as unemployment and discuss how each approach might explain its causes, effects, and possible solutions.

Ideal answer should include information from Table 1.2

Learning Objective: 1.6 Apply functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist approaches to solving a specific social problem, such as gun violence.

Topic: Is There a Solution to a Problem Such as Gun Violence?

Difficulty: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

1. Of the three main theoretical perspectives mentioned, which do you think most effectively explains social problems? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory you have chosen?

Ideal answer should contain information from Table 1.2

Learning Objective: 1.6 Apply functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist approaches to solving a specific social problem, such as gun violence.

Topic: Is There a Solution to a Problem Such as Gun Violence?

Difficulty: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

1. Explain in detail labeling theory and the self-fulfilling prophecy. Create and describe a violent event or social situation. Use the labeling theory to explain the event you have described. How can the self-fulfilling prophecy help explain the violent event or social situation you described?

Ideal answer should contain:

1. Description of a violent event
2. Labeling definition: suggests that behavior that deviates from established norms is deviant because it has been labeled as such by others
3. Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: the process by which an unsubstantiated belief or prediction results in behavior that makes the original false conception come true
4. Use of labeling and self-fulfilling prophecy to explain the violent incident given

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Difficulty: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

1. 31. Compare and contrast field research and survey research. Which do you think is more effective or reliable?

Ideal answer should include:

1. Field research is the study of social life in its natural setting: observing and interviewing people where they live, work, and play
2. Survey research is a poll in which researchers ask respondents a series of questions about a specific topic and record their responses

Learning Objective: 1.5 Describe the following social research methods and identify strengths and weaknesses of each approach: field research, survey research, and secondary analysis of existing data

Difficulty: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

32. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, explain the impact of allowing children to watch violence on television and/or play violent video games.

The ideal answer should include:

1. Symbolic interactionist explanations of violence begin by noting that human behavior is learned through social interaction. Violence, they state, is a learned response, not an inherent characteristic, in the individual.
2. Research by Bandura
3. Concept of situational approach, violence results from a specific interaction process, termed a “situational transaction”

Learning Objective: 1.4 Discuss the key ideas of the functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist theoretical perspectives on social problems

Topic: Using Social Theory to Analyze Social Problems

Difficulty: Difficult

Skill Level: Understand the concepts

33. Give an example of a current event that has manifest and latent functions. Describe the event and then both functions.

Ideal answer should contain:

1. Description of an event
2. Immediate or intended consequences are the manifest functions
3. Later or unintended consequences are the latent functions

Learning Objective 1.3 Compare the subjective and objective elements of social problems.

Topic: Do We Have a Problem? Subjective Awareness and Objective Reality

Difficulty: Difficult

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

34. Compare subjective awareness and objective reality using social media as an example.

Ideal answers should contain:

1. Social media being an individual’s subjective awareness – not sure if it is true or not
2. Objective reality being social media’s effects such as cyber bullying or being upset by something that wasn’t even true

Learning Objective 1.3 Compare the subjective and objective elements of social problems.

Topic: Do We Have a Problem? Subjective Awareness and Objective Reality

Difficulty: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It