City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course
offered by Department of Applied Social Sciences
with effect from Semester A in 2013/2014

Part I

Course Title:	Social Problems in Contemporary Societies
Course Code:	SS5426
Course Duration:	One semester
No. of Credit Units:	3
Level:	P5
Medium of Instruction:	English
Medium of Assessment:	English
Prerequisites:	Nil
Precursors:	Nil
Equivalent Courses:	Nil
Exclusive Courses:	Nil

Part II

Course Aims

This course aims to enable students to analyse social problems in contemporary societies with sociological theories, and to critically evaluate the social policies and generate new social development strategies to tackle real world problems with a focus on Hong Kong and China.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting
1.	Distinguish various concepts and principles of sociological theories for the analysis of social problems and issues;	20%
2.	Recognise the scope and limitation of the theories to analyze the social problems in contemporary societies;	20%
3.	Apply sociological theories to provide critical interpretation of social problems and issues; and	30%
4.	Critically evaluate the social policies and generate new social development strategies to tackle real world problems.	30%

Teaching and learning Activities (TLAs)
(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No.	TLA1	TLA2	TLA3	Hours / course (if applicable)
CILO 1	√	√		
CILO 2	√	√	√	
CILO 3	√	√	√	
CILO 4	√	√	√	

TLA 1: Lecture
There will be weekly lectures, with topics concerning theories and concepts on globalization, social problems, social policy, social development and social change, prepared and presented by lecturer.

TLA 2: Tutorial:
In each weekly lecture, approximately one hour will be reserved for tutorial discussion. The purpose of it is to give students to discuss and connect concepts, theories, social issues, social problems and social policies in depth.

TLA 3: Student Presentation
Students are required to form in groups and pick up one social issue or problem as their topic. They need to select one or more relevant sociological theory(ies), concept(s), or tradition(s) to analyse the issue and reflect how it relates to the global social change. They are also required to give a short description and brief evaluation of the current policies adopted to tackle the problem.

Assessment Tasks/Activities
(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No.	Type of Assessment Tasks/Activities	Weighting	Remarks
CILO 1–4	AT 1: Term Paper	70%	
CILO 2–4	AT 2: Student Presentation	30%	

AT 1: Term Paper

Students are required to submit an academic paper on topics related to the subject matter. They have to identify one social problem and to apply the relevant sociological theories to analyse it as well as generating new social development strategies to tackle this problem. Max word length: 4,000.

<u>AT 2: Student Presentation</u>
Students are required to form in groups and pick up one social issue or problem as their topic. They need to select one or more theoretical perspective(s) or theory(ies) to analyse the issue. They have to collect information from existing literature to substantiate their arguments. They are also required to give a short evaluation of the current policies adopted to tackle the problem.

Grading of Student Achievement:

Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees.

Letter Grade	Grading criteria in relation to CILOs
A+ A A-	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
B+ B B-	Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
C+ C C-	Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
D	Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.
F	Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of literature.

Part III

1.   **Keyword Syllabus:**

1.1   <u>Social Theories and Social Problems</u>
The concept of social problem; sociological perspectives on social problems; the theories and perspectives on contemporary globalization; an outline of major social issues and social problems in contemporary societies.

1.2   <u>Social Issues and Social Problems in Hong Kong</u>
Major social problems and policy debates in Hong Kong, e.g. aging, gender inequality, poverty and social security, working poor and wage policy, work and employment, social mobility and social stratification, family violence, crime and punishment, immigration and ethnic groups, development and environment.

1.3   <u>Social Problems and Social Development in China</u>
Key issues in the social development of China, e.g. rural development, sweatshop, labour regulations and social protection for migrant workers, family, aging, pollution and environmental issues.

2   Recommended Reading:

Essential Texts

Henslin, J. M., & Fowler, L. A. (2009). *Social problems: A down-to-earth approach.* New Jersey: Pearson.

Hudson, J., & Lowe, S. (2009). *Understanding the policy process: Analysing welfare policy and practice.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Macionis, J. (2007). *Social problems* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

Ritzer, G. (Ed.). (2004). *Handbook of social problems: A comparative international perspective.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sernau, S. R. (2009). *Global problems: The search for equity, peace, and sustainability.* New Jersey: Pearson.

Walker, A. et. al. (Eds.). (2010). *The Peter Townsend reader.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Supplementary Texts

Aspalter, C. (2001). *Conservative welfare systems in East Asia.* Westport: Praeger.

Baker, P. J. (1993). *Social problems: A critical thinking approach.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Bennholdt-Thomsen, V., Faraclas, N., & Werlhof, C. W. (2001). *There is an alternative: Subsistence and worldwide resistance to corporate globalization.* London: Zed Books.

Chiu, S., & Lui, T. L. (2009). *Hong Kong: The global city.* London: Routledge.

Coleman, J. W., & Kerbo, H. R. (2003). *Social problems: A brief introduction* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J. : Prentice Hall.

Feagin, J. R., & Feagin, C. B. (1997). *Social problems: A critical power-conflict perspective* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Finsterbusch, K. (Ed.). (2003). *Social problems 03/04.* Guilford, Conn.: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.

George, V., & Page, R. M. (Eds.). (2004). *Global social problems.* Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity.

Giddens, A. (1996). *Introduction to Sociology.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Heiner, R. (2006). *Social problems: An introduction to critical constructionism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Kendall, D. E. (2004). *Social problems in a diverse society* (4th ed.). Boston, Mass.: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Lloyd-Sherlock, P. (2010). *Population ageing and international development: From generalisation to evidence.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Lopata, H. Z., & Levy, J. A. (Eds.). (2003). *Social problems across the life course*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Mazur, A. (2007). *Global social problems.* London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Midgley, J. (1997). *Social welfare in global context.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Murphy, R. (Ed.). (2008). *Labour migration and social development in contemporary China.* London: Routledge.

Neubeck, K. J., & Neubeck, M. A. (1997). *Social problems: A critical approach* (4th ed.). New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Nolan, P., & Lenski, G. (1999). *Human societies: An introduction to Macrosociology*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Rubington, E., & Weinberg, M. S. (Eds.). (1995). *The study of social problems: Seven perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rubington, E., & Weinberg, M. S. (Eds.). (2002). *Deviance: The interactionist perspective.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Sanderson, S. K. (1999). *Macrosociology: An introduction to human societies.* New York: Longman.

Townsend, P., & Gordon, D. (2002). *World poverty: New policies to defeat an old enemy.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Yan, H. R. (2008). *New masters, new servants*: *Migration, development, and women workers in China.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Yeates, N. (2001). *Globalization & social policy.* London: Sage.

Zastrow, C. (2000). *Social problems: Issues and solutions* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Key Journals

Critical Social Policy

Journal of Social Policy

Social Policy and Society

Global Social Policy

Community Development Journal

Social Policy Review