

## SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL POLICY

### Essay topics

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The following essay topics are designed to correspond with the academic aims, or learning outcomes designated in the syllabus for this course.

1. How do you understand the concept, *social problem*, and how would you distinguish a social problem from (1) a personal, (2) a moral, and (3) a legal problem? Use examples that involve one or more specific issues.
2. How do you understand the distinction between the *constructionist* and the *objective harm* perspectives with regard to social problems? With which are you more likely to agree, and why?
3. Select two theoretical paradigms common in sociology and explore a social issue within the context of these two paradigms. Be sure to define, then compare and contrast the two paradigms.
4. In what ways (if at all) should social policy relate to a social problem? Use an example “case study” of one or more social problem(s) in order to illustrate your argument.
5. Choose a social issue to describe and discuss. Explain how you personally understand your obligation (if any) as a world citizen to do something about this issue.
6. Describe a social issue or problem in your own country, use a sociological theory to analyze and explain it, then discuss how this issue or problem can be related to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
7. Define social policy, then explain your understanding of its importance by discussing how social policy applies to two social problems discussed in this course.
8. Define social policy, then explain your understanding of its importance by discussing how social policy applies to a social problem *not* discussed in this course.

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Essay-writing hints:

- Always define terms that are related to the course or are not commonly understood.
- Always answer the question directly. (Do not “talk around” the general idea of the question.)
- Always answer every part of the question.
- Begin by incorporating the question in your first sentence—that is, briefly state your answer or response to the question in one full sentence.
  - For example, you might begin your #6 essay topic this way: This essay will describe the social problem, \_\_\_\_\_, which exists in my country, and apply the sociological theory, \_\_\_\_\_, to analyze it this issue.
- Use evidence to support your main points.
- Include references to as many of the readings from the course as possible.
- End by reminding the reader what you have accomplished in your essay.