# CHAPTER 1

**SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

**MULTIPLE CHOICE**

1. Morgan thinks of himself as a unique individual with distinctive experiences like no other. However, many of our personal experiences are not really exceptional; instead, they are patterned and shaped by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 a. sociological perspectives

 b. social structure

 c. social problems

 d. social innovation

 Answer: b

Topic: The Sociological Imagination

 Learning Objective 1.1: Explain the sociological imagination.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

2. What is the name for the organized arrangements of relationships and institutions that

 together form the basis of society?

 a. sociological perspectives

 b. social problems

 c. social structure

 d. the sociological imagination

Answer: c

 Topic: The Sociological Imagination

 Learning Objective 1.1: Explain the sociological imagination.

 Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

 Difficulty Level: Easy

3. Émile Durkheim (1897) conducted an early study on the subject of suicide, documenting how social structure affects human behavior. What did he find?

 a. Suicide was not a completely random event and that there were several important patterns.

 b. Personal reasons such as job loss or the ending of a relationship were the best predictors of suicide.

 c. Catholics were more likely to commit suicide than were Protestants.

 d. Counseling can help those who suffer from depression.

Answer: a

 Topic: The Sociological Imagination

 Learning Objective 1.1: Explain the sociological imagination.

 Skill Level: Analyze It

 Difficulty Level: Moderate

4. The sociological imagination draws attention to the fact that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 a. social problems are often hidden from the rest of society

b. defining social problems is usually based on whether the issue is seen as illegal or immoral

 c. religious groups no longer have the power they did in the last century

 d. seemingly private issues are often public ones

 Answer: d

 Topic: The Sociological Imagination

 Learning Objective 1.1: Explain the sociological imagination.

 Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

 Difficulty Level: Easy

5. The health care system is an example of an organized arrangement of relationships and institutions that form one basis of society—helping people when they are ill. Therefore, the health care system is part of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 a. the social structure

 b. Durkheimian theory

 c. a cultural marketing strategy

 d. the sociological imagination

Answer: a

Topic: The Sociological Imagination

Learning Objective 1.1: Explain the sociological imagination.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

6. A social problem exists when most people in a society \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. learn about the problem from the mass media

b. agree that something should be done to remedy a condition

c. have become victimized by criminals or other deviants

d. become politically active and vote on the basis of a single issue: that particular social problem

Answer: b

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

7. The people who live in the small city Baker Town agree that homelessness in their community threatens the quality of their lives and their values are being threatened. They agree that something should be done to fix this situation. For the people of Baker Town, homelessness has become \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. an act of war

b. a public concern

c. a social problem

d. a private concern

 Answer: c

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

8. Ashley is writing an essay about social problems. Which of the following statements about social problems is true, and therefore she would likely include it in her essay?

a. Immigration is considered the top social problem in the United States.

b. Social problems tend to be distinct and unrelated, with only a few exceptions to this.

c. The idea that a society should intervene to remedy conditions that affect the lives of its citizens is very long-held idea.

d. There must be enough consensus among people in a society that a problem exists for action to take place, but this consensus on the problem does not indicate consensus on the solution.

Answer: d

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Difficult

9. Many people turn to crime because they were raised in poverty, or choose to drop out of school, or have a peer group that supports criminal behavior. This shows \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 a. Durkheim’s study did not go far enough

 b. social problems are difficult to define

 c. social problems are often closely interrelated

 d. the fallacy of the sociological imagination

Answer: c

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

10. Toxic waste sites tend to be located in neighborhoods where people who are poor often live. This fact illustrates \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. that social structure has lost its relevance over the past several decades

b. the importance of power in the definition of social problems

c. that the lack of voting rights was a personal trouble experienced by a few people

d. a lack of consensus on a solution to a social problem

Answer: b

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Difficult

11. What is considered to be the number one social problem today, according to surveys of American adults?

a. the government

b. the environment, specifically climate change

c. crime

d. immigration

 Answer: a

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Difficulty Level: Easy

12. The idea that a society should intervene to remedy conditions affecting its citizens was a new development in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. period of social unrest of the 1960s

b. period of urban-industrialization of the nineteenth century

c. “enlightenment” of the late eighteenth century

d. economic depression years of the 1930s

 Answer: c

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

13. The text illustrates the three basic perspectives on social problems by showing how they explain the problem of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. unemployment

b. mental illness

c. criminal deviance

d. poverty

 Answer: c

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Easy

14. Sociologists use the term \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to refer to the position one holds in groups or organizations.

a. norms

b. status

c. social disorganization

d. social institutions

 Answer: b

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Easy

15. In a school, the student, the teacher, the principal, and the custodian are all members of a social group concerned with education. Each of these individuals has a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that requires the performance of a certain set of behaviors, known as a(n) **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.

 a. label; social disorganization

 b. status; interactionist norm

 c. label; social institution

 d. status; role

 Answer: d

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

16. Sociologists use the term \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to refer to behaviors expected of performance in a position that one holds in a group or organization.

a. activities

b. roles

c. statuses

d. demands

 Answer: b

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Easy

17. As a sociological concept, the term *social institution* refers to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. some social unit that is old, respected, and revered

b. a place where the mentally ill are treated

c. a group or organization that has become deeply embedded in social life

d. a relatively stable structure of statuses and roles devoted to meeting the basic needs of people in a society

 Answer: d

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Easy

18. Professor Ramos, a sociologist, tends to hold the functionalist perspective on social problems. She believes that the main reason for the existence of social problems is that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. societies are fundamentally corrupt

b. societies sometimes fail to adapt successfully to change and new conditions

c. organizations become too rigid and inflexible over time

d. deviance is a natural outcome of increasingly complex social conditions

 Answer: b

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

19. How do functionalists answer the question of why particular crimes are committed and punished in some societies, but not in others?

a. Each society has its own unique definition of what is criminal and punishes accordingly.

b. Individuals whose crimes challenge or threaten society’s most cherished values will be punished more severely.

c. Each society will punish the members of minority groups more severely than the members of dominant groups.

d. Since there is an element of chance in being caught, different crimes will be severely punished in different societies.

 Answer: b

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

20. According to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ perspective, societies fear most the crimes that threaten their members’ most cherished values, and individuals who dare to challenge those values will receive the most severe punishments.

a. conflict

b. interactionist

c. functionalist

d. developmental

 Answer: c

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

21. Social disorganization can be manifested in three major ways, which are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. positive, negative, and neutral conditions

b. normlessness, culture conflict, and breakdown

c. rootlessness, anomalies, coping, and disorder

d. hyper-order, disorder, and order

 Answer: b

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Difficult

22. A more modern version of the functionalist perspective attempts to show how people reorganize their lives to cope with new conditions, resulting in new kinds of organizations and/or whole new institutions. Research focusing on these attempts is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. institution building

b. social pathology

c. value conflict

d. disequilibrium

 Answer: a

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

23. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ perspective on social problems is based on the belief that social problems arise out of major contradictions, leading to contention between those who have access to the “good life,” and those who do not.

a. functionalist

b. institution building

c. symbolic interactionist

d. conflict

 Answer: d

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

24. Which of the following made major contributions to the conflict perspective on social problems?

a. Herbert Spencer

b. Karen Seccombe

c. Karl Marx

d. Emile Durkheim

 Answer: c

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Difficulty Level: Easy

25. Joseph believes that social problems arise out of major contradictions in the way societies are organized, contradictions that lead to large-scale conflict between those who have access to the good life and those who do not. Which perspective comes closest to Joseph’s views?

a. conflict

b. functionalist

c. institution building

d. symbolic interactionist

 Answer: a

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

26. The conflict view of deviance emphasizes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. the underlying value consensus of a society and why rules are broken

b. the characteristics of people who commit crimes

c. the career patterns adopted by criminals

d. differences in the power of different groups or classes in society

 Answer: d

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

27. In their work, scholars who adopt a conflict perspective on deviance usually emphasize how \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. existing institutions can be improved through minor reforms

b. rehabilitation programs can change people by shifting the blame for problems in social populations

c. inequalities of wealth and power seem to account for the distribution of social problems in populations

d. police forces can be made more effective

 Answer: c

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

28. “Social problems occur when groups with different values meet and compete,” claims Rahul. This statement describes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ theory.

a. value conflict

b. social disorganization

c. social pathology

d. labeling

 Answer: a

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

29. According to value conflict theory, a common approach to solving social problems involves \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. strengthening the police so that they may detect more crime and punish wrongdoers

b. finding ways to facilitate negotiation and compromise between and among groups

c. altering the ways that prisons rehabilitate prisoners

d. finding ways to radically restructure social institutions

 Answer: b

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

30. According to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ perspective on social problems, an individual’s or group’s definition of the situation is central to understanding the actions of that individual or group.

a. functionalist

b. conflict

c. symbolic interactionist

d. normative

 Answer: c

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

31. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ theory stresses that a social process separates deviant and nondeviant persons not by what they do, but by how society reacts to what they do.

a. Functionalist

b. Conflict

c. Value-reaction

d. Labeling

 Answer: d

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

 Difficulty Level: Moderate

32. According to labeling theory, the act of labeling a person or group deviant may cause society to suffer in which of the following ways?

a. Labeling causes those who are labeled to avoid deviance, thereby deterring them.

b. The labeled may accept the definition of themselves as deviant and increase their deviance as a result.

c. The labeling has no effect because of the pro-criminal self-concepts of those labeled.

d. The labeling causes those who are labeled to become an important, powerful,

 political force.

 Answer: b

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

 Difficulty Level: Moderate

33. Bobby uses illegal drugs—an act that is criminal. To pay for his habit, Bobby burglarizes homes and sells the items that he steals. His acts of burglary are categorized as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ deviance.

a. functional

b. criminalized

c. stress-related

 d. secondary

 Answer: d

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

 Difficulty Level: Moderate

34. Justin has been abusing alcohol for a number of years. He has been labeled as alcoholic by his family, who are weary of him. Justin has recently adopted elements of what is seen as a drug addict’s lifestyle: losing his job and resisting employment, sleeping until the afternoon, borrowing money, and making excuses for his behavior. Sociologists label this behavior \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 a. social disorganized deviance

 b. third-order deviance

 c. secondary deviance

 d. social deviance

 Answer: c

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

35. Early in the twentieth century, sociologists recognized that social problems often seemed to develop in a series of phases or stages. They called the study of this process the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. coalition forming schema

b. consensus formation mode

c. institution building system

d. natural history approach

 Answer: d

Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.4: Describe the process that reveals the natural history of social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Easy

36. Which of the following is one of the major stages that most social problems seem to go through, as identified by Spector and Kitsuse?

a. legal invasion

b. problem definition

c. de-legitimacy

d. emergence of citing of commands

 Answer: b

Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.4: Describe the process that reveals the natural history of social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

37. Concern about specific social problems come and go. Sometimes the focus in the media tends to last only a short period of time. Why does this occur?

a. There are too many social problems to cover at one time.

b. Most people are not interested in social problems.

c. Most people are interested in social problems, but they lose interest in a very short time.

d. The media wants to attract large numbers of viewers or readers so they constantly pursue stories that will capture the attention of the public.

 Answer: d

Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.4: Describe the process that reveals the natural history of social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Difficult

38. This text has four themes. Which is one of them?

 a. Sociological understanding of social problems requires a quantitative perspective.

 b. Sociological understanding of social problems requires a qualitative approach.

 c. Sociological understanding of social problems requires linking individual experiences with social structure.

d. Sociological understanding of social problems requires the understanding that all people have equal opportunity.

Answer: c

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Easy

39. An empirical approach \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. is a theoretical approach used by conflict theorists

b. asks we look at other cultures as well as our own

c. is a method that answers questions through a systematic collection and analysis of data.

d. is based on the premise that social inequality is a key feature in many social problems.

 Answer: c

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Difficulty Level: Easy

40. Olivia is interested in learning more about the amount of time men spend on leisure as compared to women. She put together a survey that asks men and women to record (in minutes) the amount of time they spend on leisure activities from a checklist of activities on the survey. She is going to tabulate this information. What type of methods is Olivia likely using?

 a. quantitative

 b. institution building

 c. reemergence

 d. qualitative

 Answer: a

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

41. Which research method provides the greatest opportunity to assess cause and effect, although the setting may have an artificial quality to it?

 a. survey

 b. experiment

 c. focus groups

 d. secondary analysis

Answer: b

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

42. Dr. Rubin’s research project focuses on people’s opinions toward abortions. She is interested in getting extensive and detailed information from each person in her study. Although this may be expensive and time consuming, she has received a large grant to hire several students to help her. Which research method is Dr. Rubin most likely using?

 a. survey

 b. focus group

 c. in-depth interview

 d. secondary analysis

Answer: c

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

43. Several sociologists have been studying why poor men and women often do not marry before having a child. They are looking beyond individual preferences and are exploring issues such as unemployment rates, sex ratios, and other patterns of social organization. What theme does this represent from the text?

 a. linking personal experience with social structure

 b. using a comparative perspective

 c. emphasizing a qualitative approach

 d. individuals are responsible for their own achievements

 Answer: a

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

44. Why is there so little social mobility?

a. The U.S. has a caste system.

b. The wealthy have been able to eliminate their social capital while lower-income people still have theirs.

c. Parents pass on their wealth and social capital (or their lack of it) to their children.

d. Actually, there is quite a bit of upward social mobility.

 Answer: c

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

45. Corrine is a college student on a study abroad program in Austria. Unfortunately, she fell when hiking and broke her arm. She was surprised that the hospital fixed her arm for such a low fee. This got her comparing and contrasting the U.S. health system with that of Austria’s. Corrine is using \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. a structural functionalist perspective

b. a comparative perspective

c. an empirical approach

d. a constructionist approach

 Answer: b

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

46. Social \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are formal procedures designed to remedy social problems at the federal, state, or local level.

a. solutions

b. structures

c. policies

d. stratifications

 Answer: c

Topic: Social Policy

Learning Objective 1.6: Assess the social policy debates between conservatives and liberals.

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Difficulty Level: Easy

47. Which of the following social policies is usually advocated today by those who are considered conservative on the political spectrum?

a. expanded public assistance programs

b. increased governmental regulation, intervention, and involvement

c. reduced government regulation so that private free-market forces will solve problems

d. social programs like in the 1960s

 Answer: c

Topic: Social Policy

Learning Objective 1.6: Assess the social policy debates between conservatives and liberals.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

48. Which of the following social policies is usually advocated today by those who are considered liberal on the political spectrum?

a. programs that involve public or governmental actions to address social problems

b. public subsidies for large corporations

c. encouraging free-market forces to create jobs

d. enhancing opportunities for private profit

 Answer: a

Topic: Social Policy

Learning Objective 1.6: Assess the social policy debates between conservatives and liberals.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

49. Voices on the conservative side of the ideological spectrum of American politics tend to take a moral stance on many social problems and often insist on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for solving them.

a. private or market solutions

b. social institutions

c. public responsibility

d. public or government intervention

 Answer: a

Topic: Social Policy

Learning Objective 1.6: Assess the social policy debates between conservatives and liberals.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

50. Carmen believes that government has a responsibility to address social problems, achieve equal opportunity, and to protect civil liberties and human rights. She is concerned about racism and sexism and feels that many people are exploited and not give a fair shot in life. Carmen is likely a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. Republican

b. moderate

c. conservative

d. liberal

 Answer: d

Topic: Social Policy

Learning Objective 1.6: Assess the social policy debates between conservatives and liberals.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

**ESSAY**

51. What is the sociological imagination? Provide two specific topics of your own and demonstrate the importance of the sociological imagination.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. The sociological imagination reveals general patterns in what otherwise might be thought of as simple random events.

Topic: The Sociological Imagination

 Learning Objective 1.1: Explain the sociological imagination.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

52. List three of the five social problems today according to survey polls and explain how public opinion on these three issues has shifted over the past decade.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. The government, the economy, immigration, health care, unemployment
2. The economy was the number one social problem, but now but now the government is ranked number one.

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

53. Write an essay that includes the definition of a social problem, the role of consensus, and the interrelatedness of social problems.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. A social problem is a widespread agreement that a condition threatens the quality of life and cherished values and that something should be done to remedy that condition.
2. There must be enough consensus among people in a society that a problem exists for action to take place, but consensus on a problem does not indicate consensus on the solution.
3. Social problems are often closely interrelated.

Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objective 1.2: Discuss the definition of a social problem.

Skill Level: Analyze It

 Difficulty Level: Moderate

54. Compare and contrast the three basic sociological perspectives on social problems. How are they similar and how are they different?

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. Functionalist Perspective: A way of thinking that considers the way major social institutions such as the family or the health care system actually operate. The role behavior associated with any given status has evolved as a means of allowing a social institution to fulfill its function in society.
2. Conflict Perspective: A way of thinking that is based on the belief that social problems arise out of major contradictions in the way that societies are organized, and these contradictions can lead to large-scale conflict between those who have access to the good life and those who do not.
3. Symbolic Interactionist: A way of thinking that looks at the symbols people use in everyday interaction, such as words, gestures, appearances, and how these symbols are interpreted by others.

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

55. What is social disorganization theory, and when does social disorganization result? Provide a specific example of social disorganization theory.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. As sociologists began to question whether the social-pathology viewpoint could adequately explain the widespread existence of social problems, a new concept, social disorganization theory, was developed.
2. Society is organized by a set of expectations or rules, and social disorganization results when these expectations fail.
3. Social disorganization is manifested in three major ways: normlessness, culture conflict, and breakdown.

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

56. Select a specific social problem (other than crime or deviance, which are used in your text) and compare and contrast how each of the three basic sociological perspectives approach the problem. Be sure to first state the premise of each perspective.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. Functionalist Perspective: A way of thinking that considers the way major social institutions such as the family or the health care system actually operate. The role behavior associated with any given status has evolved as a means of allowing a social institution to fulfill its function in society.
2. Conflict Perspective: A way of thinking that is based on the belief that social problems arise out of major contradictions in the way that societies are organized, and these contradictions can lead to large-scale conflict between those who have access to the good life and those who do not.
3. Symbolic Interactionist: A way of thinking that looks at the symbols people use in everyday interaction, such as words, gestures, appearances, and how these symbols are interpreted by others.
4. Creative use of these in the study of one social problem

Topic: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.3: Compare and contrast the three main sociological perspectives on social problems.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate

57. Discuss the natural history of social problems. Include the major stages that most social problems seem to go through, as identified by Spector and Kitsuse.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. Early in the twentieth century, sociologists recognized that social problems seemed to develop in a series of phases or stages.
2. The stages include: Problem definition, legitimacy, reemergence of demands, and rejection and institution building.

Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems

Learning Objective 1.4: Describe the process that reveals the natural history of social problems.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

58. List and briefly discuss the four themes of this text.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. Using an empirical approach
2. Linking individual experience with social structure
3. Recognizing that social inequality contributes to social problems
4. Using a comparative perspective

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Difficulty Level: Moderate

59. List and briefly describe the six research methods used by sociologists. Choose three of these methods and identify the advantages and limitations of them.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. Survey
2. In-depth interview
3. Experiment
4. Focus groups
5. Observations
6. Secondary analysis
7. Use Table 1-3 to identify advantages and limitations.

Topic: Themes of this Text

Learning Objective 1.5: Review the four themes of the text.

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Difficulty Level: Moderate

60. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast a conservative and a liberal position on a particular social problem of your choosing. First, be sure to identify the basic premise of each perspective.

Answer: The ideal answer should include:

1. Conservatives believe in limited government, free markets, individual liberty, personal responsibility, and a strong national defense.
2. Liberals believe government has a responsibility not only to address social problems and consider government action necessary to achieve equal opportunity but also to protect civil liberties and human rights

Topic: Social Policy

Learning Objective 1.6: Assess the social policy debates between conservatives and liberals.

Skill Level: Analyze It

Difficulty Level: Moderate