



SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Engagement Package

Glossary

“Not in My Backyard”:	opposition by local residents to a proposed new development in their community.
abuse:	to treat a human or animal with cruelty or violence.
achievement gap:	the disparity in academic performance between groups of students.
affirmative action:	refers to special consideration for minorities and women in employment and education to compensate for the discrimination and lack of opportunities they experience in society.
ageism:	the use of real or perceived chronological age as a basis for discrimination.
alcoholism:	an addiction to the consumption of alcoholic liquor; a mental illness and compulsive behavior resulting from alcohol dependency.
animal rights:	rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all animals.
animal studies:	the study of animals for advancement in science and other fields.

animality:	the natural instincts within animals to hunt, find shelter, reproduce, and more.
animism:	a religion that believes in the ability of non-human entities to have spiritual and divine power.
anthropomorphism:	the application of human traits or characteristics to non-human animals and objects.
anthrozoology:	the scientific study of humans and their relationships with animals in and out of society.
arranged marriage:	a type of marriage in which the bride and groom are selected by individuals other than the couple themselves.
atheism:	a disbelief or total lack of belief in a divine and/or spiritual being and, therefore, lack of belief or disbelief in religion and religious organizations.
authoritarian personality:	a personality type characterized by a disposition to treat authority figures with unquestioning obedience and respect.
binge drinking:	drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least one day in the past 30 days.
biodiversity:	the diversity of living organisms on Earth.
biophilia hypothesis:	a social hypothesis introduced by Edward O. Wilson in 1984 that states that all human life has a natural inclination and desire to seek out and connect with other forms of natural life.
blended families:	families involving children from a previous relationship; stepfamilies.
bullying:	seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce another person.
capitalism:	an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned.

charter school:	a publicly funded independent school established by teachers and community groups under the terms of a charter with a local or national authority.
class:	a person's position relative to the economic sector.
climate change:	the long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns.
cohabitation:	unrelated, unmarried adults in an intimate relationship sharing living quarters.
colonialism:	control and conquering by one group of people over another, resulting in ideological and actionable control in society by the dominant, conquering group.
color-blind racism:	a form of racism that is based on the idea that overcoming racism means ignoring race.
commodities:	anything people buy, make, or sell to fulfill a need or desire.
consumerism:	the belief that personal happiness depends on the purchasing of material possessions.
context:	the surroundings and background situational details provide additional awareness of when, how, and why something is happening.
corporate crime:	illegal activities of large business organizations, their executives, and top-level managers acting on their behalf.
corporation:	a formal organization that has a legal existence.
corruption:	dishonest and/or immoral conduct by those who have power.
counterterrorism:	a network of individuals and institutions involved in the production of weapons and military technologies.
crime:	crime is any behavior in society that deviates from the social norms considered acceptable in society.

criminal justice:	the system of justice to those who have been accused of committing crimes.
critical animal studies:	critical animal studies (CAS) is a field of research dealing with issues related to the exploitation and liberation of animals.
cult:	a group of set followers who share the same ideologies and practices, under a singular leader.
culture wars:	disputes over the state of society, including the presumed decline of the family as well as “family values.”
cyberbullying:	the electronic form of bullying.
cybercrime:	any violation of the law in which a computer is the target or means of criminal activity.
dark figures of crime:	the unreported crime that goes on in the U.S.
dating:	a formal structure of courtship in which individuals spend time together to better understand if they desire a long-term relationship.
deforestation:	the conversion of forestland to non-forest land by excessive amounts of cutting down plants.
delayed marriage:	adults marrying at later ages than they did in decades past.
demography:	a study of statistics such as birth, deaths, income, or the incidence of disease.
denomination:	a specific group of individuals within a religious organization who occupies a place in society.
depressants:	a medical drug used to lower brain neurotransmission levels that cause depression or long periods of sadness.
deviance:	a behavior that violates social norms and arouses strong social disapproval.

discrimination:	refers to the arbitrary denial of rights, privileges, and opportunities to members of certain groups.
disease:	a disorder of structure or function in a human, animal, or plant.
divorce:	the legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body.
drug:	any substance whose properties produce psychophysiological changes when ingested.
drug abuse:	use of psychoactive substances in a way that creates social, psychological, or physical problems for the user.
drug courts:	special courts divert drug offenders to treatment programs in place of probation or incarceration.
drug use:	the ingestion of substances in order to produce changes in the body or mind that alter the way the world is experienced.
e-waste:	discarded electrical devices.
economic inequality:	the extent of the economic difference between the rich and the poor.
economy:	a social institution that organizes the production, distribution, and consumption of a society's goods and services.
ecosystem:	a biological environment consisting of all the organisms living in a particular area.
education:	a social institution through which society teaches members the skills, knowledge, norms, and values they need to be good members of society.
elder abuse:	acts of sexual abuse, financial abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect toward an elder.
emigration:	when people leave their home country, usually due to conflict or disaster.

environmental activism:	the coming together of multiple individuals and/or organizations to collaborate in social, political, and conservational fields to address environmental problems.
ethnicity:	refers to the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national or regional backgrounds, that make subgroups of a population different from one another.
family:	a group of people of two or more people who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or mutual commitment.
family structure:	the individuals who comprise a family and their relationships with one another.
feminism:	the belief that women and men should have equal opportunities in economic, political, and social life.
feminist criminology:	a theory of crime that includes gender in its analysis.
fertility rate:	a count of the number of children born to women during their prime fertility period.
flirtation:	playful interactions with another person in an attempt to court them.
gender:	social and cultural differences a society assigns to people based on their biological sex.
gender gap:	an undesirable or unfair difference between men and women in terms of opportunities, pay, and status.
gender identity:	individuals' beliefs about themselves as females or males.
gender inequality:	the way in which the meaning is assigned to sex and gender as social categories creates disparities in resources, such as income, power, and status.

gender roles:	the way in which the meaning is assigned to sex and gender as social categories creates disparities in resources, such as income, power, and status.
gerontology:	the study of social aspects of aging.
gig economy:	a social institution that organizes the production, distribution, and consumption of a society's goods and services.
glass ceiling:	an unofficially acknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession.
glass escalator:	the way males are put on the "fast track" to advanced positions when entering primarily female-dominated professions.
global warming:	the increasing average temperature of the earth's surface.
green technology:	using science and technology to protect the world's natural resources and lessen human impact.
greenhouse gases:	the gases (primarily carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) that accumulate in the atmosphere and act like glass in a greenhouse, this means it holds heat from the sun close to the earth.
greenwashing:	the way in which environmentally and socially damaging companies portray their corporate image and products as being "environmentally friendly" or socially responsible.
harm reduction:	an approach to drug policy aimed at minimizing or eliminating the harms associated with drug use behaviors.
hate crime:	an unlawful act of violence motivated by prejudice or bias.
health:	a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.
health disparities:	preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, or opportunities to obtain optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged people.

healthcare:	the organized provision of medical care to individuals or a community.
heterosexism:	discrimination or prejudice against gay people on the assumption that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation.
heterosexual privilege:	the many advantages that heterosexuals enjoy simply for their sexual orientation not being LGBTQ+.
hidden curriculum:	the unofficial and often unintended social and cultural messages that students learn in school.
homicide:	the killing of one individual by another.
homosexuality:	characteristic of being sexually or romantically attracted exclusively to one's own sex or gender.
hookup culture:	a casual sexual encounter without emotional or romantic expectations.
household:	a house and its occupants regarded as a unit.
human-animal bonds:	also known as HABs; The shared ideals and beliefs between a human and an animal that result in a mutually beneficial relationship for both the human and animal.
human-animal interaction:	also known as HAI; Any interaction between a human and an animal, wild or domesticated, in or out of society.
human-animal relationships:	also known as HARs; the result of human-animal interactions and human-animal bonds that develop over time, creating a mutually beneficial relationship for both the human and animal members that each upholds through action and ideology.
identity:	the innate sense of self for who people are as individuals as well as peoples' sense of self within the larger whole of society.

immigration:	when people move to a new country, usually because they were forced to relocated due to conflicts or disasters.
imperialism:	a policy of extending a country's power and influence through diplomacy or military force.
income:	money that comes into a family or household from a variety of sources, such as earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, social security, pension, or retirement income, interest, and dividends.
infant mortality rate:	the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births.
institutional discrimination:	discrimination based on policies.
Jim Crow:	the system of legal discrimination through racialized segregation that existed in the U.S. from the Emancipation Proclamation of 1865 to the landmark civil rights legislation of the late 1960s.
labor force:	the segment of the population either employed or actively seeking employment.
liberation theology:	the combination of religious principles and political ideologies or campaigns to attempt to cause social change.
life expectancy:	the average age to which people can be expected to live.
male privilege:	the system of advantages that are available to men solely on the basis of their sex.
Medicaid:	a public health insurance program for some people or families with limited incomes and resources.
medical tourism:	a global industry that involves traveling to obtain medical care.

medicalization:	defining or labeling behaviors and conditions as medical problems.
medicine:	the science or practice of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease.
megachurch:	a bureaucratic organization with a large number of members who controls societal power, influence, and ideologies.
mental illness:	refers collectively to all mental disorders, which includes anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and more. These are described as sustained patterns of abnormal thinking, mood, and/or behaviors.
meritocracy:	a social system in which individuals get ahead and earn rewards based on their individual efforts and abilities.
migration:	in regards to animals; seasonal movement from one region to another.
migration:	movement of people from one place to another with the intention of settling either permanently or temporarily at a new location.
military-industrial complex:	a network of individuals and institutions involved in the production of weapons and military technologies.
minority groups:	a category of people with unequal access to positions of power, prestige, and wealth in a society and who tend to be targets of prejudice and discrimination.
monogamy:	marriage between two partners.
monotheism:	a form of religion in which members believe in and worship only one god or God.
morbidity paradox:	the phenomenon in which women experience more medical conditions and disability during their lives but unexpectedly live longer than men.

mountaintop removal:	a process of mining where the tops of mountains are dynamited and removed to access coal seams below.
nuclear family:	a married couple and their young children living by themselves under one roof.
nursing homes:	private institutions that provide residential accommodations with healthcare to elderly individuals.
outsourcing:	a practice in which a business subcontracts with a third party to provide business services.
pandemic:	a worldwide disease outbreak.
patriarchy:	a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded.
political polarization:	a clear division of political attitudes towards extreme ideologies.
pollution:	the contaminants found in natural environments that cause adverse changes.
polytheism:	a form of religion in which members believe in and worship more than one god or God.
population change:	the population size difference between the end and the beginning of a given time.
post-traumatic stress disorder:	a condition of persistent mental and emotional stress occurring as a result of psychological shock.
poverty:	deficiencies in necessary material goods or desirable qualities, including economic, social, political, and cultural.
poverty thresholds:	measures of poverty used by the U.S Census Bureau that take into account age, family size, and number of children in a household.

Prejudice:	refers to a set of negative attitudes, beliefs, and judgments about whole categories of people because of their perceived race and/or ethnicity as well as additional factors, such as religion and sexual orientation.
prescription drug abuse:	any intentional use of a medication with intoxicating properties outside of a physician's prescription for a genuine condition.
primary sector:	the sector of the economy centered on farming, fishing, and the extraction of raw materials.
private health insurance:	health insurance plans that are marketed by the private health insurance industry as opposed to government-run insurance companies.
probation:	the conditional release of an offender who, for a specific period and subject to certain conditions, remains under court supervision in the community.
public housing:	federally subsidized housing that is owned and operated by local public housing authorities.
public protest:	a public expression of an objection towards an action or idea; typically, a political one.
race:	category of people who share certain inherited characteristics.
racialization:	being caricatured with exaggerated features in popular media.
racism:	the belief that certain racial or ethnic groups are inferior to one's own.
radicalization:	the action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues.
recession:	a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy and lasting for at least 6 months.

religion:	all of the beliefs and practices related to spiritual and sacred concerns in life.
religious belief:	an idea, belief, or value that individuals hold to be true related to spiritual and sacred concerns.
ritual:	an action that is completed to hold a specific symbolic value and purpose.
salary:	financial compensation paid on a monthly or bimonthly basis and not directly tied to the number of hours worked.
school choice:	parents have the opportunity to choose the schools their child(ren) will attend for elementary and secondary education beyond what they are assigned by their district or community.
second shift:	unpaid housework and childcare done primarily by women, in addition to paid work outside the home.
secondary sector:	the sector of the economy that includes manufacturing and other activities that produce material goods.
service sector:	the sector of the economy that provides services such as education, healthcare, and government.
sex:	biological traits that distinguish males from females.
sex roles:	a set of expectations attached to a particular sex category.
sex segregation:	a physical and spatial separation by sex without any connotation of illegal discrimination.
Sexism:	a belief in traditional gender role stereotypes and the inherent inequality between men and women.
sexual behavior:	how individual people choose to express their sexuality through action.

sexual orientation:	a person's preference for sexual relationships with individuals of the other sex, same sex, both sexes, or neither sex.
social bond:	the bond between individuals and the social order that constrains some individuals from violating social norms.
social condemnation:	rejection of someone's behavior or trait by a social group.
social institutions:	an interrelated system of social roles and social norms organized around the satisfaction of an important social need.
social mobility:	any government system that provides monetary assistance to people with inadequate or no income.
social security:	any government system that provides monetary assistance to people with inadequate or no income.
social stratification:	the differentiation of a given population into hierarchically organized classes.
socialism:	an economic system in which the means of production are collectively owned, usually by the government.
socialization:	the activity of mixing socially with others.
socialization:	the process of transferring norms and values to future generations.
socioeconomic status:	a person's position in society is based on the level of educational attainment, occupation, and income of that person or that person's household.
stereotypes:	simplified, mistaken generalizations about people because of their race and/or ethnicity.
sustainable development:	the balancing point at which all human beings can live healthy, equitable, and peaceful lives without degrading our natural environment.

sweatshops:	work environments that are characterized by less than minimum wage pay, excessively long hours of work, unsafe or inhumane conditions, or abusive treatment.
terrorism:	the unlawful use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims.
tertiary deviance:	a form of deviance where individuals perform deviant actions to change the social perception of the action on a larger scale.
totemism:	a generalized belief in power and spiritual presence within nature and organic life.
transnational crimes:	a crime event that is not limited to a single country.
triple burden:	the tendency for women to work longer than men due to stereotyped roles, including work, working at home, and being involved in the community.
unemployment:	a widespread availability of paid work that is unoccupied by members of society.
uniform crime report:	a program that compiles official U.S. data on crime.
wage:	a sum of money paid on an hourly basis.
war:	a state of armed conflict between different nations or states or different groups within a nation or state.
war on drugs:	global campaign for drug prohibition, military aid, and military intervention to reduce the illegal drug trade.
wealth:	assets or net worth (the difference between the value of assets and the amount of debt) for an individual, family, or household.
White privilege:	the often unseen or unacknowledged benefits that members of the majority group receive in a society unequally structured by race.

white-collar crime: financially motivated, nonviolent crime committed by individuals, businesses, and government professionals.

working poor: individuals who spend at least 27 weeks per year in the labor force but whose income falls below the poverty level as set by the federal government.