Course Title: Understanding Social Problems in Hong Kong

Aims and Objective

This course is intended to be a common core course which aims at helping students to describe, understand and critically analyze the phenomenon of social problems in Hong Kong by

- Introducing multiple perspectives that seek to describe and explain different social problems;
- Explaining concepts and methodologies commonly adopted in the studies of social problems in Hong Kong;
- Identifying various contending social issues that are related to the study of social problems;
- Comparing different causes of social problems under different perspectives.

Intended Learning Outcomes of the Course

On completion of the course, students should be able to

ILO1. explain social science concepts and theoretical perspectives that are related to the study of social problems;
ILO2. describe different social problems in Hong Kong as covered in the course;
ILO3. analyse how different factors like cultural values, social institutions, government policy, individual psychology etc. lead to occurrence of social problems in Hong Kong;
ILO4. conduct reflective and analytical thinking on Hong Kong society through the study of social problems covered in the syllabus.

Syllabus

1. The challenge of studying social problems

   - Difficulties in defining social problems
   - What student can do for social problems?

2. Youth problem

   - Social construction of youth and youth problems
   - Competing ways of seeing youth problem – youth problem or problem youth?

3. Social structure and culture

   - Structure, function, structural stress, and culture
   - Individual misbehavior or mistakes of the society – how does the way we organized society cause deviant behaviours and social problems?
4. Poverty and welfare abuses

- Conceptualizing poverty and its measurement – absolute poverty, relative poverty, social exclusion and poverty line
- Competing understanding on welfare abuses and related discussion – culture of poverty, dependence culture or low intelligence quotient?

5. Government policy, power and labeling

- Social welfare policy in Hong Kong, budget deficit and “CSSA feeds the lazy”
- If not moralistic condemnation, then what? Power and labeling strategy behind the move of government.

6. Marginal workers

- Unemployment, underemployment, poor workers and casual workers
- Segmentation of labour market, dual labour market and casualization of labour force in Hong Kong

7. Capitalism and labour market

- The system of private property, capitalist mode of production and exploitation
- What explain the worsening income inequality – the lack of education credential or skills on the part of workers? Or worker’s lack of bargaining power inherent in the capitalist system and further worsened by economic restructuring?

8. Domestic violence

- Understanding domestic violence – situational violence or intimate terrorism
- Trends and statistics in HK, risk factors and government measures

9. Gender and male dominance

- Sex, gender, sexuality, gender role, gender socialization, and gender performativity
- What explains male’s violence against female? Psychology, culture, or stress in social system?

Assessment

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<th>Type of Assessment (Weighting)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous Assessment (100%)</td>
<td>Tutorial Participation (10%)</td>
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<td>Discussion Papers (40%)</td>
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<td>Quiz (25%)</td>
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<td>Group Presentation (25%)</td>
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Pre-requisite(s)

Nil
Required and Recommended Reading

Suggested Reading:

19. 邵家臻: 《逆構青年》 (香港: 香港政策透視，2001)
20. 黃洪：〈香港勞工的邊緣化與勞工政策〉 收於陳錦華、王志錚編: 《香港社會政策評論》 (香港: 中文大學出版社，2004)
23. 呂大樂: 《四代香港人》 (香港: 進一步多媒體，2007)
24. 謝均才編 :《我們的地方，我們的時間：香港社會新編 - Our place, our time: a new introduction to Hong Kong Society》 (香港: 香港牛津大學出版社，2002)