Understanding Social Problems

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To Margaret Ann Mooney, wife, mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, and great-grandmother.
You have enriched all of our lives. Rest in peace Mom.
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Preface

Understanding Social Problems is intended for use in a college-level sociology course. We recognize that many students enrolled in undergraduate sociology classes are not sociology majors. Thus, we have designed our text with the aim of inspiring students—no matter what their academic major or future life path may be—to care about the social problems affecting people throughout the world. In addition to providing a sound theoretical and research basis for sociology majors, Understanding Social Problems also speaks to students who are headed for careers in business, psychology, health care, social work, criminal justice, and the nonprofit sector, as well as to those pursuing degrees in education, fine arts, and the humanities or to those who are “undecided.” Social problems, after all, affect each and every one of us, directly or indirectly. And everyone—whether a leader in business or politics, a stay-at-home parent, or a student—can become more mindful of how his or her actions (or inactions) perpetuate or alleviate social problems. We hope that Understanding Social Problems not only informs but also inspires, planting seeds of social awareness that will grow no matter what academic, occupational, and life path students choose.

New to this Edition

In the eighth edition of Understanding Social Problems, Chapter 12, previously titled “Population Growth and Urbanization,” has been changed to “Population Growth and Aging.” Increased attention to mental health problems in Chapter 2 (previously titled “Problems of Illness and Health Care”) is reflected in the new title of the chapter—“Physical and Mental Health and Health Care.” Most of the opening vignettes in the eighth edition are new, as are many of the What Do You Think? sections, which are designed to engage students in critical thinking. Many of the chapter features (The Human Side, Social Problems Research Up Close, and Self and Society) have been updated or replaced with new content, and we have also added new photo essays, including one depicting the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and Fukushima nuclear power plant disasters. In this eighth edition, an exciting new feature called Animals in Society makes its debut. This boxed feature, found in five chapters, presents issues, problems, policies, and/or programs concerning animals within the context of the social problem discussed in that chapter. This new feature reflects the increasing scholarly attention to the study of the relationship between animals and humans, and the inclusion of Animals and Society as a special section of the American Sociological Association. As more than half of U.S. households include companion animals, animal-related topics are likely to appeal to student interest.

The eighth edition has retained pedagogical features that students and professors find useful, including a running glossary, list of key terms, chapter review, and Test Yourself sections. Finally, each chapter has new photos and new and updated figures and tables, as well as new and revised material, detailed as follows.

Chapter 1 (Thinking about Social Problems) features new examples of student activism, four new What Do You Think? sections, a new opening vignette, and additional “reasons to read this book.” An updated Self and Society feature presents the newest statistics available on U.S. freshman attitudes toward select social problems, and the Social Problems Research Up Close feature includes new data on the sexual behavior of high school students.
**Chapter 2** (Physical and Mental Health and Health Care) has a new title to reflect expanded coverage of mental health issues, including new data on the mental well-being of college students. This chapter includes updated information on maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, and obesity, and new information on antibiotic resistance as a public health threat, health insurance coverage, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s first report on health disparities and inequalities, new data on life expectancy of U.S. Hispanics, and current research comparing the U.S. health care system with 29 other OECD countries. New **What Do You Think?** sections ask students what they think about (1) how their views about having children would be affected if they (or their partner) had a one in 31 chance of dying from a pregnancy- or childbirth-related cause; (2) proposals to ban the use of tanning beds by minors; and (3) a Texas law that resulted in an HIV-infected man being sentenced to 35 years in prison for spitting on someone because his saliva is considered a “deadly weapon.” Finally, a new **Animals and Society** feature looks at “Improving Mental Health through Animal-Assisted Therapy.”

**Chapter 3** (Alcohol and Other Drugs) features all new data from the most recent reports available on alcohol and drug use including the World Drug Report, the Monitoring the Future survey, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), and the 2011 World Health Organization’s report on the link between poverty and the global tobacco epidemic. This revised chapter now includes a discussion of the “Portugal Experiment,” a section on drug courts, updated information on the economic costs of alcohol and other drugs, data from the Obama administration’s report on the prescription drug crisis in America, and the *Ending the Tobacco Problem: A Blueprint for the Nation*. There are also several new **What Do You Think?** sections on such topics as the legalization of marijuana and Spice (K2), whether or not there should be a health insurance “discount” for non-smokers, and a new drinking game called “icing.”

**Chapter 4** (Crime and Social Control) includes extensive updated statistics on official crime rates, criminal victimization, prisoners, and the death penalty. This revised chapter has a greater emphasis on white-collar crimes, and covers a number of timely and controversial issues, such as gun control, prison overcrowding, the Tucson shootings, and crime-related issues before the Supreme Court. We have added a new section, “Crime and Victimization,” and have expanded the discussions of fear of crime, prevention of juvenile delinquency and adult criminality, gangs, and capital punishment. New or updated **What Do You Think?** sections invite students to think about issues related to piracy and American homicides, proposals to make toy guns illegal, the constitutionality of banning violent video games, life sentences for offenders who killed when they were under the age 18, genetic factors that contribute to violent crime, and organ donation by prisoners on death row.

**Chapter 5** (Family Problems) includes updated information on changes and trends in U.S. families, including those related to cohabitation, singlehood and age at first marriage, and births to unmarried women. New figures present data on the percentage of U.S. adults who have step-relatives, and the percentage of women and men in five countries who agree that wife beating is acceptable if a wife argues or refuses to have sex with her husband. This revised chapter includes a new section, “Public Attitudes toward Changes in Family Life.” We have updated the discussion of parental alienation, and have included a new table on parental alienation behaviors and a new **The Human Side** feature, “Recollections from Adult Children of Parental Alienation.” A new **What Do You Think?** section asks why research findings showed that women of color with higher socioeconomic status were more likely to stay in abusive relationships than those with lower socioeconomic status. Finally, this chapter includes new research on three subtypes of male abusers and an **Animals and Society** feature that examines the issue of “Pets and Domestic Violence.”

**Chapter 6** (Poverty and Economic Inequality) includes recent data on U.S. and global income, wealth inequality, CEO compensation, corporate taxes, homelessness and hate crimes against the homeless, and welfare. This revised chapter presents a new measure
of poverty—the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)—as well as the Basic Economic Security Tables for the United States, which provide realistic income levels needed to meet basic living needs. A new The Human Side feature describes the experience of “being poor.”

Since the last edition of Understanding Social Problems was published, the United States and other parts of the world have experienced a prolonged economic downturn. In this revised edition, Chapter 7 (Work and Unemployment) provides updated coverage of the global economic crisis and the extent of unemployment in the United States and around the world. The Self and Society feature, “How Do Your Spending Habits Change in Hard Economic Times?” has been updated with recent Harris Poll data. This revised chapter includes new research on the effects of poor-quality jobs on mental health and an updated section on employment concerns of recent college grads. New Bureau of Labor statistics on fatal and nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses are presented, and a new photo essay looks at child labor in U.S. agriculture. A new The Human Side feature titled “A Worker’s Grueling Day” describes a typical day for a worker at a turkey processing plant. New topics include the International Labor Organization’s Global Jobs Pact and anti-union legislation in Wisconsin.

Chapter 8 (Problems in Education) includes all new statistics from a variety of sources, including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Digest of Education, the Children’s Defense Fund, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the 2011 Quality Counts report, and the Program for the International Student Assessment. This revised chapter emphasizes the impact of the economy on education, teachers, and college students, and describes Race to the Top spending, President Obama’s “Blueprint for Education,” and the Federal National Educational Technology Plan. There is a new The Human Side feature titled, “Dear Mr. President.” This chapter also includes a discussion of value-added measurement, as well as recent laws, policies, and proposed legislation in the area of education, including an updated section on common core standards and teacher accountability. The chapter also includes four new What Do You Think? sections that ask the following: (1) Is there a need for bilingual education? (2) Are males and females “hardwired” differently? (3) Should teachers’ evaluations be made public? and (4) Why are so many college students failing to learn?

Chapter 9 (Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration) includes new data from the 2010 census on the racial and ethnic composition of the United States. This revised chapter also presents new data on the foreign-born U.S. population and on interracial/interethnic marriages in the United States. A new table on racial identification of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States is presented along with an expanded discussion of the U.S. Hispanic/Latino population.

The section, “Myths about Immigration and Immigrants” has been updated and expanded, and the section on immigration policies contains a new discussion of Arizona’s immigration law SB 1070. Updated information about hate groups includes a new table on hate group chapters in the United States and two new key terms: nativist extremist groups and Islamophobia. New or updated What Do You Think? sections ask (1) if readers think of Barack Obama mostly as a black person, or mostly as a person of mixed race; (2) if undocumented immigrants who report crimes or commit acts of bravery to save lives should be deported; and (3) if undocumented immigrants should qualify for in-state college tuition.

New to Chapter 10 (Gender Inequality) are added sections on the complexity of the concept of gender, including a discussion of the “two-spirited person” and a photo essay titled, “The Gender Continuum.” The Human Side feature is new, and there is a greater emphasis on transgender issues. This revised chapter also has a new section on sexual violence on campus, a new opening vignette, new figures and tables, and updated information from the World Economic Forum, the AAUW, the Global Gender Gap Report, the ACLU, the Global Policy Forum, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and the State of the World’s Children. There are six new What Do You Think? sections, facilitating discussions on bacha posh, i.e., girls in Afghanistan who dress like boys so they may also enjoy the privileges that accompany being male, liability in sex
discrimination cases, support for male versus female athletic programs, and domestic violence as a human rights violation.

In this eighth edition, Chapter 11 (Sexual Orientation and the Struggle for Equality) features a new The Human Side, a new Social Problems Research Up Close, and a new Self and Society. There are six new What Do You Think? sections, three new figures, and two new tables. The revised chapter includes updated discussions of marriage equality, economic discrimination, coming out, the impact of media on LGBT individuals, and a new section, “Prejudice against Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals.” A number of new concepts and terms are introduced in this updated chapter, including minority stress theory, oppression, privilege, sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE), gender expression, gender identity, contact hypothesis, and LGBTQI. The chapter also includes recent legal decisions and bills such as the Respect for Marriage Act (RMA), the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, and the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Chapter 12, formerly “Population Growth and Urbanization,” has been renamed “Population Growth and Aging.” Statistics on population growth projections have been updated and a new Animals and Society feature discusses “Pet Overpopulation in the United States.” New sections on aging focus on global and U.S. trends in aging, the social and economic challenges of growing elderly populations, and retirement concerns of older Americans and the role of Social Security. The revised chapter examines ageism—prejudice and discrimination against the elderly—and presents the Ageism Survey in the Self and Society feature. A new Social Problems Research Up Close feature describes the Elder Care Study. New key terms in the chapter include ageism, ageism by invisibility, baby boomers, Family Support Agreement, sandwich generation, and Social Security.

Chapter 13 (Environmental Problems) includes the following new terms and information about tar sands and tar sands oil, fracking, and pinkwashing, and Green Revolving Funds in institutions of higher education. This revised chapter also includes an updated and expanded discussion of nuclear power and a new photo essay titled the “Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig Explosion and Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Accident.” A new Self and Society feature assesses attitudes toward government interventions to reduce global warming.

The revised Chapter 14 (Science and Technology) highlights new information on Web 3.0, telepresence robots, U.S. and world Internet penetration rates, media multitasking, the “quantified self,” the Semantic Web, learning health systems, massive security breaches, and a new discussion of the global digital divide. The chapter includes updates on litigation between Google, Microsoft, Novell, and the U.S. government; the Myriad Genetics case; and e-mail privacy case decisions. Five new What Do You Think? sections deal with the topics of robots, self-tracking, texting in class, “womb lynching,” and Wikileaks. There are two new tables (Attitudes toward Science, and Attitudes about Abortion by Political Affiliation and Religion) and four new figures (Online Activities by Generation, Public Assessment of Scientific Research, People On- and Offline by Country, and the Impact of Media Consumption on 8- to 18-Year Olds). The new Animals and Society feature debates the issue of using animals in scientific research.

In the revised Chapter 15 (Conflict, War, and Terrorism), new topics include the withdrawal from Iraq, the “Arab Spring,” the end of civil war in Sri Lanka, the killing of Osama bin Laden and Muammar Gaddafi, repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” militant groups in Pakistan, and the legality of detaining enemy combatants at Guantanamo. The chapter has a new Self and Society feature: “The Nuclear Bomb Quiz.” There is also a new The Human Side feature called “A Date with Tuesday” and a new Animals and Society feature titled “The Unsung Heroes among Us.” New What Do You Think? sections examine issues related to women in combat positions, gays in the military, release of documents through Wikileaks, and targeted killing. This updated chapter presents new statistics on military spending, military suicides, attacks and deaths from terrorism, nuclear talks with Iran, and the killings at Fort Hood. New and updated information for this chapter comes from the latest available data from the United Nations, the Department of Defense, SIPRI, Office of Management and Budget, FAS, Pew Research, the U.S. Department of State, the National Counterterrorism Center, the White House, branches of the military, and NATO.
Features and Pedagogical Aids

We have integrated a number of features and pedagogical aids into the text to help students learn to think about social problems from a sociological perspective. Our mission is to help students think critically about social problems and their implications, and to increase their awareness of how social problems relate to their personal lives.

Exercises and Boxed Features

Animals and Society. New to the eighth edition, a feature called Animals and Society examines issues, problems, policies, and/or programs concerning animals within the context of the social problem discussed in that chapter. In this new feature, we examine the following topics: (1) “Improving Mental Health through Animal-Assisted Therapy” (in Chapter 2—Physical and Mental Health and Health Care); (2) “Pets and Domestic Violence” (in Chapter 5—Family Problems); (3) “Pet Overpopulation in the United States” (in Chapter 12—Population Growth and Aging); (4) “The Use of Animals in Scientific Research” (in Chapter 14—Science and Technology); and (5) “The Unsung Heroes among Us” (in Chapter 15—Conflict, War, and Terrorism).

Self and Society. Each chapter includes a social survey designed to help students assess their own attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, or behaviors regarding some aspect of the social problem under discussion. In Chapter 5 (Family Problems), for example, the “Abusive Behavior Inventory” invites students to assess the frequency of various abusive behaviors in their own relationships. The Self and Society feature in Chapter 3 (Alcohol and Other Drugs) allows students to measure the consequences of their own drinking behavior and compare it to respondents in a national sample, and students can assess their knowledge of nuclear weapons in Chapter 15 (Conflict, War, and Terrorism).

The Human Side. In addition to the Self and Society boxed features, each chapter includes a boxed feature that makes the social problems under discussion more salient by describing personal experiences of individuals who have been affected by them. The Human Side feature in Chapter 4 (Crime and Social Control), for example, describes the horrific consequences of being a victim of rape, and the Human Side feature in Chapter 9 (Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration) describes the experiences of an immigrant day laborer who was victimized by a violent hate crime. Further, in Chapter 11 (Sexual Orientation and the Struggle for Equality), the founder of the “It Gets Better” campaign expresses his outrage at an email he received.

Social Problems Research Up Close. This feature, found in every chapter, presents examples of social science research and illustrates the sociological enterprise, from theory and data collection to findings and conclusions, thus exposing students to various studies and research methods. The Social Problems Research Up Close feature in Chapter 1 discusses social science research, frequently found sections in a research article, and how to read a contingency table. Other Social Problems Research Up Close topics include bullying, job loss in midlife, computer hacking, the changing nature of marriage in America, and two-faced racism.

Photo Essay. Chapter 1 features a photo essay on “Students Making a Difference.” Chapter 2 (Physical and Mental Health and Health Care) includes a photo essay titled “Modern Animal Food Production: Health and Safety Issues,” and “Prison Programs that Work” is in Chapter 4 (Crime and Social Control). In Chapter 6 (Poverty and Economic Inequality), a photo essay covers the topic “Lack of Clean Water and Sanitation among the Poor.” Chapter 7 (Work and Unemployment) includes a photo essay on “Child Labor in U.S. Agriculture,” and a photo essay in Chapter 10 is titled “The Gender Continuum.” Lastly, Chapter 13 (Environmental Problems) depicts the horrors of the “Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig Explosion and Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Accident.”

In-Text Learning Aids

Vignettes. Each chapter begins with a vignette designed to engage students and draw them into the chapter by illustrating the current relevance of the topic under discussion.
For example, Chapter 2 (Physical and Mental Health and Health Care), begins with an account of a man who committed a $1 bank robbery in order to get arrested so he could get the medical care he needed in prison (he had no health insurance and could not afford to pay for medical care). Chapter 9 (Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration) begins with the story of a New Orleans justice of the peace who refused to marry an interracial couple because he doesn’t believe in the “mixing of the races,” and Chapter 15 (Conflict, War, and Terrorism) opens with a portrayal of a young veteran with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

**Key Terms.** Important terms and concepts are highlighted in the text where they first appear. To reemphasize the importance of these words, they are listed at the end of every chapter and are included in the glossary at the end of the text.

**Running Glossary.** This eighth edition continues the running glossary that highlights the key terms in every chapter by putting the key terms and their definitions in the text margins.

**What Do You Think? Sections.** Each chapter contains multiple sections called *What Do You Think?* These sections invite students to use critical thinking skills to answer questions about issues related to the chapter content. For example, one *What Do You Think?* feature in Chapter 3 (Alcohol and other Drugs) asks students “Should marijuana be legalized to raise revenues for ailing state economies?” A *What Do You Think?* feature in Chapter 11 (Sexual Orientation and the Struggle for Equality) asks if banning same-sex marriages is based on religious beliefs, and if that is a violation of the second amendment that separates church and state. In Chapter 12 (Population Growth and Aging), a *What Do You Think?* feature asks readers if birthday cards and jokes that make fun of aging are a form of ageism.

**Glossary.** All key terms are defined in the page margins as well as in the end-of-text glossary.

**Understanding [Specific Social Problem] Sections.** All too often, students, faced with contradictory theories and study results walk away from social problems courses without any real understanding of their causes and consequences. To address this problem, chapter sections titled “Understanding [specific social problem]” cap the body of each chapter just before the chapter summaries. Unlike the chapter summaries, these sections synthesize the material presented in the chapter, summing up the present state of knowledge and theory on the chapter topic.

**Turning to Video** is a new feature found at the end of each chapter in which the authors have selected a video from the list of DVDs found in The Wadsworth Sociology Video Library Vol. I and II. The video highlights key concepts discussed in the chapter.

## Supplements

The eighth edition of *Understanding Social Problems* comes with a full complement of supplements designed with both faculty and students in mind.

### Supplements for the Instructor

**Instructor’s Resource Manual with Test Bank.** This supplement offers instructors learning objectives, key terms, lecture outlines, student projects, classroom activities, Internet and InfoTrac® College Edition exercises, and video suggestions. Test items include multiple-choice and true-false questions with answers and page references, as well as short-answer and essay questions for each chapter. Each multiple-choice item has the question type (factual, applied, or conceptual) indicated. All questions are labeled as new, modified, or pickup, so instructors know if the question is new to this edition of the test bank, modified but picked up from the previous edition of the test bank, or picked up straight from the previous edition of the test bank. Sample syllabi are also included, as well as a resource integration guide, to assist in lesson plan development.
PowerLecture™ and ExamView®. This easy-to-use, one-stop digital library and presentation tool includes the following:

- Preassembled Microsoft® PowerPoint® lecture slides with graphics from the text, making it easy for you to assemble, edit, publish, and present custom lectures for your course.
- ExamView testing software, which includes all the test items from the printed test bank in electronic format, enabling you to create customized tests of up to 250 items that can be delivered in print or online.

Videos. Adopters of Understanding Social Problems have several different video options available with the text.

AIDS in Africa DVD. Southern Africa has been overcome by a pandemic of unparalleled proportions. This documentary series focuses on Namibia, a new democracy, and the many actions that are being taken to control HIV/AIDS there. Included in this series are four documentary films created by the Project Pericles scholars at Elon University.

The Wadsworth Sociology Video Library Vol. I and II. These DVDs drive home the relevance of course topics through short, provocative clips of current and historical events. Perfect for enriching lectures and engaging students in discussion, many of the segments on this volume have been gathered from the BBC Motion Gallery. Ask your Cengage Learning representative for a list of contents.

Supplements for the Student

Study Guide. Each chapter of this critically updated study guide includes a brief chapter outline, learning objectives, key terms, matching exercise, a chapter review fill-in-the-blank exercise, worksheets that students can complete directly in the study guide to help them prepare for exams, Internet activities, InfoTrac College Edition exercises, and a practice test consisting of multiple-choice and true-false questions with answers and page references, as well as short-answer questions and essay questions with page references to enhance and test student understanding of chapter concepts.

Online Resources

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