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Chapter 1: Understanding Social Problems

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The discipline of sociology began on what continent?
   a. North America
   b. South America
   c. Europe
   d. Asia
   e. Australia
   ANS: C
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.1

2. A social problem is any condition that has what kind of consequences?
   a. positive
   b. negative
   c. aggressive
   d. optimistic
   e. dire
   ANS: B
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.1

3. To be considered a social problem, typically how many people must be affected?
   a. over 100
   b. at least a dozen
   c. large numbers
   d. over a handful
   e. 5,000 or more
   ANS: C
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.1

4. The perception that there is a social problem points to what aspect of the definition of a social problem?
   a. objective
   b. subjective
   c. intrinsic
   d. material
   e. optimistic
   ANS: B
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.1

5. The perception aspect of a social problem's existence is at the heart of which sociological viewpoint?

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a. functionalists
b. extremists
c. imagists
d. hypotheticals
e. constructionists
ANS: E
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.1

6. The feminist theory in sociology and other disciplines began in which decade?
a. 1950s
b. 1990s
c. 1920s
d. 1970s
e. 1900s
ANS: D
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.1

7. Which of the following would be considered a social entity?
a. news media
b. social change group
c. politicians
d. policy makers
e. All of the above are true.
ANS: E
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.1

8. What is the name of the second stage of the natural history of a social problem?
a. claims making
b. legitimacy
c. emergence
d. claims renewal
e. alternative strategies
ANS: B
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.1

9. What is the name of the last stage of the natural history of a social problem?
a. claims making
b. legitimacy
c. emergence
d. claims renewal
e. development of alternative strategies
ANS: E
DIF: hard

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REF: Section 1.1

10. A sociological imagination encourages us to
    a. only focus on solutions, not problems.
    b. appreciate social problems from a structural perspective.
    c. view problems from a personal or individual perspective.
    d. change individual behaviors and personality characteristics in order to change society.
    e. disregard an individual's role in society.
    ANS: B
    DIF: medium
    REF: Section 1.2

11. Which of the following is an example of a symbol?
    a. thoughts
    b. laws
    c. words and gestures
    d. theories
    e. All of the above are true.
    ANS: C
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.2

12. The name of the sociologist who distinguished between personal troubles and public issues is:
    a. C. Wright Mills
    b. Pamela Everhurst
    c. B. F. Skinner
    d. C. Calhoun
    e. J. A. Allison
    ANS: A
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.2

13. The term used to appreciate the structural basis for individual problems is called which of the following?
    a. imperative thinking
    b. sociological imagination
    c. implied reasoning
    d. contrary opinion
    e. cognitive dissonance
    ANS: B
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.2

14. According to sociologist, William Ryan, whom do most Americans blame for poverty and unemployment?

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a. victims
b. society
c. government
d. foreigners
e. None of the above are true.
ANS: A
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.2

15. Which of the following would be an example of a societal explanation for why women have eating disorders?
a. They don't exercise enough.
b. They eat fatty foods.
c. They watch too much TV.
d. Thin women are seen as more attractive.
e. All of the above are true.
ANS: D
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.2

16. Which of the following would be considered a major assumption of the functionalism theory in sociology?
a. society has pervasive inequality
b. far reaching change is needed
c. social stability is necessary for a strong society
d. people construct their roles as they act
e. symbols define interactions
ANS: C
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.2

17. Gradual change in society is preferred by which type(s) of sociology theorists?
a. functionalists
b. conflict theory
c. symbolic interactionism
d. functionalists and conflict theory
e. conflict theory and symbolic interactionism
ANS: A
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.2

18. Functionalism grew out of what two major revolutions?
a. French and American
b. French and Industrial
c. Russian and French
d. English and French
e. American and Industrial

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ANS: B
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.2

19. The term that refers to people learning the rules of society is:
    a. normalization
    b. indoctrination
    c. adherence
    d. socialization
    e. domination
    ANS: D
    DIF: easy
    REF: Section 1.2

20. Which of the following institutions would be considered important to the functionalist?
    a. family
    b. church
    c. education
    d. All of the above are true.
    e. None of the above are true.
    ANS: D
    DIF: easy
    REF: Section 1.2

21. Which of the following is (are) examples of functional aspects of crime as a social problem?
    a. prison guards
    b. police
    c. prosecutors
    d. detectives
    e. All of the above are true.
    ANS: E
    DIF: easy
    REF: Section 1.2

22. Which person below would be considered a proponent of conflict theory?
    a. Adam Smith
    b. Karl Marx
    c. Franklin Roosevelt
    d. Margaret Thatcher
    e. John F. Kennedy
    ANS: B
    DIF: medium
    REF: Section 1.2

23. What does the word bourgeoisie mean?

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a. ruling class
b. working class
c. government officials
d. people living in poverty
e. foreigners
ANS: A
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.2

24. Which theory most supports social change to reduce inequality?
a. functionalist
b. conflict
c. feminist
d. symbolic interactionism
e. None of the above are true.
ANS: B
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.2

25. Who was the major collaborator of Karl Marx?
a. Joseph Stalin
b. Vladimir Lenin
c. Joseph Schumpeter
d. Igor Martin
e. Friedrich Engels
ANS: E
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.2

26. What is the term used to describe one's awareness of placement in the social structure and the interests in arising from this placement?
a. class consciousness
b. proletariat
c. self-awareness
d. functionalism
e. social climbing
ANS: A
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.2

27. Feminist theory is considered part of which of three major theories?
a. functionalist
b. symbolic interactionism
c. conflict
d. conflict and functionalist
e. symbolic interactionism and functionalist
ANS: C

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DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.2

28. Shaking hands is normally considered a gesture of:
    a. distaste
    b. friendship
    c. acceptance
    d. dislike
    e. neutrality
    ANS: B
    DIF: easy
    REF: Section 1.2

29. That social problems result from the interaction of individuals is the belief of which of the following theories?
    a. conflict theory
    b. functionalist theory
    c. conflict and functionalist theory
    d. symbolic interactionism and functionalist theory
    e. symbolic interactionism theory
    ANS: E
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.2

30. Which of the following theories would consider a bank robbery to have positive aspects?
    a. conflict and functionalist theory
    b. symbolic interactionism and functionalist theory
    c. conflict theory
    d. functionalist theory
    e. symbolic interactionism theory
    ANS: D
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.2

31. Which of the following theories would look at a bank robbery and demand changes in society's economic structure?
    a. symbolic interactionism theory
    b. functionalist theory
    c. conflict theory
    d. symbolic interactionism and functionalist theory
    e. conflict and functionalist theory
    ANS: C
    DIF: medium
    REF: Section 1.2

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32. Which of the following theories would try to prevent bank robberies by having after school programs?
    a. conflict and functionalist theory
    b. symbolic interactionism and functionalist theory
    c. conflict theory
    d. functionalist theory
    e. symbolic interactionism theory
    ANS: E
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.2

33. Large-scale unemployment in early 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrates what Mills referred to as a:
    a. personal trouble
    b. public issue
    c. subjective concern
    d. objective condition
    e. None of the above are true.
    ANS: B
    DIF: medium
    REF: Section 1.2

34. The meaning of handshakes changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This example best illustrates which theoretical perspective?
    a. functionalist theory
    b. conflict theory
    c. symbolic interactionism theory
    d. functionalist theory and conflict theory
    e. conflict theory and symbolic interactionism theory
    ANS: C
    DIF: medium
    REF: Section 1.2

35. What theorists believe that social order is possible because people learn what various symbols mean and apply these meanings to different situations?
    a. interactionalists
    b. functionalists
    c. conflict theorists
    d. feminists
    e. constructionists
    ANS: A
    DIF: easy
    REF: Section 1.2

36. An example of how a social problem related to employment has changed for the better is:
    a. less unemployment

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b. eight-hour workday
c. fewer jobs
d. fewer employers
e. more offshore jobs
ANS: B
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.3

37. Which of the following movements does the text say improved America?
a. women's
b. labor
c. gay rights
d. environmental
e. All of the above are true.
ANS: E
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.3

38. Which former president's wife said: "It is more intelligent to hope rather than to fear"?
a. Jacqueline Kennedy
b. Lady Bird Johnson
c. Eleanor Roosevelt
d. Hillary Clinton
e. Bess Truman
ANS: C
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.3

39. Which of the following is a major disadvantage of administering a survey?
a. not enough subjects
b. inexpensive
c. repetitive
d. questions are confusing
e. time consuming
ANS: E
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.4

40. Using experiments in research is particularly good to determine
a. cause and effect.
b. randomness of a variable.
c. if large numbers of people are affected.
d. detailed information about participants.
e. if existing data is still true.
ANS: A

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DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.4

41. What is a subset drawn from the larger population in which every unit in the population has the same chance of being included in the subset?
    a. snowball sample
    b. response rate
    c. random sample
    d. fixed sample
    e. equality sample
    ANS: C
    DIF: medium
    REF: Section 1.4

42. What is the major downside of a face-to-face survey?
    a. expensive
    b. inaccuracy
    c. too much detail
    d. length
    e. few participants
    ANS: A
    DIF: medium
    REF: Section 1.4

43. What is a major advantage of using existing data to do research?
    a. details about lots of people
    b. always available
    c. randomness
    d. saves time
    e. recentness
    ANS: D
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.4

44. What is a major disadvantage of the observation research method?
    a. randomness
    b. rich in detail
    c. hard to generalize
    d. expensive
    e. many people can be included
    ANS: C
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.4

45. Experiments are used frequently in which social science discipline?
    a. history
    b. government

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c. psychology
d. English
e. economics
ANS: C
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.4

46. Frequently, there are two groups of subjects used in experiments. One group is called the experimental group. What is the other called?
a. control
b. bidivisional
c. null
d. optional
e. set aside
ANS: A
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.4

47. Another name for observational research is:
a. quick-look research
b. participation research
c. field research
d. group research
e. integrated research
ANS: C
DIF: hard
REF: Section 1.4

48. A major source of existing data used by sociologists to study issues such as poverty, unemployment, and illness?
a. City of New York
b. Major League baseball
c. New York Times
d. Major League soccer
e. U.S. Census
ANS: E
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.4

49. What is the first step in the scientific method process?
a. test data
b. gather data
c. formulate hypothesis
d. draw conclusions
e. present the result
ANS: C
DIF: hard

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REF: Section 1.4

50. What is the overriding principle of scientific research called?
    a. fundamentalism
    b. subjectivity
    c. quantitatively
    d. objectivity
    e. randomness
    ANS: D
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.4

51. If a sociologist were doing research about crime, which data source would they *not* use?
    a. courts
    b. prisons
    c. hospitals
    d. attorneys
    e. meat-packing plants
    ANS: E
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.4

52. Where do most experiments take place?
    a. field
    b. laboratory
    c. home
    d. office
    e. None of the above are true.
    ANS: B
    DIF: easy
    REF: Section 1.4

53. The beauty of a random sample is that it
    a. is easy to collect data.
    b. allows for generalization.
    c. creates a useable database for the future.
    d. eliminates any chance of errors.
    e. is easier to write questions.
    ANS: B
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.4

TRUE /FALSE

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1. Not all efforts to turn a condition or behavior into a social problem succeed. If these efforts do not succeed, a social problem does not emerge.
   ANS: T
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.1

2. Most social problems come into being from top-down efforts.
   ANS: F
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.1

3. If millions are people are out of work that would be considered a private problem.
   ANS: F
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.1

4. The social constructionist perspective suggests that both objective and subjective components of social problems are always aligned with one another.
   ANS: F
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.1

5. Most social problems begin with bottom-up efforts from social change groups.
   ANS: T
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.1

6. There are more eating disorders among women than men.
   ANS: T
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.2

7. Radical feminists hold that gender discrimination is evident in all societies.
   ANS: T
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.2

8. Both symbolic interactionism and social constructionist theory rely heavily on perception.
   ANS: T
   DIF: hard
   REF: Section 1.2

9. Social Problems are persistent.
   ANS: T
   DIF: easy

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REF: Section 1.3

10. The United States has the lowest poverty rate of all the wealthy democratic nations.
    ANS: F
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.3

11. The most common method to gather data is a survey.
    ANS: T
    DIF: hard
    REF: Section 1.4

COMPLETION

1. _____ sociology is aimed at helping people with their social, economic, and environmental hardships.
   ANS: Service
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.1

2. During the late 1800s, medical authorities and other experts advised that females should not attend college as it would disrupt their _____.
   ANS: menstrual cycles
   DIF: medium
   Section 1.1

3. C. Wright Mills felt that many private troubles are best understood as _____.
   ANS: public issues
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.1

4. _____ is used to describe our ties to other people and to social institutions such as religion and the family.
   ANS: Social integration
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.2

5. If you are a member of the _____ you are part of the working class.
   ANS: proletariat
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.2

6. People who answer questionnaires are called _____.
   ANS: respondents
   DIF: easy

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REF: Section 1.4

7. The percentage of a sample that agrees to be included in a study, usually a survey, is called the _____.
   ANS: response rate
   DIF: medium
   REF: Section 1.4

8. __ _____observation is field research in which the researcher merely observes a group or setting.
   ANS: Nonparticipant
   DIF: easy
   REF: Section 1.4

SHORT ANSWER

1. Provide examples of how social problems have changed for the better in the United States over the past century.

ANS: Working conditions have improved with the eight-hour day and minimum wage. Women and people of color have made incredible advances since the 1960s
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.3

2. List the four stages of Social Problem Development.

ANS: Emergence and claims making, Legitimacy, Renewed claims making, and Development of alternative strategies
DIF: Easy
REF: Section 1.1

3. What are the major ways to conduct research on social problems?

ANS: There are four major research methods: surveys, experiments, observation and using existing data. They all have advantages and disadvantages that must be taken into account by the researcher before conducting the research.
DIF: Easy
REF: Section 1.4

4. Explain why it is more likely that social scientists let their feelings bias their research as opposed to physical scientists.

ANS: Most of the research done by researchers in the areas of natural or physical sciences doesn't lend itself to political or social beliefs. Astronomy, geology or oceanology are studies of physical items. Social scientists are usually concerned about problems that affect humans thus they are more likely to have opinions, which can color their conclusions.
DIF: Medium
REF: Section 1.4

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ESSAYS

1. Discuss the analogy of whether noise is made by a tree falling in the uninhabited forest and the social constructionism belief that a social problem is not really a problem unless it is perceived by large numbers of people to be a social problem.

ANS: Problems do exist before large numbers of people recognize them as such. For example, violence against women has always occurred in history and in most civilizations but it was only recently that large numbers of people and policy makers agreed that policy measures should be enacted to curb and punish these abuses. But, obviously, to the women who experienced these abuses before they were widely recognized, it was a serious problem even if it was not generally agreed that it was a social problem.
DIF: Medium
REF: Section 1.1

2. Discuss the natural history of social problems by explaining their four stages.

ANS: The first stage is the emergence or claims making stage where a social entity begins to call attention to a particular type of behavior. Many times, the social entity tries to get the attention of elected officials or media representatives. The second stage is known as the legitimacy stage because the problem has been accepted as real and needing attention. Next, the social change groups renew their claims making and request more changes to resolve the problem. Finally, the last stage is the development of alternative strategies to solve the situation due to a less than adequate response from the government.
DIF: Medium
REF: Section 1.2

3. Discuss how Durkheim likens the speed of social changes to changes that occur in the human body.

   ANS: In our bodies, any sudden, rapid change is a sign of danger to our health. If we break a bone in one of our legs, we have trouble walking; if we lose sight in both our eyes, we can no longer see. Slow changes, such as the growth of our hair and our nails, are fine and even normal, but sudden changes like those just described are obviously troublesome.
   DIF: Easy
   REF: Section 1.2

4. Discuss which theoretical perspective conservatives and liberals in the United States would most likely adopt as representing their beliefs

ANS: Conservatives would be more likely to be Functionalists since this theory believes in a strong society with only incremental change. Social stability is brought about by strong support for institutions such as religion and the family. On the other hand, liberals are more concerned about the inequities in society and believe that sudden and dramatic change is necessary and required at times. Thus, they are probably more likely to support conflict theory.
DIF: medium
REF: Section 1.2

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5. Discuss how social problems can be and have been changed for the better over the past several decades.

ANS: Through the use of pressure or interest groups, social problems have been identified such as discrimination against women and minorities and brought to the attention of policy makers. As a result, many laws on both the state and federal levels of government have been passed which has made these actions illegal and punishable. For example, women were not allowed into many professions and colleges until this social problem became widely known.
DIF: easy
REF: Section 1.3

6. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the major methods of conducting research on social problems.

ANS: Surveys are excellent instruments if large numbers of people need to be included and generalizations can be made from the data. However, the downside of surveys is that they can be expensive and time consuming. Experiments, if done correctly, can produce convincing data regarding cause and effect but due to the limited number of participants it will be unlikely that generalizations will be valid. Research by observation, also known as field research, can provide excellent detailed information on the participants but again, the results cannot be used to make generalizations. Using existing data such as U.S. Census data is inexpensive, and the data is readily available but there may not be a match with the hypothesis of the research and the data may not be recent.
DIF: hard
Section 1.3)

7. Explain why using college students in social research usually does not result in a good sample for general social research.

ANS: College students are normally of higher income and younger than the population at large so that any research with their participation will usually skewed in that direction. This makes the research and the resulting data less useful to the community at large and therefore its usefulness is also dubious. However, if the purpose of the research is to make generalizations about this particular segment of the population, then the research can be of more interest and value.
DIF: Easy
REF: Section 1.4

8. Discuss the importance of using the scientific method.

ANS: The scientific method requires the researcher to adopt an objective perspective to the research. By starting with a hypothesis or a question to be answered, the researcher is required to gather the data required to answering the question and let the results speak for themselves. This is essential in social research since to do otherwise leads to distrust and disbelief by the audience. Frequently, the purpose of social research is to discover causes of a social problem and to recommend changes and/or improvement. Being objective and fully disclosing the data accumulated is essential to bringing about the change that may be recommended from the research.
DIF: Easy

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REF: Section 1.4

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