

Linda A. Mooney  
David Knox  
Caroline Schacht

# Understanding Social Problems

Third Edition





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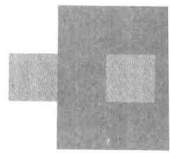
Third Edition

**Linda A. Mooney**

**David Knox**

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*East Carolina University*



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# Preface

Violence in the home, school, and street; impoverished living conditions among millions of people throughout the world; increasing levels of environmental pollution and depletion of the earth's natural resources; persistent conflict between and within nations; ongoing oppression of minorities; and the widening gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" paint a disturbing picture of our modern world. In *A Guide for the Perplexed*, E.F. Schumacher questions whether a "turning around will be accomplished by enough people quickly enough to save the modern world" (qtd in Safransky 1990, p.115). Schumacher notes that "this question is often asked, but whatever the answer given to it will mislead. The answer 'yes' would lead to complacency; the answer 'no' to despair. It is desirable to leave these perplexities behind us and get down to work."

In *Understanding Social Problems*, we "get down to work" by examining how the social structure and culture of society contribute to social problems and their consequences. Understanding the social forces that contribute to social problems is necessary for designing strategies for action—programs, policies and other interventions intended to ameliorate the social problem.

## Academic Features of the New Edition

In response to feedback from teachers, reviewers, and students who have read the second edition of *Understanding Social Problems* (2000), we have retained several features and added several others:

**Strong Integrative Theoretical Foundation.** The three major sociological approaches—structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and conflict theory—are introduced in the first chapter and discussed and applied, where appropriate, to various social problems throughout the text. Other theories of social problems, as well as feminist approaches, are also presented where appropriate.

**Emphasis on the Structure and Culture of Society.** As noted above, the text emphasizes how the social structure and culture of society contribute to and maintain social problems, as well as provide the basis for alternative solutions.

**Review of Basic Sociological Terms.** An overview of basic sociological terms and concepts is presented in the first chapter. This overview is essential for students who have not taken an introductory course and is helpful, as a review, for those who have. Additionally, Appendix A details "Methods of Data Analysis."

**Unique Organization.** The order of the 16 chapters reflects a progression from micro to macro level of analysis, focusing first on problems of health care,

drug use and crime and then broadening to the widening concerns of population growth and the environmental problems, science and technology and conflict around the world.

Two chapters merit special mention: “Sexual Orientation” (Chapter 9) and “Science and Technology” (Chapter 15). Whereas traditional texts discuss sexual orientation under the rubric of “deviance,” this topic is examined in the section on problems of human diversity along with the related issues of age, gender, and racial and ethnic inequality. The chapter on science and technology includes such topics as biotechnology, the computer revolution, and the Internet. This chapter emphasizes the transformation of society through scientific and technological innovations, the societal costs of such innovations, and issues of social responsibility. This chapter is particularly relevant to college students, many of whom have never known a world without computers.

**Expanded Coverage of Global Issues.** In the third edition, we place an even greater emphasis on examining social problems from a global perspective. Each chapter contains a heading entitled “The Global Context,” and the number and scope of references to international issues have been expanded.

**Consistent Chapter Format.** Each chapter follows a similar format: the social problem is defined, the theoretical explanations are discussed, the consequences of the social problem are explored, and the alternative solutions and policies are examined. A concluding section assesses the current state of knowledge for each social problem.

**Increased Media Content.** New to the third edition is an emphasis on the media and the role it plays in defining, exacerbating, and ameliorating social problems. Examples include discussions of the media’s role in stigmatizing mental illness (Chapter 2), minority representation on prime time television shows (Chapter 7), and media portrayals of the poor (Chapter 10).

**Standard and Cutting Edge Topics.** In addition to problems that are typically addressed in social problems courses and texts, new and emerging topics are examined. Topics new to the third edition include the mailbox economy (Chapter 6), gender tourism (Chapter 8), genetically modified crops (Chapter 10), and eco-terrorism and environmental refugees (Chapter 14).

## Pedagogical Features of the New Edition

**Opening Vignettes.** New to the third edition, each chapter begins with a vignette designed to engage the student by illustrating the current relevance of the topic under discussion. Topics of opening vignettes include the New York City police shooting of Amadou Diallo (Chapter 4), the sex discrimination suit of Duke place kicker Heather Sue Mercer (Chapter 8), and life as Mr. Dot-ComGuy (Chapter 15).

**Student-friendly Presentation.** To enhance the book’s appeal to students, the third edition includes expanded information relevant to the college population. In Chapter 1, for example, we present data on the beliefs of college stu-

dents about various social problems and Chapter 3 contains a section on binge drinking and other student alcohol-related problems. Further, Chapter 7 contains a new section on race and ethnic diversity on campus and in Chapter 12, “Problems in Education,” students may complete a “Student Alienation Scale.”

**Self and Society.** Each chapter includes a social survey designed to help students assess their own attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, or behavior regarding some aspect of a social problem. Examples include a Criminal Activities Survey (Chapter 4), a Beliefs about Women Scale (Chapter 8), and an Attitudes toward Economic Opportunity in the United States Inventory (Chapter 10).

**The Human Side.** To personalize the information being discussed, each chapter includes a feature entitled “The Human Side.” These features describe personal experiences of individuals who have been affected by the social problem under discussion. Examples include a witness’ description of an execution (Chapter 4), a college student’s story of child sexual abuse (Chapter 5), the case study of a woman trying to change her sexual orientation (Chapter 9), and a Gulf War veteran’s parents’ description of their son’s death (Chapter 16).

**Social Problems Research Up Close.** Now in every chapter, boxes called “Social Problems Research Up Close” present examples of social science research. These boxes demonstrate for students the sociological enterprise from theory and data collection, to findings and conclusions. Examples of research topics covered include “No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City” (Chapter 13), “The Social Construction of the Hacking Community” (Chapter 15), and “Family Adjustment to Military Deployment” (Chapter 16).

**Focus on Technology.** Boxes called “Focus on Technology” also now appear in every chapter. These boxes present information on how technology may contribute to social problems and their solutions. For example, in Chapter 4, Crime and Violence, the Focus on Technology feature highlights the use of DNA testing in criminal investigations. In Chapter 14, Population and the Environment, environmental and health hazards associated with computers are discussed.

**Is It True?** Each chapter begins with five true-false items to stimulate student interest and thinking.

**Critical Thinking.** Each chapter ends with a brief section called “Critical Thinking” that raises several questions related to the chapter topic. These questions invite the student to use critical thinking skills in applying the information discussed in the chapters.

**InfoTrac College Edition.** The third edition includes InfoTrac® College Edition—an online reference service that allows students to search for articles by subject, title, and author in hundreds of top academic journals and popular sources.

**World Wide Web Home Page.** <http://sociology.wadsworth.com/>. As an additional pedagogical tool, *Understanding Social Problems* has its own home page on the World Wide Web. Students and faculty can access relevant research studies,

statistics, and theoretical links as suggested at the end of each chapter in a new Media Resources section. For example, in Chapter 12, Problems in Education, faculty and students are referred to Internet links on school vouchers, Title IX, distance learning and school violence.

In addition to chapter by chapter links, several additional features have been incorporated in the text's home page. For faculty, the *Understanding Social Problems* home page now contains an online instructor's manual and test bank, both password protected. For students, the home page now includes practice quizzes, flashcards, as well as the InfoTrac College Edition articles and questions listed at the end of each text chapter. Links to information about employment opportunities and sociology as a career are also listed. Students and faculty can send questions, comments, or suggestions directly to the authors and contact Wadsworth Publishing Company concerning book adoption.

## New to This Edition—A Chapter by Chapter Look

In addition to the academic and pedagogical features noted above, *Understanding Social Problems*' content areas have been significantly revised. Over thirty new citations have been added to every chapter. Further, in addition to expanded coverage of important topics from the first and second editions, we have added new areas of research and theorizing. A partial list of new or expanded topics follows:

**Chapter 1: Thinking About Social Problems.** The “sociological enterprise,” journal article content, reading tables, and triangulation.

**Chapter 2: Illness and the Health Care System.** New sections on mental illness, inadequacy of mental health care, strategies to improve mental health care, and expanded coverage of HIV/AIDS worldwide.

**Chapter 3: Alcohol and Other Drugs.** Club drugs, mandatory drug testing, images of alcohol and tobacco in children's animated films, inpatient/out-patient treatment, and *Plan Colombia*.

**Chapter 4: Crime and Violence.** Transnational crime, increase in prison population and decrease in crime rates, racial profiling, and restorative justice.

**Chapter 5: Family Problems.** Parental alienation syndrome, interactive computer parenting, expanded global information on abuse of women, and expanded coverage of single parent families.

**Chapter 6: The Young and the Old.** Dependency ratio, beliefs about the elderly, children and grandchildren as caretakers for the elderly, and an expanded section on children, violence and the media.

**Chapter 7: Race and Ethnic Relations.** Hate on campus, new Census data on multiracial identification, expanded discussion of aversive and modern racism, and on racial/ethnic bias in the media.

**Chapter 8: Gender Inequality.** Beliefs about gender equality, expanded section on media, language and cultural sexism, the “war on boys,” and a new section on international efforts toward gender equality.

**Chapter 9: Sexual Orientation.** Updated terminology (lesbigay, transgender, LGBT), civil unions in Vermont, expanded global coverage of laws concerning sexual orientation, and a new section on how homophobia affects heterosexuals.

**Chapter 10: The Haves and the Have-Nots.** New global qualitative research findings on poverty, expanded discussion of homelessness, and updated information on living wage laws.

**Chapter 11: Work and Unemployment.** Limiting corporate power through campaign finance reform, job searching and recruitment through the Internet, and efforts to reform U.S. law on juvenile workers in agriculture.

**Chapter 12: Problems in Education.** School shootings, the Early Head Start Program, President Bush’s “no child left behind” proposal, and an expanded section on school choice.

**Chapter 13: Cities in Crisis.** The effects of urban sprawl on wildlife, brown-fields’ redevelopment, and strategies of inner-city residents to avoid criminal victimization.

**Chapter 14: Population and Environmental Problems.** Environmental education, intergovernmental report on global warming and its effects, on-line environmental activism, and corporate involvement in the environmental movement.

**Chapter 15: Science and Technology.** Microsoft anti-trust lawsuit, completion of the Human Genome Project, the 2000 Discovery Innovation Awards, and cyberstalking.

**Chapter 16: Conflict around the World.** Dual use technologies, heightened Israeli-Arab tensions, the bombing of the USS Cole, recent criticisms of the United Nations, and the Landmine Ban Treaty.

## Supplements

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

### Web site for Students and Instructors

Virtual Society: The Wadsworth Sociology Resource Center  
<http://sociology.wadsworth.com>

At *Virtual Society: The Wadsworth Sociology Resource Center*, you can find a Career Center, Sociology in the News, links to great sociology web sites and InfoTrac



College Edition, Virtual Tours in Sociology, an email link to the book's editor, instructor's resources, and many other selections. Through this site you can also access the *Understanding Social Problems* Web site, which offers the following online student study tools for each chapter of the text:

- Internet links and exercises
- Online practice quizzes
- InfoTrac College Edition exercises
- Flashcards

And much more!

### Supplements for Instructors

**Instructor's Edition.** The Instructor's Edition of this text contains an eight-page Preview that provides a visual overview of the supplements that accompany the textbook as well as the features and themes of the textbook itself.

**Instructor's Manual with Test Bank.** Written by the main text authors, this supplement offers the instructor learning objectives, key terms, lecture outlines, student projects, classroom activities, and Internet and InfoTrac exercises. Test items include 60–100 multiple-choice and true/false questions with answers and page references, as well as short answer and essay questions for each chapter. Tips for using WebTutor and a concise user guide for *InfoTrac* are included as appendices.

**ExamView Computerized and Online Testing.** Create, deliver, and customize tests and study guides (both print and online) in minutes with this easy-to-use assessment and tutorial system. ExamView offers both a Quick Test Wizard and an Online Test Wizard that guide you step-by-step through the process of creating tests, while its unique "WYSIWYG" capability allows you to see the test you are creating on the screen exactly as it will print or display online. Using ExamView's complete word processing capabilities, you can enter an unlimited number of new questions or edit existing questions.

**Wadsworth's Introduction to Sociology Transparency Acetates.** A selection of quality acetates from Wadsworth's introductory sociology texts. Free to qualified adopters.

**SocLink 2002 CD-ROM: A Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation Tool.** SocLink 2002 is an easy-to-use PowerPoint presentation tool that permits instructors to draw upon a digital library of hundreds of pieces of graphic art from Wadsworth sociology textbooks. In addition, photographs, CNN video segments, and pre-assembled lecture slides can be used to create customized lecture presentations.

**CNN Today Issues and Solutions Video Series, Volumes I and II.** The *CNN Today Issues and Solutions* Video Series is an exclusive series jointly created by Wadsworth and CNN for the social problems course. Each video in the series consists of approximately 45-minutes of footage originally broadcast on CNN within the last several years and selected specifically to illustrate important sociological concepts. The videos are broken into short two- to seven-minute segments, which are perfect for classroom use as lecture launchers, or

to illustrate key sociological concepts. An annotated table of contents accompanies each video with descriptions of the segments. Special adoption conditions apply.

**Wadsworth Sociology Video Library.** Qualified adopters can also select from an extensive selection of videos from Films for the Humanities and Sciences. Ask your Wadsworth/Thomson Learning representative for more information.

### Supplements for Students

**Study Guide.** Written by the authors of the main text, the Study Guide includes learning objectives, chapter outlines, key terms, completion exercises, and practice tests consisting of multiple-choice, true/false and short answer/essay questions to enhance and test student understanding of chapter concepts.

**Researching Sociology on the Internet.** Written by D.R. Wilson, Houston Baptist University, and David L. Carlson, Texas A&M University, this guide is designed to assist Sociology students with doing research on the Internet. Part One contains general information necessary to get started and answers questions about security, the type of sociology material available on the Internet, the information that is reliable and the sites that are not, the best ways to find research, and the best links to take students where they want to go. Part Two looks at each main discipline in the area of Sociology, and refers students to sites where the most enlightening research can be obtained.

**Social Problems: A Reader with Four Questions.** Written by Joel M. Charon, author of the best selling introductory sociology reader, *Ten Questions: A Sociological Perspective*, this NEW reader encourages students to take a critical, sociological look at today's diverse social problems. The four-question approach—What is the problem? What makes the problem a social problem? What causes the problem? What can be done?—provides a consistent framework through which students can objectively analyze and discuss our most complicated social issues.

**Social Problems of the Modern World: A Reader.** Written by Francis Moulder, Three Rivers Community Technical College, this FREE reader will appeal to Social Problems instructors that seek to internationalize the Social Problems course. The current trend in this course is to add a global focus, something that Moulder does in her reader without sacrificing focus on the United States.

**Student Guide to InfoTrac College Edition for Sociology.** This unique supplement, prepared by Michele Adams of the University of California–Riverside, consists of exercises based on 23 core subjects vital to the study of Sociology. These exercises utilize InfoTrac College Edition's huge database of articles. The exercises help students to narrow down the search of articles related to each subject and ask questions that enable students to see the ideas more clearly and pique students' interest.

**Thomson Learning Web Tutor on Web CT and BlackBoard.** WebTutor is a content-rich, Web-based teaching and learning tool that helps students succeed by taking the course beyond classroom boundaries to an anywhere, anytime environment. WebTutor is rich with study and mastery tools, communication tools, and course content. Professors can use WebTutor to provide virtual office hours, post

syllabi, set up threaded discussions, track student progress with the quizzing material, and more.

**Interactions CD-ROM.** *Interactions* is a NEW free CD-ROM developed specifically for the third edition of *Understanding Social Problems*. Dynamic, colorful, and exciting, this all-new interactive tool for students contains

- Multimedia chapter summaries that include presentations of chapter topics with audio, photos, and selected videos
- Chapter-by-chapter quizzes with scoring and feedback
- Direct links to the Internet and InfoTrac College Edition
- Links to other online sociology resources and the *Understanding Social Problems* Web site

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