ANNOUNCEMENTS

• Course Website: sites.uci.edu/socialproblems
• Website Password: socprobs

• Section Assignments, Start in Week 2
  • Randall Perez: Sections 1, 2, 6, 7
  • Steve Juarez: Sections 3, 4, 5
  • Chris Gibson: Sections 8, 9, 10

• Guest lecture added to Week 9
DEFINING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

1. Objectivist Outlook

- Issue: Conditions that might be harmful aren’t always identified as a social problem
  - Examples: Sexism, Heightism
WOMEN & LOBOTOMIES

António Egas Moniz

Dr. Freeman performing lobotomy on Alice Hood Hammatt
Source: Listverse
DEFINING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

1. Objectivist Outlook
   • Issue: Conditions that might be harmful aren’t always identified as a social problem
     • Examples: Sexism, Heightism
   • Issue: Conditions identified as social problems for different reasons
     • Example: Obesity
   • Issue: Wide range of social problems means this outlook remains vague so it can speak to everything
DEFINING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

1. Objectivist Outlook

2. Subjectivist Approach
   • Disagreement can exist about what should be considered a social problem
   • Disagreement can exist between individuals outside a society and members of a society
P.M. SILVIO BERLUSCONI

Source: Business Insider. “18 Shocking Pictures From The Life of Silvio 'Bunga Bunga' Berlusconi”
Source: New York Post. “French President Hollande splits with first lady”
1. Objectivist Outlook

2. Subjectivist Approach
   - Discoveries of new diseases, new threats can vault into our collective psyche and become major social problems
     - Examples?
DISEASES IN THE NEWS

• Flu
  • Times Union. October 3, 2014. “Ebola’s Bad, Flu’s Worse”

• Ebola
    “As Ebola patient in Texas fights for his life, his family copes with stigma and isolation.”

• Valley Fever
  • The Atlantic. August 8, 2014.
    “The Mysterious Fungus Infecting the American Southwest.”
    “Death Dust: The Valley Fever Menace.”
DEFINING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

1. Objectivist Outlook

2. Subjectivist Approach
   • Not an objective quality of a social condition, but the subjective reactions to that condition that matter.
   • Social problems as a process of responding to social conditions.
DEFINING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

• Social Problems:
  “The activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievance and claims with respect to some putative conditions”
(Spector and Kituse, 1977, p. 75)
POVERTY

• **Studying poverty as a condition**
  - Questions: What causes poverty? How many people fall under the poverty line?

• **Studying poverty as a social problem**
  - Question: How and why did people come to consider poverty problematic?
POVERTY IN AMERICA

URBAN POVERTY IN AMERICA

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

• Social Construction: The process by which people continually assign, create—or construct—meaning in the world.
• The Constructionist Approach

• Natural history model of the social problems process in six stages