Test Bank for *Social Problems*

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Chapter 11 is a Final Exam, composed of both original questions and questions from previous chapters.

CHAPTER 1

The Social Problems Process

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Which of the following is *not* one of the questions an objectivist may ask to determine whether a social condition is a social problem?
   a. Is it harmful to individuals or groups?
   b. How many people does it harm?
   c. How serious or damaging is the harm it creates?
   d. Why do people think of it as harmful?

   ANS: D

2. The objectivist definition of *harm* can be criticized for being
   a. so narrow that it excludes many conditions that may really be problems.
   b. so broad that it is vague to the point of losing its meaning.
   c. so detailed that it is difficult for anyone but experts to understand.
   d. so grounded in the social sciences that it cannot be applied to hard science phenomena.

   ANS: B

3. Subjectivists tend to think of social problems as
   a. social conditions that cause problems for people.
   b. the process of responding to social conditions.
   c. social conditions that cause problems for society.
   d. the process of a condition becoming problematic.

   ANS: B

4. A subjectivist might suggest that heightism is not a social problem in the United States because
   a. there is no research to indicate that people are discriminated against on the basis of their height.
   b. Americans do not think of discrimination based on height as a problem.
   c. heightism is not illegal in the United States.
   d. discrimination based on height does not hurt enough people to cause serious harm to society.

   ANS: B

5. The term *social constructionism* refers to the way people
   a. create fresh understandings of the world around them.
   b. learn language from their parents.
   c. use language to define their place in society.
   d. learn to differentiate social conditions from social problems.

   ANS: A

6. Saying that something is socially constructed means that it is
   a. not real.
   b. only real because a group of people created it.
   c. real only to those who have had experience with it.
   d. shaped by people's definitions and understandings of it.

   ANS: D

7. The discussion of reclassifying Pluto as a minor planet or an interplanetary body illustrates the fact that
   a. even scientists are sometimes unsure of what is really a problem.
   b. the way we use and change language reflects our efforts to better describe and understand the world around us.
   c. even natural phenomena are difficult to define clearly.
   d. even those in the hard sciences such as astronomy have a difficult time defining concepts.

   ANS: B

8. Claimsmaking can most accurately be described as a process in which people
   a. claim the right to profit from a troubling situation.

b. lie about conditions to make them seem problematic.

c. bring to the attention of others a situation that they find troubling.

d. find objective proof of a problem.

ANS: C

9. Which is *not* one of the six stages in the natural history model of the social problems process?

a. social problems work

b. media coverage

c. research confirmation

d. policy outcomes

ANS: C

10. The social problems process discussed in your text refers to the process through which

a. a condition worsens to become a problem.

b. people come to define a condition as a social problem.

c. public officials determine the best way to solve a problem.

d. a problem is identified, discussed, and acted upon.

ANS: D

11. When it comes to claimsmaking about obesity as a social problem, _____ may act as claimsmakers.

a. experts who have done research on obesity

b. people who have direct experience with obesity

c. policymakers who must deal with public opinion regarding obesity

d. all of the above

ANS: D

12. The term *troubling conditions* is used when describing the situations people make claims about in order to draw our attention to the fact that

a. we often notice problems for the first time while they are still small and manageable.

b. claimsmaking is about people pointing out things that trouble them rather than making a purely objective assessment of problematic conditions.

c. problems are often blown out of proportion once people begin to make claims about them.

d. what troubles some people may not turn out to be a real social problem.

ANS: B

13. Your text argues that because we know that knowledge is socially constructed,

    a. it is important to carefully evaluate claims and evidence.

    b. we can discount knowledge from the hard sciences as less scientific because it fails to focus on the social world.

    c. there is no way to actually understand reality.

    d. all assessments of the world and what is happening in it are equally valid.

    ANS: A

14. The natural history model of social problems outlines the process that

    a. most social problems go through.

    b. every social problem goes through.

    c. social problems that get solved go through.

    d. social problems that get media attention go through.

    ANS: A

15. Claimsmakers who are activists typically must

    a. draw attention to their cause.

    b. recruit people to join their movement.

    c. manage their movement's operations.

    d. all of the above

    ANS: D

16. The term *natural history* refers to the sequence of stages that social problems

    a. often move through.

    b. move through when they are not interfered with by claimsmakers.

    c. create in a typical community.

    d. create through their environmental impact.

    ANS: A

17. The impact of claimsmaking on the public's perceptions is typically measured using

    a. in-depth interviews with leaders.

    b. media analysis.

    c. public opinion polls.

    d. counts of who votes for politicians with particular views.

    ANS: C

18. Policymaking that is intended to reduce social problems is done by
    a. school officials.
    b. legislative bodies.
    c. government agencies.
    d. all of the above

    ANS: D

19. Social problems workers are typically responsible for
    a. developing an accurate definition of what a problem really is.
    b. helping policymakers better understand a problem.
    c. carrying out the practical actions deemed necessary to manage a problem.
    d. identifying the implications of particular solutions proposed for a problem.

    ANS: C

20. The term *policy outcomes* refers to
    a. the extent to which the policy solves the problem.
    b. people's reaction to the social problems process.
    c. critics' concerns about how the policies are implemented.
    d. all of the above

    ANS: D

21. The role of resources in the social problems process refers to
    a. access to policymakers.
    b. access to the media.
    c. influence.
    d. all of the above

    ANS: D

22. The role of rhetoric in the social problems process can be seen in how
    a. claimsmakers put together an effective argument.
    b. the media make decisions about which claims to cover.
    c. policymakers choose to focus on certain aspects of a problem and not others.
    d. all of the above

    ANS: D

23. The term *feedback* is used to refer to

a. the fact that each social problem influences the process through which other social problems will progress.

b. the fact that each stage in the social problems process influences the stages both before and after it.

c. the relationship between claimsmakers who are making claims about the same social problem.

d. the way in which social problems workers can disrupt the social problems process by discrediting the claims made by experts.

ANS: B

24. Resources primarily impact the social problems process at the level of

a. media coverage.

b. claimsmaking.

c. policymaking.

d. all of the above

ANS: E

25. The goal of your text is to provide readers with

a. a framework for determining which social problems have the greatest impact in the modern United States.

b. an understanding of what causes social problems.

c. a better way of thinking about social problems that interest them.

d. a framework for assessing the objectivity of claims.

ANS: C

ESSAY

1. What are the three major flaws in the objectivist approach to social problems? For each, explain what the flaw is and how it might confuse us as we try to differentiate between social problems and social conditions. Give examples to illustrate your points.

ANS: Answer will vary.

2. What does a subjectivist approach add to our ability to define effectively what is and what is not a social problem?

ANS: Answer will vary.

3. Describe the six stages in the natural history model of the social problems process. Be sure to clearly describe the actions and actors involved in each stage.

   ANS: Answer will vary.

4. Choose any social problem with which you are familiar and briefly describe the extent to which you believe it followed the natural history of the social problems process and why.

   ANS: Answer will vary.

5. Why might a wealthy corporation have more power within the social problems process than a low-income community? Be sure to address multiple stages in the process.

   ANS: Answer will vary.

6. What is the relationship between rhetoric and feedback within the social problems process?

   ANS: Answer will vary.

CHAPTER 2

Claims

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Your text suggests that when analyzing claims as arguments or statements, the most important thing is
   a. determining whether the claim is true.

b. assessing the credibility of the claimsmaker.

c. determining whether the audience finds the claim convincing.

d. understanding the logical framework of the claim.

ANS: C

2. Saying that claims tend to take standard forms means that

a. within a given culture, most claims will tend to have similar elements.

b. within a given culture, there are often rules regarding who can make claims.

c. across all cultures, claims tend to have similar elements.

d. all humans seem to respond to certain types of claims.

ANS: A

3. Rhetoric is the study of

a. claimsmaking.

b. persuasion.

c. deception.

d. debate.

ANS: B

4. Grounds often include assertions regarding the

a. type of problem being addressed (crime, disease, etc.).

b. fact that a problem exists.

c. fact that there is just cause to take action regarding the condition.

d. a and b only

ANS: D

5. Typifying examples are usually

a. examples that attempt to familiarize an audience with the range of manifestations of the problem, from the most extreme to the most mild.

b. extreme examples that try to catch the attention of the audience.

c. examples of the typical occurrence of the problem.

d. examples of what the beginning of a problem usually looks like.

ANS: B

6. Naming the problem is the moment when

a. an exact definition of the problem is established.

b. a catchy term like *identity theft* is created for the problem.

c. the problem becomes bad enough to gain public attention.

   d. public officials begin discussing the problem openly.

   ANS: B

7. A statistic is a

   a. number used to measure or characterize a situation.

   b. sad or an ironic example of how people often fall victim to traditions.

   c. precise measure of the damage caused by a problem.

   d. term used by the government to describe the incidence of a problem.

   ANS: A

8. Early in the social problems process, the statistics associated with problems are often

   a. rough estimates due to a lack of research.

   b. particularly large numbers because large numbers get more attention.

   c. based on careful research in response to public demand.

   d. a and b only

   ANS: D

9. By arguing that a new troubling condition is like an established type of problem such as crime or disease, claimsmakers

   a. provide the audience with a way of thinking about the problem.

   b. confuse the audience by involving too many different problems in the claim.

   c. draw on existing resources already devoted to solving the established type of problem.

   d. both a and c

   ANS: D

10. The motivational frame is also known as

   a. naming the problem.

   b. warrants.

   c. grounds.

   d. a typifying example.

   ANS: B

11. The argument that something should be done about motorcycle riders who do not wear helmets to keep health care costs lower is an example of a

   a. conclusion.

   b. warrant.

c. ground.

d. typifying example.

ANS: B

12. The audience for a claim includes
    a. people who support the claim.
    b. people who might be persuaded to support the claim.
    c. other claimsmakers.
    d. all of the above

    ANS: D

13. Valence issues are the kinds of problems that tend to inspire
    a. widespread acceptance of the claims.
    b. widespread conflict over the claims.
    c. widespread confusion over what should be done.
    d. strong feelings among a small group of activists.

    ANS: A

14. Which of the following is a position issue?
    a. debate over designating a state flower for your state
    b. child abuse
    c. abortion
    d. drunk driving

    ANS: C

15. Directing claims toward an audience that you already know to be sympathetic to your cause
    a. can be beneficial because it provides good practice.
    b. is typically ineffective because it wastes time.
    c. can energize existing supporters to take wider action.
    d. both a and c

    ANS: D

16. The term *social problems marketplace* draws our attention to the fact that
    a. audiences are easily swayed by claims that support their own interests.
    b. claimsmakers must compete with other claimsmakers for the public's attention.
    c. audiences are easily bought through gifts or promises of financial gains.
    d. it is expensive to get your claims heard.

ANS: B

17. It is suggested in your text that _____ claims tend to work best.
    a. complex and nonpartisan
    b. simple and strong
    c. simple and nonpartisan
    d. complex and strong

    ANS: B

18. It is suggested in your text that, over time, audiences tend to become
    a. more committed to well-established claims.
    b. bored with older claims and more interested in new claims.
    c. suspicious of new claims.
    d. confused by the number of claims and therefore apathetic.

    ANS: B

19. _____ is an example of domain expansion.
    a. A social problems worker who typically works with AIDS patients but is beginning to work with cancer patients as well
    b. Moving from ten thousand supporters of your claim to one hundred thousand supporters
    c. Moving from defining poverty as a situation where people cannot meet their basic survival needs to a situation that includes people who have to work very long hours to meet their needs
    d. Progressing from local news coverage of your claims to national news coverage

    ANS: C

20. When a troubling condition piggybacks on a well-established problem, it means that
    a. claimsmakers argue that the new condition is similar enough to the existing problem that if one deserves attention, so does the other.
    b. those advocating counterclaims attempt to steal media attention from the original claimsmakers.
    c. claimsmakers say that the new condition is sufficiently different from the existing problem that the two should not be associated with one another.
    d. claimsmakers try to divert media attention from existing problems by overstating the dangers of the new condition.

ANS: A

21. The well-established rhetorical formula for claims about victimization involves claiming that
    a. extraordinary measures are needed to identify the victimization.
    b. the victimization is widespread.
    c. the victimization is serious.
    d. all of the above

    ANS: D

22. A counterclaim to the claim that child abuse has been increasing over the last fifty years would be that
    a. true child abuse is now so uncommon that activists have started labeling some nonabusive behaviors as abuse.
    b. increases in child abuse are linked to our general cultural tolerance for abuse.
    c. abuse in general has increased so that children, the elderly, and pets are all experiencing greater levels of abuse.
    d. we can expect a decline in abuse when we have a stronger economy.

    ANS: A

23. Ideologies usually emphasize particular
    a. grounds.
    b. conclusions.
    c. warrants.
    d. typifying examples.

    ANS: C

24. Cultural resources are
    a. the elements of our culture that make it stronger or weaker than others.
    b. the number of people in a given culture willing to take action against a social problem.
    c. our shared ideas about how the world should and does work.
    d. the cultural values that drive us to try to end problematic conditions.

    ANS: C

25. The necessity of operating within the existing cultural resources
    a. severely limits the types of claims that can be made.
    b. limits the number of people who can be mobilized.
    c. limits potential claims somewhat but still leaves open many different possibilities.

d. does not limit us at all because our culture is so driven to correct troubling conditions.

ANS: C

ESSAY

1. It is stated in your text that "persuasive arguments share a rhetorical structure with three fundamental components." List and describe the three components of this rhetorical structure and offer examples of each.

    ANS: Answer will vary.

2. It is argued in your text that when a claimsmaker wants to convince others that a troubling condition exists, he or she often uses a typifying example, names the problem, and cites a large statistic. However, various other common devices are used to convince people that the issue is truly troubling. Describe at least three of these additional devices and offer examples of each.

    ANS: Answer will vary.

3. Explain how interests and ideologies influence certain segments of the population in their response to particular claims. How might claimsmakers use this knowledge to get the largest possible reaction to their claims?

    ANS: Answer will vary.

4. Discuss why and how claims typically change over time.

    ANS: Answer will vary.

5. Historical context influences cultural resources. Which kinds of claims are likely to resonate?

    ANS: Answer will vary.

6. Provide an example of something special about the current era and how it might influence the kinds of claims that are most effective.

    ANS: Answer will vary.

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