



TEACHING SOCIAL PROBLEMS DIVISION

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Thank you to our Division's Past Chair, **Susan Warner**, Cedarville University. She has led our division, increasing our membership and helping to create some dynamic sessions these past few years.

In particular I want to express my personal thanks for how she has helped my transition to the Chair. I can only hope to do the same for my successor. That's a promise, Susan.

Let me take a moment to introduce myself. I am the incoming Chair. I'm **Kathe Lowney**, and I teach at Valdosta State University, in Valdosta, Georgia. Valdosta State is a state-sponsored public institution of the University System of Georgia. We have a B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology and an M.S. in Sociology. Both of VSU's sociology programs are accredited by the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology.

I want to keep our division strong, thriving, and helpful to all of us. Our division is all about strengthening social problems teachers – "new" and more "seasoned" ones too. Please share your expertise – don't be shy!

Our 2009 Sessions in San Francisco

1. Thematic Session

Title: Problematising White Privilege in the Social Problems Classroom
Organizer: Susan Warner
Department of Social Sciences and History
Cedarville University
251 N. Main St.
Cedarville, OH 45385
937-76607632
E-mail: warners@cedarville.edu

2. Regular Session

Title: Using Popular Culture in the Social Problems Classroom
Organizer: Chris Kelly
1955 Comm. Ave. #5
Brighton, MA 01235
617-817-0067
E-mail: christopher.kelly.6@bc.edu

Join us in San Francisco by submitting ideas for these sessions.

3. Invited Panel

Title: Reflections on the First Year of Teaching: Lessons Learned
Organizer: Kris Macomber
North Carolina State University
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
1911 Building, Box 8107
Raleigh, NC 27695-8107
Phone: 919-389-2325
E-mail: kcmacomb@sa.ncsu.edu

See you there!

If you want to be involved in this session, contact Kris. But it will not appear in the Call for Papers, because it is an invited session.

We also have several co-sponsored sessions with other Divisions, so look for them also when the sessions are announced.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN OUR NEWSLETTER?

Send me ideas — do you have a teaching technique that you would like to share? An idea about assessing student learning? Thoughts on textbooks for Social Problems courses? Ideas on using technology in the classroom? Have you taught a class completely online and want to share how it went? We need things. So please send them to me:

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Anthropology, & Criminal
Justice, Valdosta State
University, Valdosta, GA
31698-0060.*

*E-mail:
klowney@valdosta.edu*

**Don't be shy – we
need your ideas!**

THE TEACHING SOCIAL PROBLEMS DIVISION'S MISSION STATEMENT

A just world can be promoted through helping citizen-students to better understand the complex nature of the social problems which plague communities, nations, and the world. The more individuals are aware of social problems, their interrelationships, social movements for justice, and the myriad solutions available for implementation, the more we are able to begin to solve problems. The mission of the Teaching Social Problems Division is to facilitate quality educational experiences in Social Problems classrooms by providing information about innovative pedagogical techniques, classroom materials and resources, and support for faculty members.

Teaching social problems courses can be a frustrating experience, for a number of reasons. Many students feel that the course content becomes overly depressing, piling one social problem on top of another. Additionally, some feel that the course content seeks out only the “bad” in society and rarely is counterbalanced that with the “good” that individuals, institutions, and society do. And more so than in other academic disciplines, such as the natural sciences, students often enter the social problems classroom confident in their knowledge about social problems and can feel threatened when presented with facts and opinions which challenge those preconceptions.

The division's primary challenge is to assist in the creation and identification of successful classroom experiences and texts which help students to understand the social problems process. Secondly, we need to find ways to help students to become comfortable with and adept at understanding and manipulating quantitative data which capture the complexities of social problems such as poverty, racism, and pollution. As faculty, we need to find excellent examples which can help students to grasp how some claims become successfully constructed as social problems (and how others are not) by social activists, the media, and other social actors. Students need to see how policies for solving social problems arise out of those claims.