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### Social Problems Framework

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Engaging Teaching Today conference.

Example faith and disciplinary content integration assignment.

Sociology 210: Contemporary Social Issues.

Steven Bird

The students in the class use a multi-step process to help them understand and evaluate differing views about social problems and their solutions. What problems are legitimately problems? What solutions are legitimate solutions?

The class process has five steps.

1. Consider the social negotiation of the definition of the problem and the nature of the solution.
2. Consider the quality of the empirical evidence used to justify the nature of the problem and the efficacy of a solution.
3. Consider the cultural realities that shape the problem and the solution.
4. Consider the social structural realities that shape the problem and the solution.
5. Consider conceptual explanations of the problem and conceptual evaluations of the solution.

Step five (conceptual evaluations) brings up academic theories, ethical arguments, and theologies. It is here, step five, where students are challenged to apply their faith beliefs to a consideration of what is a legitimate societal problem and what is an acceptable solution.

For example, after doing steps one through four on “social inequality,” students would be asked to use theological understandings to evaluate the problem and solution.

Using your theological view, explain how social inequality is (or is not) a problem.

Assuming social inequality is accepted as a problem, use your theological view to evaluate the legitimacy of suggested solutions.