## **Contents**

Each chapter ends with Questions for Critical Thought, Recommended Readings, Recommended Web Sites, References, and a Glossary.

Preface v

#### Introduction: What Are Social Problems? 1

What Is a 'Social Problem'? 1 • Why Study Social Problems 2 • Social Problems and the Sociological Imagination 2 • Social Problems Research as a Moral Enterprise 3 • Warnings, Panics, and Claims 6 • The Historical Context of Social Problems 8 • Social Organization, Culture, and Social Problems 10 • Broad Theories About Social Problems 14 • Solutions to Social Problems 20 • Concluding Remarks 21

## 1 Poverty and Economic Inequality 30

Poverty Is a Social Problem and a Cause of Problems 30 • Definitions and Measurements of Poverty and Economic Inequality 32 • Social Problems Associated with Poverty and Economic Inequality 36 • Theories of Poverty 42 • Culture versus Economic Inequality as Explanations of Poverty 45 • Health Consequences of Poverty and Economic Inequality 48 • Solving the Problems of Poverty and Inequality 52 • Concluding Remarks 57

### 2 Drugs and Alcohol Abuse 64

Are Alcohol and Drugs Social Problems? 64 • Changing Social Definitions of *Drugs* 64 • Definitions of *Abuse* 67 • Characteristics of Alcohol and Drugs 68 • Social Influences on Alcohol and Drug Abuse 72 • Theories of Drug and Alcohol Abuse 76 • Social Consequences of Substance Abuse 80 • Health Consequences of Substance Abuse 83 • Solutions for Alcohol and Drug Abuse 87 • Concluding Remarks 90

## 3 Crime and Violence 99

Introduction 99 • Defining Crime, Laws, and Social Order 100 • Crime in Canada and Elsewhere 101 • Patterns of Victimization 105 • Organized Crime: A Window on Our Culture?

107 • The Demography of Crime 110 • Theories of Crime 111 • Crime and Violence, and Other Social Problems 117 • Health Consequences of Crime and Violence 121 • Solutions to the Crime and Violence Problem 123 • Concluding

## 4 Race and Ethnic Relations 137

Remarks 126

Remarks 168

Introduction 137 • Canada Is Multicultural—and Conflictual 139 • Social Exclusion of Minority Groups 141 • Ethnic Nationalism 142 • The

Social Psychology of Prejudice 143 • Facts About Race and Ethnicity 145 • The Vertical Mosaic 146 • Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations 151 • Social Consequences of Race and Ethnic

Relations 155 • Health Consequences 160 • Solutions to Problems 166 • Concluding

5 Sexism and Gender Inequality 176

Inequality 176 • Factors That Reinforce Gender Inequality 178 • Gender Stereotypes in the Media 183 • Theories of Gender Inequality 185 • Social Consequences of Gender Inequality 190 • Health Consequences of Gender Inequality 197

Introduction 176 • Defining Sexism and Gender

# Solutions 201 • Concluding Remarks 203 Work and Unemployment 211

Introduction 211 • Work and Employment as Social Problems 211 • Some Basic Aspects of Work 212 • Theories of Work and Unemployment 216 • Social Consequences of Work and Unemployment 218 • Health Consequences of Work and Unemployment 231

• Solutions 237 • Concluding Remarks 242

## 7 Family 253

Introduction 253 • Myths of the Family 254 • Basic Aspects of Canadian Families 256 • Sex and Sexuality 257 • Theories of the Family 262

Social Consequences of Family Life 267
Health Consequences of Family Life 274
Solutions 277
Concluding Remarks 280

#### 8 Aging and Ageism 288

Introduction 288 • The Idea of a 'Life Course' 288 • Basic Aspects of the Sociology of Age 291 • Sociological Theories of Aging 295 • Social Consequences of Aging 299 • Health Consequences of Aging 302 • Solutions for Problems of Aging 306 • Concluding Remarks 314

## 9 Urban Problems and Homelessness 321

Introduction 321 • Contrasting Images of Cities 322 • The Importance of Neighbours and Neighbourhoods 325 • Problems Caused by Urban Growth 326 • Alternative Theories of Urban Areas 329 • Social and Health Consequences of Urban Areas 331 • Solutions to Urban Problems 344 • Concluding Remarks 347

## 10 Environment and Technology 355

Introduction 355 • Facts About the Canadian Environment 357 • Industrialization and Technological Innovation 360 • Problems of Population Growth 364 • Environmental

Problems as Global Problems 371 • Sociological Theories 372 • Social Consequences 374 • Health Consequences 376 • Solutions 378 • Concluding Remarks 382

## 11 War and Terrorism 389

Introduction 389 • War as Recurrent and Widespread 390 • Politics, the State, and Warfare 391 • Globalization Processes 394 • The Nature of War 397 • The Nature of Terrorism 401 • Changing Contexts of Warfare 402 • Theories of War and Terrorism 405 • Social Consequences of War 412 • Health Consequences of War 412 • Solutions 414 • Concluding Remarks 417

## 12 Social Problems in the Future 424

Introduction 424 • Past Futures 425 • Thinking About the Future 426 • Social Problems Trends Projected to the Near Future 431 • The Uses and Misuses of Information 436 • Rumour, Contagion, and Moral Panics 440 • The Need for Modest Optimism 444 • Concluding Remarks 447

Appendix: The Sociological Study of Social Problems 451

Index 456