

Paper Assignment:
Applying the sociological imagination

Scenario: You are having a heated discussion with someone close to you (family member, friend, significant other, or someone else) who holds a very different perspective on whatever topic you are discussing. You realize that a concept (or theory) from your sociology course would be really helpful to explain your perspective to them... but though they are open to hearing more about your perspective, the person you are talking with has no sociological background. You therefore decide to explain this sociological concept/theory to them and illustrate by offering examples of it on the individual and societal level. In addition to explaining this concept/theory, you want to show them that it is relevant to social life, so they understand why you are bringing it up in the first place.

Instructions: In this paper, you will explore one specific sociological concept or theory. Choose a concept or theory from the following list*:

Conflict theory	Social stratification	Social institutions
Symbolic interactionism	Systemic gender inequality	Social construction of emotions
Structural functionalism	Race as a social construct	
Gender as a social construct	Systemic racial inequality	

*If there is something that you would like to write your paper on that we covered in class but is not on this list, contact me with your proposed topic by April 15th and I *may* approve it.

In your paper, you should:

- 1) *Identify:* Explicitly identify your chosen concept or theory in a brief introduction.
- 2) *Define:* Explain what the concept/theory means from a sociological perspective, in your own words. Explain in a way that your target audience (non-sociologist friend, relative, etc.) will understand. Use in-text citations as needed, in ASA or APA format.
- 3) *Exemplify (individual level):* Your own life experiences are the only examples you can use in this situation, but luckily, you have firsthand experiences that are relevant examples of what you're talking about. Drawing on your own life experiences, explain at least one original example of your chosen concept/theory. Include enough detail here to fully illustrate your concept/theory (which may mean including multiple examples – use your discretion). This section should constitute the bulk of your paper. Note: please don't use activities that we completed in class as your example(s).
- 4) *Exemplify (societal level):* Speculate about how your concept/theory *could* be demonstrated or observed on the macro/societal level. (This doesn't have to be an

example based on cited research, but it should at least be plausible based on your sociological knowledge.)

- 5) *Defend*: In conclusion, explain to your audience why or how understanding this sociological concept/theory is relevant to day-to-day life (in order to do this, you could explain how it influences your thinking about social life).

Formatting: 3-4 pages, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins. Also, please write in full sentences and in paragraphs.

A note on citations:

If/when you cite the textbook or any other assigned reading, include only an in-text citation for your source; you don't need to include the textbook or assigned readings in a formal reference list. If you cite any source OTHER than the textbook or assigned readings, please include both an in-text citation for your source *and* a corresponding full citation in a reference list following the end of your paper. If you include a formal reference list, it will not be counted towards the 3-4 page length requirement.

Here is a good website on formatting of in-text citations and reference pages (in ASA format, but you can click around to find instructions for other formats):

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/formatting_in_sociology_asa_style/in_text_citation_references.html

DUE: submit on Moodle by **4:00 pm Wednesday, May 1**

Grading Rubric

Grading Criteria	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Excellent
Paper followed a logical organization and was clearly written (up to 15 pts.)	0 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 15
Paper thoroughly explained the chosen concept/theory in an understandable manner (up to 15 pts.)	0 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 15
Paper included sufficient individual- and societal-level examples to illustrate chosen concept/theory (up to 25 pts.)	0 - 16	17 - 22	23 - 25
Paper fully answered the introduction and conclusion prompts (up to 10 pts.)	0 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 10
Paper demonstrated application of the sociological imagination to one's life/experiences (up to 25 pts.)	0 - 16	17 - 22	23 - 25
Paper was free of grammatical errors, met formatting requirements, included citations as needed, and was submitted on time (up to 10 pts.)	0 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 10
Total Points: ___ / 100			

Comments: