

SOCIAL PROBLEMS RESEARCH PAPER

This assignment is worth 100 points, or 20% of your course grade. It must be submitted through ACE Assignments as an MS Word-compatible attachment. (Do not submit a cloud link.) See the syllabus for due dates.

For this project you will take a sociological perspective, choose a specific social problem that you are interested in, and do some research to analyze said issue. You want to narrow your focus to a particular social problem. For example, if you are interested in pollution then you would want to focus on something more specific: water pollution in the U.S., colony collapse disorder, etc. You wouldn't want to write a paper on pollution-in-general!

General requirements:

- I highly recommend that you get your topic approved by me ASAP. Speak with me before or after class, drop by my office hours, make an appointment, or send me an ACE Message. This will save you work in the long run!
- Please do not provide a title page. Just begin with a title (all caps and centered--the same as your 'topic' line in the proposal) and put your name below this (centered). Then begin your introduction paragraph a few lines below your name. Avoid "extra" information in the margins! I do not need to know the class section, the date, my own name, the name of your school, or other "fillers".
- All page margins should be 1".
- Use Times New Roman or Arial font, size 12, throughout the paper.
- Double-space all text, throughout the paper.
- ASA formatting is required for in-text citations and references. You need at least 5 empirical sources for this paper. Two can be from our ACE Resources.
- College-level writing. Employ sociological terms! You need to edit and revise your work to check for typos, spelling errors, comma-usage, incomplete and run-on sentences, and other grammatical and formatting errors. Consider visiting the Writing Lab.
- DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE! This is an intense, detail-oriented project and doing poorly could have a huge impact on your course grade!
- DO NOT PLAGIARIZE! I will be using Turnitin.com. Students who plagiarize will automatically receive a zero for this assignment. In addition, I will submit the case to proper university authorities.

Your paper MUST to follow this outline:

1. Introduction

This section should grab the reader's attention and tell the reader what this paper will be about. It should clearly state your thesis and the specific social problem that you are researching. Never begin a paper with a quote or a question. You should not be citing your references in this section. **(usually 1-2 paragraphs, or less than half a page)**

2. Social Causes section

In this section you will discuss the societal causes of the social problem that you are researching. You need to take at least one sociological perspective here (functionalist, conflict, symbolic interactionist) and you need to have at least one ASA citation in this section. Make sure to provide a heading for this section. **(approximately 3-4 paragraphs, or 1-1.5 pages)**

3. General Patterns section

In this section you will describe the social problem by discussing the statistics and trends. Tell the reader how frequent the problem is, how many people are being affected by the problem, who is more or less likely to experience the problem, which groups are effected, etc. You need to have at least one ASA citation in this section. Provide a heading for this section. **(approximately 3-4 paragraphs, or 1-1.5 pages)**

4. Effects section

In this section you will discuss the harmful effects of the social problem. This is probably your most important section because you will be using scientific information to show the reader WHY they should be concerned about the social problem that you are researching. You need to have at least one ASA citation in this section. Provide a heading for this section. **(approximately 3-4 paragraphs, or 1-1.5 pages)**

5. Conclusion section

The first paragraph of your conclusion should summarize the entire paper. The subsequent paragraphs are where you can reflect on the project, give your own personal opinions, and interpret your findings. You should not be citing anything at this point. Provide a heading for this section. **(approximately 2-3 paragraphs, or maybe 1 page)**

6. References page in ASA format

Your list of references should always start on a new page. You need to use ASA format. Provide a heading at the top of the page. **(minimum of 5 empirical sources)**

Here is a summary of how I will grade these papers:

- **To earn an A-range grade:** you need to exceed all of the minimum requirements (length, structure, citations, etc.) and submit an outstanding paper that demonstrates an in-depth theoretical understanding of your topic. Your paper utilizes sociological concepts, demonstrates high quality research, and/or is enhanced by exceptional writing skills.
- **To earn a B-range grade:** you need to meet all of the minimum requirements (length, structure, citations, etc.) and submit an effective paper. Your paper clearly demonstrates that you put expected effort into research and writing.
- **To earn a C-range grade:** you need to meet most of the minimum requirements (length, structure, citations, etc.) and submit your paper before the due date. Your paper might have some serious issues, perhaps because you waited until the last minute to work on this project, struggled with following directions, or did not fully understand the information.
- **I usually assign D-range grades:** for very poor quality papers that fail to follow directions, i.e., disregard the minimum requirements.
- **I usually assign F-range grades:** only if students plagiarize or do not submit an assignment before the due date/time.