

Sociological Imagination Paper Guidelines

Due Dates:

Your ½ to 1-page *prospectus* must be uploaded onto Canvas no later than 11:59pm on **Friday, November 20**. Simply click on the “Assignments” tab and then click on “Sociological Imagination Paper – Prospectus” to upload your prospectus. (Refer to the very bottom of this document to learn more about the prospectus.)

Your completed Sociological Imagination Paper must be uploaded onto Canvas no later than 11:59pm on **Friday, December 11**. Simply click on the “Assignments” tab and then click on “Sociological Imagination Paper” to upload your paper.

Instructions:

Sociology covers a very broad range of topics, such as culture, socialization, social interaction, social class and economic inequality, gender and gender inequality, race and racism, government, labor and the economy, family life, education, and more. For this assignment, I want you to use your **sociological imagination** by selecting the topic that you find most interesting, and then thinking critically and writing a paper about how your lived experiences relate to some of the broad sociological patterns we have been discussing in class.

Is there a particular topic that resonated with you as we discussed it in class or as you completed the course readings? Once you have chosen the specific topic you want to write about, I want you to write a paper where you (a) identify your topic; (b) provide a *brief* description of the key sociological concepts, theories, etc. associated with that topic; and then (c) critically reflect upon the ways in which your personal, lived experiences connect to the broader sociological patterns associated with your topic. Stated simply, the goal of your paper will be for you to demonstrate your ability to make connections between your life and the society in which you live - to apply your sociological imagination by putting on your “sociological thinking hat,” so to speak, and showing me that you are able to interpret *your* world through a sociological lens.

In keeping with the course objectives spelled out in the syllabus, your paper should ideally: identify and explain key sociological concepts; apply these concepts and theories to real-world situations and/or current events; critically examine how large-scale social institutions (such as the family, education, work, politics, or whichever realm of social life you choose to examine) have shaped your life and the society in which you live; and demonstrate your comprehension of the course material. I will be looking for evidence that you have done the required reading, have paid attention in class, and have reflected upon how the reading and other course materials speak to your own life. (For an assignment like this, by the way, it is perfectly acceptable to write in the

first person! It can even be similar to writing a personal journal entry, albeit a particularly analytical one.)

As described in the course syllabus, your paper should be **4-5 pages long**; it should be double-spaced and use standard Times or Times New Roman 12-point font. College-level writing is expected for this assignment. **You must incorporate at least three references to our textbook.** Outside references are also acceptable, but not required. (If you would like to learn more about how you can find free downloadable scholarly journal articles and/or book chapters through COC's library, check out the step-by-step guide called "How to Use JSTOR," which is located in our Course Resources module.) Please include in-text citations and a separate list of references (which will not count towards the page total). Put your identifying information (name, date, class) on a separate title page (which will also not count towards the page total). I am not particular about the style of your paper, as long as you are consistent and provide citations. When in doubt, you may simply follow ASA (American Sociological Association) style guidelines, which can be found in the Course Resources module as well as through the following link:

<https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/asastyleguide.pdf>

Tip!: If you would like to get an idea of what your paper should look like, *sample papers* can be found in our Course Resources module in Canvas. They are real papers written by students who have previously taken this class; rather than "templates" to be followed in the strict sense, they should serve as inspiration for your own writing.

As stated in the course syllabus, this assignment will be worth 45 points. Here is the rubric (or scoring guide) I will be using to evaluate your work:

- Identifies sociological topic (3 points)
- Briefly explains key sociological concepts and/or theories relevant to the chosen topic (6 points)
- Effectively illustrates connections between large-scale sociological patterns and the author's lived experiences (18 points)
- Incorporates three (3) or more references to the course textbook (6 points)
- Incorporates proper grammar / spelling / punctuation (6 points)
- Includes in-text citations (3 points)
- Includes a separate title page and list of references (3 points)

Prospectus:

The purpose of the prospectus is simply to decide what you want to write about. A "prospectus" is a brief statement describing your chosen topic and outlining, even in a rough manner, the main features of the paper that you intend to write. I want you to submit a prospectus so that I can see if you're on the right track and, if necessary, provide feedback on your planned paper early in the process of writing it. In your prospectus, you should identify your topic and several questions you would like to answer in your paper. The prospectus simple, so don't overthink it! But remember to contact me should you have any questions or wish to brainstorm ideas regarding a potential topic for your paper. Your prospectus should be short (anywhere from 1/2 a page to one

full page) and should be uploaded onto Canvas, under the “Assignments” tab, no later than 11:59pm on **Friday, November 20**.

As always, do not hesitate to message me through Canvas should you have any questions, need help selecting a topic, or have begun working on this assignment and simply want to make sure you’re on the right track. I’m here to help! And lastly, but perhaps most importantly, try not to stress out about your paper. To the contrary, try to have fun with it! Think of this as an opportunity for you to go into greater depth than you have been able to in our weekly discussion forums about a topic that you’re passionate about or curious to examine more closely. 😊