

Assignment 3, Social Stratification

SOCY 100: Introduction to Sociology

Summer Session I, 2017

Professor Witte

Due: Sunday, June 25 (by 11:59 p.m.)

The implications for sociological analysis are endless when one opens the morning newspaper or flips through a popular magazine. This assignment is meant to get you thinking about how sociological analysis can add insight to everyday situations and our comprehension of current events. It will allow you to better appreciate the day to day applications and potential of sociology and recognize how useful some of the sociological concepts we've been learning in class may be to help better understand the world around us.

You will be expected to submit a short (3-5 page) paper in which you use a sociological theory and applicable information from a chapter in your textbook in order to analyze the way by which an article in the popular media presents an example of social stratification. Because there are multiple ways by which we can be stratified, you should choose one of the following broad topics below:

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Social Class and Inequality (Chapter 7)

Global Inequalities (Chapter 8)

Race and Ethnicity (Chapter 9)

Sex and Gender (Chapter 10)

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Paper Expectations:

- Choose one of the topics listed above and find a popular media article (newspaper, magazine, pamphlet, etc.) that relates to your corresponding topic.
 - The article you choose should be an example of a way by which we are stratified. It should NOT be a discussion of either stratification or one of the topics above in a general/broad sense. If you email it to me, I would be more than happy to take a quick look at the article (*before* the due date for the assignment) in order to make sure that it is appropriate.
 - News stories or newsmagazine articles that describe an event or are a narrative work best. Please do not choose an opinion piece.
 - I DO NOT want you to find an article from a peer reviewed (academic) journal. Your article should be something that is easily found and read in our everyday lives. You should be able to provide a link to the article. It should be from a well-known and reputable source. It should NOT be from a source with a known (or discoverable) bias.

- After finding your article, you will write a 3-4 page paper in which you analyze it using one of the following theories: *symbolic interactionism*, *conflict theory*, or *functionalism*. You should use either information from the chapter that corresponds to your topic and/or Chapter 1 to demonstrate in your paper that you understand the theory and can apply it to help better understand the information in your article. The best papers will use one of the major sociological theories to answer the “why” or “what” behind your article.
- In addition to a theory, you will also choose, describe, and apply one concept from the chapter that corresponds to your topic (chapter 7, 8, 9, or 10).
 - For both the theory and the concept, make sure to **bold** or underline the terms you are using.
 - Although you are discouraged from using any source other than your textbook and your article, if you do, you **MUST** cite.
- Your paper should include the following:
 - an introductory section/paragraph in which you briefly encapsulate what you will be discussing in the paper; you should say very specifically the main idea of your article, what concept and theory you will use, and how you will apply these terms to your article.
 - a section (approximately 1-3 paragraphs) in which you briefly *summarize* what is discussed in the article (remember that you **MUST** cite when you summarize, paraphrase, and quote);
 - the bulk of the paper should be dedicated to discussing the *theory and concept* you will be using and ***applying those terms to your article in order to reach a deeper level of understanding of the information presented in your popular media source***.
 - In this section, you must show a clear understanding of whatever concept or theory you’re using by very clearly defining/explaining the information from your textbook. You want to be sure to give your article context by laying a clear theoretical or conceptual foundation.
 - Using information from your chapter, you should be able to say something interesting and insightful about your article that may not necessarily have been apparent at first read of the popular news article. The information in your text should help you to answer “why is this situation so” in a way that goes beyond the information given in your popular article. Spend time really digging into the article through the use of your theoretical or conceptual framework.
 - Some possible questions to consider while writing the paper include: How can sociological information add insight to the information presented in the article?; Do you have a new or different understanding of the information in the article based on the information provided in your textbook?; Is the presentation of your article consistent with the information provided in your book?
 - finally, a conclusion in which you summarize if/how sociological knowledge has helped you to better understand the information in the popular news story that you chose.
- **Make sure to include a link to the article with your paper.** Your paper will not be counted as complete unless I have received a link to the article about which you are writing.
- **You need to include a references section in which you cite your popular media article and your textbook.** The “references” section in the back of your text book gives you a good guideline to follow regarding how to cite appropriately. Please ask if you would like some guidance on citation procedures. (You will lose points on your paper if you do not cite the information you use and include a references page!)

- The paper should be typed, 12-point font, double spaced. Although I recommend that your paper be between 3-4 pages, I am more interested in quality than quantity.
- You must hand in your assignment on the date listed above. Late papers are highly discouraged and will receive points off for each day they are late.
- The synthesis of the information in your book and the article should be your own, original work. If you use any outside information, including from the text book and the article, you must cite accordingly! I take plagiarism very seriously. If you have plagiarized any portion of your paper it is grounds for failing the course and may lead to further sanctions.
- Read, re-read, and re-read. Make sure that you have proofread your paper! Pay particular attention to spelling and grammar. Use this paper as a way to practice getting your writing very clear and concise.
- Please keep the following point distribution in mind when writing the paper:
 - **10 points:** Mechanics. (Did you follow the paper requirements outlined above, include a link to your popular media article, and use appropriate citation procedures?)
 - **5 points:** Introduction. (Does your introduction clearly mention which theory/concept you will be applying to your article and how you will make the connection, laying the groundwork for where your paper is headed?)
 - **20 points:** Article Summary. (Do you clearly summarize the major points in your popular media article?)
 - **25 points:** Theoretical/Conceptual Understanding. (Is your description of the theoretical perspective and concept you'll be applying in your paper sufficient enough that someone who may not be familiar with these terms be able to understand them? In other words, do you show a clear grasp of the material?)
 - **30 points:** Theoretical/Conceptual Application/Analysis. (Were you able to appropriately apply a sociological theory and concept to the events discussed in your article in order to gain thoughtful insight and a deeper understanding of that particular social institution? Did you show this connection clearly in your paper by, for instance, using appropriate examples in order to demonstrate the theory "at work"?)
 - **10 points:** Writing Style. (As a whole, to what extent does the quality and clarity of your writing aid or hinder your ability to present your argument? Was the information presented in a clear and interesting manner?)

Please email me with any questions that you may have about the assignment including appropriate articles, synthesis of the information in the text with the information in the article, writing issues, or anything else about which you may need help or clarification.

Hopefully, this assignment will give you the chance to see how Sociology is relevant in our everyday lives. Be as creative as possible in choosing your articles; the more interesting the article, the easier it will be for you to engage the material. Enjoy!