

Research Paper Guidelines: The First Draft

due Thursday, November 7th, 2018

Basic requirements: Your first draft is a first serious, complete, full-length attempt to write your paper. Your paper should be between eight and ten pages, not including your bibliography, and include at least ten relevant, well-chosen sources (your final paper will require ten). *The first draft is worth 10% of your final grade.*

Learning Objectives: This assignment fulfills the following learning goals established by the Department of Sociology:

- *Critically Evaluate Published Research.* Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
- *Communicate Skillfully:* Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
- *Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes:* Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
- *Improve project management skills:* Students will improve their skills in time management, ordering and executing a series of complex and inter-related tasks, and integrating distinct components of a project into a final product.

Guidelines

The Task

- In your paper you will make an *informed* argument about the sociological problem you choose to study. It should be persuasive and rely on logical reasoning and empirical evidence, rather than values, beliefs, or on rhetoric.
- The *analysis* needs to illustrate your sociological appreciation for the complexity of the social issue at hand. And this requires you a) take other theories seriously, b) consider all evidence available, even when they challenge your argument. During the course of research your argument may need to be revised or qualified.
- You should make an *argument* and not writing a *summary*. This is a fine line, as making an argument requires summarizing, but the task basically requires you to organize what others have said for your own purposes. ***What are you trying to say about a particular social issue? What are you contributing?***

Structure

- Generally, a research paper is constructed in the following order:
 1. Introduction
 - Frames a problem or question
 - Includes background information on the topic
 - Includes a thesis statement at the end
 2. Body & Evidence
 - Includes 2-3 paragraphs on each point of your thesis
 - Each paragraph has a topic sentence at beginning that guides rest of paragraph
 - Everything speaks to the main claim you are making (your thesis!)
 3. Conclusion
 - Summarizes what you just said
 - Contains one or more of the following:
 - SPECIFIC and realistic solutions to the problem(s) you discuss
 - Questions still unanswered by research on your topic and the research that needs to be done to answer it
 - How your conclusions speak to other social issues/topics

Requirements

Your paper must:

- Make a *sociological* argument
- Include the following elements:
 - a clear and identifiable thesis statement (your argument in a very brief manner)
 - an introduction and a conclusion
 - a body where you outline your main points that support your thesis,
 - evidence to support each main point you make
- The thesis statement should articulate a *single* cohesive argument, but with reference to its multiple stages, components, and/or major points of support.
- Each body paragraph should provide evidence/support for each component of your thesis.
- Be 8-10 pages (not including bibliography and cover page)
- Be double spaced, with standard margins, 12 pt Times Roman.
 - Do not use exotic fonts.
- Make use of 10-12 scholarly sources

Other Details:

- You may incorporate *additional* non-academic sources such as newspaper articles, but they do not count toward the required 10.
- If you want to use or collect primary data, you may include less than 10 sources. But you **MUST** discuss this option with your section instructor before beginning.

Grading Rubric

SOC 210 First Draft Grading Rubric		
Criteria	Ratings	Pts
<p>Structure</p> <p>The opening paragraph clearly introduces the paper topic and includes a thesis statement. The thesis statement is clear and concisely previews the paper's body (in 1-2 sentences). Each body paragraph is focused around one specific idea that supports the thesis statement. Paragraphs use topic sentences to keep the paper organized. The conclusion summarizes the writer's main ideas in an original way and provides some additional insight into the significance of the thesis.</p>	<p><i>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</i></p>	3.0 pts
<p>Analysis</p> <p>The writer demonstrates an in-depth understanding of sociological concepts/theories. Assertions are fully explained and well-supported with examples from text(s). Quotations from text(s) are interpreted accurately and use appropriately. The writer employs strong logic and reasoning; there are no gaps between the writer's argument and supporting evidence.</p>	<p><i>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</i></p>	3.0 pts
<p>Style</p> <p>Paragraphs flow well together; the writer uses transition language within and between paragraphs. Writing is academic (third person narrative except for personal examples or particular circumstances); clear and concise. Little redundancy; deliberate and diverse word choices. Largely free of grammar, spelling or mechanical errors -- strong proofreading evident. The assignment formatting is followed (page numbers, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, etc.) The writer uses proper American Sociological Association style citations and source list.</p>	<p><i>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</i></p>	1.0 pts
<p>Development</p> <p>The writer demonstrates thoughtfulness, review and implementation of previous feedback from oral presentations, outlines and thesis statement submission(s).</p>	<p><i>This area will be used by the assessor to leave comments related to this criterion.</i></p>	1.0 pts
Total Points: 8.0		