

## Project-Based Learning Assignment: Introduction to Sociology 3100

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### Introduction

The **two-part assignment** provides you with the opportunity to relate real life matters to the ideas and techniques discussed in the classroom lectures. The assignment is designed to follow the tasks required of skilled sociologists as closely as possible. The assignment asks you to examine social problems from a sociological perspective and suggest policies for modifying the negative aspects of social problems. It is expected that, throughout this assignment, you will learn to evaluate, gather understanding and recognize social problems from a broad perspective.

The project is broken down in to 2 parts. You may earn up to 20 points (20% of total grade) of credit for each part (40% of total grade).

### Project Part 1

1. Please select a topic covering a social subject (think sociologically! You are free to select your own topic) from chapters 3 to 11 from the textbook, which you are interested in exploring further (start early in the semester). The topic has to address concerns related to sociology. Be specific when selecting your topic (e.g. online education pros/cons for community college students or social media aspects in education).
2. Form groups (up to **4** people in a group). Start early in the semester.
3. **Select at least TWO articles** from the popular press (web, magazines, and newspapers) and at least **TWO** articles from a social science journal (See KCC library's website: <http://kbcc.cuny.libguides.com/az.php>). These articles should be ones not included in the course materials.  
Research will be presented in class and submitted in writing (you will email me as an attachment your paper. No hard copies will be collected).
4. **Directions for Part 1 of the Assignment:**
  - Write a brief review of each of the four articles.
  - Provide full citations to the articles.
  - The paper should be 4-5 pages in length.
  - Select one of the sociological perspectives: functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism.
  - Interpret the social problem from the selected sociological perspective. Furthermore, be specific in your explanation: what you learned from each reading and which sociological perspective you are using.
  - Suggest a social policy to improve the social problem
  - During the presentation (15-20 minutes), the student will not read from the paper, rather he/she should summarize key issues and be ready to lead a discussion on the topic.
5. **Due Date:** Presentation dates will be announced. Your group will be committed to completing the presentation on that date.
6. **Suggestions for Organizing the Written Assignment:**
  - Start with an introductory paragraph that outlines and describes your social topic, such as why it is important.

- Summarize the information provided for each article in a paragraph (4 articles). It will be interesting if you can find opposite views on the topic you selected.
- Write a couple of paragraphs to explain the social topic from a sociological perspective.
- Recommend social policy to improve or lessen the negative concerns of your social problem in 2-3 paragraphs.
- End with a conclusive paragraph summarizing your research.
- **BE CAREFUL TO AVOID PLAGIARISM.**

Possible topics related to sociology covered in SOC 31 that you might consider include the following:

- What is the sociological imagination?
- Wright Mills and the Sociological Imagination
- Name four major figures from the history of sociology, and briefly describe their contributions to the field.
- What is the difference between norms and values, and what part does each play in society?
- Symbolic Interactionism
- How do symbols and, more particularly, language shape the way we see our world?
- Define group, institution, and society.
- Describe the interplay of nature and nurture as understood today.
- Thomas theorem
- Social Presence
- Gender Issues
- Kids' exposure to technology
- Games
- Karl Marx/Marxist analysis
- Technology and social change
- Socialization
- Gender socialization
  - Gendered toys
  - Toys and job segregation: doctors vs. nurses and pilots vs. pilot assistants
  - Boys' and girls' Halloween costumes
- What is anomie theory?
- Explain Merton's Theory of Structural Strain
- What is social stratification? What are three components of it?
- How do the functionalist, conflict, interactionist, and feminist perspectives explain gender inequalities?
- Describe major theories of social change.
- What is social change? Give one example of a major social change that has taken place in the past 100 years. What were some of the factors responsible for that change?
- How have computer use and Internet access affected life in the United States?
- Health and Medicine
- American's perception of various religious groups and atheists
- Women and Technology
- Online education con/pro for community college students
- Social media aspects in education

## Project Part 2

For this part 2, students may earn up to 20 points of credit by developing a **Video Presentation** or an **infographic** of the topic you selected in **part one**. The video or infographic has to be uploaded on <http://www.youtube.com/> (or any other server) and the link to the presentation has to be posted on the class's blog (part of the class website).

**Due Date: Tues. May 31, 2016 is the last date to submit the URL (link)** to your video or infographic. Your group will be committed to completing the presentation on that date.

Your **video** or infographic should demonstrate the following:

- ✚ The key aspects of your topic
- ✚ An authentic application of your topic
- ✚ A strong research base for your topic
- ✚ Sharing insight you gained from having read related material
- ✚ Expanding the topic by validating an idea with your own experience
- ✚ An organized presentation that follows good visual design principles
- ✚ Your short video (a five- to six-minute) may focus on *any* aspect of sociology that you find timely and interesting.
  
- ✚ **For the infographic:** highlights statistics that will seize people's attention
- ✚ Tell the basic story of your topic
- ✚ Present visual data narratively
- ✚ Use color in a meaningful way

### Media Tools

- ❖ **YouTube Free Video Editor:** <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/4522397?rd=1>  
YouTube instructions "how to upload video on YouTube "  
<http://youtu.be/Hlxqk0iHp5w>
- ❖ <https://support.google.com/youtube/troubleshooter/2888402?hl=en>
- ❖ YouTube Forum: <https://productforums.google.com/forum/#!forum/youtube>
- ❖ **Movie Maker - Microsoft Windows** (Free)  
<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-live/movie-maker#t1=overview>
- ❖ "Six Easy Ways for Students to Create Videos Online"  
(<http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/11/six-easy-ways-for-students-to-create.html>)
- ❖ **Prezi - Presentation Software** <http://prezi.com/>
- ❖ **POWTOON** <http://www.powtoon.com/>
- ❖ "Tools for Creating Infographics" (<http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2013/12/five-good-online-tools-for-creating.html>)

- ❖ **Free tools for creating infographics:** <http://www.creativebloq.com/infographic/tools-2131971>  
<http://www.edudemic.com/diy-infographics/>

**Some additional tools for creating infographics:**

Adobe Illustrator

Microsoft Publisher

[easel.ly](#) (template based online infographics maker)

[Piktochart](#) (6 free themes that are editable)

[Dipity](#) (for timelines)

[Infogr.am](#) (online infographics maker, most useful if you have numerical data)

[Tableau](#) (online data visualization tool, you would need numerical data to use)

[Wordle](#) (generates word clouds)

[WorldMapper](#) (maps of the world resized by subjects of interest)

[Lucid Chart](#) (Chrome app, use with googledrive and generate flow charts)

**Advice for Creating Infographics:**

[10 Tips for Designing Infographics](#)

[How to Strike the Elusive Balance Between Data and Visualization](#)