

SOCIOLOGY INTERNSHIP

RESEARCH PAPER DIRECTIONS

I. COVER PAGE(S)

- A. Your name and telephone number (home, cell and work)
- B. Name and address of agency
- C. Name and title of your supervisor
- D. Agency or Organization office telephone number
- E. A precise listing of each of the dates (and clock hours) of your contacts-- plus the total hours)

II. FORMAT

- A. The research paper should be **no less than 7-10 typed, double spaced, pages**. Use Times New Roman (12) as the font and set the margins at one inch on all four sides. Number the pages.
- B. Use the ASA format to cite the work of others (see Appendix A).
- C. **Plagiarism is not allowed.** This includes copying other people's work without using quotation marks and/or without citing the original source, as well as changing only a few words in a paraphrase. The penalty for plagiarism ranges from failing a course to being expelled from the University. Do not try to directly quote other people's words at length: this usually indicates a lack of full understanding of what the quoted person is talking about. If you are not clear about the meaning of plagiarism it is your responsibility to find out.

You are permitted to use widely discussed sociological concepts (e.g., culture, stratification, socialization, etc.) and theories (e.g., conflict theory, functionalism, etc.) without citing published work because these concepts and theories are "common knowledge" in the discipline. But if you reference specific research findings or obscure ideas, cite the source.

III. CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

Section #1: AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Provide a single-page, typed description of the agency or organization **in your own words**. You may wish to include a description of basic services, goals, and type of clients. You may not turn in a pamphlet distributed by the agency/organization to substitute for this section. This description does **not** count towards the 10 pages.

Section #2: REFLECTIVE RESEARCH REPORT

This section will draw upon two areas of information. First, and most important, your

paper will draw from the field notes you have collected during your internship. Keep a handwritten or typed journal of your observations about your field experiences. **(FYI - you must turn in this journal when you turn in your research paper)**. You should have an entry for every day in the field, usually at least one page in length. Write down any relevant quotes. The purpose of the journal is to provide you with material for your research paper. Second, you will use the field notes, in conjunction with information from **a minimum of 3** (you may use more if you wish, but it is not required) academic sources (books or journal articles), to compile your research paper. You may be able to take notes while you are in the field or you may have to summarize what you saw and did immediately after each shift at your agency. Your handwritten journal should include the following two components:

- In
- A. EXPLANATION/DESCRIPTION of training, experiences or activities. other words, what you saw and did at the agency/organization.
 - B. REFLECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS of your experiences. This is an analytical attempt to **reflect sociologically** on what you saw and did at the agency/organization. You should resort to subjective reflections (i.e., personal opinions) only in rare cases of great importance (i.e., something you saw in the field helped change your career path or impacted you in a significant way).

You should consider beliefs, events, and behaviors from multiple perspectives, including: 1) the agency/organization as an operating structure, 2) the staff/supervisors, 3) the formal and informal goals of the agency/organization, and 4) the clients (plus those in his/her "social world" -- such as the family, staff, you, etc.). This sensitivity to different viewpoints is a key component of thinking sociologically.

The readings on the internship Springboard should also help you reflect on issues in your own agency or organization from different perspectives, as well as the broader social context of these issues. The readings by Robert Burgess on "Methods of Field Research" and by Kristin Esterberg "Qualitative Methods in Social Research," also on Springboard, will help you to ask probing questions of agency/organizational personnel about their social world (see especially the example interview on by William Foot Whyte) and on how to take field notes (see pages 72-80 in Esterberg). Appendix B contains actual quotes from past student journal entries along with follow-up questions designed to foster a sociological analysis.

If you are conscientious about keeping a journal and you make sure to ask probing questions of agency/organization staff on sociological topics, you should have more than enough material for the 8-10 page paper. You do not need to recount events on a daily basis. Instead, you should organize your paper by using sociological theories, concepts, and ideas that have been discussed in your classes (e.g., culture, norms, gender, and

inequality). For example, if you interned at a police department, can you identify aspects (e.g., language, symbols, norms) of a “police sub-culture” that are distinct from other sub-cultures you have observed in your daily life (e.g., student sub-culture)? Or if you interned in a men’s prison, did you notice any differences in how the prisoners interacted with male vs. female staff? Answering such questions will help you **write sociologically**, which is the primary goal of the paper. In other words, you are required to demonstrate that you can make sense of your field observations using the conceptual tools you have gained as student majoring in sociology. See Appendix C for examples of student journals that exhibited a sociological imagination.

To reiterate: the most important element of the report is that you demonstrate your ability to use your **sociological imagination** to help you better understand your field experiences and the patterns of behavior you witnessed. If you are less than 100% clear about what the term “sociological imagination” means, seek clarification from me (Dr. Callanan). See Appendix D for more on the sociological imagination.

Your paper will be graded according to the Evaluation Rubric listed in Appendix E.

As you can see, you are required to reflect on your internship experience using five aspects of your undergraduate training: sociological **perspective, vocabulary, theory, method, and academic references**. All five elements will be assessed according to the rubric.

Your final grade is based on your agency supervisor’s evaluation (which must be forwarded to the Center for Career Management) and the grade that you receive on the paper. A strong evaluation from your supervisor, a detailed journal demonstrating a sociological perspective, and a “+” in all five content areas for the final paper will earn an “A” grade. You will earn a lower grade for the course if receive a “-“ or “x” in any of the five content areas, a weak evaluation from the agency supervisor, keep a minimal journal, or some combination of both. If you have any questions about the Evaluation Rubric listed in Appendix E, please see me.

To sum, in order to pass the course, you **MUST**

1. Complete 120 hours of internship
2. Receive an adequate evaluation from your agency supervisor
3. Turn in a detailed journal of your daily observations
4. Complete the final research paper

REMINDER: When you submit research paper it is your responsibility to make certain that your advisor at the Center for Career Management has received your agency supervisor's evaluation and all of the other paperwork that the Center requires.

The final paper and journal is due in Dr. Callanan’s mailbox no later than the Monday of final week of spring or fall semester to receive a grade for that semester, or the first Friday of August for summer semester. If the paper is turned in later you will receive an IP (In Progress); the final grade will not be posted until Dr. Callanan is able to read your paper.

Appendix A: ASA Format

References in the text cite the last name of the author and year of publication. Include page numbers whenever your text quotes directly from a work or refers to specific passages in the cited work. Cite only those works needed to provide evidence for assertions and to guide readers to important sources on your topic. Identify subsequent citations of the same source in the same way as the first. Examples follow:

If the author's name is in the text, follow it with the year in parentheses: Duncan (1959).

If the author's name is not in the text, enclose the last name and year in parentheses: (Gouldner 1963).

Pagination follows the year of publication after a colon: (Ramirez 1979:239-40). Give both last names for joint authors: (Martin and Bailey 1988).

A few examples of a reference list follow. See recent issues of *American Sociological Review* or its homepage (<http://www2.asanet.org/journals/asr/Notice.pdf>) for further examples:

*Books:

Bernard, Claude (1865) 1957. *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*. Translated by H.C. Greene, New York: Dover.

*Periodicals:

Conger, Rand D. 1999. The Effects of Positive Feedback on Direction and Amount of Verbalization in a Social Setting. *Sociological Perspectives*, 54:121-133.

Appendix B: Example of Follow-up Questions for Student Journal Entries

Quote: “One thing I have learned about this agency is that they do not give the case workers enough power to enforce serious consequences when clients break the rules.”

Follow-up Questions: Why are case workers not allowed to use more serious consequences, or are you making an assumption? Would the case worker in this example have preferred to use more serious consequences, or does she have a lenient style in general? In sociological terms, is she constrained by social structures or agency subculture (e.g., rules/policies, “standard operating procedures,” informal norms, “learned helplessness,” external pressures, etc.) or is her personal preference to be lenient? This is the kind of question that you should ask staff at your agency in order to provide empirical data to support your claim. With enough data, you could write one or more paragraphs exploring the reasons why staff members are constrained from holding clients accountable. The scholarly literature suggests that staff have a great deal of discretion in how they implement policy, so you could use your observations to speak to this issue. See also the reading by Michael Lipsky on “Street-Level Bureaucracy” on the course Springboard.

Quote: “Many ex-felons try to obtain jobs that pay ‘under the table,’ which I do not think is fair. I have to pay taxes so why should people who break the law not pay their share?”

Follow-up Questions: Have you ever discussed this issue with clients? What are their reasons for preferring jobs in what sociologists refer to as “the informal economy”? Are there structural forces (e.g., stigma, lack of social capital) at work? If so, what do you think about these forces? What do the other workers at your agency think? Do staff members have time to discuss such issues or are they focused on the practical issue of clearing their caseload? In other words, do staff members possess a sociological imagination? Should their job responsibilities include such discussions, or would that interfere with the efficient performance of their assigned duties?

Quote: “I think that the staff should not demean the residents with some of their responses to the residents’ questions. Some of the clients have legitimate arguments but instead of a diplomatic, yet truthful answer, it has to be politically correct. The clients know they are being swindled by the lame answers but have no choice than to accept it.”

Follow-up Questions: What do you mean by “politically correct”? Why must staff give “politically correct” answers? What are the consequences of not doing so? What do the administrators and managers think about this practice? Do they encourage staff to behave in this manner? You have identified an interesting aspect of the sub-culture at your agency and you could write a great deal about the causes and consequences of this sub-culture, from your perspective and the perspectives of staff and clients.

Appendix C: Examples of the Sociological Imagination in Student Journals

[Note: sociological concepts are bolded.]

- 1) “All the times that I have gone out with an officer to interview a suspect we have gone to the poorer sections of town. Maybe this can be partially explained by using Merton’s **structural strain theory**. Perhaps the perpetrators of these crimes were what Merton would have referred to as “**innovators**,” that is, one who accepts the societal goal of material success, but rejects the socially acceptable means for achieving those goals. It could be that the perpetrators of these crimes lack the resources to gain meaningful employment, so they turn to alternate means of making a living. This is a subject that I plan to discuss with officers during the course of my internship.”

- 2) “Having interned at the coroner’s office for several weeks now, it seems to me that most of the homicide victims are young adults, while most of the suicide victims are middle-aged or elderly. This pattern can probably be explained, but I’m sure how at the moment. I seem to recall reading about the “**age/crime curve**” in one of my classes, so I’m going to look through my old notes to see what I can find.”

- 3) “The police department where I work is dominated by male officers. The chief is a man, so are all of the captains and other administrators. There are a handful of female patrol officers, but even this aspect of the department is male-dominated. I wonder if there is a “**glass ceiling**” here that keeps women out of powerful positions. I don’t really know how to ask about this issue without offending anyone. As a woman, I may have better luck talking with female officers so I’ll start with that.” [Note: This student should have contacted the internship coordinator to discuss ways to explore this issue.]

- 4) “I recalled one of Weber’s five **dysfunctions** of **bureaucracies** that we discussed in my theory class when the Secret Service agent told me that the only reason that the final reports were still being done was that they had always been done. This reminded me of what Weber referred to as **ritualism**. He claimed that ritualism is when procedures themselves are valued more than the goal that the procedure was designed to accomplish. These reports serve no purpose according to the agents and nobody even reads them. They are just busywork.”

Appendix D: Using the Sociological Imagination

by Kathryn Feltey, Ph.D.

C. Wright Mills' concept ***the sociological imagination*** is central to the discipline of sociology. What is the sociological imagination? It is the ability to see how the experiences of individuals are connected to events in the larger society. Put another way, the sociological imagination is:

...the ability to see the societal patterns that influence the individual as well as groups of individuals. Sociology should be used, Mills argued, to reveal how the context of society shapes our lives” (Anderson & Taylor 2004, p.5).

The basic distinction made in the sociological imagination is between **personal troubles** and **social or public issues**. Troubles can be understood as our private problems that are related to events in our personal lives. For example, a couple married for 10 years files for divorce; all of the financial, emotional, and psychological turmoil they experience constitute **personal troubles**.

Issues, on the other hand, are rooted in institutional arrangements and social history and affect large numbers of people. Therefore, the dramatic increase in divorce rates in the U.S. in the 2nd half of the 20th century is an example of a **public issue**. Accordingly, sociologists want to understand “...the larger political, social, and economic issues that affect our lives and the lives of others in our society and around the globe” (Scott & Schwartz 2000, p.4).

In your internship, you will want to begin seeing the ways that the experiences of individuals you encounter are connected to larger structures of society. For example, if you are working in a juvenile facility, you could make note of the social status of children and adolescents in society and look for ways that specific experiences are related to that status (along with others such as gender, class, and race). Once you begin using the sociological imagination you will find that it is difficult not to apply it – at the movies, the mall, school, work, family events, and so on. Then you will know you have become a sociologist.

Appendix E

Displaying Sociological Imagination: An Evaluation Rubric

Adapted from the Outcome Assessment Committee of the College of DuPage

(Source: <http://www.cod.edu/outcomes/ProgDis/SOCInstr.htm>)

1. **PERSPECTIVE (10%):** Demonstrate a sociological perspective (a recognition that an individual is impacted by and exists within a social context combined with an ability to view social reality through perspectives other than your own [i.e., “take the role of the other”]):

- (-) Does not display a sociological perspective
- (x) Makes an effort at using a sociological perspective
- (+) Strong evidence of a sociological perspective

2. **VOCABULARY (30%):** Demonstrate use (application) of sociological terms and concepts to describe, and/or comment on the social context of an episode or issue. Sociological concepts could include, but are not limited to: culture/sub-culture; stratification by race, class, and/or gender; norms; social status; social roles and role conflict; institutions; socialization; primary and secondary groups; bureaucracy; formal and informal organization; ideology; conformity; deviance; social power; functions and dysfunctions; prejudice and discrimination (racism, sexism, ageism, etc.); social change; consensus and conflict; and social mobility.

- (-) Does not use sociological terms and vocabulary
- (x) Makes an effort at using sociological terms and vocabulary
- (+) Strong use of sociological terms and vocabulary

3. **METHOD (20%):** Demonstrate use of systematic methods in collecting observational and interview data. This will help you articulate a sociological perspective using relevant concepts that are grounded in your data. You should also display an awareness of the limitations of your data/method. Refer to the readings by Robert Burgess and Kristin Esterberg on the course Springboard as a guide.

- (-) Does not use systematic methods in identifying and analyzing relationships among elements in a social context
- (x) Makes an effort at using systematic methods in identifying and analyzing relationships among elements in a social context
- (+) Strong use of systematic methods in identifying and analyzing relationships among elements in a social context

4. **THEORY (30%):** Demonstrate application of sociological theory in identifying and analyzing relationships among elements in a social context:

(-) Does not use sociological theory in analyzing relationships among elements in a social context

(x) Makes an effort at using a sociological theory in identifying and analyzing relationships among elements in a social context

(+) Consistently and appropriately uses a sociological theory in identifying and analyzing relationships among elements in a social context

5. **REFERENCES (10%):** You must draw from a minimum of 3 academic sources to theoretically ground your paper. These sources may be academic books (not textbooks), academic journal articles, or chapters from an edited book. Interviews, web sites, popular magazines, trade journals, or newspapers do not count as academic sources.

(-) Does not use any academic sources

(x) Lists sources in the reference page, but does not incorporate all sources into the paper.

(+) Uses a minimum of 3 academic sources, and incorporates all the works in the final paper.