

Social Problems Paper Grade Criteria

Name _____

Grade _____ (out of 25)

_____ Topic statement (3 points)

Topic is appropriate, justified, and presented within the social problems framework identified in class.

_____ Topic Overview (5 points)

Discussion of the causes of the problem and its consequences for society is clear and accurate.

Accurate, relevant supporting text material provided.

_____ Research and Theory (12 points)

Accurate, concise summary of all four required sources is presented.

Theoretical orientation of all four required sources is accurately identified.

Comparison of theoretical perspectives across sources demonstrates comprehension of core concepts and assumptions of sociological theories.

_____ Format and Presentation (5 points)

Copies of all four required sources are attached.

Paper includes complete bibliography and citations are correctly presented in APA or MLA format.

Paper follows a logical format, is coherent, and adheres to the rules of written English in organization, grammar, spelling, sentence structure, tone, and usage.

Shepherd University, Department of Sociology

Social Stratification – Spring 2006

Checklist for Ethnography Project Presentation

Criteria	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Clear introduction that identifies topic to be discussed				
Appropriate references to theory, core concepts, and/or other relevant research made				
Specific examples from fieldwork provided				
Implications of your research for better understanding a sociological theory or concept are stated				
Response to questions reflects comprehension of course material and familiarity with fieldsite				
Overall quality of presentation (organization, coherence, integration with group members)				

Grade: _____

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NAME _____

GRADE _____

A 5 Excellent Summary is well-written. Explanation of the problem is clear and coherent. The main points are relevant and consistently supported by specific, appropriate examples. Student makes reference to appropriate text and/or lecture material. Summary reveals exceptional insight and/or creativity as well as a superior understanding of core concepts and theories in sociology.

B 4 Good Summary is generally well-written. Explanation of the problem is clear. The summary includes some key points and several relevant examples. Student makes reference to appropriate text and/or lecture material. Summary reveals solid understanding of core concepts and theories

C 3 Average Summary may have some weaknesses in written expression, organization, or presentation; but main point is identified. Reveals fair understanding of core concepts and theories. Student indirectly or vaguely makes reference to relevant course materials. Analysis needs further development.

D 2 Needs Improvement Summary includes errors in written expression and basic organization of ideas that interfere with clarity of the paper. Lacks references to relevant course materials and needs examples to support points. Reveals incomplete understanding of relevant concepts and theories.

F 1 Unsatisfactory Summary has numerous weaknesses in written expression, presentation, and organization, resulting in overall lack of clarity. Student did not completely follow assignment guidelines.

Grade: _____

Grading Criteria Sheet for State Demographic Profile

Criteria	A 90-100	B 80-89	C 70-79	D 60-69	F < 60
Technical correctness	Rates presented are correct; all calculations are shown; all data sources are clearly presented.	Rates are nearly correct (e.g., one or two math errors); nearly all calculations shown; source of all data not exactly clear.	More than one or two errors in calculations; many calculations are not shown; several unknown data sources.	Most rates are way off; calculations are not shown; most data sources are not included in the report.	Rates presented do not make sense or are omitted; calculations not shown; data sources not included.
Interpretation	Explanation of procedures and measures is correct and explanations display complex, thorough understanding of methodology; assumptions and limitations are clearly specified.	Explanations are mostly correct (one or two errors) and display thorough understanding of procedures and measures; assumptions and limitations implied or briefly identified.	Several mistakes in interpretation made and explanations are somewhat superficial or inconsistent; assumptions and limitations not specified.	Numerous mistakes in interpretation; explanations are superficial and do not reflect basic level of understanding.	Interpretations are mostly incorrect and therefore do not meet minimum standards.
Analysis	Your discussion of the causes of the observed patterns and consequences for society is sophisticated and insightful; material included is appropriate and justified; the report displays exceptional creativity and original ideas.	Your discussion of the causes of the observed patterns and consequences for society is comprehensive; the material is relevant and justified; the report displays some creativity and original ideas.	Your discussion of the causes of the observed patterns and consequences for society is often vague or requires elaboration; the relevance of some material is questionable; the report is mostly a summary that does not demonstrate creativity or original ideas.	Your discussion of the causes of the observed patterns and consequences for society is overly vague; most of the material is irrelevant or insufficient to support points; paper does not demonstrate the most basic understanding of your topic.	You fail to discuss the causes and/or consequences of the observed patterns; included material is irrelevant or completely omitted; level of understanding does not meet minimum standards.
Mechanics/ Style	The report is free from grammar and spelling errors; paper follows a logical format; tone is appropriate.	Very minor mistakes in organization, grammar, spelling, sentence structure, tone, and usage.	Limited evidence of proofreading and/or revision; paper disorganized and points sometimes hard to follow.	Errors in spelling, grammar, sentence structure, etc. distract reader from the content; points difficult to ascertain or follow.	Stylistic errors render the paper virtually incomprehensible.

Shepherd University, Department of Sociology - Social Problems
Dr. Margie L. Kiter Edwards

Paper Guidelines

One of the major assignments for this course is the completion of an analytical review paper based on a comparison of multiple sources of information pertaining to the same social problem. One of the most important skills you can learn in college is the ability to *synthesize* information. This is a **critical thinking** exercise in which you carefully examine the 1) content, 2) sources, and 3) methods of production involved in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. For this paper, you will be expected to:

- gather relevant information from four different sources (specified below)
- compile and present the information about your topic in a logical, coherent way
- assess the *utility* and *accuracy* of the information in the context of the material presented in your textbook and during class discussions

Required Information Sources

- One article from the *Journal of Social Issues* – full-text articles are available online through Shepherd’s library. Use only articles published from 2000 to 2007.
- One official *government* source, accessed electronically or in paper form, such as a database (United States Census, Uniform Crime Reports, etc.), a proposed law, a policy statement, or program eligibility criteria.
- One *newspaper article* (accessed electronically or in paper form) pertaining to the topic. The article must be a news report, *not* an editorial (op-ed column). The article may be from any standard local or national newspaper, e.g. the Journal, the Washington Post, the Herald, the New York Times.
- One web-based source that is *not* affiliated with the government or a university. For example, it may be maintained by an individual, a non-profit organization, a political party, or a religious organization.

As you develop the paper, consider the following questions for 1) each information source, 2) across sources, *and* 3) in comparison to our text and class discussions:

- 1) What is the main issue being addressed in the article? Does this issue constitute a *social problem* as we have defined it in this class?
- 2) What assumptions does the author make about this issue? Which broad perspective do these basic assumptions reflect, e.g. biomedical, psychological, sociological?
- 3) With which *sociological* theory are the author’s arguments most closely associated?
- 4) What *evidence* does the author provide to support his or her points? Does the author offer a solution for the problem? Is the solution logically tied to the author’s presumed cause of the problem?
- 5) Did you identify any examples of bias, faulty reasoning, or other *methodological* shortcomings in these information sources?
- 6) Overall, what conclusions would you draw about how this social problem is framed, understood, and managed in the contemporary United States?