

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PAPERS

Sociological Theories

The application papers are intended for you to examine one or two specific theoretical concepts introduced in the reading or in lecture and “apply” or “use” them to understand a “real world” social issue found in the media. In writing each application paper you will be expected to demonstrate: (1) an accurate understanding of your chosen concept(s) and (2) an ability to use the concepts to “frame” the social issue being presented. Basically, you’ll demonstrate how your concepts help us to gain new insight into something that’s happening in the world today – or at least in mediated depictions of our world.

These papers are to be 5-7 pages long. They must be typed (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 11-12 point New Times Roman font) **and follow correct citation and referencing procedures** (see attached or look for “How to cite and reference in your papers” under Assignments on Springboard about how to do this). You will also need to include one of the following with your paper: (a) a copy of or link to the relevant newspaper or magazine article; (b) a link to the specific radio broadcast; or (c) clear reference to the film being discussed.

Paper content and organization

- (1) Please begin your analysis with a brief summary of one or two concepts of interest to you and link it/them to the appropriate theorist or theoretical perspective. The concept(s) should be taken from assigned class reading. Be sure to cite the source of your concept(s) following the citation format instructions. Examples of the types of concepts I’m referring to here might be: solidarity, anomie, alienation, surplus value, the Protestant ethic, habitus, cultural capital, etc.

In addition to providing a definition/description of each concept, provide an example (that was NOT taken from the readings or lecture) to further illustrate your understanding.

- (2) Once you have clearly explained the concept(s), move onto a few paragraphs that describe or summarize the key part(s) of your chosen article, radio story/program, or movie. Just tell us about the most important facets of the media presentation for understanding what happened in it. These paragraphs should merely summarize the information presented (wait until the next section to “apply” the concepts).
- (3) In the next part of the paper **show** how each concept is being illustrated in the article, program, or movie. What part(s) made you think about each concept? The type of experience I’m referring to here is of the sort: “Hey! That sounds just like what we were reading about in theory last week.” **Explain the connection.** What made you see this link and help us to see it like you did? This takes some real critical thinking skill and is what is meant by “application.” You are using theoretical concepts to help us solve (or “frame”) a particular sociological “puzzle” that arose in the article, radio broadcast, or movie.

Note: Using specific quotes or scene descriptions will really help you to clearly demonstrate the connection to your concepts. A quote or two can help you to explain what specifically made you think that the concept was being illustrated in this particular part of the article, program, or movie.

- (4) Conclude the paper with a summary of your main points. What insights do you want the reader to take away from your paper? What should the reader really remember about what you’ve said in the paper?
- (5) At the end of the paper, include a reference page – see “**How to cite and reference in your papers**” under **Assignments in Springboard**.

DUE DATES: See the syllabus for the due dates for each of the three application papers.

NOTE: For each paper, you may use concepts from any theorist or perspective we have covered in the course reading up to that time and, if you use more than one concept, you may use concepts associated with different theorists or perspectives. **However,** may not re-use a concept that has already been used in an earlier paper.

Grading (see rubric below). Each application paper will be graded out of a possible 40 points.

Receiving a 36-40 means that your paper presented accurate descriptions of your chosen concept(s) and that each of your concept(s) were linked to the appropriate theorist(s) or perspective(s). The relevant parts of the article, radio program, or movie were accurately and completely summarized. This grade also means that you clearly demonstrated how each selected concept was illustrated in the article, program, or movie. You show how each concept frames the issues in a particular way, providing us

with new sociological insights. Finally, this grade also indicates that you cited and referenced material correctly and have demonstrated good writing skills in terms of clarity, grammar, and punctuation.

Receiving a 32-35 means that one of the pieces noted above was missing or inadequate in your paper. It may be that your descriptions of the concepts were not clear, that you didn't summarize the relevant parts of the article/program/movie or that you didn't clearly connect your concepts with the article/program/movie (i.e., we were left wondering what the relevance of the concept was for the article). These grades may also indicate that you failed to cite or reference your materials or that your paper had a number of grammar or punctuation problems.

Receiving a 28-31 indicates that major parts of the assignment were seriously flawed or incomplete. Perhaps the descriptions of the concepts were not adequate or the article/program/movie was not clearly summarized. It may also be that the application portion of the paper did not demonstrate an accurate understanding of the concepts. The paper may also have included serious writing errors.

Receiving below a 27 indicates that the paper did not fulfill the requirements of the assignment. This may be because whole parts of the assignment were missing or that the application was clearly inaccurate and incomplete. The paper may also have included so many writing errors to fully comprehend what you were trying to accomplish.

In addition to the information on “How to cite and reference in your papers” on Springboard:

(If from lecture notes)

Erickson, Rebecca J. 2008. Lecture notes. Sociology 460-001: Sociological Theories, The University of Akron, Spring.

(If from class discussion)

Class Discussion. 2008. Sociology 460-001: Sociological Theories, The University of Akron, Spring.

(If a movie)

Frank, Scott (Writer) and Steven Spielberg (Director). 2002. *Minority Report*. [DVD]. Los Angeles: Universal Studios Home Video.



GRADING RUBRIC FOR APPLICATION PAPER

	<u>POINTS POSSIBLE</u>	<u>YOUR SCORE</u>
A. Introduction to concept(s) being applied.....	10	
- Accurate definition/description		
- Complete definition/description		
- Accurately attributed to theorist		
- Example provided for each concept		
- Sources of information are correctly cited in text		
B. Summary of media presentation or event – article, story, movie, etc....	8	
- Summary complete coverage of relevant issues		
- Sources for info accurately cited in text		

C. Application of concept to your mediated event.....	15		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly show how each described concept is being illustrated - Specification of parts/scenes of article/movie that reflect the definition(s) - Connection accurately explained - Connection thoroughly explained - Sources of information correctly cited 			
D. Final summary paragraph highlighting main points.....	4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key points accurate summarized - Clearly explain what the reader should remember from your paper 			
E. Reference page included.....	3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - References complete (1 to 1 correspondence with citations in text) - Accurate formatting (see citation instructions) 			
		_____	_____
TOTAL POINTS FOR PAPER CONTENT	40		
LANGUAGE USAGE (See below for key)	0		
FINAL POINTS EARNED	40		

BASIC LANGUAGE USAGE

1. Typos/Spelling/Homophones (accept/except; affect/effect; there/their)
2. Punctuation (Check that comma and semi-colon usage is appropriate)
3. Subject-verb agreement
4. Possessives (Its vs. It's - it is)
5. Capitalization
6. Agreement of pronouns and antecedents (Their....he...)
7. Appropriate word endings (-ing; -ed; -es. . .)
8. Incorrect sentence structure or word usage

This numbered key was used in correcting your paper. A check mark (√) indicates the place of the problem and the number refers to the type of problem encountered. More than 2 checkmarks per page resulted in the loss of 1 point (up to 4 points).