

SOCIOLOGY 105: SOCIAL PROBLEMS & ISSUES
FINAL PROJECT
Fall 2013

Due Dates

Research Proposal: 11/19/2013

Final Project Presentation: 12/12/2013

Final Paper: 12/15/2013

Reflection Paper: 12/15/2013

I. Background

This final assignment is comprised in three complementary parts to help students further practice critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as strengthen basic research and advanced critical writing skills.

For this final project, students will work in groups to assess and analyze one specific media message in print, audio, visual, and/or digital format(s)¹ (i.e., newspaper, magazine, radio, television, Internet, film, music, etc.), but the message must address a blatant or latent depiction of a social problem. The media selection can: 1) highlight/raise awareness a social problem or 2) perpetuate, reinforce a social problem. Please make sure to select a media message that can be referenced and/or accessed by the group and the instructor (i.e., provide URL, multiple hard copies, etc.).

Each group is also required to create a “counter” media message in either the same media format of the media critiqued or in an alternative media format.

II. Research Proposal: 11/19/2013

The group is required to submit a research proposal (1-3 pages, double-spaced, stapled, Times New Roman) to the instructor (at the beginning of class) that includes the following information:

- 1) Full names of all members of the group and their assigned tasks for this final paper and presentation;
- 2) Working title of project;
- 3) The media of choice (include title and source (link, attach hard copy, etc.));
- 4) Justification for media selected:
 - a. How does this media reflect a social problem?/Which social problem is it addressing?
 - b. What are your initial critiques of this media message? (List them);
- 5) “Counter” media format to be used and justification for its use;
- 6) Five annotated bibliographies on literature that supports your topic that are relevant to: 1) the social problem; 2) the media format and message you have selected; and 3) the media format and the message the group choose to “counter” with.

III. Final Paper: 12/13/2013

The outline of the final paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, emailed) should be exactly like the outline of the critical analysis paper. (Please refer to the guidelines of the critical analysis paper for further guidance):

- I. Introduction
- II. Short Summary of the Media and its Message
- III. The Group’s Argument/Critique
- IV. Conclusion

¹ Please note that if a visual/audio/digital media message is selected, it cannot exceed 2:00 minutes.

Please remember that media: are “carefully-wrapped packages”; construct versions of reality; are interpreted through diverse, individual lenses; are about profit/marketing/consumerism; and promote agendas. It is also helpful to consider the following points in your final paper, ensuring that you stay focused on the social problem addressed in the original media content:

Industry:

- ◆ Who’s in charge?
- ◆ What do they want of us; why?
- ◆ What else do they want?
- ◆ How do we know?

Product:

- ◆ What kind of message (i.e. social problem) is this?
- ◆ Are message conventions followed or broken?
- ◆ How is this message constructed?
- ◆ How do we know?

Audience:

- ◆ Who is this intended for?
- ◆ What assumptions does the media content make about the audience?
- ◆ Who are we supposed to be in relation to this media message?
- ◆ How do we know?

Values

- ◆ How real is this text?
- ◆ How/where do I find the meaning?
- ◆ What values are presented?
- ◆ What is the commercial message?
- ◆ What is the ideology of this text?
- ◆ What social/artistic/political messages does the text contain?
- ◆ How do we know?

Predisposition

- ◆ Do we agree with (assent to) this text’s message?
- ◆ Do we disagree with (resist) this text’s message?
- ◆ Do we argue/negotiate with the message of this text?
- ◆ How do we know?

Skills

- ◆ What skills do we need to apply to this media message?
- ◆ How do we deconstruct/reconstruct this media message?
- ◆ What new skills does this media message demand of us?
- ◆ How do we know?

Receiver

- ◆ What does all this mean in the end?
- ◆ How do we know?

IV. Final Presentation: 12/10/2013

The final presentation will follow a similar structure and organization to the final paper (please see above). Each group will have 20 minutes to present in front of the class and both the media message being critiqued and the alternative media message created by the group.

V. Reflection Paper: 12/15/2013

Instructions TBA.