SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

PROGRESS REPORT MARCH, 2015



(Source: [Trails: The ASA's Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Trails-The-ASAs-Teaching-Resources-and-Innovations-Library-for-Sociology/199012373456764?fref=photo))

Submitted by Roberta Goldberg, Chair

Roxana Moayedi

Konia Kollehlon

SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

PROGRESS REPORT MARCH, 2015

The sociology program is in the second year of implementing our assessment plan. In the first year, 2013-2014, we developed the plan which is centered on helping students develop a sociological perspective. Specifically we are utilizing the concept of the sociological imagination developed by C. Wright Mills, a sociological theorist, as a measure of how well students develop an understanding of sociology and can articulate a sociological perspective. The sociological imagination is widely acknowledged to be a cornerstone of the discipline. (See the first year assessment plan for more details about this concept.) We are assessing the acquisition of the sociological imagination, and more broadly, a sociological perspective, primarily through the introductory course (SOCY 100). In four sections of this course, including one honors course, students are introduced to the overall sociological perspective and the sociological imagination specifically through readings, class discussions and written assignments. We began the formal assessment process in the fall, 2014 semester. In one section in the spring, 2015 semester, the book *The Sociological Imagination* (Mills, 1959, 2000) was used directly. Thus, there are several conduits through which student comprehension can be measured.

We designed several measures to evaluate the ability of students to define, summarize and analyze social issues using the sociological imagination. In some exams and assignments, the sociological imagination is used explicitly and in others it is part of a larger more overarching application of the sociological perspective. Samples of the exam questions and written assignments as well as the raw data collected so far are found in the appendix of this report. We expect to evaluate the data in the 2015-16 academic year. Below is a specific list of goals we hope students will achieve if successful in incorporating the sociological imagination. These goals are slightly revised for clarity from the original plan.

**GOALS: Students should understand and articulate the sociological imagination as an essential component of sociology so that the student will be able to**

1. define and identify the sociological imagination.

2. apply the sociological imagination to a specific social issue or experience.

3. use other sociological concepts in conjunction with the sociological imagination to display an understanding of the overarching sociological perspective and articulate the value of the sociological imagination in their lives beyond the classroom.

Following is the rubric and evaluation method to be used to assess the success of our approach to teaching the sociological imagination. Note the relation of the rubric to the goals.

**RUBRIC:**

1. **Sociological Imagination**: Student recognizes that an individual is impacted by and exists within a social context (meets goals 1)

2. **Vocabulary:** Student demonstrates use (application) of sociological terms and vocabulary to describe, and/or comment on the social context of questions asked: (meets goal 2)

3. **Application of the Sociological Imagination:** Student demonstrates appropriate and accurate application of sociological ideas, concepts, vocabulary, and theory in describing, identifying and analyzing relationships among elements in a social context, i.e., has developed a sociological perspective (meets goal 3)

**EVALUATION:** In each of the above areas the measure will include the following ratings:

0: Poor—Does not use sociological concepts

1: Fair—Sociological concepts are infrequently used or frequently misused and/or inappropriately applied

2: Good—Sociological concepts are applied with reasonable accuracy and frequency

3: Very Good—Sociological concepts are consistently applied with accuracy and clarity of use

4. Excellent—Especially strong understanding and application of sociological concepts

**CURRENT STATUS OF ASSESSMENT:** During the fall 2014 semester, examination questions and written assignments were distributed in four sections of SOCY 100 taught by Drs. Kollehlon and Moayedi. The data were collected and are currently being evaluated. In addition Dr. Ellis, one of our adjunct professors, has reported on his use of Mills’ book *The Sociological* Imagination in his SOCY 100 class. The data gathered this year will be evaluated in the 2015-16 academic year. Please find the following in the appendix:

1. Relevant written assignments

2. A report from the SOCY 100 section reading *The Sociological Imagination*.

3. Relevant examination questions and outcomes (ATTACHMENT). This is raw data which we expect to evaluate in the coming months. Please note that the raw data is presented without review or evaluation at this stage.

**APPENDIX**

**1. Relevant written assignments (3 assignments)**

**ASSIGNMENT 1**

**SOCY 100 Section 2, Moayedi**

**RACE: A Power of an Illusion**

Goal: The central goal of this course is to introduce students to the concept of Sociological Imagination. The Sociological Imagination challenges us to question the obvious, to remove ourselves from familiar experiences and examine them critically and objectively. It also challenges us to see beyond individual experiences and to see how individual choices are always made within a cultural and structural context. Given that gender, race and social class condition every aspect of our social structure and culture, particular emphasis is paid to these components.

After viewing the video, **RACE: A Power of an Illusion,**  use the sociological perspective to answer the following 5 questions. The paper should be typed, double-spaced and 2 to 3 pages long,

**A hard copy of your paper is due in Dec 4, the last class. No paper will be accepted after 3 pm on Dec. 4. If you email or drop off your paper after this deadline, I will not grade it. Missing this deadline will result in a grade of F.** You should use the resources in the campus Writing Center to improve your writing skills. **Students must receive permission in advance if a deadline is to be extended. You should integrate examples from the video and the Text book into your answers**

1. What's the difference between personal racism, where the beliefs and / or the actions of an individual reflect prejudice or result in discrimination, and institutional racism? 10 points
2. We all like to think we made it because of our own grit, merit and hard work. How have whites benefited from their race in ways that others have not? 5 points
3. Do you agree or disagree with William Julius Wilson suggestions that class, and not race, is the determining status of African Americans? Use text and video to support your argument. 5 points
4. Do you think America should still be viewed as a "melting pot"? 5 points
5. Write on how your life would have been/would be different (in a nontrivial way) had you been born a member of a different race . Use your sociological imagination to discuss/explain, etc. 5 points

**ASSIGNMENT 2**

**Socy 100 Honor**

Exposure to and Use of Violence by Young Women from Distressed Inner-City Neighborhoods: Between *Good to Ghetto by Nikki Jones*

Goal: The central goal of this course is to introduce students to the concept of Sociological Imagination. The Sociological Imagination challenges us to question the obvious, to remove ourselves from familiar experiences and examine them critically and objectively. It also challenges us to see beyond individual experiences and to see how individual choices are always made within a cultural and structural context. Given that gender, race and social class condition every aspect of our social structure and culture, particular emphasis is paid to these components.

**A hard copy of your paper is due in Dec 4, the last class. No paper will be accepted after 3 pm on Dec. 4. If you email or drop off your paper after this deadline, I will not grade it. Missing this deadline will result in a grade of F.** You should use the resources in the campus Writing Center to improve your writing skills. **Students must receive permission in advance if a deadline is to be extended.** The paper should be typed, double-spaced and 5 to 6 pages long,

1) Who do you think the author intended to read this book and why? This part is worth 5 points

2) According to a 2006-2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDH) report, *Violent Behaviors Among Adolescent Females*, over a quarter (26.7 percent) of adolescent females aged 12 to 17 engaged in at least one violent behavior: 18.6 percent reported that they engaged in a serious fight at school or work, 14.1 percent participated in a group-against-group fight and 5.7 percent attacked others with the intent to seriously hurt them. African American girls were more likely to have engaged in a violent behavior than those in all other racial/ethnic groups. As annual family income increased, the incidence of violent behaviors decreased. Use Jonas’s book to explain why African American girls from distressed neighborhood are more likely to fight? This part is worth 10 points

3) What is the “code of the street”? This part worth 4 points.  
  
4) Who are the “good” girls and who are the “street?” How does she describe both groups? This part is worth 4 points.  
  
5) What is the cost of being “good”? This part is worth 4 points

6) Jones found that young African American girls in inner cities use physical violence as an important social resource/ capital. Why this form of social capital does not work for them at school or work This part is worth 5 points?

7) Did this book remind you of anything that has happened to you or to someone you know? What? Why? (This part is worth 4 points)

8) What would the main characters be likely to do if they visited Trinity? This part is worth 4 points

9) What lesson(s) did you learn from the book? This part is worth 4 points

**You should integrate examples from the book into your answers**

**ASSIGNMENT 3**

Sociological Imagination Term Paper Assignment: **Revised Instructions**

Application of the Sociological Imagination to the Concepts of Status and Role\*

Instructions: Write a 2 to 3 page essay that addresses the following question: **Where Do I Fit In?**

First, read the excerpted three page class handout entitled: C Wright Mills, **“The Promise [of Sociology]”1** and Watch the short video on the sociological imagination at: [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5ocDRJkmoo**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5ocDRJkmoo)**:**

**Organization of the Paper**

**The paper should have a title page, your full name, Number and title of the course, name of Institution, etc. An appropriate title could be: Sociological Imagination Paper: Where Do I Fit In?**

**The paper should be divided into three parts: Introduction, Body or Discussion, and Summary and Conclusion**

1. **Introduction**

After the title page, on page 1 of your paper, type Introduction at the top of the page. Begin your introduction by introducing the topic; that is, tell the Reader [Me] what you intend to do in this paper. You may specifically say, for example, what you are going to do in the Introduction; what you are going to do in the Discussion, and what you are going to do in the Summary and Conclusion. Or, you may state in a sentence or two what you are going to do in the entire paper. After telling the reader what you are going to do, begin the essay with a definition of C. Wright Mills’ concept of the **sociological imagination**, with particular emphasis on the subcomponents of **biography** and **history** and make a distinction between what Mills refers to as **‘the personal troubles of milieu’** and the **‘public issues of social structure’**. **NOTE** :[Stated otherwise, clearly state in your own words as much as possible, what Mills mean by the concepts: **biography, history, personal troubles of milieu**, and **public issues of social structure**. Where possible give examples of each]. Use a transitional sentence to smoothly lead the reader to what you are now about to do in the Discussion section.

**II. Discussion/Body**

Begin your discussion by providing ***sociologica*l**  definitions of the concepts **social status** and its two subcomponents of **ascribed status** and **achieved status** and provide examples [at least **one example** of ascribed and **one example** of achieved status] of each from your own life. **In paragraph 2,** define the concept: **social role** and note at least two roles that you currently play today. **NOTE**: The two roles that you describe here should derive from each of the two statuses that you just noted . Tell me one role that you play in your ascribed status and another role that you play in your achieved status. Next, define the concepts of **role conflict** and **role** **strain** and give an example of each that you have experienced in your own life. **NOTE:** The examples of role conflict and role strain that you provide here should clearly be about the roles that you play. In other words, the role conflict and role strain that you describe here should relate to the two roles that you play each of which should be about the two statuses --ascribed and achieved – that you noted after your definitions of these concepts. I do not want you giving me an example of a role, role conflict, or role strain that is not related to the statuses that you occupy/noted earlier. Remain consistent, don’t keep changing. **NOTE**: If you have any doubts here about the sociological definitions of the concepts in this section, go back and read **chapter four of your text**, where these concepts are considered.

In ten years from now, what do you expect your **two major achieved** statuses to be? How would the two statuses that you have noted -one ascribed and the other achieved – **each** impact your future two statuses ten years from now? Would the impact of your ascribed status on your future achieved status be positive or enhancing? Why or why not? Would the impact of your current achieved status enhance or restrain the achievement of your future achieved status? Why or why not? **MORE; OVER, PLEASE**

In other words, how would using C. Wright Mills’ concept of the sociological imagination, your knowledge of U.S. society, and/or the knowledge that you have gained from your study of introductory sociology so far help you to explain how larger **external** social contexts/forces --- race/ethnicity, gender, social class, neighborhood of residence, age, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, etc. -- enhance or restrain your ability to meet your personal goals/future statuses.

1. **Summary and Conclusion**

Summarize what you have done in Parts I and II and add a concluding statement or two.

**Format**: The paper should be typed, 2 to 3 pages long, excluding title page and references (if any); double-spaced with 1” margins on standard 8.5” X 11” white 20 lb. bond paper..

**Organization of Pape**r: As noted above, the paper should be divided into three parts**: Introduction, Discussion/Body**, & **Summary and Conclusion**. **I want to see these three headings in your paper**

**Evaluation/Grading**: The paper will be evaluated in terms of content, insight, originality, coherence, analytical skill, organization, clarity of expression, overall presentation style, spelling, grammar, proper referencing, and footnoting (if any).

**Gradin**g: The **Discussion/Body** will be worth **70 points**, the **Introduction will be worth 20 points** and the **Summary & Conclusion will be worth 10 points.**

Due Date: **The second draft of the paper is due in class on Thursday, Nov. 6, 2014 and the final paper is due in class on Thursday, Nov. 20,, 2014**.Contact Trinity University’s Writing Center for assistance with writing college level papers generally --citations, references, APA style, etc. I will sign the second draft of your term paper and let you know the problems [or lack thereof] that you may need to address in putting together your third and final draft. \*\***It is very important that you keep this signed copy of your second draft of your paper with my signature. Please make sure to attach this second draft to your final paper when submitting it in November. This lets me know that the paper that you are submitting is the paper that you and I have agreed for you to write. Final papers that are submitted without a draft (having my signature) will be graded down by ten points** **\*\***. Delays in getting your drafts to me on time will result in delays in submitting your final paper on the due date. **REMEMBER**: **Late assignments are graded down by five points for each day of lateness**. So, begin early in order to avoid lateness and penalties.

\*\***REMEMBER\*\*: The second and third/final drafts of your papers [neatly typed and stapled] are due in class. Do NOT e-mail papers to me. If you do not present your papers in class when they are due, put them in the Red Box near Faculty Services in the the Main Bldg. I will use the date stamped on each paper by Faculty Services as the date for computing the number of points to be subtracted. If you need further clarifications, please feel free to contact me during my office hours.**

References (if used): References should be cited both within the text (to indicate the source of a quotation, statistic, etc) and in a full reference section at the end of the paper. Use the American Sociological Review or the format for references used in the Henslin textbook that you are using for the course. No blogs, Internet sources, Newspapers, or Wikipedia!! Use direct quotations sparingly [limiting yourself to one quotation with no more than three sentences]. Stay away from Dictionary definitions of sociological concepts.

**Plagiarism: Cheating of any kind, including plagiarism, is a very serious offense at Trinity Washington University and will result in severe punishments that range from failing the course to dismissal from the university. So, please carefully read and familiarize yourself with Trinity’s position/Honor Code on cheating and plagiarism.**

Have Fun !!!

\*Roberta Goldberg’s example; with slight modifications.

1Retrieved from: **Sociology.morrisville.edu/readings/SOC1101/Mills-The\_Promise\_of\_**

**Sociology\_chapter1.pdf**

**2. A report from the SOCY 100 section reading *The Sociological Imagination*.**

Bryan R. Ellis, Adjunct Professor

March 15, 2015

Trinity Washington University

**Introduction to Sociology 100: Teaching the Sociological Imagination**

In Introduction to Sociology, I teach the sociological imagination concept developed by C. Wright Mills. In the *Sociological Imagination*, Mills (1959) stresses the point that sociology is the understanding of the relationship between the individual and society, or biography and history, as he put it. Following this approach, I believe that I have been able to make sociology relevant to students by getting them to see themselves in the world, in relation to others. In addition, by taking this approach, it forces the professor to begin with the student, instead of the reverse. By having students begin with themselves, they become active in the learning process.

This semester students have read three chapters from the *Sociological Imagination*, “The Promise,” “The Philosophies of Science,” and “On Intellectual Craftsmanship.” Along with these chapters, three assessments were assigned: (1) chapter notes from the readings, which included a summary of the chapters and reactions from the students; (2) class discussion, where students debated the ideas from the chapters with the professor and classmates; and (3) a three-page sociological autobiography, where the students were asked to pick a social problem in their lives and to relate it to others and larger social structures.

From these assessments, my observations are that the sociological imagination is effective in teaching Introduction to Sociology. I find the sociological imagination concept to be the clearest definition of sociology. It allows students to use their experiences in the learning process and to talk about subjects that might be taboo in other places. Although I found that many students were able to understand the sociological imagination concept and the three chapters from the book, they did not fully grasp its full meaning. They did the exercises and debated the ideas, but several students were unable to grasp its significance. For me this is alright, since understanding comes before significance, and significance often comes through life’s lessons. This is what the sociological imagination teaches us.