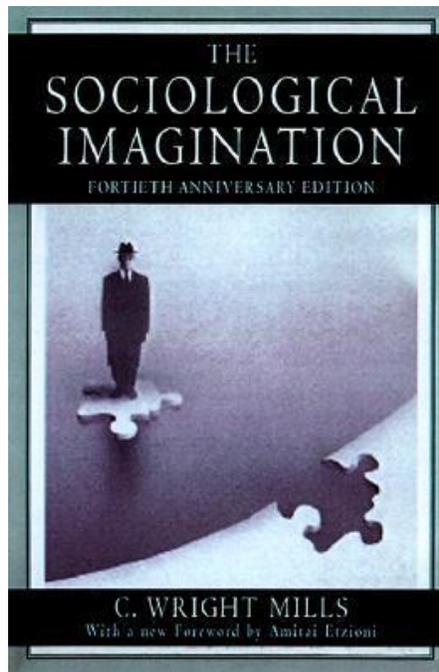


**SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
FINAL REPORT 2015-2016**

Trinity Washington University

Understanding the Sociological Imagination in Introductory Sociology

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SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM ASSESSMENT FINAL REPORT 2015-2016

Understanding the Sociological Imagination in Introductory Sociology

The sociology program at Trinity Washington University has completed a three-year assessment cycle. This final report includes the findings of the assessments performed during the second year in which we evaluated student understanding of the sociological imagination in our introductory courses. This report also contains our conclusions and recommendations to carry forward into the future. As will be seen in this report, we included measures of objective tests and written assignments for Introduction to sociology (SOCY 100): Sections 2, Honors, 4 & 5. Data were collected in the Fall Semester, 2014. We have also included a newer assignment in a section of introductory sociology offered in the fall semester, 2015, though more for demonstration purposes than for evaluation. Please refer to earlier reports for details of the goals of the program and specific plans for the assessment. Our program assessment is based in our commitment to teaching one of the most important analytical concepts in sociology, the sociological imagination, which we presented in detail in the first and second year reports. Rubrics, exam questions and assignments can also be found in earlier reports.

Introduction

In our assessment of the Sociology Program at Trinity Washington University, we focused on students' understanding of the concept of the sociological imagination first introduced by sociologist C. Wright Mills in 1959. This is a critically important concept in the discipline of sociology, and is an integral part of what has come to be known generally as the sociological perspective. According to Mills, the sociological imagination helps us to grasp the intersection between biography and history, and between personal and social experiences (Mills, Charles W. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press).

The sociological imagination emphasizes the preeminence of social structures of institutions and their influences on individual life through macro and micro processes. The primary goal in all the courses we teach is to help students understand the links between their personal experiences and larger social forces. The central goal of all our introductory sociology courses (SOCY 100) is to introduce students to the concept of the sociological imagination and to enable them to apply it in relation to their lives and the society around them.

In preparing our students in the Fall semester of 2014 to fully understand this concept and its significance in sociology, we used a number of instructional strategies and written exercises to accomplish our goal. In sections 4 and 5 of SOCY 100, in addition to regular lectures, Dr. Kolllehlon provided additional examples to those in the textbook and showed two short films from YouTube on the topic. The two short films are Danny Cortese' "Sociological Imagination", a four and a half minute film and Debra Marshall's "Definitions: Sociology and the Sociological Imagination", a nine minute film (both of which were attached as part of the Instructions for the Term Paper).

In-Class Exercise Example:

One of Dr. Kollehlon's examples included asking each student in class to briefly tell the class why she chose Trinity Washington University as the institution of higher learning to attend, given the many universities in this region and the country as a whole. Not surprisingly, many of them gave answers that reflected the strong individualistic value system of the US: because I wanted /decided to attend Trinity Washington University, or similar answers. Then, Dr. Kollehlon began trying to pierce beneath the surface of this individualistic veneer by asking how many of them chose Trinity University because of its physical location—either its proximity to their home(s) or its greater distance from their home(s), for those who really wanted to get far away from their home? How many of you chose Trinity Washington University primarily because of its social –political location – in the nation's capital, he asked. Then he asked how many chose to attend Trinity Washington University because a parent, relative, or friend had attended Trinity University and encouraged you to do so? Dr. Kollehlon asked more questions: how many of you chose Trinity University because of its relatively lower tuition and fees in comparison to other universities in this area? How many of you chose to attend Trinity University because you accompanied your immigrant parents here to this area as a minor? How many of you chose Trinity University because of a more generous financial aid that Trinity University provided you? How many of you chose Trinity University because of the type of institution it is -- private, Catholic, predominantly black/Hispanic, or a women's college? As we went through these and similar questions, very few of them were able to hold on to their initial individualistic answer(s). Then, Dr. Kollehlon demonstrated to them that based on the changes in their responses, we can see that much of our behaviors and decisions in life are largely the result of groups/influences external to us – or what we call in sociology, social location, which is the very essence of the sociological imagination concept.

Testing Knowledge of the Sociological Imagination

There were two approaches to assessing how well students understood the sociological imagination. These included evaluating answers to objective exam questions and written assignments that required students to apply the concept.

Exams: In terms of activities used to measure students' basic knowledge about the sociological imagination, in the four sections of SOCY 100 Drs. Moayed and Kollehlon used a number of similar test bank questions on their first exams that directly measured an understanding of the concept. They felt that given the predominant emphasis on the sociological imagination concept throughout the discipline of sociology, especially the earlier introductory chapters, that they would use the grades of the first exam as a rough measure of students' understanding of the concept.

Written assignments: Each professor used a somewhat different written exercise to further measure students' understanding of the sociological imagination concept. In Dr. Kollehlon's two sections, sections 4 and 5, he required students to write a short, three page paper that required an additional reading of a three-page excerpt of C. Wright Mills, "The Promise" (from Chapter 1 in *The Sociological Imagination*) which he gave to each student as a class handout. More details about the short paper can be found in Appendix 4.

Students in Dr. Moayed's SOCY 100 courses had several assignments. Section 2 was required to view a video, "Race—the Power of an Illusion", and the Honors section was assigned to read the

book *Between Good and Ghetto* by Nikki Jones. Students in both sections were required to analyze and write papers on the video or book using the sociological imagination.

See the guidelines for each assignment and the rubrics for assessment for each of the four sections in Appendix 4. Also included is an evaluation, “Reflections from Section 1” submitted by our adjunct Dr. Ellis, who had students assigned to read parts of *The Sociological Imagination* in his section.

Using results/grades from the first exam in SOCY 100 as a basic measure of students’ general understanding of the sociological imagination concept, the results from the SIX test bank questions used to directly measure students’ understanding of the concept, and the additional exercises that each of us used, we now present and discuss our findings.

Findings

Using letter grades as a rough measure of students’ understanding of the sociological imagination from the first exam, we find in Table 1 (Appendix 1) that students in the Honors section and section 4 had a much better understanding of the concept than the other two sections. A slightly higher percentage of students in section 4 had an excellent understanding of the concept, with a grade of A. Overall, over half [59 %] of the students in the Honors section had grades of A and B, while half of the students in section 4 had similar grades. In other words, half of the students in section 4 and over half of those in the Honors section demonstrated good to excellent understanding of the concept. At the bottom extreme of the grade distribution, the Honors students, as would be expected, did even better with none of them earning a grade of F/Poor. Interestingly though, while students in section 4 had a slightly higher percentage of A’s, they also had a slightly higher percentage of F’s.

Using somewhat more direct measures of students’ understanding of the sociological imagination concept, we turn next to Table 2 (Appendix 2). In Table 2, the calculation following each question represents the percentage of students who correctly and incorrectly answered that question. The six questions from the test bank are used as measures of Goal 1 in our Sociology Assessment: students’ ability to understand, define, and identify the concept of the sociological imagination.

First, we begin with the top portion of Table 2, with sections 2 and the Honors section. Students in section 2 seem to have a very good understanding of the concept. In five out six questions [questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6], the percentages of students correctly answering each question ranged from 73 to 100. In short, all of the students in section 2 of SOCY 100 had fairly good to excellent understanding of the sociological imagination concept. Contrary to expectation, students in the Honors section did not do as well on these more direct measures as they did on the first exam. While the percentage of students who correctly answered questions 3, 5, and 6 ranged from 85 to 92, slightly over half (54 %) of them incorrectly answered question 1.

For Sections 4 and 5 of SOCY 100: Introduction to Sociology, these results indicate that overall, most students in each of the two sections of Introductory Sociology had very good to excellent understanding of the sociological imagination. In Section 4, 83 percent of the students correctly answered two of the questions (questions 1 and 3) while 90 percent or more correctly answered the remaining two questions (questions 2 and 4). In Section 5, 90 percent or more of the students correctly answered three of four questions.

With respect to the short term paper exercise that summarizes goals 2 and 3 in our Program Assessment, the findings found in Table 3 (Appendix 3) are not as impressive. In Section 4, for example, while about one out of four students (26 percent) had an excellent understanding of these goals, with grades of 90 percent or higher, three out of ten students had a poor understanding of the goals, with grades below 60 percent. These goals embody a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the concept of the sociological imagination. In Section 5, slightly over half (58 percent) of the students had a poor understanding of the two goals, with only eight percent having an excellent understanding of the goals. In short, on average, students in Section 4 had a fair understanding of these goals, while slightly over half (55 percent) of students in Section 5 had a poor understanding of the goals. These can be seen in the median scores.

Why the discrepancy in the two sets of findings? The poorer performance of students in both sections 4 and 5 of SOCY 100, especially Section 5, on the short term paper may be due in large part to the expectations of students in writing college level term papers. In contrast, in the objective exam, with the four multiple choice questions used as direct measures of students' understanding of the sociological imagination concept, selecting one correct answer from the four choices obviously does not involve the analytical skills that are required in organizing and writing an academic paper. Very few of the students sought help from Trinity's Writing Center, as they were asked to do. Hence, greater emphasis should be placed on college level writing, among other things. However, other factors may have influenced the poorer performance of students in section 5 of SOCY 100 overall. This section had higher rates of absenteeism than section 4. This higher rate of absenteeism may have resulted partly from the fact that this was a late afternoon class, which met from 3:00 to 4:15 pm.

As seen in Appendix 3, the data in Table 4 for Section 2 and the Honors section demonstrates that while a majority of students developed an excellent (65% and 77%) understanding of the sociological imagination, meeting Goal 1, most had difficulty meeting the second and third goals. Only 54% of honors students and 29% of Section 2 students could meet Goal 2. To meet Goal 3 students had to demonstrate the capacity to view and read situations sociologically presented in the assigned video and the book and then demonstrate the applicability of the sociological imagination to those situations. Accomplishing these goals required that students develop higher order thinking skills, such as application, analysis, and evaluation of concepts and theories. Only 38% of honor students and 35% of Section 2 students scored "excellent" in application of theory and the sociological imagination. A higher percentage of students scored "good" in the application category, 41% in Section 2 and 45% in Honors. The tentative explanation for these findings is that we need to use more innovative pedagogical methods in 100-level classes that provide the foundation for enhancing students' capacities to think critically.

Additional Results, 2015:

The evaluation of the application of the sociological imagination as part of the sociology program assessment has generated increased interest among the faculty to more explicitly apply the concept in additional sections of the Introduction to Sociology course in 2015. For instance, one section of the course had a series of assignments specifying the application of the sociological imagination after introducing the concept toward the beginning of the semester. See Appendix 5 for the assignments and samples of responses from students.

It is worth reporting on the responses to the first assignment above as they demonstrate, at least among a sizable number of students, the value of teaching the concept. Many students responded to the assignment by describing personal hardships of paying for college, being the first in their families to attend college, being immigrants, and adjustment to the work load, among other issues. Appendix 5 has a selection of student responses among those who understood the concept well. These students have agreed to allow their comments to be included in this report. These are not intended to reflect an overall evaluation of the assignment, but rather a sampling of why it is of value to teach students to use their sociological imaginations. The inclusion of the samples of responses is an example of how we work to achieve the goals of our program. It is gratifying to work with the findings of the assessment as we continue to refine our teaching to enhance student learning.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Measures used to evaluate student understanding of the sociological imagination demonstrate that students were able to identify the concept and define it, especially in objective assessments. They were less successful in applying the concept in the written work that was assigned in 2014. There is more we can do to increase our students' understanding of and application of the sociological imagination, thus giving them a tool to use throughout their lives.

After a thorough examination of the findings, the sociology program has the following recommendations for the program in the future regarding the teaching of the sociological imagination:

1. Continue to provide consistent and varied measures to test comprehension and application of the sociological imagination in the introductory course.
2. Increase the emphasis of the sociological imagination in introductory courses that are direct and reinforcing through the semester.
3. Bring the sociological imagination more explicitly into upper level courses so as to reinforce the concept as an analytical tool. Students studying focused areas of sociology, especially social inequality, theory and research methods should become comfortable with its application.

Our experience with this assessment process has reinforced our commitment to teaching in the broadest possible way the basic tenets of sociology, the centerpiece of which is the sociological imagination. Our students face an uncertain world in which they will have to find their place. With our focus on social inequalities we find our students are eager to understand the social context in which they live. We hope they will use the sociological imagination as an analytical tool so that they can be empowered to face their futures with confidence long after they leave Trinity.

Appendix 1

Sections 2, 4, 5 and Honors

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.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of Letter Grades by sections on First Exam: SOCY 100, Fall Semester, 2014

Sections	Letter Grades					N of Cases
	A	B	C	D	F	
2	7	15	44	19	15	27
Honors	14	45	27	14	--	15
4	17	33	10	23	17	30
5	15	8	31	31	15	13

Number Grades

90 and Above
80 to 89
70 to 79
60 to 69
Below 60

Letter Grades

A
B
C
D
F

Appendix 2

Table 2. Percent of students in each section of SOCY 100 who correctly (or incorrectly) answered each of questions 1 to 6 – used as measures of understanding the concept of the sociological imagination – below.

	SOCY 100 SEC 2		SOCY 100 Honors		SOCY 100 SEC 4		SOCY 100 SEC 5	
	Answered Correctly	Answered Incorrectly						
Goal 1. Students understand, can define and identify the concept: sociological imagination.								
Question 1. When sociologists group people into categories based on their age, gender, educational level, job, and income, they are trying to determine: Answer: B, Social location	73	27	46	54	83	17	92	8
Question 2: The sociological perspective emphasizes how the social context influences people’s lives, particularly how people are influenced by: Answer: D, Society	77	23	69	31	90	10	100	0
Question 3: Which of the following elements does C. Wright Mills Attribute to being the one that sociologists would use to explain Individual behavior? Answer: C, external influence	86	14	92	8	83	17	77	23
Question 4: The sociologist responsible for suggesting the connection Between history and biography to explain the sociological imagination was: Answer C. C. Wright Mills	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	97	3	92	8
Question 5: Based on studies of isolated and institutionalized children, What is the key variable in acquiring the basic “human” traits we take for granted? Answer: C, Intimate early social interaction	86	14	85	15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Question 6. What concept do sociologists refer to when they say that :society makes us human”? Answer: D, Socialization	100	0	92	8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Number of students in each section of SOCY 100:	27		15		30		13	

Appendix 3

Course Description & Goals: Sections 4 and 5

Sociology is the scientific study of human society, social groups, and social interaction. Even though we all live in a society and interact with other people on a daily basis, this course will help us to view this familiar world in a more critical way. In the tradition of C. Wright Mills, this introductory course will focus largely on how larger social forces influence our lives as individuals. In other words, understanding C. Wright Mills' concept of the sociological imagination will be a major goal throughout this course. According to Mills, the sociological imagination enables us to grasp the relationship between history and biography, making it possible for us to further understand the difference between "the public issues of social structure" and "the personal troubles of milieu." In order for us to fully explore and understand the sociological imagination, we will employ a number of activities – lectures, a three-page assigned reading, film, exam questions, and a short term paper to achieve this goal.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of students' grades by sections on term paper; Fall Semester, 2014

Goals 2 & 3. Students' use of other concepts with sociological4 imagination concept and their application of the sociological imagination concept to specific social issues or experiences ¹	SOCY 100 SEC 4					N of Cases ²	SOCY 100 SEC 5					N of Cases ²
	90+	80-89	70-79	60-69	Below 60		90+	80-89	70-79	60-69	Below 60	
Percent of students in various grade categories:	26	9	17	17	30	23	8	17	0	17	58	12
Median Scores of students on Term Paper	75						55					

¹Three page term paper in which students apply the concepts ascribed status, achieved status, role conflict, and role strain in their own lives. Then, each student demonstrates how and why C. Wright Mills' concept of the sociological imagination enables each to explain how larger external social contexts/forces enhance or restrain their ability to achieve their future achieved social statuses. See attached full instructions for term paper for more details.

²Total number of students who turned in term papers.

Table 4: Written Assessment for Sections 2 and Honor

<p>Summary of Exercise for SOCY 100 Section 2: Students in SOCY 100 Section 2 were asked to watch a video about structural racism: Race – the Power of an Illusion,. Their written answers to five questions are used as measures of each of the three goals.</p> <p>The percentage of students with scores ranging from Excellent to Poor, Corresponding to each of the three goals, is presented below.</p>	SOCY 100 SEC 2					
	Excel- lent	Good	Fair	Poor	N	%
	<p>Sociological Imagination: Student recognizes that an individual is impacted by and exists within a social context (meets goals 1)</p>	65	12	24	1	22
<p>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)</p>	29	47	24	0	22	100%
<p>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)</p>	35	41	18	6	22	100%
<p>Summary of Exercise for SOCY 100 Honor Section: Students in SOCY 100 Honor Section were asked to read Between Good and Bad, a book about exposure to use of violence by young women from distressed inner city neighborhoods, and answer nine questions. The percentage of students with scores ranging from Excellent to Poor, Corresponding to each of the three goals, is presented below.</p>						

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Sociological Imagination: Student recognizes that an individual is impacted by and exists within a social context (meets goals 1)	77	15	8	0	15	100%
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)	54	31	15	0	15	100%
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)	38	46	15	0	15	100%

Percentage of Students**Category**

- Excellent- Sociological ideas, concepts, etc. are consistently applied with accuracy and clarity of use.
- Good- Sociological ideas, concepts, etc. are applied with reasonable accuracy and frequency
- Fair- Sociological ideas, concepts, etc. are infrequently used, or frequently misused and inappropriately applied.
- Poor - Does not use sociological ideas, concepts, etc.

. N refers to Number of Students in each section answering the question(s) or who completed and turned in the writing assignment

See attached assignments for SOCY 100 Sections 2 and Honor

APPENDIX 4

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSIGNMENT 1

SOCY 100 Section 2, Moayed

RACE: The 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: The 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 Sections 4 and 5:

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>:

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

I. 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 **sociological** 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.

III. 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 Paper: 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).

Grading: 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

Reflections from Section 1: 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.

Appendix 5

Sample written assignments in SOCY 100 Fall 2015 requiring application of the sociological imagination:

ESSAY 1 The Sociological Imagination and Me DUE SEPTEMBER 16:

Before writing this essay, watch this video about the sociological imagination:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5ocDRJkmoo>

Describe your experiences as a college student. (Ex: grades, major, cost, social life) What social factors have contributed to your experiences as a student? (Ex: Family expectations, the economy, peer groups, politics, the state of education in the U.S.) Using the sociological imagination, how do you see your education connected to the larger society in which you live? How does the sociological imagination make a connection between your personal experiences and society? A good essay will clearly explain the concept of the sociological imagination and apply it appropriately to your college experience.

ESSAY 2 WHAT'S IN A FLAG? SYMBOLIC INTERACTION, THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION AND ME DUE OCTOBER 14:

Watch the video regarding the removal of the Confederate flag at the State House in South Carolina on July 10, 2015: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wSs7s-w5TQ>. Find other videos and articles that discuss the controversy regarding the flag.

Answer the following questions, with emphasis on the underlined words:

1. Consider the symbolic meaning of the flag. What does it represent specifically? Why do some people revere the flag while others despise it?
2. Why was the flag removed in July? What does the removal represent?
3. Use your sociological imagination: What does this flag represent to you and why (consider your status in society)?
4. Using the sociological theory of symbolic interaction, explain why it is important to understand the meaning or interpretation of symbols in culture.

ESSAY 3 “POOR AMERICA” DUE NOVEMBER 23.

Watch the video, “Poor America” at <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/poor-america/>

(Run time approximately 30 minutes)

Write an essay on the following:

1. Briefly describe the poor Americans featured in the film.
2. Using the information in your text book on “Consequences of Social Class” (pp. 233-236) and “Poverty” (pp. 239-246) describe some of the life chances of the poor sociologically as presented in the film.
3. Using your sociological imagination, how does your social class position compare to the people in the film?

Sample of student responses to Essay 1:

“...my college education is connected to the larger society. Every person with a higher level of education contributes well to our society. Similarly, if I achieve my goal of graduating from college, I

will be part of the people making our society a better place. My education will not only benefit me, it will also have a positive effect on society...Overall, [the] sociological imagination is a tool that allows us to connect to the world around us. When we use [the] sociological imagination to view our own lives, we draw different conclusions for our problems compared to if we do not..."

"Sociological imagination is being aware of the relationship between our personal experience and the outside world...My experience as a college student reflects upon the fact that today's society has given women the right to achieve higher education. If we look at it through the sociological imagination, the events in my individual life are also parts of the current society...My education is connected to the larger society because factors that contributed to my experiences as a student are likely to affect other students in my society as well. The fact that I had economic impediments through my path to complete a higher education is not an issue that I only face, which makes it a shared problem in today's society."

"When my professor asks the students how many of them are struggling to make ends meet, you think that the person is not working hard enough or they need to have a tighter budget. You are constantly pointing your fingers to the individual. But, what is a social problem? What if the problem is out of their control? C. Wright Mills want[s] us to get out of our own mindset and look at 'their' situation from their perspective, which deals with the sociological imagination...It gets you out of the notion of a fixed mindset that the individuals created the problem but allows us to look at the situation as a social problem."

"Growing up in an individual's environment tends to play a component in the way we go about things throughout our life. Environment cannot be changed by itself, therefore I had to change myself in order to adjust to a new environment when I came to [the] U.S. The sociological perspective otherwise called the sociological imagination assists people with seeing through a more extensive lens. The sociological imagination is the ability to view one's society as outsider would. I discovered that regardless of how great I do academically, I will always be stereotyped and looked at differently because I am a foreigner."