

SOCIOLOGY 2700 - ASSIGNMENT #2 GUIDELINES

ESSAY 1 - MANDATORY

You need to choose a particular social space and discuss:

Strategies

Who has the power? What kind of power do they have? What kinds of social relations are possible (allowed) and impossible (prohibited)? How are social interactions organised or managed? What roles can people take? Which behaviours and identities are possible (encouraged) and impossible (discouraged)?

Tactics

Who lacks power? What kind of power do they lack? How do their actions and identities fall outside, or get excluded from, the “proper” way of doing things? How do they resist these definitions and practices? In what ways do they make these spaces their “own”? In what ways do their private (individual) actions challenge or change public (shared) spaces?

Alternatively, you can choose a particular group of people and/or set of practices, and describe how power works in particular social spaces. In either case, the point is to include three things: people, practices and places. This helps you avoid unsupported generalisations and allows you to focus on supported specifics. Your title should refer to the particulars of your essay.

You need to use two academic sources to support this discussion:

You may include one of your assigned readings, but the other must come from library research. (And yes, both can come from library research if you prefer.)

Be sure to use ASA or APA style in-text citations (no footnotes/endnotes) and include a bibliography at the end.

ESSAY 2 - Option 1

You need to do two things:

1. Summarise the main points of Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* and Vaneigem’s revolution of everyday life.

Be sure to explain what the “society of the spectacle” involves, if and how the concept continues to provide a critique of popular culture and consumption, and critically evaluate how a revolution of everyday life can--and cannot--resist the spectacles of today.

2. Give concrete examples of how you use--or could use--Situationist perspectives and techniques like *derive* (drifting) and *detournement* (diversions) to reconfigure relations of power in your everyday life.

Be sure to define the perspectives and techniques (tactics) you're talking about, apply them to particular situations you encounter in your everyday life, and explain how they succeed, or fail, as a form of resistance.

Be sure to use ASA or APA style in-text citations (no footnotes/endnotes) and include a bibliography at the end.

ESSAY 2 - Option 2

You need to do two things:

1. Summarise the main points raised by feminist critiques of everyday life.

Be sure to explain how these approaches compare to and differ from traditional (i.e. structural-functional) sociology and how they are relevant to understanding power and everyday life today. Support your argument using the specific concerns of particular researchers--such as Friedan, Steedman, Smith, Giard, Miller, Pink--and examples from lectures.

2. Give concrete examples from your own life of how "women's" knowledge and experience have shaped your understanding of power relations.

Be sure to define what you think constitutes "women's" knowledge and experience of power relations in everyday life, give specific examples of practices you have witnessed, and critically evaluate what they taught you (both 'right' and 'wrong') about how power works.

Be sure to use ASA or APA style in-text citations (no footnotes/endnotes) and include a bibliography at the end.

ESSAY 2 - Option 3

You need to do two things:

1. Discuss the ways people make and use physical objects around them to organise and challenge power relations.

Be sure to explain how material culture plays an important role in negotiating power relations in everyday life. Support your argument using the specific concerns of particular researchers--such as Baudrillard, Miller, Ferrell, Barthes,

Duncombe, Willis--and examples from lectures.

2. Give concrete examples of how you use physical objects to reconfigure relations of power in your everyday life.

Be sure to explain similarities and differences between store-bought, hand-made and/or found objects, give specific examples of objects you have made or modified, and critically evaluate how each works, or fails, as a form of resistance.

General reminders & helpful hints

You have a 2-page limit for each essay--this will require advance planning and several rounds of editing to make sure that you focus only on the most relevant and important bits in detail.

Start your research now. Once you locate 4-5 possible sources, you will need to (re)read them and determine which 2 you want to use to support your argument.

Create an outline to make sure that you can structure and support a coherent argument in the allotted space.

Refer to the handouts on effective research, reading and writing skills that are available on the course website. Learning these skills will benefit you now and for the rest of your academic career.

And last, but not least

Both Anne and Tamy are here to help, so please don't hesitate to talk with either of us.

Anne especially likes meeting over coffee in the library... Hint, hint! And don't forget that if you would like her to read a complete draft of your assignment, please email it to her no later than 7am Monday 19 November, 2007.

Your assignment is **due in class** on Friday **23 November**, 2007.

Notes