

Please cite as: Cramer, J. (2016). *Field Analysis*. American Public University System.

## Assignment

### Week 5 Forum

#### Observation Collaboration

This week you will complete an observation activity in your community. This activity will help prepare you for the Week 7 Assignment. This Forum is unique so read the instructions and point values carefully.

Write a 500+ word initial post that includes these 4 components:

- 5 points: Go to a public place and observe the people there for 25 minutes. What are the details of the location? Describe the general context (time of day, lighting, sounds, vibe/energy, etc.). Describe the people around you and their sociodemographic characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, gender/sex, socioeconomic status, etc.).
- 10 points: Identify two or more social norms that people engaged in at the public place. A norm is a social rule. There are many norms that help to frame how we are supposed to behave in our daily lives, one example is gender norms (what are social rules we follow to 'be masculine' and to 'be feminine'); another example is standing in line (consider what would happen if you cut everyone in line at 8am in a Starbucks?).
- 5 points: How do these norms you observed in the scene fit with sociological concepts and theories we've learned so far in class? Some examples of sociological concepts we've learned about so far include gender roles and emotional labor. (What is a Sociological Concept? See below).
- 10 points: Reflect on your experience. How was this observing others through a sociological lens different from when you've "people watched" in the past? What perspectives do you think a sociologist can bring to our understanding of everyday human behavior?

Peer responses (10 points):

Remember to write at least three 100+ peer responses. As with our other Forums, two responses need to be to peer posts and one response needs to be to someone who commented on your post.

In any public scene, all of us will notice different things, and find different observations important or unimportant. In your peer responses, help one another identify sociodemographic characteristics, social norms, or sociological concepts that the classmate may not have noticed. Consider helping one another notice common themes in the types of public places you choose and your observations of people in those scenes.

What is a “**sociological concept**?” They are all the **bold terms and phrases** within the text, such as "socialization," "norms" and "folkways." Look at the bottom of the text page for the concepts and definitions. Key terms (sociological concepts) are also listed following the Summary of each Chapter. Additionally, the entire GLOSSARY contains sociological concepts.

## **Assignment 2: Field Analysis**

**Due: by 11:55 p.m. EST on the Sunday of Week 7**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this assignment is to recognize sociological concepts at play in your lived experience. Keeping a field log of your social and institutional experiences for one day, you will critically discuss how your daily life is shaped and constrained by society. This will allow you engage with many of the sociological concepts learned in class.

### **Writing expectations**

The paper should be 4-6 typed pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, with 1" margins. Remember to use APA format to cite and reference your sources.

### **Instructions**

#### *1) Observation*

Create a field log ([example](#)). For one day, observe and record the key interactions and institutions in your lived experience. Starting with waking up, who is the first person you talk to? What do you do next- take family members to school, go to the gym, go to work and interact with coworkers? Throughout the day you will take on different roles by interacting with different people and in different situations, and be in contact with different social institutions (education, government, health, etc). Type or photograph your field log and submit it with your written Assignment.

#### *2) Application*

Try to wait one or more days before starting this step. Revisit your field log and apply sociological analysis to your observations.

- Describe how our day is shaped and constrained by social norms.
- Identify how several of your experiences fit with at least four sociological concepts learned in class (eg. roles, institutions, interactions, impression management, stage theory, emotional labor).
- For at least two of the concepts, find and incorporate an appropriate source that highlights how sociologists study this concept in everyday society (for example, emotional labor in the restaurant industry). Not sure

what constitutes an appropriate source? See our Announcement on this in the classroom- tips and a learning module are provided there.

### 3) Reflection

· Reflect on your role as a larger part of society (i.e. your motives, instincts, feelings, and/or structural constraints). Discuss ways other people affected you and the ways you affected others in the social experiences of your day.

### Sample Field Log

Below is a brief field log to give you an idea of the social interactions and institutions you might look for in your day. With the observations are sample course concepts that relate to the observations. Be creative in exploring and applying concepts- we will all apply concepts differently even if the scenes we observe are very similar.

5:45am: Wake up, interact with children.

*Gender roles, nuclear family, folkways*

6:30am: Interact with spouse and children. Eat breakfast, run, shower.

8:00am: Arrive at airport, check in interaction with airline customer service; interaction with TSA.

*Social structure, bureaucracy, norms, mores, social control*

9:00am: Wait with other passengers to board flight; purchase a drink at coffee shop; employees have a tip jar; a family sitting close by is watching the news and commenting on what they think is wrong with other cultures.

*Emotional labor, ethnocentrism, Piaget's stages of development*

9:30am: On flight with family having a difficult time with small children; flight attendant offers to help them.

*Emotional labor, gender roles, family*

12pm: Arrive at destination airport; drive two hours to see extended family. Along the road there are farmers with fruit stands. See homeless person asking for assistance in exchange for work.

*Poverty, inequality*

4pm: Extended family arrives for potluck dinner; look at family photos together and share family memories. Watch evening news- local robbery and assault.

*Social deviance, material culture*

6pm: Stop at church to meet family friend, see a bible study group inside; lots of religious symbols; someone remarks on a new church being built to accommodate a different racial group.

*Religion, race, monotheism*