

Finding Local Solutions & Taking Action in Your Community

So far this semester you've researched your social problem, made a fact sheet, and analyzed the role social institutions play in creating and maintaining your social problem. Now that you have a solid understanding of the problem it's time for you to DO something about it.

For this project you will write a four to five page paper. The paper will be split into two parts as described below, but part A should flow nicely with part B. That is this paper should read as a single cohesive paper.

PART A: **Find an organization taking action:** *(At least two full pages)*

It's always a good idea to see what is already being done before you take action. With this in mind I want you to find a local, state, national, or international organization that is working to reduce your social problem. Be sure that the social agency you pick is focused on a system-based analysis¹ of the problem and is taking *ACTION*. A blog or website that just says your social problem is bad, but isn't taking action on this issue won't work. We want a group that is doing something to make the world better.

Now critically analyze the organization. What specific ends are they trying to reach, how do they go about reaching them, and how successful have they been? Do they have a long term plan or a set of policies they would like to see created or enforced? How do they argue the problem could be reduced. Provide a URL link to the organization's website in your write up.

PART B: **How will you create social change?** *(At least two full pages)*

For the last part of this assignment you need to create social change in your community. That is, you must take *ACTION* and do something personally to reduce the social problem or raise awareness. Be creative, go out on a limb, and maybe surprise yourself. To be clear, I do not want you to tell me what you *would* do *hypothetically*. **Please note: your proposed social action must be approved by me before you carry it out.** After we settle on what you will do to take action you must figure out a way that you can verify that you completed it. Take a photo of what you did, record it on a cell phone, give me a phone number I could call to verify, etc. Feel free to collaborate with other students on this part of the project, but every student must write their own paper about their experiences.

This assignment is focused on autonomous problem solving and learning. Meaning it's your responsibility to figure out what action you could take. In the end, no matter what career field you enter, your future employer will want to know if you can creatively solve interesting problems. This assignment is directly focused on helping you develop this skill.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Lead a letter writing campaign
- Volunteer at a local social service agency
- Carry out a donation drive for a social service agency
- Carry out a public education program
- Publish a letter to the editor about your issue
- Speak at a public hearing or town hall meeting on your issue

¹ Remember individual-based social problem analysis isn't the focus of this course.

- Create a brochure/website about your issue and local services available to affected individuals

Oral proposals (due no later than November 1st)

Sometime before 11/1 come up to me before/after class or during office hours to give me an oral proposal. Your proposals must be delivered in a face-to-face interaction with me. No emailing allowed.

Your proposal should include:

1. The action you will take
2. Why you think it will be meaningful
3. How will you provide evidence of your action
4. Who will be working with you.

Social Action Paper.

Write a paper that is at least 2 full pages that critically analyzes your action and it's effectiveness. Start by describing the process of deciding what action you would carry out. Why did you think this action would be effective? What was the planning process or what did you have to do to prepare for the social action. How did it go when you were carrying out the social action? Do you think it was effective?

Now play "devil's advocate" against your work. What would a critique of your social action be critical of? Did your action make a meaningful difference? Does the social action you chose to carry out say something about your social location (i.e. race, class, gender, etc)? This last part should be at least a full paragraph. Lastly, it probably seems to your disadvantage to "keep it real" here, but I'll reward students who make an honest assessment of their effort and it's shortcomings.

Formatting:

Your paper must be double spaced with a font no larger than 12pts. Don't use the `courier` font. All works must be cited in paragraph (quotes with page numbers) and any cited works must be included in a references page. Please use the ASA citation style. References do not "count" for your overall page total. Staple your paper and include page numbers. Lastly avoid huge headers. Your paper only needs to have your name and perhaps a title. Just FYI: You lose points for not following all of these formatting expectations.

Go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/1/> for the ASA style guide

Grading Rubric:

Component	Points
PART A:	
Organization in Part A is relevant to your social issue, took a social-based approach to your issue, and the agency was/is taking action on your issue.	15
Part A critically analyzes your organization as described in the directions above and URL link is (i.e. www.asa.org) provided	25
PART B:	
Part B critically analyzes the student's social action and it's effectiveness as described in the directions above	20
Part B plays "devil's advocate" against the student's action in an honest way	15
Action carried out was meaningful & created a positive change	15
Total Points:	90
Grammar & Formatting	Points
Paper has less than 2 grammatical or spelling errors	3
Paper has a reference page that follows ASA style guidelines. Go to http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/1/ for ASA style guide	5
Paper is printed, stapled, and has page numbers	2
Total Points:	10

Deductions: Not doing these components costs you the following	Points
You didn't provide evidence or a way to verify your action	-50 pts
The action was not taken, but only proposed	-50 pts
Action was not proposed and approved of by instructor before it was taken	-100 pts

Note: If one section's negative impact on the paper exceeds the points allotted in the grading rubric I reserve the right to subtract additional points from the overall total. However, this rarely happens.