

Social Institution Analysis of Your Social Problem

Social problems come from somewhere. Social policy decisions made by all levels of the government, business firms, schools, religious institutions, health care institutions, and every other social institution create consequences for the people they serve. Sociologists are tasked with examining individual choices and behaviors and tracing them back to decisions made at the social level. For this assignment you are charged with finding how your social problem has been created, exacerbated, and maintained by social institutions. Write a four (but no more than six¹) page paper that addresses the following:

The institutions (just a reminder):

The seven major social institutions discussed in class are: the family, the economy, the government/political system, the education system, the media, religious organizations, and the environment

Part 1: Institutional Analysis (at least 3 FULL pages)

Identify the Major Players:

What social institutions are having the greatest impact on your social problem. Tell me who is involved with creating or amplifying your social problem. Base your analysis on what the research you've collected says. I am uninterested in your opinion of the causes. I want to know what scholarly research says. Remember what we learned from *Everything is Obvious* don't submit a "common sense" sociological analysis.

Be as specific as possible. What *exactly* are these social institutions doing that is causing or increasing the social problem? For example instead of saying, "the global economy" say, "The lending policies of The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund." Almost all of your social problems should have multiple social institutions that are impacting your social problem, but if you focus on just one institution you are expected to go in to great depth with precise details and facts.

Why do these institutions behave in these ways?

Act like a conflict theorist here and answer the question, "who is benefitting from this social problem?" and "who is suffering because of this social problem". Why do these social institutions continue to behave in a way that causes these social problems? Is there inadequate public concern for the issue? Is the public unaware of the issue? Is the issue something that only affects a minority of people in the United States? Remember to base your answers to these questions on what your research says and not your opinion.

Part 2: Proposing Systemic Solutions (at least 1 FULL page)

Propose Realistic Systemic Changes:

How could we *realistically* change the social institutions that you identified as a problem? What would the social institutions you identified as the problem need to look like for your social problem to be reduced or improved? Your proposed changes **MUST BE FEASIBLE**. That is you can't suggest something that requires institutions, businesses, or people to be perfect or utopian. For example saying, "All drug addicts must report to a drug rehab program" will not solve drug addiction. Also, be sure that if your solution is a multi-step process you identify all of the steps. Lastly, feel free to include any solutions proposed in the research you included in the fact sheet.

¹ The 6 page upper limit isn't negotiable. If it's longer than 6 pages you'll lose points. Succinctness is a highly valuable skill in the modern economy.

Evidence, Evidence, Evidence... not mere opinion.

In addition to the sources you've collected for the fact sheet you must find 3 more credible sources² and use them in at least part 1 of this paper.

Grading Rubric

Paper Component	Points
Student sufficiently identifies social institutions that affect the social problem. Is specific in identifying aspects or specific actors within the larger institutions. Explains specific policies or actions that affect the social problem.	25
Student proposes a plausible reason why these institutions have not changed. Student sufficiently "puts on the conflict theorist hat"	20
Student presents solutions that could reduce the social problem and the solution is feasible. The solutions are based in what current research on the problem suggest/ find. The solution proposed has all of the steps in the process identified. The solution is not too simplistic.	25
The paper adequately supports its ideas with peer-reviewed or credible sources. Paper includes references to the additional 3 resources add for this paper. Evidence, Evidence, Evidence.	20
Total	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	10

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. So no worries.

Late Work:

Papers submitted after the end of class on the day they are due will be have their final letter grade dropped by one whole letter grade. Papers over a week late will not be accepted for any reason.

² Credible sources are defined as either a peer-reviewed source, a government website (i.e. .gov), or a source that has been approved by the professor prior to turning this assignment in.