

FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT- FACTS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE READINGS
Sociology101QC / Spring 2020 – Professor Levine

READ THIS CAREFULLY, SLOWLY, AND MORE THAN ONCE

The reading at the beginning of the course titled “Important Things To Know About Sociology, College, This Course and Exams” says that college is a training program for professional workers in all kinds of businesses, institutions and organizations. It says that college is a place where people learn how to learn and practice skills they will need for almost any job that a college degree requires. Reading, research and writing are three of those central skills that students practice and get better at in college in almost any class they take, including this one.

The midterm writing assignment required all three of those skills: reading, research and writing. The task was to write seven one-page summaries of some important points from the readings. People in the class did pretty well on that and I think people will do pretty well on this one too.

The final writing assignment is to do one part of that task -- to just find and pull out **IMPORTANT** or **INTERESTING** points from the second set of readings and write them down in a Word file, as much as possible in your own words. Period. The task this time is not to write essays, but to make reading and research notes in the form of a few good sentences. The information is drawn purely from the second set of readings for this class.

The articles you will be writing notes on are the 6 readings: #21-25 and #31-32 on the reading list in the reader and on the class website. These are readings about:

- Policing, Race and Marijuana (#21 and 22, plus the short video by Jay-z)
- Guns and Gun Violence (#23-25) and
- Healthcare in America (#30-31)

You do not have to write notes on all of them and you can write on only some of them if you want. You pick what you want to take notes on and write brief summaries of important or interesting things they say. You decide everything about what you want to focus on.

The assignment is to write about 3 to 4 pages of brief factual statements drawn entirely from the readings. A single-space sentence or two, or maybe three, but that is all. And then a double-space and another brief single-spaced factual statement summarizing something from a reading. And then a double space and then another one.

YOU WANT TO RESTATE AND REPORT IN YOUR OWN WORDS INFORMATION FROM THE READINGS. You can take information from several different sentences or paragraphs or even pages of an article and put them together in your own words.

At the end of this description of the assignment there are examples from an imaginary student called PENCE, MIKE – so you can see what a collection of these notes looks like.

Q&A / QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Q: What is the formatting layout

A: Like the midterm, 1-inch margins all around; 12-point font, Arial or Times New Roman; in a Word file. This time everything is single spaced, with double spaces between paragraphs, between each set of “notes” or sentences with information.

As for the midterm, you do this in a Word file (not a pdf, not Pages file). The file name should be like this: LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME – Soc101 Final Assignment – Spring 2020.docx

Q: Can we look up information on the web from other sources.

A: Yes, you can and should look up the meaning of words, the spelling of words, and possible terms in the reading that you don’t know, like “Medicare,” or “war on drugs” so you know what they mean. But the information you are reporting and synthesizing comes from the readings for this class, period. You do not take other information from the web and put that in these notes and statements. This is reporting, not opinions or personal experiences, not about your thoughts about the past or future of any of this. Some people wrongly did that on the midterm, but please don’t do that here. This assignment is about drawing information from the readings for this class and reporting it, and that is all.

Q: Can I quote directly from the readings. If there is a sentence I like or part of a sentence, can I copy it and use it?

A: NO, not unless you use quotation marks and italics for anything you copy that is six words or more. This is very important so let this be very clear.

“Use quotation marks and italics for anything you copy that is six words or more.”

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And you should quote as little as you can. Obviously, it is more difficult to put things in your own words than to quote somebody else’s. People who want more credit, or extra credit, or just a lot of credit should try to write nearly everything in their own words.

Q: Can I rewrite a sentence by switching the word order around.

**A: Yes, and adding some new words too. That is the way the world works. Newspaper and magazine reporters, TV and radio news professionals, people writing press releases and political statements do that too. See the attached sample from the imaginary student
PENCE, MIKE**

Q: How do I show what reading or article I am reporting on.

A: Look closely at the example answers attached. The end of each paragraph or note has the name of author or authors of the article, or the name of the publication, in parentheses. Use that format as in the sample.

Q: How do I send this in and what is the deadline.

A: The final exam date for this class, as set by the college, is Wed May 20th. So that is when the assignments are due. By the end of that evening or before. As with the midterm, the word file should be emailed to: Soc101HGL@gmail.com
Unfortunately, because grades have to be submitted shortly thereafter, there can be no extensions.

Q: I understand that students can decide to take any course switched to a Pass / Not Pass basis.

A: Yes. You can copy and past this link into a browser. It opens to issue #72 of the Queens College publication "The View." You scroll down and the Pass / Not Pass option is explained. <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/The-QView--72.html?soid=1103033957415&aid=hG-rHgM1Y4A>
This link is also at the bottom of the online reading list for the class.

If you are sure you'd like to do this, let me know and I can help you figure out how to end this semester more easily. If you are sure you'd like to do this, email me at Soc101HGL@gmail.com

Q: Do you have advice about easier ways of doing this assignment?

A: Yes. Write short sentences and write one or two sentence notes. Write a lot of short notes with double spaces between them. Also don't get hung up on the first page or two of an article. There is lots of information on nearly all pages of the various readings. You will find things inside of the readings that you can use.

Q: Anything else?

A: Yes, before you send in your assignment read it over, closely, slowly, and if possible, out loud to yourself. That is the best way to see if you have made errors, if what you are saying makes sense. Also, if possible, have someone, anyone – a friend, sister, brother, cousin, neighbor, almost anyone – read over what you have written looking for mistakes, typos. That is good advice for anything you write and hand in. If you have not done that before, this is a good time to start. And this is a pretty short and easy to read document.

Q: How will grades be decided

A: We are hoping that nearly everybody in the class will get at least a B of some kind. We also expect that a number of people will get As. But as I said in my email on May 5, just staying alive has probably been the most important thing that everyone has accomplished this semester.

GOOD LUCK. CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS WILL BE ANNOUNCED THROUGH EMAILS AND POSTED WHEN APPROPRIATE OR NECESSARY.

SEND ALL EMAIL TO: Soc101HGL@gmail.com

PENCE, MIKE - Final Writing Assignment, Sociology101, Spring 2020

In 2009, a New York Times headline said “*Whites Smoke Pot, but Blacks Are Arrested.*” Black people and white people used marijuana equally, but police arrest blacks at much higher rates than whites. That was true in New York City and in every state and nearly every city in the US. (Levine)

In New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, police arrested blacks for possessing small amounts of marijuana at seven times the rate of whites. And most of the people arrested (76%) were teenagers or in their early 20s. (Levine)

Police arrest so many more blacks and Latinos than whites for marijuana possession because police departments focus their patrols in low-income black and Latino neighborhoods where they stop, frisk and search many young people walking or driving cars. Cops are told by their police departments to do this. But police departments do not tell cops to stop and frisk people in white middle-class and upper-middle class neighborhoods. As a result, middle class white people usually do not know this is going on in black and Latino neighborhoods. (Levine)

Police officers do not mind making these arrests of mostly young people for marijuana possession because the arrests are safe and easy, and the officers often get overtime pay and productivity credit for the arrests. Police departments like the marijuana arrests because it allows them to keep track of what the cops are doing and they get fingerprints and photo data they could not otherwise get from young people who have never before been arrested. (Levine)

The arrests for possessing tiny amounts of marijuana create permanent criminal records for the young people who have been arrested that gets them blocked from jobs, credit cards, apartments, and many colleges and other schools. (Levine)

In 2013 the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) wrote a long report documenting this and found that the only way to stop police departments from doing this was to legalize the possession and use of marijuana. In recent years, this form of legalization has been happening in some states. (Levine)

Jay-Z, the rap and hip hop star, made a four minute video called “*The Drug War is an Epic Fail*” that showed some of the drug war’s racist effects. This video was posted on the website of the New York Times. (Jay-Z video)

In the first three years that Bill de Blasio was mayor (2014, 2015 and 2016), the New York Police Department made 60,000 arrests of mostly young black and Latino young people for possessing tiny amounts of marijuana. Former New York City mayor Ed Koch and New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo both said that these arrests were unjust, unfair and should stop. But by 2017, in de Blasio’s fourth year as mayor, they were still going on (Levine & Siegel).

In 2017 Levine and Siegel wrote that New York City is “*the marijuana arrest capital of the world, arresting more people for possession than any other city and more than many countries.*” They also said that in three years New York City arrested more people for possessing marijuana

SAMPLE FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR A STUDENT NAMED MIKE PENCE – AN EXAMPLE

than the countries of England and Wales combined, where 38 million people live compared to 8.3 million people in New York City. (Levine and Siegel)

Various studies have found that the marijuana arrests do not reduce serious or violent crime and actually make cities less safe because when cops take young people to jail the cops are not on the street and not available for other crime-fighting. Many police officers have called the marijuana arrests “*a waste of time.*” (Levine and Siegel)

The Upper Eastside of Manhattan (precinct 19) is one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in New York City but it has one of the lowest rates of arrests for marijuana possession in the city. West Harlem and Spanish Harlem are very close to the Upper Eastside, but mostly black and Latino families live there and police make some of the highest rates of marijuana arrests in those two neighborhoods. No parents want their children arrested. In wealthier white neighborhoods the police departments respect the wishes of the parents, but not in West Harlem and Spanish Harlem. (Levine and Siegel)

Homicide is when one person kills another person. Homicide includes both intentional killings and accidental ones. But homicide does not include suicide. (NY Times)

The rate of homicide by gun is higher in the US than in 22 other countries that also have high incomes. The rate of gun homicides in the US is 25 times higher than in 22 other countries. The rate of gun homicides for 15 to 24 year olds is nearly 50 times higher in the US than in 22 other high income countries. (NY Times)

The gun murder rate is 17 times higher in the U.S. than in Sweden, Australia, France, Denmark and the Netherlands. The gun murder rate is 35 times higher in the US than in England, Norway, Japan, Spain, Germany, and South Korea (NY Times)

Americans own more guns than people do in any other country in the world. (Kristof)

How the US regulates cars and trucks is a good way of thinking about how to regulate guns. As Kristof says: “*We don’t ban cars, but we work hard to regulate them – and limit access to them – so as to reduce the death toll they cause. This has been spectacularly successful.*” (Kristof)

The US has one gun for each citizen, over 300 million guns. Japan has one gun for every 100 people. (Kristof)

Kristof lists 9 different kinds of regulations that would make guns safer. He includes background checks for everyone, bans on sales to people younger than 21, better enforcement of laws against buying guns for other people, background checks for people buying bullets, and smart guns that require a fingerprint or pin number to use them, just like on cell phones. (Kristof)

Hochschild describes a gun show near San Francisco with “*every conceivable kind of rifle and pistol, gun barrels, triggers, stocks, bullet keychain charms, Japanese swords, telescopic sights, night-vision binoculars, bayonets, a handgun carrier designed to look like a briefcase, and enough ammunition of every caliber to equip the D-Day landing force.*” (Hochschild)

SAMPLE FINAL WRITING ASSIGMENT FOR A STUDENT NAMED MIKE PENCE – AN EXAMPLE

Massachusetts has some of the strongest gun laws in the US. In Massachusetts, guns kill 3 people per 100,000. Alaska has some of the weakest guns laws in the US. The murder rate in Alaska is 7 times higher than in Massachusetts. (Hochschild)

The US government Title X programs helps poor women get “*birth control, cancer screenings and testing for H.I.V. and other sexually transmitted infections.*” In 2019 the Trump administration instituted new regulations that cut millions of poor women off the program and made it much harder for them to get birth control and family planning services. (NY Times editorial)

50 years ago Canada created a nation-wide program to pay the medical bills of everyone In Canada. Canada’s system of medical coverage is called “*single payer.*” In the US this is sometimes referred to a “*medicare for all.*” (Consumer Reports)

Canada’s system of health care is not “*socialized medicine.*” Like Social Security in the US, and like Medicare which is only for older people, Canada’s health care is just a kind of insurance that covers the costs for checkups, for when they need a doctor, or for when they need to be hospitalized. (Consumer Reports)

The five principles of the Canadian health care system as described in the law creating it are:

- 1.Everyone has health insurance.
 - 2.People can move from job to job or place to place and keep their health insurance.
 - 3.Everyone can use the whole system’s medical services.
 - 4.All medically necessary treatments are covered.
 - 5.The system is publicly run, which means by the elected local and national governments.
- (Consumer Reports)

THIS IS JUST A SAMPLE, THIS IS SO YOU CAN SEE WHAT YOU CREATE WILL LOOK LIKE. AT THE END OF EACH SUMMARY OR NOTE OR POINT YOU PUT IN PARENTHASIS THE LAST NAME OF THE AUTHOR OR AUTHORS, OR THE PUBLICATION IT COMES FROM. AGAIN, SEE THE WAY THAT IS DONE.