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Instructor's Manual

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1. THEORY AND METHODS

Puzzling Over Theoretical Perspectives 1

Kathe Lowney, Valdosta State University

Are your students nervous about theory? This exercise is a fun way to begin to think about the role of theory in the discipline of sociology. Your students will be asked to get into a group and then collectively work a puzzle, under timed conditions. This task can help reduce any anxiety they might have about working with theories!

Observation of the Social World: Marketing 5

Steve Derné, State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo
And Lisa Jadwin, St. John Fisher College

Groups of your students will analyze the social world--specifically, the world of shopping. In the spirit of grounded theory, the groups will generate some propositions or broad theories that explain the patterns they observe.

Faculty Doors as Symbolic Statement 7

John W. Eby, Messiah College

This active exercise uses naturally occurring symbolic statements, postings on faculty office doors, to help students develop skills of observation, understand the sociological imagination, develop group cohesion, and understand one aspect of campus culture. What do faculty post on their doors?

Helping Experiment 10

Paul Higgins, University of South Carolina at Columbia

Your students will experience and explore the challenge of creating knowledge about social life through an important research method used by sociologists, experiments. They can also work with the scientific process, the steps through which sociologists and other scientists conduct their investigations. This experiment explores whether attachment between people affect whether or not help is offered.

A Very Short Survey 13

Sue R. Crull and Susan M. Collins, Iowa State University

Here is your students' chance to choose a research topic with their classmates, operationalize that concept, write survey questions that get at the issue, collect the data, and interpret it. This is a welcome to Sociology!

2. CULTURE

Understanding Social Location 16

Andrea Malkin Brenner, American University

By reading and discussing some shocking fictional accounts, we hope your students will come to see that as humans, we have a habit of looking at other's worlds as we look into our own and we make assumptions based on what we know is the "norm" or the "truth." Yet, others in a different social location may see things differently.

Decoding Norms 18

Corinne Lally Benedetto, DePaul University

Every social situation functions through the recognition and maintenance of *norms*. These prescriptions for appearance and behavior are both formal (written) and informal (expected), yet we typically pay little conscious attention to them. This assignment (group and individual) offers a systematic practice in the recognition and analysis of norms in everyday life situations.

The Symbolic Basis of Culture: The Cultural Cocktail Party 21

Andrea Malkin Brenner, American University

Welcome to the Cultural Cocktail Party, a fun, group exercise involving role playing that will enable your students to understand the importance of non-material or symbolic culture and, specifically, the use of gestures and personal space to convey meanings in different cultures.

Investigating Students' Rooms 24

Jeff Lashbrook, State University of New York (SUNY) at Brockport

This group assignment has your students studying "the familiar." Through an investigation of the contents of students' rooms, they will learn about material culture and research methodology, develop oral presentation skills, learn teamwork (i.e., planning and executing a project), and create a more student-centered classroom.

Application Exercise on Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism 27

Virginia Teas Gill, Illinois State University

In this group writing assignment, your students will learn to view the world with "different lenses" by analyzing specific cases or situations. The focus is on the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. How do people from different cultures view an event? Why?

3. SOCIALIZATION AND INTERACTION

Gender Socialization 29

Betsy Lucal, Indiana University at South Bend

The purpose of this individual and group exercise is to give your students a chance to analyze how children learn about gender. They will begin with a visit to a children's clothing or toy store so they can observe the items offered for sale. By analyzing the gender make-up of children's toys and/or clothes, they will have a chance to see how gender and socialization work in the real world.

Leadership, Gender, and the Invisible Ceiling 31

Keith A. Roberts, Hanover College

This is a survey exercise in which your students gather some data from about 25 students – male and female – that allow us to reflect on social conceptions of masculinity and femininity and our society's definitions of leadership. Understanding that our definitions of "leadership characteristics" tend to correspond very highly to our society's definitions of masculinity can help students understand forces that contribute to the *invisible ceiling*.

A Play Based on Goffman's Theory of Dramaturgy 33

Victoria Rosenholtz, Albright College

This assignment is to help convey the nature of social interactions at the micro level in everyday life. Goffman's Theory of Dramaturgy was chosen because it gets at the details of behavior in a way that is compatible with our mass media oriented society where we encounter acting and actors perhaps even more often than intimate relationships. Your students will create a glossary of definitions for concepts from Goffman's theory and then write a three-act play!

4. GROUPS AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE

The Year is 2292 AD. 39

Kim M. King, Hiram College

Your students are all members of the president's council on the planet Thorion. Thorion has been nominated for the title of BEST MODEL SOCIETY. They will be involved in this application/selection process. Diversity and multiculturalism are complex concepts, and this exercise will help students to sort through some of the possible minority/majority group relationships.

Stereotyping and Labeling 41

Andrea Malkin Brenner, American University

Stereotypes are specific assumptions about what people are like based on previous associations with them or with people who have similar characteristics, whether true or false. People's stereotypes influence their expectations and actions. This individual and group exercise focuses on the origin of stereotypes in the United States and the power of racial and ethnic labels.

Group Decision-Making 43

Judy Singleton, University of Cincinnati

Building off of previous group assignments, this one allows student to analyze what factors about their group influenced *how* the process worked. What might explain the particular dynamics of that group? Did leaders or other roles emerge? Can students track how decisions were made? Learning to analyze group dynamics can be a valuable skill to take into a future workplace.

The Seed Jar: Social Construction of Reality 46

Keith Roberts, Hanover College

This exercise asks your students to solve a problem, with unclear guidelines for how to do it! Analyzing just how individuals came up with “answers” can help increase awareness of various influences on the ways people make sense of other ambiguous situations.

5. STRATIFICATION

Guided Fantasy: The Titanic Game 48

John R. Bowman, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

This time your students’ ship is going down, survivors will be few, and their group will have to make life and death decisions! This exercise will bring issues of social status and social inequality into focus, as they were in the case of the real Titanic and the list of who actually survived its sinking. Do students think social class position still affects life and death decisions?

Social Inequality: Budgeting for a Low Income 51

Brenda Beagan, University of British Columbia

Doing this exercise will allow your students to determine, first of all, what it actually costs to live in the community where they are, and secondly, what it would be like to budget out a low income so that they could live reasonably in the community within their means. No sooner do they have it all worked out, when along comes some new expense they have to work in.

Occupation and Income Exercise 53

Keith Roberts, Hanover College

In this exercise students are asked to consider why we pay more for some jobs than others. Each group will have to divide a specific sum among workers doing different kinds of work. On what basis do students decide who gets what amount of income? Sociologists try to explain patterns in society. Do their theories help your students analyze and explain the different levels of income associated with different jobs?

Divorce and Income 57

Judy Aulette, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Using tables that report real earnings for men and women of specific educational levels in this country, your students will have the chance to talk about what they feel the statistics tell us about people's lives. Do they help students consider the impact of these income differentials for divorced men and women? They will have the chance to consider how they feel about this information and the group discussion about it.

6. ORGANIZATIONS AND BUREAUCRACY

Structural Change at Your College or University 59

Charles S. Green, III, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater

By comparing a much older organizational chart of your school with one from today, students will be able to see how their college or university has changed structurally as an organization. What kinds of changes have occurred, and what might explain those changes? See whether students can relate these organizational changes to other changes that have occurred, both inside and outside your college or university during this time period.

Critique of Student Government 62

Alton M. Okinaka, University of Hawaii at Hilo

Here is an opportunity for your students to consider what they would like their student government to do, and then investigate systematically what it is currently doing. This is a government that operates right on their doorstep, which makes it accessible. Or is it assessible? Students will have the chance to work with a group over a number of weeks to find out how closely this government in operation meets their visions.

7. RACE, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION

A Group Exercise in Affirmative Action 65

Jacqueline C. Simpson, McMurry University

To do this exercise, students will need to apply the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its Executive Order to specific situations, such as admitting certain students (and not others) to medical school or, in the case of a private firm, promoting some workers to supervisory positions. They will need to devise a plan to guide, and justify, their decisions, while upholding the law, but they will have their group to help them.

Critically Thinking About Race Through Visual Media 68

*Marcia Marx and Mary Thierry Texeira,
California State University at San Bernardino*

In a major group project over a number of weeks, your students will tape from the television examples of subtle messages about nonwhite groups. Presenting their edited selections to the whole class will allow them to "show and tell" how the media can make

certain images of different racial groups seem to be a natural part of the way things are in society, when in fact they are manipulating that picture.

Drawing Pictures: Race and Gender Stereotypes 73

Jacqueline C. Simpson, McMurry University

We all have stereotypes in our minds, and this exercise helps get some of them out on the table, literally. Doing this early in a course will help your students see the ways in which we organize an image of people in our minds and even adapt the names we give to people to our image.

A "Coming Out" Role Play 75

Travis W. Anderson, University of Washington

During class time students will be asked first to consider the societal attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Then some class members will act out a coming out scene (that they create) between a young person and her or his parents. The goal here is not to judge homosexuality as positive or negative, but to consider the various ways that attitudes in society may influence the different family members. Role-playing allows students to imagine what a gay or lesbian young person and his or her parents are thinking and feeling.

8. DEVIANCE AND CRIME

Images of Crime 81

Paul Higgins, University of South Carolina at Columbia

Your students will conduct a small interview survey to identify the common images people have about crime and criminals. Pooling the findings from all class members, they can consider what patterns emerge from at least *these* respondents. Often the images we carry with us oversimplify reality and leave out important categories and characteristics.

Debating Deviance 84

Brenda L. Beagan, University of British Columbia

This exercise will allow your students to explore in depth the key concept of deviance. Answering the worksheet questions require consulting their book chapter on deviance or deviant behavior and then working with classmates to develop a group answer. Groups will then debate each other on whether or not date rape can be considered deviant, according to the definitions they developed. This practice in how to build a coherent, logical argument will help develop an essential skill for their academic work and beyond.

Drug Testing in the Workplace: What Would You Do? 87

Robert B. Petti, Manchester College

In a hypothetical case study, the owner of an accounting firm begins conducting mandatory drug testing of employees, and one male employee (single, age 28) tests

positive. He denies illegal drug use. Students, in groups, need to decide what should happen next. The exercise allows them to debate the real-life issue of mandatory drug testing in the workplace, as well as analyze what sociological theories say about how people get identified as deviant and with what consequences.

The Hand Game 93

Paul Higgins, University of South Carolina at Columbia

This is an in-class exercise that asks students to work in pairs – each tapping on the back of their partner’s hand, according to a rhythm and intensity led by you, the instructor. After the tapping part is over, students will reflect on what occurred and consider a sociological explanation for what happened. They will also be asked to reflect on implications for other similar social situations, where young people are guided by others, such as peers and people in authority.

9. COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, SOCIAL CHANGE

Studying a Collective Behavior Episode 96

Charles S. Green, III, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater

Over several weeks student teams will conduct field research about a fad, a crowd, or a disaster. They will gain research skills as they gather your data, and will learn how to analyze those data using conceptual tools about collective behavior. Finally, your students will likely gain empathy for other people whose experiences are different from theirs, because field research can take them close to other worlds.

Family History Project 99

Mark R. Warren, Fordham University

With this exercise your students have the opportunity to explore in-depth their own family history. They will conduct interviews with six family members, going back as many generations as possible. As they share stories with classmates, they will see the impact of common social and historical factors, as well as individual differences. Their final essay will consider both the extent of societal influences on their family and the extent of that family history on who *they* are!

Studying a Social Movement Organization 102

Charles S. Green, III, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater

Your students will gather information on the goals of an organization, the kinds of activities they engage in to reach those goals, who their opponents are and how they compete for resources. What is the purpose and tactics of this social movement? Teams of students are called upon for an in-depth analysis of a social movement organization.

10. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Families Across Cultures in the Media 105

Nancy Wisely, Stephen F. Austin State University

Using the sociological approach to study the family, students will ignore the individual people involved, and look instead at the institution of the family or how it operates. The family as an institution operates according to a set of norms, roles, statuses, and values. In this assignment, your students will observe and analyze two fictional families (on video). They will have the opportunity to develop their sociological imagination, apply core course concepts, and collaborate with peers for a quality analysis of the family.

Parenthood: Defining Family 108

Judy Aulette, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

In order to confront changing definitions of what constitutes a family, students will be asked to decide who the child of a surrogate mother (Baby M) should be raised by. What are the sociological issues relevant to this decision?

Housework: Division of Labor 110

Judy Aulette, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

This assignment gets your students to think personally about what a household should do (if anything) to change how household labor is divided between two working parents. They will also place their thoughts in the context of a theoretical approach within sociology.

Proposed Grading System 113

John W. Eby, Messiah College

Your students will be asked to rewrite the grading system for the sociology course in which they are enrolled. What should count and for how much? In doing so, they will be asked to think about stratification and the allocation of rewards.

Tommy's Story 115

Marjorie Altergott, DePaul University

Define health. This exercise will have your students look at this and other tough issues related to why some people die and others do not. Students may find this activity a little stressful.

Mapping Census Data for Your Town 124

*Frank D. Beck, Illinois State University and
Julie A. Pelton, Pennsylvania State University*

Students are asked to look at the poverty rates, racial diversity, and housing characteristics for their hometown or neighborhood. Given what they know of the place, they are asked to describe why these structural characteristics are distributed the way they are. Where do the wealthy live, and why? How segregated are different neighborhoods, and why? Answer these questions and more with Internet mapping technologies.

11. MULTI TOPIC ASSIGNMENTS/MAJOR CLASS PROJECTS/GENERAL
Critical Reports on Contemporary Social Problems 126

John J. Shalanski, Luzerne County Community College

Your students will choose a social problem in their local community, the nation, or a more global issue that affects everyone. Writing critically about the problem they will select and attempt to come up with solutions which will help them to clarify their own perspective and values. Students will be able to look at how the problem originated, what has been written about it, and what can be done about it.

Meal for the Homeless 129

Sue R. Crull, Iowa State University

Who are the homeless? Why are there homeless people? Students gain answers to these questions through a service-learning exercise constructed with the goal of your students doing something they have never done before and confronting their own beliefs head-on.

Social Class Stratification Project 132

Angela J. Hattery, Wake Forest University

Here's a chance for your students to intelligently confront the issues of resource distribution and stratification in our society. In groups, your students will work up a highly detailed budget for a family. Other groups will do the same for families with different socioeconomic characteristics. The discussion that follows should be quite interesting.

Song Analysis Project 137

Mellisa Holtzman, University of Iowa

Is music sociology? It can be, and this assignment enables your students to use different songs as examples of sociological concepts. You may even ask students to bring compact discs of their own into class and demonstrate their sociological relevance.

Creating A Society 140

Lynn H. Ritchey, University of Cincinnati

Here is your chance to start over. This exercise asks group of students to create their own society. All aspects from family, education, and religion to politics, economics, and culture are on the table for discussion. Students can have fun and be creative.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Student Empowerment: Student-Designed Syllabus 144

Ada Haynes, Tennessee Technological University

In this group exercise, your students will have the opportunity to help design the syllabus for your Introduction to Sociology Course. According to research, such input can increase student motivation and empowerment in the course.

Initial Group Assessment 147

John R. Bowman, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Working in groups, your students will engage in an analysis of how a class work group (for a class project or assignment) is functioning. They will look at group norms and periodically assess the effectiveness of their group.

Group Quiz 149

Sue R. Crull, Iowa State University

Have your students ever had the chance to answer a quiz question with a group of other students? Now is their chance. You, the instructor, will pose a question relevant to a section of the course, and each group will write a response.

Facilitating Discussion 152

Sandy Welsh, University of Toronto

A group of students will take responsibility for leading a discussion on the readings for a section of the course. You, the instructor, will help them, but this is their chance to be the teacher.

Group Presentations 156

Kathleen R. Johnson, Keene State College

Given that there are some controversial yet sociological issues that your class will not have time to address fully, this exercise enables groups to work together on a presentation of one such topic. Students will work closely with you to educate the rest of your class about the new knowledge.

Panel Debates 159

Kathleen R. Johnson, Keene State College

Given that there are some controversial yet sociological issues your class will not have time to address fully, this exercise allows groups to work together in the formation of an argument on one such topic. Different groups in class will argue the pro and con sides of an issue. In doing so, students will become more skilled at constructing quality arguments for what you believe.