

SOC 161: Social Problems and American Values, Honors, Final Project

Making your voice count: Public sociology

Please write a 700 to 1,000-word op-ed public sociology piece addressing:

Choose a social justice concern and discuss how you think it will be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due dates

- Please complete the **topic proposal worksheet by Thursday, May 7, 11:59 p.m.** This appears as a “test” in our Final Project tab on Blackboard. (It isn’t a test, no worries.)
- If you would like me to review or comment on your paper in advance of turning in the final draft, please have your draft to me no later than Tuesday, May 12, 11:59 p.m.
- **Final draft due Friday, May 15, 11:59 p.m.**

The topic proposal is worth 10 points, the final project is worth 40.

Please turn in your final project in .doc, .docx, .pdf, .txt, or .rtf format. Please do not turn in unconverted Pages or Google Docs formats. The rubric is below as well.

The following three links provide examples of public sociology from sociology blogs:

- <https://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/>
- <https://thesocietypages.org/>
- <https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2020/03/06/social-inequality-medical-fears-and-pandemics/>

Please also utilize this information on how to write an op-ed column:

- https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/new_seglin_how_to_write_an_oped_1_25_17_7.pdf

This page from the KU Libraries website will direct you, by subject, to a number of useful databases to begin your search for academic sources:

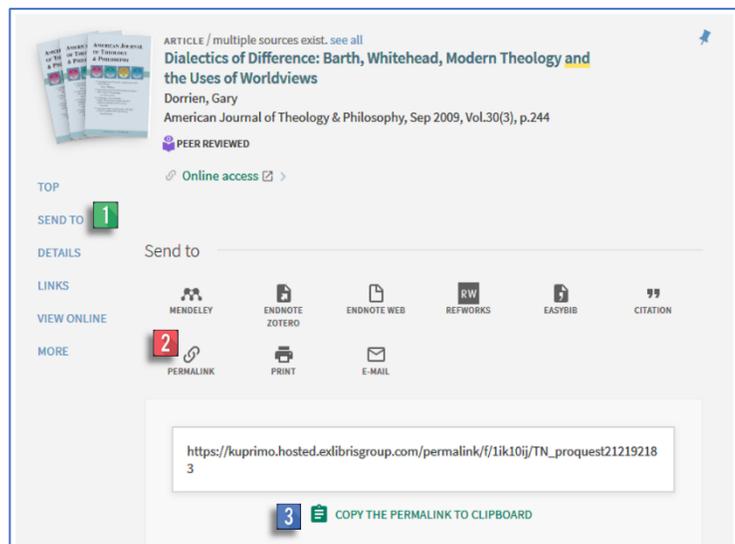
- <https://lib.ku.edu/articles-and-databases>

Evidence and Citation

Plan to provide at least **six** sources of evidence for your argument and be sure that a minimum of **three** of these are academic sources. (Three should be peer-reviewed articles or academic books from the library databases. The other three can be newspaper or online sources. For more information here, see our video on Blackboard about using the library.)

For this project, rather than following a citation style, we will use live links as citations, just as any online news source would – like this, for example: “In their book, [American Society, How it really works](#), Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers argued that...” (If you clicked on this linked text, it would take you to the Google Books page for our textbook.) See the instructions below about how to make one of these text links. (Don’t paste the full URL into the text of your article, but instead, keep your argument flowing by linking it as shown here.)

- To cite newspapers or other online sources, linking your text to a regular URL is fine.
- To cite books, please provide its link on Google Books <https://books.google.com/>
- To cite journal articles, provide a permalink from the KU Libraries. (Why?¹) To the right is a screenshot from a KU Libraries search showing how to get the Permalink.



To manually insert a live link into a Word document,

1. Highlight the URL and click Control + C to copy it (Command + C on a Mac)
2. Next, highlight the text where you want the live link to appear
3. Click “Insert” from the top menu
4. Then choose the drop-down menu for “Links”
5. Use Control + V (or Command + V) to paste the link into the “Address” box

¹ Why use a permalink rather than just grabbing the URL from the library search? Because if you are logged in to the library, some of the pages you’re seeing are protected, and won’t appear to those not logged in. Entire databases, for example, may produce links that can’t be accessed unless the user is logged in to the library. In a public sociology piece, you want to make sure that everything you provide is accessible to the public. The permalink will show information about the article even to those who cannot access the KU Libraries. That’s why we’re using Google Books too.

Assignment Rubric

(Please note that the rubric makes room for up to three bonus points for work that exceeds expectation. Receiving the full points for a section below indicates a job very well done. The additional bonus points are not given out lightly, so if you've received any, please accept my compliments on an aspect of your paper which was done outstandingly well.)	Score
Knowledge of cultural/worldview frameworks (KU Core Goal 4) – 15 points	
16 – Exceeds expectation	
12 – 15 pts – Expectation – Clearly defines a real-world social problem and presents an argued analysis. Assignment demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of structural elements in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, education, racial construction, economy, and/or beliefs and practices.	
8 – 11 pts – Approaching expectation – Defines a real-world social problem and provides some analysis. Assignment demonstrates adequate understanding of the complexity of structural elements in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, education, racial construction, economy, and/or beliefs and practices	
4 – 7 pts - Developing – Definition of real-world social problem and analysis are present but not well developed. Assignment demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of structural elements in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, education, racial construction, economy, and/or beliefs and practices	
0 – 3 pts – Needs improvement – Definition of real-world social problem and analysis are poorly developed or absent. Assignment demonstrates minimal understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	
Evidence (KU Core Goal 1) – 10 points	
11 – Exceeds expectation	
8 – 10 pts –Expectation – All assertions are supported with academic or professional citations. Information is taken from sources with enough interpretation or evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned and discussed. Includes references to at least six sources, three of which are academic.	
6 – 9 pts – Approaching expectation – All assertions are supported with academic or professional citations. Information is taken from sources with enough interpretation or evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	
3 – 5 pts - Developing – Information is taken from sources with some interpretation or evaluation but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	
0 – 2 pts – Needs improvement - References are seldom cited to support statements or are not from academic sources. Most arguments are unsubstantiated and appear speculative or based on author's opinion. Information from sources is provided without any interpretation or evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.	
Present and communicate the problem and ethical perspective (KU Core Goal 5) – 10 points	
11 – Exceeds expectation	
8 – 10 pts – Expectation – Uses course readings and others to clearly and fluently communicate an understanding of social responsibility and ethical behavior.	
6 – 9 pts - Proficient – Uses course readings and others to communicate some understanding of social responsibility and ethical behavior.	
3 – 5 pts - Developing – Communicates some understanding of social responsibility but with minimal use of course readings or other sources.	
0 – 2 pts - Lacking – Efforts to communicate social responsibility and ethical behavior are either absent, insufficient, or based upon individual speculation or personal opinion largely without the use of course readings or other sources.	
Organization – 5 points	
4 – 5 pts – Expectation – Assignment includes introductory paragraph with strong thesis statement and an overview of the direction of the paper, takes a clear position and states an argument, elaborates on at least two points (minimum, one paragraph each) in support of the author's argument, provides and defends against at least one counter-argument or propaganda device, links topic to structural factors, and provides strong conclusion summarizing arguments and delivers a final, take-home point.	
3 pts – Approaching expectation – Assignment is organized as described above but some sections may not flow as clearly.	
2 pts - Developing – Assignment is organized less cohesively, may lack thesis statement, supporting arguments, counter argument, or conclusion.	
0 – 1 pts – Needs improvement – Assignment is lacking in most or all aspects described above. Reads as free-flow of thought; unedited for coherence; major sections are either too short or missing entirely.	
Total	

Blackboard Topic Proposal

This isn't a test—just an easy format for me. Below, it will ask you to briefly describe your argument, to share links (see the Assignment Information sheet, above) and to consider any counter-arguments. The assignment is worth 10 points.

1. What over-riding argument do you plan to make in your op-ed piece? Describe it a little bit here (200 words should be enough but feel free to write more if you like.) 2 points

2. What sources do you plan to use? Please include links to Google Books, permalinks from the KU Libraries, and regular URLs for newspapers and websites (see above). Minimum 6; three must be academic. 6 points

3. Are there any groups or propaganda outlets that present an argument that runs strongly in the opposite direction of yours? What rebuttal would you give for that argument? 2 points