

TO: Dean Charles E. Kratz, Dean of Library and Information Fluency, Weinberg Memorial Library
FROM: Meghan Ashlin Rich, Associate Professor, Sociology/Criminal Justice
RE: Information Literacy Stipend, 2014
DATE: February 10, 2015

**Information Literacy Stipend Report
Sociological Theory, Fall 2014**

Description:

For an information literacy project in Sociological Theory (SOC 218; see Appendix A for syllabus), I proposed that I add a requirement to the final group project of a written literature review for each individual student. This literature review consisted of at least six (6) sources and an overview of the chosen theorist's body of work. One of my frustrations with students reading and understanding sociological theory is that they over-rely on secondary sources and even Wikipedia for their knowledge about a particular theorist. I have emphasized the importance of primary sources for theory so that we can work towards doing theoretical interpretation ourselves, rather than relying on others' interpretation of the literature. I required at least half (3) of the sources to be primary (allowing for the fact that much classical and postmodern sociological theory has been translated from a language other than English). The requirement required students to understand the difference between primary and secondary sources, to seek and acquire appropriate sources through various on-line databases, and practice writing a concise (4-5 pg.) literature review of a theorist we did not cover extensively within the course, complete with appropriate citations and list of references. The students were also required to provide an oral report of their chosen theorist with a group of 3-4 students (assessment of this requirement is not included in this report because it is a "regular" part of the course). must understand that theory is not created in a vacuum, but in rela

historical

political, cultural, and social conditions, and new discoveries in the field of social science and cultural studies. The literature review required students to situate their chosen theorist within a particular "school of thought" (if any) and investigate their major influences and, in turn, whom they influenced. As real historical figures, the student had to also determine if the theorist's body of work had influence on society at large (for example, Marx obviously had and continues to have a huge influence throughout the world). Lastly, the student had to demonstrate their own understanding of the theorist's writings and if they can be applied to their own

information into his or her knowledge base and value system” (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2000).

Assessment plan to determine how student learning outcomes will be evaluated:

This project was assessed through an information literacy pretest, an information literacy in-class tutorial provided by Donna Witek, and a written paper. The paper was graded on a number of criteria: 1) quantity and quality of sources, 2) appropriate citations and reference list (ASA style), 3) how well sources are integrated into written content of paper, 4) how well sources are interpreted, 5) how well the theorist is situated in the larger conversation, interpreting their influence on the discipline of sociology and its history, 6) how well the theorist's work can be applied to contemporary society, and 7) how well the paper's structure, and grammar.

Class Activities Related to Information Literacy Project:

On the first day of class, Donna Witek introduced herself and we briefly explained the theorist literature review group project and paper requirements for the semester. Students were required to fill out an online “pre-test” survey on their own time, which asked them to discuss briefly their knowledge of sociology and research using primary and secondary sources. All students but one filled out the pre-test by Sept. 3, 2014 (see Appendix B).

The students were provided detailed instructions and a grading rubric on D2L for the theorist literature review (see Appendices C and D). They were asked to join other students in selecting a theorist by Oct. 15, 2014, when Donna and I arranged for a one-hour tutorial with the students in WML 305/306. At this tutorial, Donna and I discussed the requirements for the assignment. Donna provided a background for what a literature review requires and introduced students to the information literacy website she created specifically for this course and assignment. The class then was able to do searches on classroom PCs while Donna demonstrated different search tools and research strategies. See: <http://guides.library.scranton.edu/rich->

(**Sources**), 2) appropriate citations and reference list (**Style**), 3) how well sources are integrated into written content of paper (**Sources**), 4) how well sources are interpreted

this semester I realize many of the theories build on each other and there are theorists that are still using some of the oldest theories made to explain the current society today.”

“

B

1: Timestamp

2: Name

3: PLEASE provide your R Number

4: I am a

5: It's the discipline of sociology, a primary source about a theory is one written by the theorist who developed the

6: A secondary source about a sociological theory or theorist is one written by someone other than the

1: Timestamp

2: Name

3: Please provide your R Number

4: I am a

5: It's Christmas (or other winter family holiday gathering), and a family member asks you what sociology

6: A secondary source about a sociological theory or theorist is one written by someone other than the

IL Pre & Post Test (scored by librarian)

F

SOC 218: Sociological Theory, Fall 2014
Information Literacy Pre/Post Test Assessment

Check one: Sociology Major | Sociology Minor | Neither | Student Name: _____

Pretest (Aug 2014):

3 - Developing: response evidences an increase in depth of understanding of

5 - Expert: expert understanding of sociology

Question # and content area

1 - Novice: superficial understanding of sociology

#5 - scholarship as a conversation (three things about the discipline of sociology)

#3 - inquiry/searching (how to research a theory/theorist)

#6 - research/investigative (sociological theory)

#7 - primary sources/information creation

#8 - secondary sources/information creation

creation is a process (two reasons intentionally consult a secondary source about a sociological theory/theorist)

Posttest (Dec 2014)

5 - Expert: expert understanding of sociology

Novice: superficial understanding of sociology

3 - Developing: response evidences an increase in depth of understanding of

#5 - scholarship as a conversation (three things about the discipline of sociology)

#3 - research as inquiry/searching (how to research a theory/theorist)

investigative (how to research a theory/theorist)

consult a primary source about a sociological theory/theorist

creation is a process (two reasons intentionally consult a secondary source about a sociological theory/theorist)

intentionally consult a secondary source about a sociological theory/theorist

What surprised you?

Comments (general and #9) on both tests: what do you expect/hope to learn? What did you learn?