

Formal Essay#1: Study of Everyday Behavior-Waller-SYG1000-6

The paper, worth 40 points, must be submitted on CANVAS by class time, Thur., Feb 17th.

It should be a minimum of 600 words, typed double spaced with 1" margins and 10-12 font.

See 2nd page for the rubric, or the standards that will be used to evaluate your essay.

Your task is to **observe an everyday situation and interpret what you observe using sociological ideas, concepts, or theories**. Your paper will thus include observations of people's actual everyday behavior, and to explain these observations, a discussion of **two or more terms** from our textbook or PowerPoint lectures related to the class themes in Modules 2, 3, and/or 4. To get started, you might just watch people, keeping in mind the ideas and terms sociologists use to explain behavior. Or, you might consciously select an idea or term or two, and try to seek out a situation which demonstrates them in action. While you observe people, take notes so you can later remember details, carefully think about them, and use them in your paper. Finally, you should organize your paper around a clear theme or question you state at the start.

As a general guideline for your paper (these are mostly suggestions—but you should introduce and conclude your paper), you might include: 1) An introductory paragraph which helps the reader understand what your writing about and why—like, *what kind of situations and people did you observe, what sociological ideas will you discuss, and why is it of interest?*; 2) Descriptive paragraph(s) providing some details about what you saw and heard, or what occurred during your "research" (*what did you actually observe?*); and 3) Analytical paragraph(s) where you interpret what you observed, and explain how your specific observations exemplify sociological terms and ideas (*what does what you observed mean, and how does what you observed reflect the cultural and/or structural aspects of a social situation?*); 4) A conclusion tying things together and offering final personal/professional insights in regards to society & interaction.

Finally, some tips: The meaning or sociological relevance of some of your observations may be unclear to you. If that's the case, then focus on those moments or interactions that are more understandable. Also, your study should not be so ambitious as take on a big, complex aspect of social life. You should focus on making sense of the details of ordinary everyday behavior, including the stuff we might typically overlook or take for granted during daily life. Perhaps then you'll see the everyday world of people is more complex and interesting than you previously recognized.

Example topics or broad "research" questions you can relate to a specific situation:

- ~ How does a social interaction reflect the status and roles of a particular set of people?
- ~ How are norms acted out in interaction (or learned in the socialization of children)?
- ~ How is impression management carried out to perform and meet role expectations?
- ~ How are values communicated by symbols common to a culture or subculture?

PAPER #1 RUBRIC

(each of the paper elements, and how well you realize them, will determine your paper grade)

ELEMENTS	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	FAILING
<i>Introduction of Essay</i>	The introduction has all the following elements: 1) it draws the reader in with interest, 2) clearly states the main topic, and 3) previews the paper's <u>sociological</u> theme.				There is no definable introduction of the main topic or structure of the paper. It just begins discussing the topic in full leaving the reader to figure out what's going on.
<i>Focus on and Presentation of Topic</i>	There is a clear, well-focused, well-developed topic or theme. The main ideas are well organized and well supported by lots of relevant and insightful information..				The main topic or ideas are not clear and consistent. There are 2 or more different and unrelated topics. Little organization, or the paper is a random collection of information.
<i>Support for Topic</i> <u>IMPORTANT ELEMENT!</u>	Relevant, valuable details of reported aspects of the interaction give the reader important and complete supporting information that goes beyond the obvious.				Supporting details and information on the observed social interaction are unclear, irrelevant, not related to topic, or are made up as fiction.
<i>Sociological Analysis (Concept use)</i> <u>MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT!</u>	At least 3 concepts are explained well, fit the situation well, are used to analyze the situation, and add perceptive and unique insights to the topic.				No concept is understood or discussed adequately, fit the situation well, or are used to well analyze or carefully examine the situation observed..
<i>Grammar & Spelling (Writing Norms)</i>	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling which might distract the reader from the content. Very well written in clear sentences and precise language.				Writer makes errors in grammar and spelling that seriously undermine the ability of the reader to understand what is being said. Wrong format used to falsely lengthen paper.
<i>Author's Voice and Effort</i>	The author has enthusiastically taken up the topic, makes an ambitious effort to understand social life (goes well beyond 2 pages), and "owns" the study throughout.				Giving some missing elements, the writer appears to not be invested in the topic or assignment, and the paper falls short of the minimum length of 2 pages.
<i>Conclusion to Essay</i>	The conclusion ties the parts together, leaving the reader with a clear sense of what the writer is "getting at." The paper adds up to something <u>sociologically</u> important.				There is no real conclusion, the paper just hurriedly ends by restating the topic (or introducing a new one). or by saying something cliché just to get the paper over with.