**Sociology 156, Fall 2022 – Annotated Bibliography Assignment**

Due Friday, **October 14** at 5 PM. Submit using the link on the course website.

For this assignment you will write an annotated bibliography, which will help you work towards writing the literature review due at the end of the quarter. The annotated bibliography is meant to demonstrate that 1) you have a clear-cut research question, 2) you have found credible sources that are relevant, and 3) you understand how the sources will help you answer your question.

**Format:** Your annotated bibliography should be 2-4 pages, double-spaced (typed, with 12-point font and normal margins). Follow the example on the website in the “Lit Review Resources” folder: <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/143374/files/folder/Lit%20Review%20Resources>.

At the top of the document, state your research question. Then list *at least* 5 *credible* *sources* that help answer your research question. The sources should be listed in alphabetical order and formatted as reference list entries, in APA style. (5 sources is just the minimum number. You may need more if your sources are brief and/or do not provide much useful information).

Below the entry for each source, you should write a short paragraph about the source. This is the key information to include:

1. what kind of source it is (e.g., an academic study, a report from a government website, a book written by a historian, etc.)
2. A brief summary of the information it provides that’s related to your topic (e.g., responses to a survey, a historical account of events that happened, etc.)
3. how the source will help you address your research question (e.g., it shows how big the disparities are, it tests different explanations for an outcome, etc.)

**Selecting a Topic:** The first step for this assignment is choosing a topic. You can choose to write on a wide range of subjects as long as it fits within the broader topic of this class – Race and Ethnicity in the U.S.A. You can choose a topic that we are covering in this course, but you will need to go beyond the lectures and assigned readings to gain a deeper understanding.

For inspiration, you can look at the lectures and readings of this class, read news articles, look at social media, think about issues that matter to you in your own life, etc. It will also help to start looking for sources to give you an idea about what information is available.

**Developing a Research Question:** Once you’ve chosen a topic, and begun collecting basic facts about it, you will develop your own *research question*. The research question is what you will try to answer by finding and synthesizing information from your sources. The research question for this paper should be a “*why* question” – a question about the explanation/causes of some outcome. In other words, it must go beyond describing the outcome (i.e., what happened) to presenting (and assessing) explanation(s) for why the outcome occurred. For help getting started, see the handout called “Mapping your Research Ideas” on the course website, <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/143374/files/folder/Lit%20Review%20Resources>.

A typical research question for this class would be to ask why some outcome differs across racial groups – such as average income, political identification, or rates of incarceration. You would need to begin by finding data on the specific outcome to figure out the extent to which, and how, racial or ethnic groups differ. (Keep in mind that you would be looking at averages, medians, or rates, NOT at something that is different for every single member of a group compared to another). Then you would need to look for credible sources that try to explain the disparity/difference between groups.

Other kinds of research questions that work well for this class include: ones where racial self-identification is the outcome to be explained; that ask about why something has changed over time; or that ask about the extent to which race influences some outcome vs. other factors (gender, age, etc.). If in doubt, you’re welcome to run your research question by the professor or your TA before getting too far into the research process.

Please keep in mind that the point of this assignment is to start with an open-ended question and then figure out the answer(s) based on existing research and evidence from credible sources. *Do not start with a thesis you are trying to prove*; *instead, start with a question, and be open to evidence that might contradict any assumptions you have about what the answer is.*

You can change your research question as you go through the process of finding and analyzing sources. In fact, changing your research question is a typical part of the research process. You may need to modify your research question depending upon the information that is available – such as by broadening it or narrowing it. For now, here are some guidelines to help you develop your research question:

* It should be succinct (usually just one sentence, and no more than two sentences)
* It should be open-ended (multiple answers are possible)
* It should be specific enough that you can answer it in 8 double-spaced pages
* It should be something that can be answered through finding and confirming facts about your topic (not a question of morality, philosophy, or opinion)
* It should be “sociological,” i.e., not trying to explain an outcome primarily in terms of biology, psychology, or other non-social factors.

**Sources:** For this assignment you must find *at least* 5 credible, useful sources to include in your annotated bibliography. *5 is just the minimum number.* You will need more than 5 if some of your sources are brief, or if they do not provide much useful information about your topic. (For example, 5 full-length books on your topic would be sufficient, but 5 brief news articles will not be). Make sure at least *some* of the sources you find for the annotated bibliography will help you *answer your research question*, not just provide basic information about your topic.

You can use a variety of different kinds of sources for your literature review. Examples of credible sources for this assignment are books written by scholars, studies published in academic journals, reports from research organizations, articles from trustworthy news organizations, etc. You may use assigned readings and lectures for this class as sources, but they do not count towards the requirement to have at least 5 sources.

I highly recommend saving your sources as .pdfs and collecting them in a folder on your electronic device. This will make it much easier to look through sources than just bookmarking them in your browser. I also highly recommend recording the citations for sources as you find them. You can use a citation generator like Zotero. However, be sure to check that all of the necessary information is included; citation generators don’t always work.

**Recommended Databases and Search Engines:**

* *Google Scholar* - <https://scholar.google.com/> - Allows you to search for a wide variety of academic books, articles, and research reports. Make sure you are logged onto your UCLA account so that you get access to the sources.
* *JSTOR* - allows you to search for and access a wide variety of academic articles. You can limit your search to sociology-related journals. To access it, login through <https://www.library.ucla.edu/>.
* *UCLA Melvyl* - <https://ucla.on.worldcat.org/discovery> - allows you to locate books at the UCLA libraries and other libraries. **~~While you will not be able to physically go to the library this quarter,~~ Y**ou can**also** request books to pick up. In addition, many books are now available online. When searching, you can restrict your search to “Online Content and Media” if you want to only see items that you can read online.
* *Pew Research Center* - <https://www.pewresearch.org/> – has useful reports on demographic trends, public opinion, and political participation in the U.S.
* *U.S. Federal Reserve Research* - <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres.htm> - publishes reports on racial inequality
* *U.S. National Bureau of Economic Research* - <https://www.nber.org/> - publishes working papers on racial inequality
* *UCLA Library’s News Guide* - <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/news> - This is a guide to the various newspapers that you can access through UCLA, both present-day and historical.
* *UCLA Library’s Sociology Research Guide* - <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/sociology> - more helpful information about finding sources

**Citations:** Please follow the American Psychology Association (APA) style for the reference list entries and for in-text citations. All sources that you use should be cited properly, and direct quotes must be in quotation marks. You can ignore other APA rules (like having an abstract). For guidance please refer to the two handouts on APA style (with examples) on the course website, at <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/143374/files/folder/Lit%20Review%20Resources>

. You can also find a useful guide at Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

**Submission:** Save your annotated bibliography as a .docx or .pdf file, then upload it using the link at <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/143374/assignments/1272564>. A service called Turnitin will check your paper for evidence of plagiarism. Papers that are emailed will not be accepted. Papers that are turned in late will have points deducted for each day past the deadline.

**Additional Guidance:**

* email your TA or Professor Speer, or come to our office hours
* Ask peers for help with brainstorming or proofreading
* Ask a librarian: <https://www.library.ucla.edu/research-teaching-support/research-help>
* Help with writing from the Undergraduate Writing Center, <http://wp.ucla.edu/wc/>
* UCLA Online Research Tutorials: <https://uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips/tutorials/>