

# My final project reflection

Philosophy



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## DRAFT COPY Reflective Essay, Group Project &amp; Discussion Question

Guidelines for Effective Writing Peace Studies 1050, Introduction to Peace Studies Spring, 2009 FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS: Be sure to have your name AND lab section (A, B, C, D, E, or F) at the top of the assignment! One reflective essay (four to six pages), one Group Project, one final essay and fourteen discussion questions ( ? to ? page each—may be longer) will be assigned at various times throughout the term (see the Syllabus, the Readings & Assignments Calendar and the Blackboard website for due dates).

They are an opportunity for you, the student, to pose your own sociological questions about the assigned topic or reading material. You might want to think of these essays/questions as conversations with me in which you can develop your own line of sociological reasoning and critical thinking about peace studies. Keep in mind that critical analysis = thoughtful, academically grounded questioning rather than making a negative attack. Write in the first person and use active voice for all assignments. \*\*Note: be sure to include appropriate citations!! \*\*\* The essay and/or discussion question cluster should be based on the following outline: 1) Begin by framing a question about the assigned reading— keep in mind that this question will form the basis of our classroom discussion. Some of the themes from which questions might be drawn include— a. Ethics, comparisons among readings (e. g. , if Johnson makes one claim about social justice, but Nibert makes another claim then you might ask why they are different); b. Personal experience (e. g. if you have ever joined a student protest (or not) and your observations about the experience are different from Johnson's then you might ask why he sees things in a different way—first trying to see things from his point of view as a

sociologist! ); c. Suggestions for how things might be different (e. g. , questions about how the public can be made aware of issues that you think are being kept under wraps—e. g. how economic development in Africa relates to increased poverty and war—see Tola Pearce article); d. How power and policies relate to socially constructing norms and values (e. g. asking why the media covers college student stories or animal abuse cases with a particular slant...you could ask who controls the media and how do they do it? ). 2) Explain why you are asking the question (e. g. , your experience might contradict what you are reading or you think that the author may have missed something and you wonder why) and be sure to relate the question to our readings and discussions. Do NOT simply repeat the question(s) that the author is asking!!!! Show me that you are thinking sociologically and critically about the reading. For the ESSAY ONLY you will also complete items 3-10: ) Give your own reflective response to a question you have asked about the assigned reading(s). Either use one of your already completed Discussion Questions OR create a new Discussion Question. Elaborate on how you developed your response. In other words, what most influences your thinking (e. g. , parents, peers, religion, other classes, or ? )? Explain how others are (or are not) able to influence your thinking. 4) Support your sociological line of reasoning with material from classroom discussions, course texts, at least one (1) professional journal article from the field of sociology, and your own empirical observations.

While there is no specific requirement about the number of citations needed for each assignment, academic work of a high quality is marked by the way all knowledge claims are supported with full citations. (remember that you

must cite readings along with discussions, lectures and primary source documents such as letters) 5) If you feel limited in your ability to answer the question then explain how and why you feel limited. Maybe you have never before considered the issue and feel as if your worldview has been shaken. What do you think would help you to better answer the question?

Perhaps you will think that having more work experience in a particular organization would give you a better insight into the matter. You might also want to speculate about interviewing people affected by conflict(s) or interviewing so-called experts. What would you ask them? Would interviewing the author help? 6) Keep in mind that I am not asking you to tell me your opinion of the reading (that it is good or bad—easy or hard). I am asking you to reflect on how the material pertains to the academic discipline of sociology as it relates to peace studies.

Be a sociologist and ask questions a sociologist would ask. It is important for you to use sociological language and footnotes/bibliography where appropriate. Here are a couple of very brief examples of sociological questions (for more examples see the questions posted on our Blackboard website—I expect YOUR questions to be much longer than my examples! );

a. If there is enough food to feed the entire planet then why are there conflicts over humanitarian aid? Why are people anywhere dying of hunger related illnesses? How is the media involved in peace processes that could help feed the hungry?

Through what social processes other than the media do people attach meanings to peace? b. If peace is valued in a society, then why are Peace Studies classes and academic programs considered controversial? Who

benefits from questioning the value of peace studies? Who loses? Whose voice is silenced? For the Essay AND the Small Group Poster/Essay/Abstract Exhibition complete items 7-10— 7) The Revision Process (applies only to the Reflective Essay and Small Group Essay Exhibition—not the abstract)—you will be given one week after the individual graded reflective essay and small group essay are returned to complete revisions.

NOTE: You will not be given a grade on your first draft. We want you read the comments of the grader and make appropriate revisions. Revisions should focus on the following: 1) course content; 2) the quality of critical analysis; 3) consistency and parsimony in your line of reasoning; 4) quality of sources cited; 5) grammar; 6) syntax; 7) spelling; 8) composition; and 9) any other suggestions made by the person grading your essay. ) The Grading Rubric (posted on Blackboard Course Documents page) provides specific guidelines for your revisions; however, revisions should not involve the following: 1) the submission of a completely new essay; 2) simply making the essay longer without attention to the comments of the grader; and/or 3) making only cosmetic changes. 9) NOTE: You must submit the original copy of your individual essay AND Small Group Essay WITH the revised copy! Attach them with a staple or a paper clip. Also, it is entirely possible that your revisions will not be sufficient to merit a superior grade.

You will not lose points in the revision process, but you may not gain points either. Quality of effort matters! 10) About those citations—the graders will be checking to make sure that the sources you cite include (but are not limited to): course readings, classroom discussions, Blackboard posts, professional academic journals, and primary source documents. You do NOT

need to use all of these sources in each assignment (although you will need to cite at least one journal article in your reflective essay). Simply make sure that you fully support your line of reasoning.

NOTE: Wikipedia is NOT an acceptable source of information, and it will not count as a citation—use of Wikipedia may even have negative consequences. It is also important that you use a sociology dictionary rather than a standard dictionary when trying to define key concepts such as peace, freedom and liberty. I want to reiterate that there is NO SET NUMBER of citations required for any assignment. It is quality and not quantity that matters! SECOND REMINDER: FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS: Be sure to have your name AND lab section (A, B, C, D, E, or F) at the top of the assignment!