

Model Assignment: SOC 203 Research Paper Assignment

Term paper: Students are required to write a 4-5 page research paper on a topic of their choice. Topics for the research paper must be approved by the Instructor. Paper topics are due September 19th. An outline of your paper is due by October 17th. The First draft of your paper is due by November 14th. The Final draft of the paper is due by Dec. 13th. All four assignments will count for **25%** of your grade.

Writing Assignment

Important information to consider before and while writing your paper.

- Based on your knowledge of the theories and our discussion in class, this paper will require you to present a story about an individual who is involved in criminal behavior. **You may choose, a real-life criminal (famous or otherwise), a character from a movie (which may be a depiction of a real-life character or not—either way is acceptable), or you may completely make up your own character and story. The most important thing is that you display that you know how to apply the theories presented in this class to individuals in specific circumstances.** This story should include three theories about why the individual is engaged in crime. You should choose three theories from the list below. Most importantly, make sure your facts are specific enough and relate to the theory's assumptions. The story should resemble a person's biography. Following the biography you are to answer the following questions:
 - How do the theories you have chosen explain the main character's behavior (e.g. how can each of the three theories be applied to explain the behavior)? Different theories may be applied using the same biographical events, however not all biographical events may be applicable to the same theory.
 - Explain what [policy] changes need to be made to make sure that persons like the main character in your story do not engage in crime.
- You are to use size 12 point font, Times New Roman, and double spacing. The paper must be 4-5 pages, not including cover and reference pages and should be submitted electronically via SafeAssign no later than **10:00 AM on 13th, 2013.**
- This assignment is divided into four parts: storyline, overview of the theories you are using, application of each of the three theories to the storyline, and policy changes that should be made (see 1b above). Please organize your paper in the same manner.
- Do not waste space repeating facts or information that is irrelevant to the theories you will be applying to explain the main character's behavior. **The character's behavior should be clearly discussed and the theories you choose must be used to explain the behavior.** I am interested in what theoretical assumptions are referenced in your stories, how the theories you have chosen explain the behavior of the main character, and your discussion on what changes need to be made to lower the chances of someone else, who has similar experiences to your character, engaging in the same behavior.

Make sure to use a cover sheet that contains your name, the course and section number, due date, and title. A reference page is required.

You are being graded on primarily five factors:

1. Ability to provide **specific detailed information** on the character reflecting the theory's assumptions (exemplifying the theory).
2. Ability to correctly apply theory to the individual's biography.
3. Ability to provide a **logical foundation** for your position.
4. Ability to identify a **policy recommendation** that is consistent with the theory that you believe best explains the person's behavior.
5. Writing—make sure to proof read your papers. Do not lose easy points on your paper because of a failure to correct mistakes in spelling, grammar, phrasing, etc.

Instructions: Choose (3) of the following theories:

- Social Disorganization Theory
- Differential Association/Social Learning Theories
- Anomie /Strain Theories
- Social Control Theory
- Labeling Theory
- Critical Criminology
- Rational Choice/Deterrence Theories
- Routine Activities/Situational crime prevention/Broken Windows
- Life Course Theory
- Theories of White Collar Crime

*NOTE: When choosing a theory, you may focus on one theorist and go into detail about their interpretation of the theory, instead of explaining all the variations of the theory. For example, Anomie/Strain theories include Merton, Agnew, and Messner & Rosenfeld—you may either give a brief overview of each of their theories, discuss only the points they all share in common, or choose one