

SR968, Sociological Methodology

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Professor

Dr. Joshua Reichard

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Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

a. Asynchronous Cores 2 and 4: Create a 350-word original discussion paper

(with cited sources) during the first week of the term. Post this discussion in DIAL

Discussion Forum. Then, provide two peer responses of 100 words each (total of

200 words) in the Discussion Forum.

b. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade

assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

Sociological Framework for cultural Analysis

The Sociological imagination as coined by C Wright Mills is built around the idea of translating private troubles of individuals, families and groups into public troubles, that is relating personal concerns or social problems as part of societies structural and macro challenges (Mills, 2000). It underpins the relationship between experience and wider society. A sociological imagination is key to the social scientist to be able to conduct cultural analysis in order to change the world.

There are some sociological traditions and frameworks upon which the study of society, social behaviour and culture is analysed. These are Functionalism, conflict/critical theory and symbolic interactionism. Some postmodern sociologists also recognize feminist sociology as a framework upon which the study of society and inequality stems, some contend that this is built from traditional conflict theory cultural analysis. These frameworks analyse norms, mores, values, beliefs and behaviour within organisations, systems and society at large.

The functionalist framework is embedded in an ideology of functionality, that all systems, structures and culture serve a purpose. Even that dysfunction itself is functional and serves to let us know when something is wrong and needs adjustment. Functionalists view society as a complex system of interrelated parts with each subsystem serving a specific function for symbiosis and stability.

Conflict theory has traditionally been associated with Karl Marx and his thinking around power and inequality. However there are many conflict critical theorists. The foundation of this framework is that conflict exists in society and drives social change. It examines disruptive power structures and norms for cultural analysis (Gallo, 2013).

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Symbolic Interactionism is a sociological framework that focuses more on the individual and interpretation of interactions, reality and relationships. It emphasises the importance of the lived experience, meaning through cultural contexts. This is the framework that has often guided qualitative researchers such as myself. As a social worker, it allows exploration of individual experience that can explain shared meaning often done through anthropological analysis. My own social research has often taken a symbolic interactionism approach to sociological cultural analysis of social problems in society through the lived experiences of clients and service users. Additionally, for my research purposes, I have often used feminist theoretical analysis to examine social inequality and other structural analysis for women in society. This framework allows for exploration of intersectional discourse around ageism, classism and women's experiences of social inequality. A more postmodern analysis will utilise womanism standpoint theory to explore cultural nuances in society.

In examining and analysing various systems and culture, these sociological frameworks offer various perspectives and worldviews about understanding, explaining and resolving various social problems within society.

WORKS CITED

Mills, C. W. (2000). *The sociological imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Gallo, G. (2013). Conflict theory, complexity and systems approach. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 30(2), 156-175.