

DEMOGRAPHY OF MINORITY GROUPS TERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT

Description of Assignment

This assignment requires you to analyze a social issue that relates to racial/ethnic relations in American society by (1) synthesizing relevant research literature; (2) incorporating demographic data or statistics into your paper; and (3) relating the issue to your own personal lived experiences. You should choose some social issue that relates to race & ethnicity **and** that you have a personal interest or experience with. Such issues can be any of the topics covered in the course, or any other issue with a direct focus on racial/ethnic relations in the U.S.

The issue should be covered by at least **one** article that is assigned from either the AB1 or AB2 books in this course. You are also required to find at least **two** outside sources that discuss this issue (i.e., articles from the Internet, magazines, newspapers, academic journals, or books). You will then write about how the readings relate to the particular social issue at hand and your own personal experiences regarding that issue. To summarize, you need:

- At least **one** assigned article from either the AB1 or AB2 books, and
- At least **two** articles from outside sources

Option to Do a Group Project

You can either work independently or with up to three other students on a group project. The research requirements will be the same but if you work within a team, (1) each of you only have to write a 5-7 page report on your project that still includes all the sections listed below and (2) as a group, do a 15 minute presentation to the class on your project. Your grade for this entire assignment (80 points) will be divided into 55 points possible for the written report and 25 points possible for the group presentation. All members of your group will receive the same presentation score but each member's written report will be graded separately.

Incorporating Demographic Data & Statistics Into Your Paper

Whether it's a solo or group project, your project must include at least **two tables** that contain some demographic data or statistics that are related to the issue that you are analyzing. The statistics can be reprinted from existing research, from your own original analysis using some statistical dataset (i.e., the GSS, etc.), or from survey/data collection or other observation that you conduct yourself.

At the top of each data table, you should label it as Table 1 (or Figure 1) and then each subsequent table should be labeled consecutively. Remember that "**Tables**" contain numeric data arranged in columns and rows while "**Figures**" contain graphs, charts, drawings, or other visual representation of data. Whether your data tables are reprinted from another source or from your own original analysis, be sure to also **list the source** of the data at the bottom of the table.

Format

- Typed and a minimum of 6 pages of text, and a maximum of 8 pages of text (cover page, tables,

figures, and the bibliography are not counted as text)

- Double-spaced, with standard 1-inch margins all around, using Times New Roman 12 point font
- Use page numbers and **HEADINGS** and *sub-headings* to divide your paper into distinct sections, rather than one continuous series of paragraphs (see any article in the AB1 and AB2 books for examples of using headings and sub-headings)

A. Introduction: Describe the social issue that you're discussing. Focus on answering the following questions: How does it relate to racial/ethnic relations? What is the general history of the issue and why is it still important today? In what way does it affect or interest you? Then briefly describe the general points or arguments you will use in the next sections. This introduction section should be about 1½ to 2 pages long.

B. Integrating the Readings: This is the main part of the paper and where you will bring in all of the research sources in order to analyze and synthesize them. The three main questions that you should answer in this section are:

- What are the main arguments or points of each of the research sources?
- How do the research sources relate to each other -- how are they similar and different?
- How do the research sources allow you to better understand the issue that you are analyzing?

Along with analyzing the research sources, you should also incorporate your own analysis of the issue as well. In fact, this is what separates good papers from excellent papers -- the ability to synthesize the information available to create **new analyses** that are intelligent, well-thought out, and original. You can also bring in your own analysis of current events or recent incidents that are examples of this issue. This is the main section of your paper and should be 4 to 6 pages long.

C. Relating the Readings to your Experiences and Social Environment: Here you will answer the following questions:

- How is this issue and these readings relevant to your own life and experiences?
- What is the significance of this issue to the larger society -- why is this issue important?

This last section should be about 1 to 2 pages long. You can also combine this section with the previous section if you want to incorporate your personal interest or experiences directly into the analysis of the readings.

D. Tables/Figures: This is where you will include your tables or three figures, rather than including them in the main text of your paper.

E. Bibliography / References: Here is where you list the research sources you're using -- the one reading from the course textbooks and the three (or more) outside sources that you used as well. Below are examples of how to list each type of reference source:

- Internet article
- Name of person who wrote the article
 - Year that the article was written
 - Title of the article in quotes

- Title of the web site in italics
- URL of the article in brackets
- Date that you accessed/first read the article in parentheses

Example: Kornblut, Anne E. 2003. "Schwarzenegger is in, Davis out in California" *Boston Globe* <<http://www.boston.com/news/schwarzenegger/>>. (October 8, 2003).

Books	Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin P. Sikes. 1994. <i>Living with Racism: The Black Middle Class Experience</i> . Boston: Beacon Press.
Chapter/Article in a edited Book	Takaki, Ronald. 1994. "A Different Mirror" in <i>Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology</i> , edited by Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
Articles in Academic Journals	Tienda, Marta and Haya Stier. 1996. "Generating Labor Market Inequality: Employment Opportunities and the Accumulation of Disadvantage." <i>Social Problems</i> 43:147-165.
Magazine/ Newspaper Articles	Bradley, Susan. "IBM Announces New Affirmative Action Policy," <i>Newsweek</i> , vol.65 (May 12, 1996), p.12-14.

Academic Honesty

Somebody once said, "To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal ideas from many people is research." Either way, if you're using any outside sources, you should avoid plagiarism -- it's bad. Plagiarism occurs when you use someone else's arguments, data, or any other piece of his/her work and claim it (explicitly or implicitly) as your own. To avoid this, you need to cite your sources, whether they are other books, magazines, newspapers, and even Web sites.

There are different ways to cite other people. If you quote directly from a source, make sure that you identify as a **direct quote** by enclosing it in quotation marks and then naming the author, year and page of the quote. For example: "Have a nice day" (Smith, 2003:262).

You can also use "**inline citations**" where you paraphrase the author's argument and write something like, "As argued by Steinberg (1996), the federal government . . .," or something like "The data show that Blacks have a lower voting rate than Whites (Kasarda, 1995)."

In recent years, the practice of students downloading or copying papers from various sites on the Internet has become more common. This is another form of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. There are mechanisms that educators can use to detect this type of plagiarism and I reserve the right to do so if needed. The bottom line is, don't risk it -- it's not worth it. It's perfectly fine to use outside materials and sources -- just be sure to properly cite them and list them as a reference.

Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling, Writing Style, and Early Drafts

It should go without saying that I expect your papers to have the proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Make sure you make full use of the “spellcheck” and “grammar check” functions in your word processing program. How well you write is also part of your grade -- your writing should be well-organized, coherent, and persuasive. If you need further help, I strongly encourage you to visit the UMass Writing Center (<http://writingprogram.hfa.umass.edu/writingcenter/writingcenter.html>, 545-0610, Bartlett 303A) and make full use of their free tutoring services.

I am also willing to review early drafts of your paper if you would like to get comments and suggestions on it before you turn in your final draft. In order to ensure that I have enough time to read all early draft and to get them back to you in time for you to make appropriate revisions, the last day that I will accept early drafts (preferably by email) is **Thursday, May 1st**.

Deadline

The final draft is due on the last day of class, **Tuesday, May 13th**. I prefer to receive your paper **by email** since that will make it easier for me to comment on it and send it back to you (be sure to include your email in your paper). Unless prior arrangements are made (and only for extraordinary reasons), if you do not turn in your final draft on May 13th, you will lose ten points for each day that it is late (including weekends).

Grading Criteria

Your grade will not depend on what kind of political beliefs you have. Your paper can have any kind of perspective you want -- liberal, conservative, neutral/moderate, or something else. Instead, your grade will depend on how well you use the tools of sociological analysis -- valid and reliable theory, data, and existing research -- to back up and support your arguments.

If you're doing a solo project, below is the grading criteria:

- How well you structure/organize your paper according to the guidelines of this assignment: 10 pts.
- The actual content of your paper -- methodology, literature review, analysis, etc.: 60 pts.
- Grammar, spelling, punctuation, and writing style: 10 pts.

If you are doing a group project, below is the grading criteria:

- Group presentation (how comprehensive, informative, organized, and coordinated): 25 pts.
- Structure & organization of your written report: 10 pts.
- Content and analysis of written report: 40 pts.
- Grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and writing stle of written report: 5 pts.

Final Comments

The ability to write intelligent and well-argued analysis is a critical skill, not just in your courses but in many other areas of your personal and professional life. I want you to do well on this assignment and to see you develop your research and writing skills. Therefore, talk to me if you have any questions at all or need any help, or use the resources available to you at the UMass Writing Center. Good luck.