

SOCIETY AT PLAY: CONTEMPORARY LEISURE AND LIFESTYLES

Writing Across University; University of Pennsylvania
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MAPPING OUT THE TERRAIN

This class is about learning how to make sense of our social selves through the process of reading, observing, writing, and presenting our thoughts to an audience. Thinking, writing, and speaking form a continuous process through which we learn to understand the world around us. We will become familiar with this process through three steps.

We will start with an exploration of two highly neglected but arguably most important practices through which we as a culture and we as individuals define ourselves, namely leisure and its corresponding lifestyle. The focus is on the western idea of leisure and lifestyle. While leisure studies is a well developed field, the study of lifestyle is still very much in the making. Traditionally, leisure has been studied in relation to the nature of work and perceptions and experiences of time. We will challenge this approach by examining leisure through our practices of consumption. Finally, we will try to develop an understanding of the western concept of lifestyle in the context of globalization of consumption and its effects on our ways of life.

An exciting part of doing sociology is observing ourselves and analyzing what we do. We will transform our observations and experiences into a research topic, formulate this topic as a research question, use the library resources to find books and articles on that topic, observe a particular instance of that behavior in the 'real world,' and then write it all up in an academic narrative.

You will condense your written narrative and transform it into a verbal format. Using our class as your audience, you will learn how to capture this audience by presenting your research project in a coherent, articulate and persuasive manner.

WE – THE READERS

Required texts below are available at the Penn Book Center at 130 34th Street:

Bill Osgerby (2001) *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America*

George Ritzer (2001) *Explorations in the Sociology of Consumption: Fast Food, Credit Cards and Casinos*

Naomi Klein (2002) *No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, No Logo*

Other readings are available on blackboard, in hard copy in the basement of the Van Pelt Library and in a bulk pack at the Wharton Reprographics.

You are expected to read CAREFULLY all the readings assigned and respond to them following the guidelines for each class meeting.

WE – THE WRITERS

There are as many writing styles as there are writers. We will focus on standard academic writing as this is most likely going to be the writing style required of you throughout your academic career. We will, however, remind ourselves through impromptu exploratory writing that spontaneity and creativity are the driving force of the scientific inquiry.

Selected leisure journals: Activities, Adaptation and Aging, Journal of Leisure Research, Journal of Sport Management, Leisure Sciences, Leisure Studies, Leisure Today, Leisure and Society/Loisir et Society, Sociology of Sport, Therapeutic Recreation Journal, World Leisure Journal.

Assignment #1 - The Prospectus:

You will write about two page research statement in which you will state the following:

- What is the research problem, question, or issue you want to study
- Why did you choose this topic
- What supportive evidence do you have for the relevance of this topic
- Why should I, the reader, be interested in this problem
- How would you study this question

Your problem should be a phenomenon or behavior which can be observed within your geographic and social proximity and to which you have access throughout the semester.

Assignment #2 – Review of the Literature:

This assignment consists of two parts, an annotated bibliography and a literature review. After you think about the issue of your interest, start collecting bibliography on the topic. Choose FIVE sources that address your chosen research problem and summarize and synthesize their content in a paragraph for each source. Remember that only academic books and articles apply. Non-academic sources such as internet sites do not count. This summary will not only show ME that you have read the text carefully and thought about how it relates to your topic but also help YOU see how it can inform your own study. Next, you will weave these sources together into a coherent scientific narrative that will show how the resources you have chosen support your own research problem. This narrative (i.e. literature review) should be about four pages long. Include your annotated bibliography as an appendix. For referencing the sources use the standard of the American Sociological Review as follows:

- when using an author's ideas in the text:

(Last name of the author, Year of publication)

- when quoting directly from a particular work:

(Last name of the author, Year of publication: Page number)

- your list of Bibliography should look like these examples:

Cressy, David. 1994. "National Memory and Early Modern England." Pp. 61-73 in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, edited by J Gillis. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wagner-Pacifi, Robin and Barry Schwartz. 1991. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past." *American Journal of Sociology* 97:376-420.

Zelizer, Barbie. 1992. *Covering the Body*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Assignment #3 – Research Report:

This assignment also consists of two parts, notes from your observations and a research paper. After formulating your research question and completing the literature review, you will choose a place to observe the social practice you have chosen to research. You will, first, write four pages of detailed observations at your chosen site. Then, you will tie together your observations, your research statement, and your literature review into a coherent narrative. Since writing is a process and not a sit-down-and-do-it-all-in-one-night project, it is expected that your final assignment will not simply be a sum of three parts (i.e. prospect + literature review + field notes) but a revision and a refinement of your research question you have been pursuing all along. With other words, your final assignment should be a carefully argued narrative which has benefited from our conferences and your peer reviews.

Since writing is a process, you will be given a week time to rewrite your three major assignments from the date they were due. You will meet with me three times throughout the semester to discuss each of your three assignments separately.

Minor Assignments:

Equal weight is given to all mini assignments, including exploratory writings, notations on the margins, summaries, peer reviews, observations, notes for oral presentations, etc. Please follow carefully the instructions for each class.

WE – THE SPEAKERS

Speaking is an integral part of the writing process. Discussing, defending, explaining, questioning, or otherwise talking about issues that interest us is helpful for our own thought processes. It forces us to think through our own ideas and reevaluate our reasoning. A guest speaker from “Communication Within the Curriculum” will provide us with guidelines on how to lead a discussion and conduct a formal presentation.

Leading a Discussion:

You will choose one article and prepare to lead a discussion on the content of the article. You will first give a short summary of the article and then open the floor for discussion. Remember that you will be an expert on the topic so you should make sure that you understand all the relevant details discussed in the article. You should consult other sources to obtain a more complete understanding of the issues and draw attention to other interesting aspects of that topic not directly addressed in the text. Your colleagues will come to class prepared with at least five questions and their possible answers to these questions.

Formal Presentation of Your Research Project:

We will devote the last four sessions to presentations of your research projects. You will each have 20 minutes, 15 of which should be spent on presentation and 5 on discussion.

WE – THE AUDIENCE

We most often write for an audience. For the purpose of our class, your audience will be your classmates.

Peer Reviews:

You will work in groups of four. Before each class you will send each other summaries and other writing materials for review. In class you will engage each other over ideas, comments, interpretations, and logic of arguments, either your own or those of the authors we will be reading. It is essential that you engage fully in this process in order to make your effort in this class (and mine) worthwhile. The idea is that you will learn as much (if not more) from your peers as you will learn from me.

WE – THE STUDENTS

A few words on the general policy. You are expected to attend EVERY class as each absence would take away from the learning experience of your peer group. Every class you miss will count against your final grade. No incompletes will be given and no late assignments will be accepted. Any missing assignments will also count against your final grade.

Please read carefully all the references provided regarding academic cheating and plagiarism. Evidence of either will automatically fail you.

Awarding Your Work:

Assignment #1 10%

Assignment #2 20%

Assignment #3 30%

Leading a Discussion 10%

Formal Presentation 10%

Peer Reviews 10%

Minor assignments 10%

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 13: Introduction

In class:

Exploratory writing: Impressions on a photograph (10 min)

GOAL: Critical observation

[Photographs and cartoons are concise artistic expressions but as any work of art, their interpretations are limitless. Their expressive power lies in their ability to capture a moment of our every day life, single it out, and bring it to our attention. What does the photograph, or the cartoon, say to you? Where does it direct your thoughts?]

Overview of the class: expect intensive reading, writing, and analysis through a sociological lens

MEANING OF LEISURE AND THE CULTURE OF WORK

Jan 15: Conceptualizing Leisure

Reading:

Rojek, Chris. 1997. 'Leisure Theory: Retrospect and Prospect.' *Loisir et Societe*, 20(2): 383-400.

Home assignment:

Critical reading through interaction with the text: notations on the margins

GOAL: Dynamic dialog with the text

[As you read the text, write on the margins copious notations that summarize the text, agree with it or argue against it. Ask yourself the following questions: Why is that passage important? What does it say? Is it a major point in the argument? A significant piece of support? A summary of the opposition? A strong point or a weak point? Does it remind you of other texts and issues you have read or thought about?]

Bring the text with your notations on the margins to class.

In class:

In depth discussion of the text

GOAL: Discussing the text by comparing your own notations to those of others in class

[We will discuss the reading, paragraph by paragraph to enable you to compare your own notations with the interpretations put forth in class.]

Jan 20: NO CLASS: Martin Luther King Day

Jan 22: Leisure and Work

Reading:

Sylvester, Charles. 1999. 'The Western Idea of Work and Leisure: Traditions, Transformations, and the Future' in: Jackson and Burton (Eds) *Leisure Studies. Prospects for the 21st Century*, pp. 17-33. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.

Home assignment:

Critical reading through interaction with the text: notes on the margins

GOAL: GOAL: Dynamic dialog with the text

[As you read the text, write on the margins copious notations that summarize the text, agree with it or argue against it. Ask yourself the following questions: Why is that passage important? What does it say? Is it a major point in the argument? A significant piece of support? A summary of the opposition? A strong point or a weak point? Does it remind you of other texts and issues you have read or thought about?]

Bring the text with your notations on the margins to class.

In class:

Peer review of notes on the margins

GOAL: Discussing the text by comparing your own notations to those of your peers

[You will discuss the reading, paragraph by paragraph, by comparing your notations with those of your peers.]

Jan 27: All Work and no Play?

Reading:

Schor, Juliet. 1994. Decline of Leisure Time in America. *Vital Speeches of the Day*, pp. 748-752.

Home Assignment:

Critical thinking through interaction with the text: Reflection Essay 'Am I an Overworked American?' (three pages)

GOAL: Engaging with the text through critical self reflection

[This is your personal connection to the text. As you go through the text making notes on the margins, critically reflect how these points relate to your own experience. Then, 'speak back to the text' by questioning, probing, contesting, or appreciating its arguments in relation to your own experience. Think in the following terms: Does the text speak to your own experience? Why? How? Why not?]

E-mail your essay to your three reviewers by 6 PM the day before. As you review and critically relate to the essays of your peers think of the following: How well does the essay reference and relate to the text to which it is responding? (i.e. Is it just 'a story of my life' or does it meaningfully relate to Gershuny's arguments?) Also, answer the following question: What are the main points of the essay you are reviewing? This time, type up your constructive comments and the answer to the last question on one page for each essay. Bring your own essay together with your comment sheets to class for discussion.

In class:

Peer review of your exploratory essay

GOAL: Understanding your peer's thinking process

[Each of you will present your essay to your peer-group and your peers will respond with their comments.]

Jan 29: Formulating Your Own Research Topic

Writing conferences with me by appointment: Assignment #1 DUE via e-mail by 6PM the day before

Home assignment:

Assignment #1: Writing a Prospectus (about one page)

GOAL: Thinking through your own research problem

[In the Appendix of your reading packet I have included tables of content from various leisure journals. Read through them and think of a topic that might interest you. Also, now that you have thought about work and leisure in the US and your own work and leisure patterns, begin thinking in the following terms: How do people of particular age, gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, interest, job, community, and other affiliations spend their leisure time? What is interesting about their leisure practices? Why? Use the literature we have discussed and the assignments you have completed to conceptualize your interest in terms of a research problem.]

E-mail your prospectus to your peer group by 6PM the day before. Comment on the feasibility and relevance of your colleague's proposed research and answer on the margins the following question: What research problem does the proposed research address? Bring your comments and your prospectus to class for discussion.]

In class:

Peer review of your prospectus and discussion on how to formulate a research topic

GOAL: Writing is a process

[Writing is never set in stone. Our thinking through ideas, concerns, concepts, issues and other observations are always evolving as we, ourselves, evolve through learning, discovering, and observing. Use your peers as your audience for evolving your ideas and articulating your research problem.]

LESSONS IN THE ART OF LIVING

Feb 3: How Did We Get Here?

Final Revision of Assignment #1 due in class

Reading:

Osgerby, Bill. 2001. Ch. 1 'Introduction' and Ch. 2 'This Side of Paradise' in: *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America*. Berg: Oxford.

Home Assignment:

Critical reading through interaction with the text: text summary (two pages)

GOAL: Understanding the book's structure of argument

[An introduction to a book lays out the author's argument(s), informs about the sources of data and methodology used in the book, and lays out its theoretical perspective(s). Read it carefully! As you read the rest of the chapters, pay attention whether the author delivers what he proposed to do in the introduction. In addition, consider the following: The author assumes that the reader has a particular cultural literacy. What kind of background information, familiarity with theories, and common knowledge is assumed by the author?]

E-mail your summary to your reviewers by 6 PM the day before. Print out the two summaries you received and make constructive comments on the margins. Bring your own summary and the notated summaries of your peers to class for discussion. Turn in for my review.

In Class:

Peer review of your summary of Chs. 1 and 2

GOAL: Understanding the structure of argument

[Discuss the structure of the author's argument as proposed in his introduction. Do the other two chapters follow this structure? One of the problems students face when reading theoretically informed work is the common knowledge assumed by the author. What does the author assume the reader knows?]

Feb 5: Visit to the House of Knowledge (Introduction to Research, Part I)

In class:

Tour of Van Pelt Library. Meet Ancil George at the Reference Desk in the library at 1:30 sharp.

Feb 10: Compiling References (Introduction to Research, Part II)

Reading:

Osgerby, Bill. 2001. Ch. 3 'Lessons in the Art of Living' and Ch. 4 'People of Plenty' in: *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America*. Berg: Oxford.

Home Assignment:

Critical reading through interaction with the text: text summary (two pages)

GOAL: Contextualizing the argument

[In your summary, pay special attention to the sources of data used by the author and how this data was interpreted.]

E-mail your summary to your reviewer by 6 PM the day before. Print out the two summaries, make constructive comments on the margins and bring to class for discussion. Turn in for my review.

Compiling references and library research: Annotated bibliography

GOAL: Summarizing main points

[Go to the library and find at least eight sources such as journal articles and books that are relevant to your research topic. For each source, write a full citation following the American Sociological Review and summarize each source in one paragraph.]

In class:

Peer review of your summary of Ch. 3 and 4, discussion, and exchange of your experiences and concerns in bibliographical research.

Feb 12: Compiling References, cont.

Reading:

Osgerby, Bill. 2001. Ch. 5 'The Old Ways Will Not Do' and Ch. 6 'High Living with the Upbeat Generation' in: *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America*.

Berg: Oxford.

Home Assignment:

Critical reading through interaction with the text: text summary (two pages)

GOAL: Contextualizing the argument

[In your summary, pay special attention to the sources of data used by the author and how this data was interpreted.]

E-mail your summary to your reviewer by 6 PM the day before. Print out the two summaries, make constructive comments on the margins and bring to class for discussion. Turn in for my review.

Compiling references and library research: Annotated bibliography – turn in for my feedback

GOAL: Summarizing main points

[Continue looking for articles and books and summarizing each source in one paragraph.]

Feb 17: Making Data Speak (Introduction to Research, Part III)

Reading:

Osgerby, Bill. 2001. Ch. 7 ‘Bachelors in Paradise,’ Ch. 8 ‘Turn On. Tune In. Step Out.’ and Ch. 9

‘Conclusion’ in: *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America*.

Berg: Oxford.

Home Assignment:

Critical reading through interaction with the text: text summary (two pages)

GOAL: Supporting the argument

[In your summary, pay special attention to the following: Which data sources is the author using to support his argument? How does he interpret this data? What conclusions does he make based on this data? Also remember to evaluate whether the author delivered what was promised in the introduction.]

E-mail your summary to your reviewer by 6 PM the day before. Print the two summaries you received, make constructive comments on the margins and bring to class for discussion.

Finding your own sources of data: Methodology (two pages) – turn in for my feedback

GOAL: Interpreting the social world

[First think of the members of the social group you want to study. How will you contact them? Where will you find them? Then think of the ways you would obtain your data: surveys, personal interviews, observations, etc. Why choosing these methods? How would they help you answer your research question(s)? And finally: How would you analyze your data?]

In class:

Exploratory writing: Impressions on a photograph (10 min)

GOAL: Critical observation

Peer review of the summary and exchange of your concerns, ideas, and experiences about data collection

Feb 19: Learning to Observe (Introduction to Research, Part V)

Tour of the Kimmel Center. Meet in front of the main entrance to the Kimmel Center at 1:30.

GOAL: Analytical Observation

[The purpose of this tour is to learn how to observe at research settings. Inside the center we will first walk around for about 30 min and observe. Then we will go on a tour for about 45 min. We are interested in the following: Who are the people visiting the Kimmel Center? What do they see when they go on a tour? In which parts of the center do visitors tend to gather? Is there a coffee shop or a restaurant? What is on the menu? What kinds of things happen there? Can visitors enter every room in the center? What does the center mean for the city of Philadelphia? Try to talk to visitors and ask them why they come

and what the center means to them. As you move around and observe, take notes of what you observe and what people tell you.]

Home Assignment:

Write up your report (about three pages) and e-mail it to me no later than Feb 20.

THE MEANING OF LIFESTYLE AND CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION

Feb 24: Understanding the Concept of Lifestyle

Writing conferences with me by appointment: Assignment #2 DUE via e-mail by 8PM Feb 22

Reading:

Bögenhold, Dieter. 2001. 'Social Inequality and the Sociology of Lifestyle: Material and Cultural Aspects of Social Stratification.' *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 60(4): 829-847.

Home Assignment:

Critical reading through interaction with the text: text summary (two pages)

GOAL: Understanding the structure and details of the argument

[In your own words, restate the arguments in the text by adhering to the structure of the text and by following the logical sequence of its argumentation. E-mail your summary to your three reviewers by 6 PM the night before. Print out the three summaries you received by e-mail from your peers, make constructive comments on the margins of their summaries. Bring to class for discussion and turn in for my review.]

In class:

Peer review of article summary

GOAL: Comparing your own reading and understanding of the text with those of your peers
[You will discuss the flow of the author's argument.]

GUEST SPEAKER: Sara Coello on Leading a Discussion

Feb 26: Rational and Not so Rational

Reading:

Ritzer, George. 2001. *Explorations in the Sociology of Consumption: Fast Food, Credit Cards and Casinos*. London: Sage

Ch. 2 'The Irrationality of Rationality'

Ch. 3 'Some Thoughts on the Future of McDonaldization,' and Ch. 4 'The Process of McDonaldization is not Uniform'

Home assignment:

Critical interaction with the text: Leading Discussions

GOAL: Developing oral skills

[This is a series on leading discussions. Each of you will choose one reading. Discussants: Read the text of your choice carefully, critically evaluate the arguments, conduct additional research on the subject to share it in class, write down the outline of the text, and present a short summary in class. Come to class prepared to lead a discussion about the text. This is not a peer process so you will need to engage the whole class. Others: read the text carefully and prepare a discussion sheet with five questions to be potentially discussed in class, why these questions are relevant, and how you might answer them. Turn the discussion sheet in for my review.]

In class:

Leading discussions

Mar 3: Consuming Leisure: Having and Spending

Reading:

Ritzer, George. 2001. *Explorations in the Sociology of Consumption: Fast Food, Credit Cards and Casinos*. London: Sage.

Ch. 5 'Expressing America: A Critique of the Global Credit Card Society'

Ch. 7 'Ensnared in the E-Net: The Future Belongs to the Immaterial Means of Consumption'

Home assignment:

Critical interaction with the text: Leading Discussions

GOAL: Developing oral skills

In Class:

Leading discussions

Mar 5: Consuming Globally

Reading:

Ritzer, George. 2001. *Explorations in the Sociology of Consumption: Fast Food, Credit Cards and Casinos*. London: Sage.

Ch. 8 'Globalization Theory: Lessons from the Exportation of McDonalidization and the New Means of Consumption'

Ch. 10 'Thorstein Veblen in the Age of Hyperconsumption'

Home assignment:

Critical interaction with the text: Leading Discussions

GOAL: Developing oral skills

In Class:

Leading discussions

Mar 10 and Mar 12: NO CLASS: Spring Break – Enjoy your leisure time!

LEISURE POLITICS AND PROSPECTS FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

Mar 17: Branded Lives

Reading:

Klein, Naomi. 2000. *No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, No Logo*. Picador USA: New York.

Ch. 2 'The Brand Expands'

Ch. 3 'Alt.Everything,'

Home assignment:

Critical interaction with the text: Leading Discussions

GOAL: Developing oral skills

[You are expected to read the introduction as well to help you understand better the structure and the argument of the chapters.]

In Class:

Leading discussions

Mar 19: Branded Identities

Reading:

Klein, Naomi. 2000. *No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, No Logo*. Picador USA: New York.
Ch.4 'The Branding of Learning,'
Ch. 5 'Patriarchy Gets Funky'

Home assignment:

Critical interaction with the text: Leading Discussions
GOAL: Developing oral skills
[I expect a lively discussion!]

In Class:

Leading discussions

Mar 24: Choices – Real and Otherwise

Reading:

Klein, Naomi. 2000. *No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, No Logo*. Picador USA: New York.
Ch. 7 Mergers and Synergy,'
Ch. 8 'Corporate Censorship,'

Home assignment:

Critical interaction with the text: Leading Discussions
GOAL: Developing oral skills
[I expect you to find other observations and research that support or challenge Klein's arguments.]

In Class:

Leading discussions

Mar 26: Giving it all Back

Reading:

Klein, Naomi. 2000. *No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, No Logo*. Picador USA: New York.
Ch. 12 'Culture Jamming,'
Ch. 14 'Bad Moon Rising'

Home assignment:

Critical interaction with the text: Leading Discussions
GOAL: Developing oral skills

In Class:

Leading discussions

Mar 31: All Good, All Bad, or All Ugly?

Reading:

Klein, Naomi. 2000. *No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, No Logo*. Picador USA: New York.

Ch. 16 'A Tale of Three Logos'
Ch. 17 'Local Foreign Policy'

Home Assignment:

Interaction with the text: Identifying the issues (One to two pages)
GOAL: Learning to discern issues

[Identify several issues Klein presents in her chapter that you want to discuss in class. Why are they important? Do you find them surprising? How do they relate to your own experience?]

Bring your discussion sheet to class

In class:

Debating: Generating discussion

[Come prepared to present your issues and solicit lively response from your peers.]

Apr 2: Resistance as Political Practice

Reading:

Shaw, Susan. 2001. 'Conceptualizing Resistance: Women's Leisure as Political Practice.' *Journal of Leisure Research*, 33(2): 186-201.

Home Assignment:

Interaction with the text: Identifying key issues (One to two pages)

GOAL: Learning to discern issues in a text

[Prepare a set of issues presented in the article that you want to discuss in class. Why are they important? How do they relate to the leisure and lifestyle issues we have discussed?]

Bring your discussion sheet to class.

In class:

Debating: Generating discussion

[By now, you should feel confident and comfortable breaching in class various issues of your concern. Come prepared to present your issues and solicit lively response from your peers.]

Apr 7: The New Epidemic?

Writing conferences with me by appointment: Paper #3 DUE via e-mail by 8PM Apr 5

In class:

GUEST SPEAKER: Sara Coello on Formal Presentation

Documentary *Affluenza* (1994)

Apr 9: Author Meets Critics

In class:

Presentations of your research paper

Apr 14: Author Meets Critics, cont.

Apr 16: Author Meets Critics, cont.

Apr 21: Author Meets Critics, cont.

Apr 23: Summing Up What We Have Learned

Final revision of Paper #3 DUE April 25 in my mailbox, 113 McNeil, Dept. of Sociology.