

Applying Sociology to the 'real world' via Blogger: Blogposts as assessment

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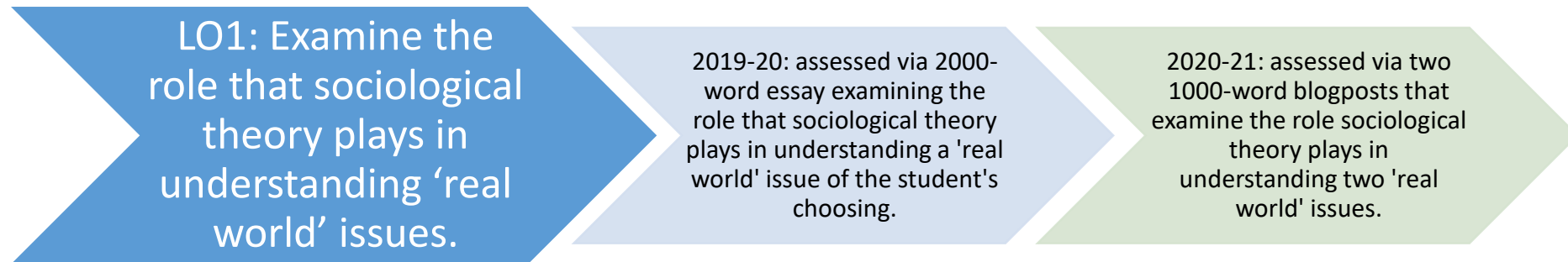
NS5401 – Sociology in the Real World

- NS5401 is a Level 5 compulsory module that explores the importance and utility of sociology and sociological theory outside of the academy
- Level 5 BA Sociology LOs:

At Level 5 a student should be able to:

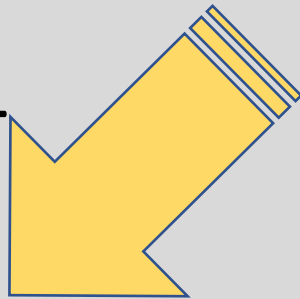
- 1. Examine the processes that underpin social change and social stability.*
- 2. Evaluate the relationship between sociological theory, arguments and evidence in a range of contexts.*
- 3. Apply a range of research strategies and methods and assess the appropriateness of their use*

NS5401 Assignment 001 adaptation



Links neatly back to Level 5 BA Sociology LO: *Evaluate the relationship between sociological theory, arguments and evidence in a range of contexts* e.g. in this instance, non-academic audiences

Assessment brief A001



LO1: Examine the role that Sociological theory plays in understanding 'real world' issues.

Due Friday 15th January 2021 by 3pm.

NS5401 Assignment 001 is **two 1000 word blogposts** that each:

Examine the role that social theory can play in understanding a 'real world' issue.

- You may choose two of the 'real world' issues we have looked at in class or different issues (but please check with the module tutor whether your choice is suitable). **Your blogposts must draw substantially on social theory and as such must include references to academic sociological literature which are accurately cited** (the bibliography is excluded from the word count). Your blogposts also need to be written in an accessible manner to demonstrate how sociology can be understood by those outside of academia.
- You may choose theory/ies we have covered in this module or a different theory/ies (but if doing this, please check with the module tutor whether your choice is suitable).
- ***When submitting your assessment, you will upload a PDF of each blogpost to Moodle (when on your blogpost go to Print > Save as a PDF) then you will provide a direct link to your blog in the 'Online text' box.***
- This assessment is individual and is worth 40% of the overall module mark.

Assessment in the real world

- The blogposts are tangible outputs for students that are directly situated within the 'real world' context of an online blogging platform
- The students are then, themselves, demonstrating how to be sociologists in the 'real world' as well as examining the role that sociological theory holds in understanding 'real world' issues
- This has ensured that the assessment is sustainable, in that it meets their learning needs at the present whilst also supporting lifelong learning and ability to achieve tasks that hold relevance outside of the HE setting (Boud 2000, p.151).

Some examples...



NS5401: Assessment A001Blog 1.



January 29, 2021

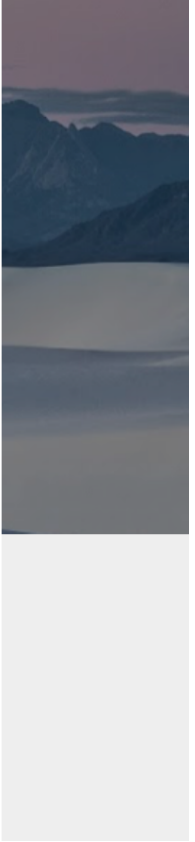
Starving Kids, Tories Making Quids: Examining the role of 'stigma' in providing free school meals to impoverished families during covid-19.

Key words: Food Insecurity, Free School Meals, Stigma, Covid-19, Twitter.

“Could you let me know when we’re close to £18? I’m not sure I’ve got enough in my account for all this.”

I have worked in a supermarket throughout the entirety of Covid-19, and phrases similar to this one are only becoming increasingly frequent. During my break, I open twitter hoping for some light-hearted entertainment, but instead I am bombarded by images of miscellaneous tins, halved vegetables, and bags of unknown foods. Upon a closer look it becomes apparent that these are images of food parcels, delivered to some of the most impoverished families in England, to replace the free school meals they would have otherwise been provided at school if it were not for England’s third national lockdown. The decision to move schools to remote learning was announced in the form of yet another U-turn by the Conservative government (Cabinet Office, 2021), which gave schools little time to prepare as Boris Johnson insisted schools were safe just one day prior (Johnson, 2021).

Ensuring that children who are eligible for free school meals are fed during lockdown is not a new phenomenon. After mounting public pressure, the Department for Education (2020) introduced a national voucher scheme, which provided £15 supermarket vouchers per week, per child eligible for free school meals. However, it was clear from the contents of the food parcels on my timeline that £15 worth of food had not been delivered, leaving many angry tweeters and tax-payers wondering where their money was going – because it clearly wasn’t being spent on hungry children. Whilst the majority of my timeline agreed that the food parcels were insufficient and should not replace the national



NS5401 Assessment

All lives matter? The implications of feminism without intersectionality



January 28, 2021

In recent months, the Black Lives Matter movement has gained much more publicity than it originally had when it was founded in 2013 after Trayvon Martin, a young African American boy, was murdered and his murderer was acquitted. The movement aims to eradicate white supremacy and protect **all** Black lives - including, but not limited to, those who are transgender, disabled, non-binary and those who have a criminal record (Black Lives Matter, 2020). Though, the intersectional approach that the movement takes when discussing the subject of race is not taken by all movements.

Intersectionality & the issue of feminist approaches

Intersectionality is an outlook which understands the complexity of human experiences - events of social and political life are not usually affected by just one factor alone but usually a range of factors in multiple different ways. The different ways factors influence these events needs to be understood to understand the complexity of the world (Collins and Bilge, 2016).

Historically, feminist approaches have often focused primarily on white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle class women. This seriously invalidates the experiences that are unique to Black women. The issue is that, whilst all women experience varying levels sexism, Black women experience sexism *and* racism at the same time. Crenshaw coined the term 'intersectionality' in the 1980s and claimed Black women are excluded from feminist theory. In order to solve this issue, they cannot simply be included in the theory as it stands because does not represent their struggle - they don't fit into it, which is exactly the issue. The entire framework needs to be rethought in order to accurately represent the

Adhering to Covid-19 Restrictions: Foucault and the Disciplinary Society



January 06, 2021

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The ways of regulating behaviour in society have evolved throughout time. In modernity, behaviour is subtly controlled within society by numerous different means (Foucault 1975). The way in which we should behave is generally promoted through the use of power. Power is an inherent part of the functioning of everyday life. "Discipline is a mechanism of power which regulates [the] behaviour" of individuals within a social body (O'Farrell 2019). Through disciplinary power techniques, obedience is prompted through compliance with significant institutions and favourable societal practices, further enforced by systems of surveillance.



Our behaviour, as a society has been regulated by numerous restrictions throughout the recent pandemic. As we are all well aware by now, we have been

NS5401 Assessment 1

Fast Fashion: how consumerism is an environmental disaster



January 22, 2021

Fast fashion is a term for clothing being mass-produced and sold cheaply and this industry is currently thriving, with an estimated \$3 trillion spent on it in 2018 alone (The price of fast fashion, 2018). This is because it is normal in our current society to constantly be buying and replacing clothes to fit with trends and since we can get them cheap and delivered to our doors, it has become even easier. We no longer buy for necessity; the clothes we wear display who we are and we believe that spending will affect our happiness, so we consistently choose to not think about why we do this or the impacts it has on the environment.



Bauman's (2000) theory about how we have moved into a phase of 'liquid modernity' can help to explain this issue, as there has been a societal shift from being producers to being consumers. With this, comes a focus on our own happiness rather than the good of society and a feeling of hurry as we live in the present rather than considering the big pictures. This helps explain why we have increased our volume of desires due to the belief that

Legacy of this approach going forward

1. The 'real world' output of the assessment demonstrating utility outside of the university
2. The development of online writing skills and writing for non-academic audiences
3. The eventual creation of a departmental blog, hosted on glos.ac.uk, for use in outreach and recruitment