

## Metacognitive Reflection #2

Look back at your learning investigations, instructor feedback, etc., particularly since the first reflection assignment (which was due September 28). Take a look at your grades. Reflect on your goals for this course and on what you know and do. You can also take anything else from class into account. Consider course content, its application outside this course, and your work to date.

Think about your thinking, your learning process, and your learning outcomes to date. Then engage in a conversation with yourself, exploring, evaluating, and questioning your thoughts. Take ownership over your future learning and think about how to continue and/or redirect your future process in ways that will be helpful. Are there patterns in terms of your feedback, thinking, or growth? What progress are you making towards the course objectives? What progress are you making towards your own goals for the course? What have you learned? What are you finding difficult to learn? What could increase your learning? What preconceptions did you come into class with that may conflict with what we have learned or challenge what we are learning? Where did these preconceptions come from? What have you noticed outside of class that is relevant to what we have been learning? What similarities and differences do you notice between your investigations and your peers' comments in class?

Now articulate your thinking in a 1-2 page single-spaced reflection. There is a good deal of flexibility in terms of where you take this assignment; however, you should not respond to the questions below item by item. This is an opportunity for you to think about your thinking and have a conversation with yourself. This reflection is an informal writing assignment – thinking made visible.

<b><u>Criterion</u></b>	<b><u>Performance Characteristics</u></b>
<b>Depth of reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Insightful.</li><li>▪ Supported with evidence.</li><li>▪ Thorough and thoughtful.</li><li>▪ Demonstrates interest in taking ownership in one's success.</li></ul>
<b>Clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Well-written, understandable (can understand on first read).</li><li>▪ Mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting do not interfere with understanding.</li></ul>
<b>Complete</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Follows guidelines.</li><li>▪ One to two pages, single-spaced.</li><li>▪ Contains depth; statements are elaborated.</li></ul>

You do not need to respond to or address all of the questions, items, and concepts below. They are here to help you reflect about this course and your learning.

- Do you attend all classes and do so punctually?
- Do you communicate in a timely manner when you need assistance?
- Do you understand the material you are learning?
- Are you responsive to criticism?
- Do you contribute to class in a way that promotes learning and positive interactions?

- Do you get your work done completely and on time?
- Are you well-prepared for class?
- Do you manage conflicts of commitment well so that you can fully honor your commitment to class? (Conflicts of commitment are competing responsibilities and demands on time and effort.)
- Are you productive?
- Do you hold high performance expectations for yourself and produce quality work?
- Are you professional and respectful?
- Do you bring enthusiasm to your work?
- For areas that you have been successful, what has brought about these successes?
- What skills have you mastered? What skills do you want to work on?
- What problems have you encountered in completing work for this class? If you have troubleshot them, what have you learned?
- What do you like most about this course and/or the instructor's teaching of it?
- What do you like least about this course and/or the instructor's teaching of it?
- What suggestions can you offer to make this course a better learning experience?
- What are you doing well?
- What are your growing edges (e.g. what are you doing least well?)
- What could you change to make this a better learning experience?
- Are there any flaws or gaps in your thinking?
- How can you revise your efforts?
- What do you understand? What do you not yet understand?
- What do you know, not know, and want or need to know?
- What is required of you and what do you need to do to be successful (as a learner, as a student)?
- What are approaches you can take to improve your learning and success?
- What is the relevance of what you have learned?
- What have you learned so far in this course?
- What challenges have you faced?
- Have you encountered particular problems?
- What resources have you used to overcome them?
- What successes have you had?
- How has your thinking about social problems evolved?
- What risks have you taken?
- How might you improve your learning or grade in the future?
- What have you learned that is transferable? How does what you have learned connect to your experiences and the world outside of the classroom? How can you apply it in your everyday life?
- How does what you are learning in this course connect with what you have learned and are learning in other courses? In what ways is what you are learning in this course enhancing what you learn in other courses, and vice versa?
- Have any of your thoughts, assumptions, or understandings changed? If so, how and why?
- What has been satisfying so far?

- What has been frustrating?
- Have you met your standards for yourself?
- What has this course revealed to you about you as a learner?
- What is one thing you would want others to notice if they looked through your work?
- What is your current grade?
- Are you doing better or worse in any particular categories?
- If someone else read through your work, what might they learn about you?
- What would you like to improve?
- What is one goal you have going forward in this course?
- What might you want more help with?
- How will what you have learned apply to your work/life/studies?
- What have you learned that you think can be useful going forward?

## **From the syllabus:**

### **Course description**

Since sociology's inception, sociologists have engaged in scholarship and action to better understand the social world and to improve our society. This work is often anchored by an exploration of structural inequality; indeed, sociologist Allan Touraine (2007:71) claims that "the central subject matter of sociology is the study of all forms of resistance to power-loaded transactions and institutions."<sup>1</sup> This class will explore the sociological perspective on social problems, with the goal of being able to apply this perspective when you encounter social problems beyond this course. We will ask: What makes certain social phenomena social problems? What are the causes of social problems? What can be done about them? We will explore a variety of contemporary social problems, complete a project in which you explore one contemporary social problem in depth, and, through a case study of gender and welfare, explore both common misconceptions regarding social problems and the utility of sociological thinking for better understanding and addressing social problems.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand the sociological perspective and its utility for understanding social phenomena
- Develop a sociological imagination, and be able to apply it to social problems, including being able to critique competing conceptions of and explanations for social problems
- Increase your knowledge of a variety of contemporary social problems, including a social problem that is important to you
- Engage in and further develop critical thinking skills through critical conversations, reading, writing, and reflecting to learn, and inquiry into social problems
- Develop informed ideas about concrete ways society (and you as part of society) can effect social change to address social problems

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<sup>1</sup> Touraine, Alain. 2007. "Public Sociology and the End of Society." Pp. 67-78 in *Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-first Century*, edited by D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra, N. Gerstel, R. Stokes, D. Anderton, and M. Buroway. Berkeley: University of California Press.

*Note:* “Social problems” is a quite encompassing topic; there are more sociological theories and social problems than we can possibly cover in one semester, particularly with any depth. Furthermore, as we investigate complex and persisting social problems, the questions and issues raised will frequently be ones that cannot be resolved quickly, easily, or satisfactorily. Oftentimes sociology not only helps one understand the social world, but also helps unveil its complexity. Investigations frequently lead to more questions, not fewer questions. Whether or not you decide to pursue sociology further academically, my hope is that you will leave this class with the ability to think sociologically and inquire into social problems (and phenomena) in a way that will continue to impact your thinking and analysis of the social world into the future.

## **Discovery Program**

This course fulfills the Social Science category requirement for UNH’s Discovery Program. We will be engaged in a critical thinking journey in which we will explore the nature of social problems, looking beneath surface layers of popular discourse and conceptions to deepen our understanding of what social problems are, what causes them, and what to do about them. The following passage about the Discovery Program is taken from the UNH 2015-2016 Undergraduate Course Catalog:

When we discover what we had not before known, we experience wonder. When Keats first read Homer, he felt “like some watcher of the skies / When a new planet swims into his ken.” The Discovery Program, like Homer to Keats, serves as the beginning of a great journey of learning and teaching that students and faculty take together.

When we learn and teach in Discovery, we take four questions as our common ground: How do we know the world? What questions and what tools shape our knowledge? How do we determine what we value? How do our different perspectives—intellectual and personal—inform each other?

Professors in Discovery have a common mission: to help students from all departments and programs understand better the organization of knowledge in the modern world...

Students, too, have a common mission: to claim their own educations with curiosity, open mindedness, and discipline. They are responsible for active and tangible engagement in the intellectual life of the University, in classrooms, on campus, and within the wider community. Students are partners in the learning process. Together, students and faculty seek to understand the world as it is and as it might be, and to take their places as independent thinkers in the world they will help to shape.

The Discovery Program provides the intellectual framework for students in any major. It represents the faculty’s collective belief in what constitutes and contributes to essential knowledge of the world. Together, students and faculty attempt to understand fully and use ethically that knowledge, both in the present and as a reservoir from which to draw in the future.

Each course in the Discovery Program fulfills an obligation not only to its own field, but also to others. Individually, courses illuminate the disciplines and ask that students understand their foundational methods, tools, and questions. Collectively, the Discovery Program aspires to help students recognize complexity and elegance in the relationships

among the disciplines, to chart constellations of human knowledge. Like Keats, we are “watchers of the skies.”

*“He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.”* Confucius.

### **Academic Citizenship**

- Academic citizenship is your exercise of rights and responsibilities as a student, co-creating knowledge through actively contributing to the class. Studies consistently show that if you engage in active learning rather than passive learning, you will learn more, better retain that learning, and improve your ability to transfer your learning to new contexts.

### ***Skills & Dispositions***

To succeed in this course, you will need certain skill competencies. We will actively practice these skills throughout the semester, working together to develop them. In particular, this will focus on your ability to think critically, to consider phenomena in context and from multiple perspectives, and to communicate effectively – both in writing and speech. You will also need to be diligent regarding staying on top of your work; if you work hard and actively engage with the course material, you are likely to do well in this course. Finally, you will need to bring a particular cognitive mindset to your learning that will orient you towards success; the particulars of this mindset are reflected in the Discovery Program description above and the section on Norms below.

### ***Norms***

It is vital that we create an environment that ensures this class is as beneficial as possible to every student’s educational and professional goals. We will best be able to meet our goals and grow together if the classroom is a supportive space and if everyone practices proper etiquette. There are certain norms we want to co-create and hold within this space that reflect a vision for how we want to be as a class and in relation to one other—safe, supported, open, productive, trusting, intellectually curious, thoughtful, and engaged. Creating a classroom environment that is conducive to learning is a shared responsibility.

Be present. Classes are only 50 minutes, so it is important to arrive on time and devote the entire class period to concerted intellectual engagement. Participate actively and critically in discussions, having completed the readings and thought about the issues. Focus your energy and attention to the topic at hand. Refrain from activities that can cause distractions. Do not pack up to leave prematurely. This class is held from 12:10pm-1pm; while you are welcome to bring and consume (snack) foods and (non-alcoholic) beverages, within reason, this is not lunchtime. Unless you have explicit permission from me, the use of electronic devices (other than laptops) is prohibited during in-person classes and should remain off or in silent/vibrate mode for the duration of class. Laptops may be used but only for class related work. Presented slides will be posted on Blackboard. Using electronic devices during class for anything other than classwork, or laptops during class time for non-class activities, may result in the designation of an unexceptional absence for that class. That being said, you are in college and will be treated as an adult. Take care of yourself and step out if you need to do so. If you need to use the bathroom, do

so. If you need to take a call because a family member is in the hospital, do so. If you can handle your needs before or after class, even better. You are responsible for any material you miss. Respect the space and the people in it. Be conscientious and courteous.

Be respectful, thoughtful, and conscientious. A good deal of sociological content is of a sensitive nature; individual students may have strong opinions and/or personal experiences that relate to the material we cover. Therefore, it is essential that your participation maintains a civil tone, respects the beliefs of others, and does not inhibit others from sharing or participating. Follow the guidelines below to help create a healthy classroom climate:

- Be professional and respectful, considerate and kind. Do not make derogatory comments of any kind. Only one person should speak at a time. Evaluate and reflect on the amount of space you are taking up in a particular conversation. If you have not spoken up and have something to add to the conversation, speak up; if you feel like you have been talking a lot, create space for others to share. Listen to others' thoughts and feelings, even if they differ significantly from your own. Your comments should be professional in nature, based on content knowledge, and related to course material (Note: Professional does not mean it cannot be personal). Ask clarifying questions when appropriate. Your comments and questions are meant to probe and shed new light, not to minimize or devalue others' comments. Make sure if you are disagreeing with an idea your comments are aimed at the idea and are not a personal attack on a fellow student.
- Take risks. Share what you are thinking or ask questions even if you are worried that you have not put what you are feeling or thinking into the right words or that it may not be the "right" thing to say. Share and surface disagreements and ideas that seem at tension with one another. You are encouraged to express your opinions, encourage others to develop and share their ideas, explore controversial material, risk making mistakes in writing about and discussing issues, and ask for help in understanding ideas you do not understand. This intellectually rigorous work may be uncomfortable at times, but risking such discomfort often leads to insight. Lean into discomfort. Be patient in situations in which you may feel challenged or uncomfortable; there may be something else behind that emotion. Help ensure others who may feel this way are supported. Keep an open mind and be willing and open to being challenged or confronted about ideas or prejudices you have been socialized into and internalized. Temporarily suspend your disbelief and seek to understand; understanding should precede critiquing. When challenging others, do so with the intent of facilitating their growth; do not demean or embarrass others.
- Assume good intentions and give others the benefit of the doubt. Comments and assertions by others in this space should be assumed to be coming from a place of good intentions. Understand that there may be a range of knowledge and experience around the issues we discuss. This is a space where you can challenge things you do not necessarily agree with and be challenged by others, without taking things personally or being clouded by feelings of offense.
- Respect everyone's individual identity. Speak from your own experience and analysis of the readings. Only speak on behalf of yourself; do not generalize. Do not expect others to speak as representatives of a social or cultural group. Do not make assumptions about other class members' identities, experiences, or beliefs. Recognize and value the diversity of the class and everyone's experiences, abilities, and knowledge that they bring to the class that we can all learn from. Personal stories or experiences that are shared in class

should remain confidential. However, what you learn from those stories and experiences can definitely be shared.

### ***Asking Questions***

You are encouraged to ask questions, both about content and about course requirements and policies. Take control of your own learning.

### ***Monitoring Blackboard***

Blackboard is the University's online course management system and the portal for student and faculty electronic services. Do not expect me to issue a warning to you if you are in danger of failing the course or to contact you if you do not successfully submit an assignment. You are responsible for keeping track of your progress in this course. I will be regularly updating grades on Blackboard. Make sure to check your submitted assignments to make sure they submitted correctly as well as for grades and feedback. Take charge of your success in this class. I encourage you to contact me or meet with me if you have any questions or concerns about your progress.