

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINE: READINGS/GROUP DISCUSSION
--

Assignment Description

The course materials include a set of readings that are intended to stimulate student discussion of criminological theory and its application to contemporary social issues and challenges faced by the justice system. A series of five readings/group discussion exercises will enable students to actively participate in small group and class discussions based on the assigned course readings.

The assigned readings/group discussion exercises are scheduled throughout the semester as follows:

Date	Reading Title	Relevant Applied Perspective
22 September	Reading #2 Girls in trouble	Canadian crime data
29 September	Reading #3 Three strikes laws	The classical school
27 October	Reading #5 School shootings	Social environment theories
17 November	Reading #6 But they're not real criminals	Social interaction theories
8 December	Reading #8 Alcohol and other drugs	Contemporary theories
	Reading #9 Crime and the family and the household	
	Reading #10 DNA testing	

In preparation for each of the assigned readings/group discussion exercises, students are asked to read and carefully think about the course reading before coming to class. Each student is required to individually prepare and record two key 'talking points' or questions about the assigned reading. The talking points or questions must be prepared in advance of the class in which the reading is discussed. The talking points must be legibly hand written on an index card provided by the instructor. After the group and class discussion have taken place, each student will submit her/his index card to the instructor for review and evaluation. The index card is due on the day the reading is discussed in class and may NOT be submitted after this date.

The talking points/questions that are prepared by each student will provide the basis for small group and general class discussion. Each student will use her/his talking points or questions to actively participate in small group discussion of the assigned reading, approximately 20-30 minutes in length. The small group discussion will be followed by a general class discussion, approximately 20-30 minutes in length, during which each discussion group's RAPPORTEUR will present the group's main ideas and conclusions to the class.

For this assignment, students will be assigned to small five-member discussion groups for the semester. Each discussion group will select a name for the group reflecting some aspect of criminological theory. Each discussion group will appoint a facilitator, a recorder, a rapporteur, and two observers on a rotational basis. The FACILITATOR is responsible for initiating and leading the small group discussion, ensuring that all participants have an equal opportunity to present her/his talking points. The RECORDER is responsible for documenting in a clear and legible manner the main points of discussion and the conclusions reached by the group. The

RAPPORTEUR is responsible for presenting the discussion group's main ideas and conclusions to the class. The OBSERVERS are responsible for monitoring overall group progress in the accomplishment of its tasks. All group members are expected to actively participate in the small group discussion based on the assigned reading.

Assignment Objectives

The purpose of the readings/group discussion exercises is twofold. Firstly, the readings/group discussion exercises will foster a student's individual ability to analyze and synthesize information, articulate succinctly her/his comprehension of the materials reviewed, and to recognize and articulate the linkages between criminological theory and criminal justice policy and practice. Secondly, group work and class discussions will provide students with an opportunity to develop public presentation and collaborative learning skills including communication, leadership, decision-making, and teambuilding skills.

Assignment Submission Format

Each student will be provided with a set of five index cards. Each student will individually prepare and legibly record her/his talking points or questions, with a maximum of two talking points or questions per student for each group discussion to be written on the index card.

Your talking points or questions may be about:

- the main purpose of the article
- the most important information in the article
- an argument or proposition that is made by the author that encourages debate about some aspect of criminology
- the main inferences or conclusions drawn by the author
- the policy or practical implications of the information presented or conclusions drawn by the author.

When preparing your index cards for submission, please ensure to write your name, student number, course number and section, and the class date in the upper right hand of each index card. This information should be followed by clear identification of the title and author of the article, underlined and centered. Talking points or questions should be clearly identified as points 1 and 2. A suggested format is as follows:

Hayli Millar Student Number CRIM 166 (005) 22 September 2004
<u>'Girls in Trouble' by Sandra J Bell</u>
1. The author examines the selective portrayal of female youth crime in Canada presented by the media and through official statistics.
2. The author considers familial patriarchal ideology as a possible theoretical explanation for female youth violence and a more punitive justice system response to female youth violence.

Please note that your talking points or questions must summarize in your own words information contained in the article. You may NOT quote or otherwise replicate verbatim the author of the article for this assignment.

Evaluation

The total value of the readings/group discussion exercises is 10%. Each set of five talking points/questions is worth a maximum of two (2) marks. In assigning the two marks, I will be looking for your demonstrated understanding of the reading and your ability to express this understanding clearly and succinctly. Please remember that the point of this exercise is to recognize and articulate the relationship between criminological theory and criminal justice policy and practice.

The index cards will be assessed as follows:

Originality of points/questions (2 @ .5 mark each)	1
Accuracy and relevance of points/questions to theory (2 @ .5 mark each)	1
-----	-----
Total	2 marks

If you have any questions or concerns about this assignment, please come to see me at the earliest opportunity.