

Oregon State University
Department of Sociology Assessment: Theory Rubric

I. Meeting Assignment Goals

1. The specific research question is sociological in nature

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The question is eminently clear, interesting, sociologically relevant, and testable using sociological methods.	The question is adequately clear, sociologically relevant, and testable using sociological methods.	The question is not stated clearly, isn't sociological relevant, and couldn't easily be tested using sociological methods.

2. A classical theory is summarized (in general terms) in a manner that reveals mastery.

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The writer clearly presents the central theoretical concepts associated with a classical theory and does so using key quotations from relevant primary readings.	The writer adequately presents some of the central theoretical concepts associated with a classical theory; uses some quotations from primary readings but does so awkwardly or in a limited manner.	The writer does not present the central theoretical concepts associated with a classical theory, and does not use quotations from primary readings or does not do so effectively.

3. Specific concepts or ideas from the classical theory are meaningfully applied to the research question.

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The writer selects at least one theoretical concept, and insightfully and creatively demonstrates how it could be utilized to make sense of their research question. Relevant quotations from primary readings are used in a thoughtful manner.	The writer selects at least one theoretical concept, and adequately demonstrates how it could be utilized to make sense of their research question. Quotations from primary readings are used in a limited manner.	The writer does not select a theoretical concept and/or adequately demonstrate how it could be utilized to make sense of their research question. Quotations from primary readings are not used or are not used effectively.

4. A post-classical theory is summarized (in general terms) in a manner that reveals mastery.

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The writer clearly presents the central theoretical concepts associated with a classical theory and does so using key quotations from relevant primary readings.	The writer adequately presents some of the central theoretical concepts associated with a classical theory; uses some quotations from primary readings but does so awkwardly or in a limited manner.	The writer does not present the central theoretical concepts associated with a classical theory, and does not use quotations from primary readings or does not do so effectively.

5. Specific concepts or ideas from the post-classical theory are meaningfully applied to the research question.

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The writer selects at least one theoretical concept, and insightfully and creatively demonstrates how it could be utilized to make sense of their research question. Relevant quotations from primary readings are used in a thoughtful manner.	The writer selects at least one theoretical concept, and adequately demonstrates how it could be utilized to make sense of their research question. Quotations from primary readings are used in a limited manner.	The writer does not select a theoretical concept and/or adequately demonstrate how it could be utilized to make sense of their research question. Quotations from primary readings are not used or are not used effectively.

6. The two theories are compared or contrasted.

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The writer clearly and creatively compares and/or contrasts the theoretical insights of two theories.	The writer adequately compares and/or contrasts the theoretical insights of two theories.	The writer does not adequately compare and/or contrast the theoretical insights of two theories.

II. Ideas and Content

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The paper is clear, logical, focused and interesting. The writer makes connections, excellent transitions, and presents insights into the topic.	The paper is adequately clear, logical, and focused, but lacks interesting insight specific to the author.	The paper lacks a central idea, purpose, and idea development.

III. Support

Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
The writer supports the thesis well with relevant details, citations or other pertinent, well-chosen information. Good use of primary and secondary readings overall.	The writer provides some support, but it is too limited, insubstantial, or too general/vague. Limited use of primary and secondary readings.	Details are sketchy or evolve from clichés or stereotypes. Information is limited or simply unclear. Poor or limited use of primary and secondary readings.

IV. Writing/Mechanics

Criteria	Sophisticated 5	Competent 3	Unsatisfactory 1
Introduction and Conclusion	The introduction is interesting and draws the reader in. The conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of resolution.	The introduction and conclusion are recognizable, but are incomplete or not connected.	There is no clearly identifiable introduction or conclusion, or no connection to the body of the text.
Paragraph Topic Sentences	Topic sentence conveys a comprehensive “story” line.	Topic sentences convey a partial “story” line without the remainder of the paragraph sentences.	Story of essay cannot be ascertained from only the topic sentences.
Word Choice	Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise and natural way. The writing is interesting, but concise.	The language conveys the message adequately, but is not precise or interesting. Lacks detail and precision.	The language is vague, redundant, or lacks detail. Excess use of non-descriptive nouns, verbs, or pronouns.

Sentence Fluency	The writing has an easy flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences are consistently strong and have varied structure.	The text works for the most part, but there are occasional awkward sentences that force the reader to slow down or reread text.	The paper is difficult to read aloud. Sentences are choppy, incomplete, and/or very awkward.
Paragraphs	Paragraphs are logical using a simple topic sentence clearly supported by other sentences.	Paragraphs are logical using a simple topic sentence, but many have disjointed supported sentences.	Sentences in paragraph are not clearly related. Sentences may be choppy, incomplete, or very awkward.
Conventions	The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions such as grammar, capitalization and punctuation.	There are few errors in grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.	There are frequent errors in grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
Spelling	There are no spelling errors	There are few spelling errors	Spelling errors are frequent
Citations	Sources are cited appropriately.	There are few errors in citing references and sources.	Sources are not properly cited.