

CHRISTABEL OBUOBI SARPOMAA
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (SOC 1000)
CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENT

Think – Group – Rethink: Understanding Youth Unemployment in Ghana through the Sociological Imagination.

Learning Outcome

By the end of this activity, students will be able to;

1. Apply sociological imagination to differentiate between **personal troubles and public issues**.
2. Analyze unemployment by identifying at least **two structural factors** influencing the issue.

WEIGHT: 20 POINTS

Purpose

This activity encourages students to critically examine media narratives about unemployment and apply the concept of **sociological imagination** to analyze structural causes of social problems.

It's designed to measure how students' understanding of social problems changes after learning the concept of sociological imagination.

Resources

Students will use the following materials:

1. BBC News report on youth unemployment in Ghana
2. Ghanaian television news clip discussing causes of unemployment
3. Lecture on the sociological imagination
4. Assigned course reading on sociological imagination

Step 1: Individual Reflection

Students will **individually** answer the following prompt:

1. What do you think are some causes of youth unemployment?
2. Explain your reasoning.

Students will write a **short individual response (1 paragraph)**.

This step captures students' **initial assumptions** before learning the sociological concept.

Step 2: Group (Collaborative Analysis)

Students will form **small groups of 5-7 students** and discuss their individual responses. After, students will be presented with two media reports about youth unemployment in Ghana:

- **A BBC news report discussing youth unemployment trends in Ghana**
- **A Ghanaian television news report suggesting youth unemployment is caused by laziness among young people**

Groups will analyze the case study using the following questions:

1. What explanations does each news report provide about youth unemployment?
2. Do the reports focus more on individual responsibility or structural causes?
3. Based on the reports, what social, economic, or political factors might influence youth unemployment in Ghana?

Each group will produce a **short-written summary (1–2 paragraphs)** of their discussion and briefly present their ideas to the class.

Step 3: Lecture on Sociological Imagination

I will introduce the concept of **C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination**, emphasizing:

- The relationship between **personal troubles and public issues**
- How social structures influence individual experiences
- Structural explanations for social problems such as unemployment

Step 4: Rethink (Post-Lecture Reflection)

After the lecture, each group will receive their original group response.

Groups will revisit their earlier explanation and answer the following questions:

1. Has your explanation of youth unemployment changed after learning about the sociological imagination?
2. Identify **two structural factors** that could contribute to youth unemployment.
3. Explain how youth unemployment may represent a **public issue rather than simply an individual problem**.

Groups will submit a **revised written response (2–3 paragraphs)**.

Note: Students must submit their individual reflections independently of the group assignment, these reflections will be assessed separately and should be handed over to me in class.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENT

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT (4 pts)	GOOD (3 pts)	DEVELOPING (2pts)	BEGINNING (1 pt)
Application of Sociological Imagination (Step 3 and 4)	Clearly and accurately applies the sociological imagination; consistently distinguishes between personal troubles and public issues with strong explanation	Applies the sociological imagination with minor gaps; shows general understanding of personal vs public issues	Partial understanding: distinction between personal and public issues is unclear or inconsistent	Little or no understanding ; fails to distinguish between personal troubles and public issues
Identification of Structural Factors (Step 4)	Identifies two or more relevant structural factors and explains them clearly and insightfully	Identifies at least one structural factor with some explanation	Mentions structural factors but explanations are weak or unclear	Focuses only on individual explanations; no structural analysis
Critical Analysis of Media Narratives (Step 2)	Demonstrates strong analysis of both media sources; clearly evaluates differences in explanations (individual vs structural)	Some comparison of media perspectives; analysis is present but not fully developed	Limited comparison; relies mostly on description rather than analysis	No meaningful comparison or analysis of media sources

Reflection and Change in Perspective (Rethink) (Step 1 and 4)	Clearly explains how understanding changed after learning; shows deep reflection and integration of sociological concepts	Shows some reflection and change in thinking	Minimal reflection; little evidence of change in perspective	No reflection or no evidence of learning change
Clarity and Organization of Response	Writing is clear, well-organized, and logically structured; ideas are easy to follow	Writing is mostly clear with minor organizational issues	Writing is somewhat unclear or disorganized	Writing is unclear, disorganized, or difficult to follow

COMMENTS:

18–20 = A

15–17 = B

12–14 = C

Below 12 = Needs Improvement

Formatting

Please submit a single document as your group's assignment in PDF or DOCX (Microsoft Word) format in the designated drop box on Canvas.