

BACKGROUND ASSIGNMENTS - Overview

**Assignments to set the stage**

Background Assignment #1: Socialization Outline

What do personal stories tell us about the way society works?

Reframing private troubles as public issues

Outline

*The purpose of this first assignment is for you to consider what personal stories can tell us about the way society works by looking at the life of a young teenager through the lens of the “cycle of socialization.” Conclude by reframing the teen’s “private troubles” as “public issues.”*

Background Assignment #2: LBJ Reflection Essay

Envisioning social change

Personal reflections on a tour of the LBJ Presidential Museum

Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum

*This second (and last) background assignment to the books you will be reading focuses on imagining social change. To do this, we will visit the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum, located on the UT campus. Here you will have the opportunity to experience and reflect on the vision for American society conceived by President Johnson and the larger Civil Rights movement.*

## What do personal stories tell us about the way society works?

### *Reframing private troubles as public issues*

#### Background Assignment #1: Socialization Outline

As background to the books you will be reading, the purpose of this first assignment is for you to consider what personal stories can tell us about the way society works by looking at the life of a young teenager through the lens of the “cycle of socialization.” Conclude by reframing the teen’s “private troubles” as “public issues.”

#### Readings for this assignment:

1. *The Sociological Imagination (1-page excerpt)*
2. *Antiblack Racism and the AIDS Epidemic (3-page excerpt)*
3. *High Deep: Opinion, Essays, and Vision from American Teenagers (4 very short essays)*
4. “The Cycle of Socialization”

#### Instructions

Insert your content into the outline provided below. You should write about 1½ - 2 single-spaced pages (or 3 double-spaced). Do not prepare an essay.

#### **I. Introduction (2-3 sentences)**

Select one of the four essays in *High Deep* and tell us about him or her here.

#### **II. Stages of socialization**

##### **A. Stage 1: The beginning and first socialization**

*The roles/social identity the teen was born into and the messages they got from parents and family.*

1. Key elements (stage 1) Describe the key elements of stage 1 described in Harro’s reading, using her terminology (e.g., dominant vs. target group).
2. Application to your teen Apply the elements in stage 1 to your teen. Use supporting detail from the story and from what *you* think the teen may be facing given your general knowledge about the main issue in the story (e.g., immigration).

##### **B. Stage 2: Institutional/cultural socialization and enforcement**

*The messages the teen got from institutions they interacted with and the rewards and punishments society used to enforce the teen’s roles.*

1. Key elements (stage 2)

## BACKGROUND ASSIGNMENTS

2. Application to your teen

### **C. Stage 3: Results/direction for change and actions**

*The results of the system of socialization for the teen and what their story suggests about what can be done to change societal conditions to improve the life chances of people like them.*

1. Key elements (stage 3)
2. Application to your teen

### **III. Conclusion and critical analysis (short paragraph).**

- Discuss the social conditions that exacerbate the “private troubles” the teen is facing. Talk about the teen’s “private troubles” as “public issues” by drawing parallels from *The Sociological Imagination* and *Antiblack Racism and the AIDS Epidemic*.
- What does the teen’s story tell you about the way society works (assumptions, norms, values, policies, etc.)?

## BACKGROUND ASSIGNMENTS

### **Imagining social change: Personal reflections on a tour of the LBJ Presidential Museum**

*Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum*

#### Background Assignment #2: LBJ Reflection Essay

*Exhibits assigned (numbers refer to the numbers on the LBJ Library & Museum map)*

*Level 3: #3 LBJ, An Introduction (11-min. film)*

*Level 4: #7 LBJ's Presidency (emphasis on Civil Rights and the Great Society)*

*#9 A Legacy of Liberty: LBJ & You*

This second (and last) background assignment to the books you will be reading focuses on imagining social change. To do this, we will visit the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum, located on the UT campus. Here you will have the opportunity to experience and reflect on the vision for American society conceived by President Johnson and the larger Civil Rights movement.

#### Before you go to the Museum

Read Califano's description of President Lyndon Baines Johnson's work in "Seeing is Believing" and view President Johnson's speech to Congress on voting rights.

#### During the Museum visit (use attached notes page)

Take notes responding to the questions on the attached notes page as you tour the Museum exhibits.

#### After you go to the Museum

Write an essay (3-page, double-spaced) on your *personal reflections* on the visit to the Museum. Focus on at least three specific things you saw, heard, or interacted with in the museum (include one or two photographs, if you like) and how each of them made what you had learned about President Johnson from the reading and the speech more meaningful. Reflect on how those three things together tell a story. For example, from what you saw at the exhibit, how do you think the events of the era influenced President Johnson's vision about voting rights of blacks? What do you believe are the ramifications for current times? Think creatively and look beyond simply learning one more fact from the exhibit to the meaning the new information adds. Share your understanding of the work and vision of President Johnson as a whole. Ask yourself *what, how, and why*: *What* is the exhibit saying? *How* does it get this idea across? *Why* is this a significant idea?

BACKGROUND ASSIGNMENTS

**NOTES FROM THE LBJ LIBRARY & MUSEUM TOUR** (do not need to be turned in)

**Write your notes from the exhibit here.** View the photos and artifacts and read the captions.

<u>What you see, hear, interact with</u> <i>Artifacts, images, phone conversations, videos, etc.</i>	<u>Your thoughts/analysis</u> <i>How do they expand on what you learned about LBJ's vision toward a more just society from his Voting Rights speech or from Califano's piece?</i>	<u>What it meant to you</u> <i>How did the museum experience make you feel? What overall meaning and impressions about LBJ were conveyed?</i>

Other notes:

## I & II. Reader's Notebook Reflections *and* Multiple Book Book Review

### Reader's Notebook Critical Reflections (One per book)

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Write in your reader's notebook at least once per week. Submit a compilation of your notes in one in-depth personal reflection per book, 2-3 double-spaced pages each. The reflections should respond to the prompts connected to each book below. Insert your voice and apply critical thinking. These three reflections will be the material you will draw from to write your Multiple Book Book Review described below.

#### **Non-Fiction: Personal stories of journeys to break social barriers<sup>i</sup>**

- What were some of the major social, economic or cultural barriers that the person or community in your story faced? Distinguish between public issues/social conditions and private troubles.
- How does confronting those social barriers affect their life and what does the experience mean to them?
- What are their dreams or hopes (what keeps them going)?
- How is their life more than “a reaction to their oppression,” their difficulties?

#### **Fiction: A deepening understanding of the complexity of the human experience**

- What insights concerning the complexity of the human experience did you gain from the fiction book which extended what was exposed in the real-life story(ies) in your non-fiction book?
- How does the author use his or her imagination (creativity) to illuminate on the complexity of the human experience?
- How does the book attempt to help us imagine a better world, what alternatives to how we live does it offer?
- What new way of looking at yourself, life, the world did the book inspire?

#### **Social Analysis: Issues, activism, and visions for social change**

- Briefly summarize the author's analysis of the social barrier(s) addressed in the book, including the causes and consequences.
- What is the author's vision (main goal) and strategy for social change?<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Social barriers are defined as “differences (inequalities), in gender, ethnicity, race, religion, health or socioeconomic status, between individuals or groups that prevent them from achieving or accomplishing their goals, or deny their opportunity to access resources and to advance their interests.” – US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Library, 2015 Glossary (<https://agclass.nal.usda.gov/glossary.shtml>)

<sup>ii</sup> For example, President Lyndon B. Johnson's main goal behind The Great Society was the elimination of poverty and racial injustice, and his strategy was the creation of a set of specific domestic programs. The programs included voting rights, desegregation, educational opportunities, etc.

## BOOK ASSIGNMENTS

- How do you see the vision applying to the social barriers that emerged in the first two books (how would you make a connection even if the specific barriers were different)?
- What does the author of the book bring personally to the cause?
- What does the book represent social ethics?

### **Multiple Book Book Review and Oral Presentation**

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This book review assignment will be in two parts: a written and an oral presentation.

1. Draw from your three Reader's Notebook Reflections to write a 3-page, double-spaced multiple-book book review on intersecting messages that stood out for you across your three books. Provide your personal assessment of the books and how they come together to expand our understanding of social barriers and social change. Introduce each book and its type (e.g., memoir, novel, etc.), provide key details, and include meaningful quotes.

Discuss how, collectively, the three books communicate a message of social change:

- (a) how the unique personal story(ies) in the non-fiction book illuminated on the experiences of those who strive to break social, economic, and cultural barriers,
- (b) how the fiction book deepened your understanding of the complexity of the human experiences addressed in the first book
- (c) how the social analysis book portrayed a specific issue related to social barriers and provided a unique vision for social change.

Include meaningful quotes. See a general sample of a multiple-book book review published in *The New York Times* in Books of the Times titled, "[Black Lives Matter and the Intrepid Lives That Preceded It](#)," by Jennifer Szalai (January 24, 2018).

2. Give an oral presentation on your book review (read your review). I will display a slide for each of you with the book covers of the 3 books that you read.

### III. Research Note

Write a 2½ -3 page research note using 3 to 5 peer-reviewed scholarly sources on one interesting question that arises for you as you read your books. This is not a comprehensive research paper, but rather a snapshot of what research reveals about your question within the and the particular angle that choose. For example, why do people have negative views toward different races (question), from the perspective of moral development (angle)? See next page for library search strategies.

#### Research Note Format : Synthesis of the findings from your research

##### Title

Come up with a creative title for your Research Note. (e.g., “Can Empathy be Learned?”)

##### Introduction

Write your introduction according to your own personal style, but include the following: (a) start by saying what your non-fiction book is about in one sentence and give the title and author of the book, (b) say what it was about the book that inspired your question, and (c) state the your research question.

##### Synthesis

Say what you learned from your research by creatively synthesizing what you found. Cite three to five sources. Provide a short, succinct description of what each source says.

In writing about what you found, try not to list one source at a time. **Use critical thinking** to generate a new understanding of the topic to answer your question. **How does information from one source speak to information from another?** Think of it as creating a dialogue between the ideas among the sources: If you imagine a synthesis as a room in which you are joined by the authors of the sources, the essay has everyone engaged in conversation, with everyone commenting on each other’s ideas directly. As the writer, you make sense of the conversation.

Cite each source each time you draw information from it using APA style. For example,

*Related to the role of the media in raising public awareness around gay issues, based on a national survey Kessler (2003) found that public awareness can significantly change attitudes .... Yet, how a message is articulated matters. One study found that when messages were not crafted accurately, the result was the strengthening of stereotypical thinking (Smith and Jones, 2011)....*

##### Conclusion

Overall, what does the information that you gathered from your various sources say in response to your question? What does it tell us about social change, either specifically as it applies to your book or more generally? Why does the topic you researched matter?



### Research Search Strategies: Scholarly and peer-reviewed articles

Go to <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>, click on “Databases.” Under POPULAR DATABASES, you can choose the general database, “Academic Search Complete.” Or you can find a subject database. In the “Search databases” box, enter a subject, such as “psychology,” which will provide you with several databases (e.g., PsycINFO) that you can search.

You can do a preliminary search to familiarize yourself with the general literature on the topic by searching on the UT Libraries homepage:

- Go to <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>
- Click on “Articles & More” located below the search bar
- Enter your topic (racism moral development)
- When the next page opens, further refine your search by checking “Scholarly and Peer-reviewed” on the side bar
- Pick the article(s) you like, and on the top right-hand side of each article, you will see



- Click on the quotation mark symbol, which will give you the option to choose a “Citation Format.” Pick APA. Copy and paste your citation to your list of references in your paper.

### Examples of scholarly peer-reviewed sources for the research note (using APA format)

Davids, Y. D., & Gouws, A. (2013). Monitoring perceptions of the causes of poverty in South Africa. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3).

Kehoe, M., Bourke-Taylor, H., & Broderick, D. (2018). Developing student social skills using restorative practices: A new framework called H.E.A.R.T. *Social Psychology of Education*, 21(1), 189-207.

Pettus-Davis, C., Doherty, E. E., Veeh, C., & Drymon, C. (2017). Deterioration of postincarceration social support for emerging adults. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 44(10).

Boehm, D. A. (2017). Separated families: Barriers to family reunification after deportation. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 5(2), 401-416.

Liu, R. T., PhD, & Mustanski, B., PhD. (2012). Suicidal ideation and self-harm in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 42(3), 221-228.

## LITERARY GENRES (Handout)

The literary genres that we are covering in this class offer different approaches to addressing social issues: true stories, imaginary stories, and social analysis. Each brings a different dimension and perspective of social change.

### **Narrative Non-Fiction: Books that recount factual stories, windows into people’s personal journeys**

Memoirs/biographies/creative non-fiction: (a) a person’s story based on memories of moments or events that took place in their life, (b) non-fiction narratives based on research

Ethnography: a story that a researcher tells based on interviews and observations through long-term immersion in the lives of a group or community, which is done with the aim of providing rich, holistic insights into people's views and actions, as well as the nature of their social context

Investigative journalism: a story that a journalist tells based on an in-depth, long-term investigation on a topic or event that a community is going through that may include analyses of documents, etc., and is conducted with the aim of bringing about change

### **Fiction: Books that describe imaginary events and people – providing “alternatives to how we live”**

*Fiction brings the “voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now and can see through our fear-stricken society... to other ways of being, and even imagine some real grounds for hope..., writers who can remember freedom. Poets, visionaries, the realists of a larger reality.” – Ursula K Le Guin<sup>a</sup>*

Novel: a fictitious prose narrative of book length, typically representing character and action with some degree of realism

Science fiction/fantasy: fiction that uses magic and other supernatural forms as a primary element of plot, theme, and/or setting; science fiction is a form of fantasy that often involves speculations based on current or future science or technology

### **Social Analysis: Books that systematically examine a social issue with the aim of prompting change**

Activist memoir/biography: for the purposes of this class, specifically books that tell the stories of the lives of activists and which include an analysis of a specific social issue and a vision for social change from their perspective

Social analysis: an in-depth analysis of specific social issue and a vision and strategies for social change often written by a researcher, a scholar, a policy maker, or other professional

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<sup>a</sup> Source: “Fiction for Social Change,” by Nicole Lampe, Resource Media, <http://www.resource-media.org/fiction-social-change-dreaming-better-future/>. Ursula K Le Guin’s was a fantasy and science fiction author.



**BOOK CLUBS / STUDENT BOOK SELECTIONS** ❖ **Books with a Powerful Message of Social Change** ❖

Student names	Non-Fiction	Fiction	Social Analysis
	<i>The Short Tragic Life of Robert Peace: A Brilliant Man Who Left Newark for Ivy League</i>	<i>The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia</i>	<i>Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis</i>
	<i>An Arab Melancholia</i>	<i>Japanese Roses: A Novel of the Japanese American Internment</i>	<i>I Put a Spell on You: The Autobiography of Nina Simone</i>
	<i>Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States</i>	<i>Behold the Dreamers: A Novel</i>	<i>Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law</i>
	<i>Compassionate Confinement: A Year in the Life of Unit C</i>	<i>America is Not the Heart: A Novel</i>	<i>Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds</i>
	<i>Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools</i>	<i>Exit West: A Novel</i>	<i>Until we are free: My Fight for Human Rights in Iran</i>
	<i>In the Country We Love: My Family Divided</i>	<i>The Hate U Give</i>	<i>Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture &amp; Literature</i>
	<i>The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates</i>	<i>The Map of Salt and Stars: A Novel</i>	<i>Lakota Woman</i>
	<i>What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City</i>	<i>Piecing Me Together</i>	<i>Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg</i>
	<i>Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America</i>	<i>The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales</i>	<i>Barbara Jordan: Speaking the Truth with Eloquent Thunde</i>
	<i>The Devil's Highway: A True Story</i>	<i>The Underground Railroad: A Novel</i>	<i>Decolonizing Trans/gender 101</i>
	<i>No House to Call My Home: Love, Family, and Other Transgressions</i>	<i>There There: A Novel</i>	<i>Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation</i>
	<i>Everyday Desistance: Transition to Adulthood Among Formerly Incarcerated Youth</i>	<i>Push: A Novel</i>	<i>Becoming Ms. Burton: From Prison to... Leading the Fight for Incarcerated Women</i>
	<i>Warriors Don't Cry: The Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High</i>	<i>When the Emperor Was Divine: A Novel</i>	<i>When They Call You a Terrorist. A Black Lives Matter Memoir</i>
	<i>Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City</i>	<i>Americanah: A Novel</i>	<i>Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption</i>
	<i>Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love &amp; So Much More</i>	<i>Ancillary Justice</i>	<i>Small Pox: The Death of a Disease</i>
	<i>Enrique's Journey: Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother</i>	<i>The Fifth Season: Every Age Must Come to an End</i>	<i>We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Inner Light in a Time of Darkness</i>
	<i>Behind the Walls: A Guide for Family and Friends of Texas Inmates</i>	<i>The Boat People: A Novel</i>	<i>Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Amer</i>
	<i>Planet of the Blind: A Memoir</i>	<i>An American Marriage: A Novel</i>	<i>Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor</i>

## Book Club Format

### Book introductions

- Show your book cover and give the title of your book (to remind people what you're reading)
- Indicate the type of book you're reading.

### What's going on in your book now

- In the first meeting, briefly describe what your book is about/ in the last meeting tell how it ends
- Briefly share what's going on in the life of the person/people in your book right now.

### Themes across books

- Include some comments addressing the Reader's Notebook Prompts
- Provide some details from the book
- Read quotes from meaningful passages
- After everyone speaks: notice and discuss parallels or diverging themes that you notice across the unique stories from each book.

### Insert your voice

- Insert your voice: share your personal reflections on the book so far.
- Consider how you fit in the story (into the issues that are being discussed).

Book Preference Form: NON-FICTION

As you think about preferences:

- read Internet descriptions and reviews of the books
- exclude books that you have read before
- consider both books as mirrors (that you can see yourself in) *and* books as windows (to see the lives of others)
- consider both books within your interests *and* books you would not have thought of
- you are free to choose within the same *or* a different topic across the three book genres (non-fiction, fiction, and social analysis)
- all the books are full-length books, no edited volumes or anthologies

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

**BOOKS**

Please list your top 6 preferences for a NON-FICTION book from the class booklist and PDF file of book covers/descriptions.

<b>Book title</b>

**INTERESTS**

Tell me about some of your interests and a bit about your career goals. Be as specific or as general as you like.

Book Preference Form: FICTION

As you think about preferences:

- read Internet descriptions and reviews of the books
- exclude books that you have read before
- consider both books as mirrors (that you can see yourself in) *and* books as windows (to see the lives of others)
- consider both books within your interests *and* books you would not have thought of
- you are free to choose within the same *or* a different topic across the three book genres (non-fiction, fiction, and social analysis)
- all the books are full-length books, no edited volumes or anthologies

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

**BOOKS**

**Please list your top 6 preferences for a FICTION book from the class booklist and PDF file of book covers/descriptions.**

<b>Book title</b>

## Book Preference Form: SOCIAL ANALYSIS

As you think about preferences:

- read Internet descriptions and reviews of the books
- exclude books that you have read before
- consider both books as mirrors (that you can see yourself in) *and* books as windows (to see the lives of others)
- consider both books within your interests *and* books you would not have thought of
- you are free to choose within the same *or* a different topic across the three book genres (non-fiction, fiction, and social analysis)
- all the books are full-length books, no edited volumes or anthologies

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

### BOOKS

Please list your top 6 preferences for a SOCIAL ANALYSIS book from the class booklist and PDF file of book covers/descriptions.

Book title