Project #2: Case Study in Society, Technological Change, and Social Stratification

Your final project is a case study exploring a particular technology. You will be writing a scholarly-journalistic article that addresses the following questions about one specific technology:
- How has this technology and its use changed over time?
  - In what ways were these technological changes socially constructed?
  - How do changes to this technology make sense in light of broader economic and labor transformations?
- How is this particular technology related to the mitigation, reproduction, or exacerbation of structural inequality? You are not limited to the scope of your site or similar sites in investigating this question
  - Detail a specific response related to at least one particular social location.
  - In what ways is this social stratification technologically determined?
  - How have changes in this technology affected inequality?
  - What social problems are associated with this technology?
- What opportunities are there for things to be different?

In your project reflection, you will also answer the following questions:
- What insights do you have from this research regarding the reciprocal interplay between society and technological change?
- How did you apply a sociological perspective/imagination to your research regarding this particular technology? How did this benefit your research?

To answer these questions, you will start off with a scientific exploration of a site you select. This could be a particular office, a store, a classroom, a playground, or any other site. You will conduct a field observation, paying careful attention to how technologies are used at that site and how people interact with these technologies. You will then identify one particular technology you want to investigate further. You will also interview at least one person who interacts with that technology about their role at the site, their interaction with the technology you have selected, how the technology impacts their life, and how they impact the technology's "life."

After conducting this initial inquiry you will conduct library/information research to learn more about the history of your technology and to directly explore its relationship with and impact on social stratification. You will need to explore its impact on structural inequality for at least one specific social location and respond to the questions above.

Finally, synthesizing all of the work you have done, you will write a scholarly-journalistic article to share your research and the insights you have gained into your research question(s). The class will read your article as part of our reading investigation for the final class. During the final class you will lead a discussion about your article.

Grading

Project #2 is worth 32.5% of your total course grade.

Criteria	Proficient
Content	Research question is clearly identified. Sources are relevant to the research question. Analysis demonstrates careful consideration of scientific inquiry as well as a careful reading and understanding of source content, argument, and relevance. Argument is effectively presented. All content is pertinent to the research question and aids in reader's understanding. Project guidelines related to content were followed.
Sociological Perspective & Relevance	Demonstrates deep understanding of the sociological perspective. Sociological relevance is clear and consistently reinforced throughout. All guiding questions for project are explicitly addressed, evidence is provided to support the presenter's argument, and an explicit connection is made between the evidence and the argument.
Organization	Well-organized in a logical sequence with good flow. Easy to follow. Follows organizational guidelines laid out in submission guideline documents.
Clarity	Well-written, understandable (can understand on first read). Uses correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting throughout; follows the submission guideline documents).
Complete	Follows all laid out guidelines regarding length, source requirements, content requirements, components, etc.
Discussion	Author leads engaging class discussion. Author poses effective and understandable critical thinking questions to the class. Students do more talking than the author. The conversation covers substantive ground and easily fills the allotted time.

Project Components: Timeline and Associated Grade

Due Date	Assignment	Percent of Course Grade
11:59pm on Thursday, July 23	Project #2A: Proposal	**1%**
11:59pm on Sunday, July 24	Project #2B: Feedback response plan #1	**0.5%**
8am, Wednesday, July 29	Project #2C: Data Findings	**1%**
12 noon on Saturday, August 1	Project #2D: Source List	**1%**
8am on Monday, August 3	Project #2E: Pre-writing	**1%**
8am on Wednesday, August 5	Project #2F: Feedback response plan #2	**0.5%**
8am on Wednesday, August 5	Project #2G: Rough draft	**1%**
11:59pm Friday, August 7	Project #2H: Feedback response plan #3	**0.5%**
8am on Monday, August 10	Project #2 Final Version	**25%**
Class, Wednesday, August 12	Project #2 Discussions	
11:59pm on Thursday, August 12	Project #2I: Reflection	**1%**

- Project #2A: Proposal due by 11:59pm on Thursday, July 23
    - We will go over the project in class on Wednesday, July 22, and you will have time in class to work on this assignment.
    - This initial proposal will lay out the methods you expect to use for the scientific research component of this project. You will choose the site for your site investigation, detail what you will do for your observation, suggest who you will interview, list potential interview questions, and explain how you will meet research ethics guidelines.
- Project #2B: Feedback response plan #1 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, July 24
    - After reflecting further on your methods plan and receiving instructor feedback on your methods proposal, you will submit a short (two sentences to a paragraph) plan for what changes you will make to your methods, or, if you are not making changes, why you feel the feedback you received does not warrant implementing changes. You do not need to wait until Sunday to submit this, as you will want to complete it prior to conducting your observation and interview(s).
- Project #2C: Data Findings due by 8am, Wednesday, July 29
    - You will need to have conducted your field observation and interview(s) in order to complete this assignment. For this assignment you will share what you learned based on your field observation and interview(s). You will also identify the specific technology you are planning to research further and write a draft of your research question.
- Project #2D: Source List due by 12 noon on Saturday, August 1
    - The next stage of your project is library/information research. We will have a library session in class on Wednesday, July 29 with the GBCC Library Director for further information about searching for publications. For this

assignment you will need to list the sources you plan to use to answer your draft research question. You may also want to record sources you will include in the further information resource section of your article.

- Project #2E: Pre-writing due by 8am on Monday, August 3
  - o You will share the general substantive outcomes of your research - how the information/library research you conducted help answer your research question (or at least provide insight into it). You also will re-evaluate your research question and may end up modifying it as part of this assignment.
- Project #2F: Feedback response plan #2 due by 8am on Wednesday, August 5
  - o After reflecting further on your pre-writing assignment and receiving instructor feedback on it, you will share your plans for what you still need to do to ensure you have sufficiently addressed your research question.
- Project #2G: Rough draft due by 8am on Wednesday, August 5
  - o You will turn in a rough draft of your article. We will spend time in class on Wednesday, August 5 to conduct peer reviews of the first drafts.
- Project #2H: Feedback response plan #3 due by 11:59pm Friday, August 7
  - o Based on your own reflections as well as instructor and peer feedback, you will share your plan to revise your rough draft and make it into a final version ready for publication.
- Project #2 Final Version due by 8am on Monday, August 10
  - o You will turn in the final version of your feature article. I will share these with the class and we will read them for the next/final class.
- Project #2 Discussions in class on Wednesday, August 12 (Class #16)
  - o This is our final class of the semester. You will lead a 15-minute class discussion regarding your article.
- Project #2I: Reflection due 11:59pm on Thursday, August 12
  - o You will submit a self-evaluation and learning reflection regarding your project.

Project #2A: Methods Proposal for Site Investigation

1. Where will you go for your site investigation?

2. What kinds of things will you notice and record in your field notes during your field observation?

3. Who might you interview at the site?

4. List some interview questions you hope to ask; you can make these more specific when you have more context for your interview.

5. What research ethics considerations do you need to be conscious of during your research? Is there any potential harm to human participants? How will you obtain their informed consent? (POST ON BB FORM TO USE)

Project #2B: Feedback response plan #1

After reflecting further on your methods proposal and receiving instructor feedback on it, you will submit a short (two sentences to a paragraph) plan for what changes you will make to your methods, or, if you are not making changes, why you feel the feedback you received does not warrant implementing changes. You do not need to wait until Sunday to submit this; you will want to complete this assignment prior to conducting your observation and interview(s).

Project #2C: Data Findings due by 8am, Wednesday, July 29

You will need to have conducted your field observation and interview(s) in order to complete this assignment. You are welcome to conduct additional field observations or interviews; however, you will need to have conducted at least one 15 minute (or longer) field observation and one 5-minute (or longer) interview for this assignment.

1. What site did you visit?

2. What did you notice/observe? (Write at least one paragraph.)

3. Analyze your field notes and reflect on your field observation. What did you learn from your field observation? Did anything surprise you? In what ways did your observation make the familiar strange? (Write at least one paragraph.)

4. What technology will you focus on for your project?

5. Who did you interview?

6. What did you do to ensure you followed ethical guidelines in conducting your interview?

7. What did your interviewee share? (Write at least one paragraph.)

8. Analyze your interview. What did you learn from it? What insights did you gain about possible relationships between your technology and social stratification? (Write at least one paragraph.)

9. Write a draft of your research question. As you conduct further research you can refine and revise your question, including making it more specific. For now you are welcome to keep it simple (e.g. What is the relationship between _____ (your chosen technology) and social stratification?).

Project #2D: Source List

The next stage of your project is library/information research. For this assignment you will need to list the sources you currently plan to use to answer your draft research question. You may also want to record sources you will include in the further information resource section of your article.

You do not need to use a particular formatting style to list the sources, but make sure to list the author(s), year of publication, title of publication, type of publication, URL if there is one, and if applicable the source of the publication (name of journal, edited book, organization, newspaper, etc.).

You must have at least three publications
- At least two must be academic or professional publications (e.g. academic journal articles, books, reports, etc.)
- At least one must be a scholarly article from an academic journal. This can count towards your academic/professional publications. However, it must be an article you find on your own; while you can use articles from class as part of your research, they will not count towards meeting this particular requirement.

Project #2E: Prewriting

For this assignment you will share the general substantive outcomes of your research - how the information/library research you conducted help answer your research question (or at least provide insight into it).

First, re-evaluate your research question.

1. Based on your research, are there changes you want to make to your research question? You may want to modify it in some way, in particular to make it more specific. Your research question is the specific sociological question you hope to answer. It should be a specific and focused question that is sociologically relevant and relevant to the project assignment.

Next, answer the following questions in relation to your project.

2. How has the technology you researched and its use changed over time?

3. In what ways were these technological changes socially constructed?

4. How do changes to this technology make sense in light of broader economic and labor transformations?

5. How is this particular technology related to the mitigation, reproduction, or exacerbation of structural inequality?

6. Detail a specific response related to at least one particular social location.

7. In what ways is this social stratification technologically determined?

8. How have changes in this technology affected inequality?

9. What social problems are associated with this technology?

10. What opportunities are there for things to be different?

11. What insights do you have from this research regarding the reciprocal interplay between society and technological change?

12. How did you apply a sociological perspective/imagination to your research regarding this particular technology? How did this benefit your research?

Project #2F: Feedback response plan #2

Reflect further on your pre-writing assignment, any first draft work you have completed to date, and instructor feedback to date. In two sentence to a paragraph, share your plans for what you still need to do to ensure you have sufficiently addressed your research question.

Project #2G: Rough Draft

Submit the rough draft of your article

Project #2H: Feedback response plan #3

Based on your own reflections as well as instructor and peer feedback, what is your plan to revise your rough draft to make it into a final version ready for publication?

Project #2 Final Version

Submit the final version of your feature article. I will share these with the class and we will read them for the next/final class.

Project #2I: Reflection

Project #2 Reflection

A. Submit this assignment via Blackboard by 11:59pm on Thursday, August 14.

B. Evaluate your project. Using the table below, in the third column, give yourself an A, B, C, D, or F based on the following performance levels.

Grade	Performance Level
A	Proficient
B	Satisfactory
C	Approaching Competence
D or F	Unacceptable

Then write at least one sentence explaining why you rated your project at that performance level

Criteria	Proficient	Your Self-Rating and Feedback
Content	Research question is clearly identified. Sources are relevant to the research question. Analysis demonstrates careful consideration of scientific inquiry as well as a careful reading and understanding of source content, argument, and relevance. Argument is effectively presented. All content is pertinent to the research question and aids in reader's understanding. Project guidelines related to content were followed.	
Sociological Perspective & Relevance	Demonstrates deep understanding of the sociological perspective. Sociological relevance is clear and consistently reinforced throughout. All guiding questions for project are explicitly addressed, evidence is provided to support the presenter's argument, and an explicit connection is made between the evidence and the argument.	
Organization	Well-organized in a logical sequence with good flow. Easy to follow. Follows organizational guidelines laid out in submission guideline documents.	
Clarity	Well-written, understandable (can understand on first read). Uses correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting throughout; follows the submission guideline documents).	
Complete	Follows all laid out guidelines regarding length, source requirements, content requirements, components, etc.	

Discussion	Author leads engaging class discussion. Author poses effective and understandable critical thinking to the class. Students do more talking than the author. The conversation covers substantive ground and easily fills the allotted time.	
Overall	The project demonstrated overall proficiency in content, sociological perspective and relevance, organization, clarity, completeness, and discussion.	

C. Answer the following questions:

1. Based on your project, what can you say about how the concepts of society and technological change relate to each other?

2. Based on your project, what can you say about how the sociological perspective/imagination benefits our understanding of society and technological change?

3. What went well regarding your project?

4. Are there ways you can build on these strengths in the future?

5. What could have gone better?

6. How can you improve these "growing edges" in the future?

6. How easy or difficult did you find completing this project? How much effort did you put into the project?

7. What feedback do you have about the project assignment and/or project?

OTHER PROVIDED INFORMATION

General submission guidelines

Submission guidelines excerpted from http://contexts.org/submission-guidelines/

submission guidelines
author guidelines (updated october 2014)

Contexts is a general interest sociology magazine. The writing is crisp, the stories are engaging, and the magazine appeals to both sociologists and educated "lay" readers such as mothers-in-law, university students, policy professionals, activists, and anyone who's interested in insightful social analysis.

We welcome contributions from social scientists, journalists, K-12 teachers, and anyone else who writes incisively and in an engaging style. We're looking for insightful analyses. We welcome intellectual risk takers. We publish longer, feature articles (that go through a peer-review process) and shorter "department" articles selected by section editors.

feature articles (3,000 words maximum)

Our feature articles are written for a broad audience and are cleanly and clearly written, with no jargon, footnotes, or citations. They have much in common with the best of long-form journalism: They're empirically and theoretically driven storytelling, teach readers new stuff, and they help us think differently about the world. Basically, they make you go, "Huh. That's pretty cool. I never really thought of that."

Articles in *Contexts* look at why the world is the way it is and how it came to be that way. Before submitting, look over some recent Contexts articles: How did Dubai go from a sleepy trading post to global city? What does it mean for young adults in America to "grow up" today? Why is social integration so hard for educated, professional second-generation immigrants in France [PDF]? What's so bad about fair trade coffee [PDF]?

Also posted:
***Contexts'* Guide to Style, Self-Editing and Formatting**
https://contexts.org/docs/Self-Editing_and_Formatting_Guidelines.pdf

Project #2 Additional Guidelines

Your article must be at minimum 1,000 words.

Your article must be based on:
- At least one site observation lasting at least 15 minutes, conducted by the author
- At least one interview lasting at least 5 minutes, conducted by the author
- At least three publications
- At least two academic or professional publications (e.g. academic journal articles, books, reports, etc.)
- At least one scholarly article from an academic journal. This can count towards your academic/professional publications. However, it must be an article you find on your own; while you can use articles from class as part of your research, they will not count towards meeting this particular requirement.

Great Bay Community College

PERMISSION FORM

Dear study participant,

I am a student in a Sociology course at Great Bay Community College and am working on a research project. I am writing to invite you to participate in this project.

You will not receive any compensation to participate in this project. The potential risks of participating in this study are minimal. Although you are not anticipated to receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, the research will help me investigate sociological questions through basic research and analysis, better understand the social phenomena I am exploring, and enable me to share the results of my sociological investigations.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you refuse to participate, you will not experience any penalty or negative consequences. If you agree to participate, you may refuse to answer any question and/or if you change your mind, you may withdraw at any time during the study without penalty or negative consequences.

I seek to maintain the confidentiality of all data and records associated with your participation in this research, within legal limits. The end result of this research is a research paper and class presentation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yes, I, _____consent/agree to participate in this research project.

No, I, _____do not consent/agree to participate in this research project.

_____   _____

Signature   Date