Find and Cite Three-to-Five Sources: Applying the Sociological Imagination to Critical Information Literacy

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### Sociological Eye

Sociology as a distinctive discipline
- Social basis and construction of knowledge
- “Truth is political”
- Scientific knowledge vs. other ways of knowing
- “the medium is the message”
- Commodity: economic/financial structures support/constrain information production
- Means for education: varying access, promotion of “correct” information
- Means to influence: role and impact of propaganda
- Ask questions like a sociologist
- Social assumptions vs. scientific evidence
- Verification process
- Social context of scholarly discourse; (a) who is an expert in a field, (b) where the boundaries of a field lie, and (c) what can be said within these boundaries
- Social institutions exert influence over what is considered valid or factual
- Scientific knowledge vs. factual concerns
- Ownership of information systems impacts the processes of information creation and what information is made available
- Ownership of information systems is concentrated; even where information is produced by individuals, it may be owned by private corporations (e.g., on social media platforms, transfer of copyright agreements)
- Expert knowledge is shaped by established scientific systems and processes
- Scholarly conversations are shaped by institutional structures: higher education, research firms, publishers, libraries, archives, and the WWW
- Search engines as gatekeepers to information
- Algorithms reflect the interests of their creators

### Social Structure

The impact of social structures on human action
- Social roles may privilege some as authorities
- Social institutions exert influence over what is considered valid or factual
- Ownership of information systems impacts the processes of information creation and what information is made available
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### Socialization

The relationship between the self and society
- Ideologies impact accepted authorities
- “Fake news”
- Social media as performative work
- Trusted formats and sources vary by culture
- Creation of information as expressions of self and social belonging is monetized and monitored (e.g., social media)
- Cultural contexts shapes perceptions of legitimate knowledge and questions
- Perceptions of relevance are shaped by social position
- Participation in scholarly discourse relies on membership in communities of practice
- Citation practices, plagiarism
- Search engines as gatekeepers to information
- Algorithms reflect the interests of their creators

### Stratification

The patterns and effects of social inequality
- Institutions with authority to produce knowledge recreate social inequalities
- Certain forms of knowledge production are valued over others: e.g., low income students as lacking cultural capital, rather the institutional de-valuing of different cultures
- “Profitable” research outputs receive more value and resources
- Corporate control and limits on information distribution and participation
- Commodification of personal information (i.e., surveillance capitalism) and privacy ramifications
- Particular methods of scientific inquiry are privileged as creating “neutral” knowledge
- Historical exclusion of subordinated social groups from scholarship
- Unequal access to literacy education
- Development of expert search strategies is a skill that takes education and experience

### Social Change and Social Reproduction

How social phenomena replicate and change
- Scientific authority comes from approval by educational institutions; Academic success requires acceptance of certain “truths” about the social and natural world; Through young scholars, these “truths” persist
- Certain kinds of knowledge are reproduced; because scientists use existing theories for hypothesis building, methodological design, and interpretation, they will often fail to see what does not fit into these theories
- Social movements may be aided by social media, but the terms of use and algorithms that impact what information is seen are set by private ownership
- Every day, scientists encounter phenomena that cannot be explained by existing theories: often, these anomalies are ignored or avoided through a focus on certain methodologies over others
- Students are trained in certain disciplines; While these disciplines may address similar problems, they remain distinct and the conversations within them siloed
- The terms scholars use in search depend on the conventions of their discipline; It is more difficult to read scholarship outside the discipline in which one is trained
**Find and Cite Three-to-Five Sources:**

**Applying the Sociological Imagination to Critical Information Literacy**

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**Challenge:** Do you ever ask students to complete an assignment that includes a bibliography requirement? Literature research and writing is an opportunity to apply the sociological imagination to both the paper topic *and* to the process of discovering and selecting the information sources that will inform student work. However, this is often a missed opportunity: either information discovery is seen as ancillary to the assignment and not discussed, or library instruction may not meaningfully integrate sociological concepts.

**Approach:** The *Sociological Information Literacy Framework*

- Tool for identifying how to bring **critical information literacy** into the sociology classroom
  - Reflectively locate, understand, and use information in support of lifelong learning goals for developing informed citizens with higher-order thinking skills
- **Sociological Information Literacy** is an understanding of how information and scholarship are created, published, disseminated, and used by individuals and organizations that is informed by sociological thinking and scholarship.
- The *Sociological Information Literacy Framework* takes the form of a crosswalk between two guiding documents:
  1. Sociological Literacy Framework
  2. Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

**Next Steps:** Peer review, revision, and putting it into practice!

- Review and endorsement of the Sociological Information Literacy Framework by the Association of College & Research Libraries and the American Sociological Association
- Making meaningful connections between sociological and information literacy will provide a foundation to enrich instructor-librarian collaboration in the classroom and strengthen overall student learning

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**Call for Peer Reviewers**

The draft *Sociological Information Literacy Framework* is currently under development by the Anthropology & Sociology Section (ANSS) of the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) as part of the Framework Companion Documents program, and is overseen by the ACRL Information Literacy Frameworks and Standards Committee ([https://acrl.libguides.com/ILFSC](https://acrl.libguides.com/ILFSC)). In order to create a robust, meaningful, and collaborative document representing the expertise of both librarians and sociologists, ANSS-ACRL seeks to gather peer reviewer input from sociology instructors, especially those active in the ASA Section on Teaching & Learning. The initial peer review and revision process is expected to take place during the 2018-19 academic year.

Please fill out the form at [https://tinyurl.com/socinfolitreviewerscall](https://tinyurl.com/socinfolitreviewerscall) to indicate your interest in volunteering as a peer reviewer.