# Sociological Information Literacy Framework (DRAFT – ASA 2018 Poster Version)

Author: Sociology Subgroup, Instruction & Information Literacy Committee, Anthropology & Sociology Section, Association of College & Research Libraries

| Sociological Literacy Framework Concepts | Framework for Information Literacy Concepts | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Authority Is Constructed and Contextual**<br>Evaluate based on information need and context, different types of authorities. | **Information Creation as a Process**<br>Different formats reflect varying messages and delivery methods. | **Information Has Value**<br>As commodity, education, influence, understanding; role of legal and socio-economic interests | **Research as Inquiry**<br>Iterative question asking, methods, analysis | **Scholarship as Conversation**<br>Sustained discourse, varied perspectives | **Searching as Strategic Exploration**<br>Iterative evaluation of range of sources, mental flexibility |
| **Sociological Eye**<br>Sociology as a distinctive discipline | • Social basis and construction of knowledge<br>• "Truth is political"<br>• Scientific knowledge vs. other ways of knowing | • "the medium is the message" | • Commodity: economic/financial structures support/constrain info production<br>• Means for education: varying access, promotion of "correct" information<br>• Means to influence: role and impact of propaganda | • Ask questions like a sociologist<br>• Social assumptions vs. scientific evidence<br>• 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 | • Deconstruct search engines as products of human engineering and bureaucracy.<br>• Search is a social behavior<br>• Knowledge is *not* easy |
| **Social Structure**<br>The impact of social structures on human action | • Social roles may privilege some as authorities<br>• 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 | • 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<br>• Algorithms reflect the interests of their creators |
| **Socialization**<br>The relationship between the self and society | • Ideologies impact accepted authorities<br>• "Fake news" | • Social media as performative work<br>• 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 | • Participation in scholarly discourse relies on membership in communities of practice<br>• Citation practices, plagiarism | • Perceptions of relevance are shaped by social position<br>• Cultural bias impacts design of search engines and classification systems |
| **Stratification**<br>The patterns and effects of social inequality | • Institutions with authority to produce knowledge recreate social inequalities<br>• 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 | • Socioeconomic status impacts ability to participate as a producer of information, or to access information | • "Profitable" research outputs receive more value and resources<br>• Corporate control and limits on information distribution and participation<br>• 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<br>• Development of expert search strategies is a skill that takes education and experience |
| **Social Change and Social Reproduction**<br>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

Presenters: Hailey Mooney, University of Michigan Library (haileym@umich.edu)
Paula Dempsey, University of Illinois at Chicago Library (dempseyp@uic.edu)

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
     a. Ferguson, Susan J. and William Carbonaro. 2016. "Measuring College Learning in Sociology." Pp. 135–87 in *Improving Quality in American Higher Education: Learning Outcomes and Assessments for the 21st Century*, edited by R. Arum, J. Roksa, and A. Cook. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. http://highered.ssrc.org/wp-content/uploads/MCL-in-Sociology.pdf
     b. Ferguson, Susan J. 2016. "The Center Does Hold: The Sociological Literacy Framework." *Teaching Sociology* 44(3):163–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X16651478
  2. Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education
     a. Association of College and Research Libraries. 2015. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework

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

---

### 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). 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 to indicate your interest in volunteering as a peer reviewer.