

Sociological Case Study Analysis Papers



Sociology is the study of social behaviors and their impact on society.

The themes of sociology are found in everyday culture including films. Motion picture films are an excellent vehicle to demonstrate the terms and theories discussed in this course.

For each film, students will **analyze the contents for specific sociological perspectives and examples of terms from the unit**. Analysis papers are the demonstration of a student's ability to make connections between class discussions and popular media. The goal of the analysis paper is to explain how specific sociological elements are present in an in-depth manner. Analysis papers are **NOT a film summary**. Examples from the film are used to provide evidence of specific sociological factors, **NOT a film review**. A brief synopsis of the film may be included in the introductory paragraph.

Analysis papers are assigned at the conclusion of a film. You may not use a homework pass to excuse yourself from an analysis paper! **Analysis papers must follow standard 5-paragraph essay format**. Your introduction must briefly summarize the film and include a detailed thesis. The thesis statement must clearly identify how that particular film show evidence of the specific concepts found on the film viewing sheet. A good example of a thesis statement might be:

"The 1988 film "Stand and Deliver" represents a clear analysis of achieved status, as well as ethnic and economic stigma through the conflict perspective."

This thesis tells the reader that the writer will be discussing ethnic and economic stigma as well as the relationship between those stigmas and achieved status. The writer also identified that they decided to perform their analysis of specific sociological terms according to the conflict perspective.

For body paragraphs, you should select three-four terms from the viewing sheet that you can use information from the film as examples in your analysis. You should include a definition of the term from the viewing sheet prior to giving examples of that term. Also, make reference to how your examples are reflections of that term. Each paragraph should be dedicated to evaluating a specific term. **A conclusion paragraph must be present**. A conclusion paragraph should wrap up your ideas and reiterate your thesis.

Analysis papers must be typed. You must **bold your thesis**. You must **bold all terms used from your viewing sheet**. When turning in your analysis paper, you must **staple your viewing sheet to the back of your analysis paper**. If on the rare occasion you need to e-mail your analysis paper, you must submit your viewing sheet separately.

Points to remember about your analysis:

- ❖ Incorporate all or most of the key points from the viewing sheet in a logical manner.
- ❖ Clearly identify and explain at least one sociological perspective when analyzing the film
- ❖ Show clear comprehension of one or more of the key concepts!

Perspectives Defined:

1. **Functionalism**- approach that emphasizes the contributions made by each part of society
2. **Conflict perspective**- approach emphasizing the role of conflict, competition, and constraint within society.
3. **Symbolic interactionism**- approach that focuses on the interactions among people based on mutually understood symbols.



Sociology Analysis Paper Sample

Analysis: The Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club is a film detailing a Saturday detention involving five very different students who are forced into each other's company and share their stories. All the students are deviant in their own way and eventually are able to look past their differences and become friends. The film also offers detailed observations of social sanctions, peer pressure, control theory, and the three different sociological perspectives.

The first principle seen in the film is a stigma, which is an undesirable trait or label that is used to characterize an individual. Each of the characters is associated with a stigma at the start of the film. For example, Allison is known as a basket case and liar, while Andy is seen as a jock and bully, John is characterized as a criminal and failure, Brian is known as a geek and people pleaser, and Claire is seen as a spoiled and conceited princess. They are also seen as deviants in their own ways. A deviant is a person who breaks significant societal or group norms. Each character is seen as deviant by either their actions which placed them in detention and or certain acts they perform during the detention. For instance, Allison is a thief and steals Brian's wallet during the detention and also comes to detention without even being in trouble. Claire is deviant in the way she skips school to go shopping and enters a relationship with John during the detention. Andy is deviant when he smokes the marijuana because he is a varsity athlete. Brian is deviant when he brings a flare gun to school in order to commit suicide and John is constantly deviant in the ways he is not involved in school activities, challenges Principal Vernon, and destroys school property.

Comment [s1]: Clearly identified the film

Comment [s2]: Thesis statement suggests exactly which concepts the writer will discuss in a clear and concise manner.

Comment [s3]: Not only identifies the concept but defines it as well. The proceeds to give examples of where it is seen in the film.

Comment [s4]: Not only identifies the concept but defines it as well. The proceeds to give examples of where it is seen in the film.

Another principle observed in the film is social sanctions, or rewards or punishments that encourage conformity to social norms. This is seen when the students cover for John when he snuck back into the library and also in the way Vernon threatens the addition of more Saturday detentions to control the students' actions. Similar to this is peer pressure. In the film peer pressure is used to encourage both positive (when behavior over conforms to expectations) and negative (when behavior under conforms to expectations) deviance. An example of negative deviance encouraged through peer pressure is when John convinces everyone else to smoke pot with him. An example of positive deviance would be in the way Brian tries so hard to please people, especially his parents. This can be seen in the way he is driven to suicide because he is failing a class and the way he offers to write the essay for everyone at the end of the detention because he is "the smartest".

Comment [s5]: Not only identifies the concept but defines it as well. The proceeds to give examples of where it is seen in the film.

Comment [s6]: Not only identifies the concept but defines it as well. The proceeds to give examples of where it is seen in the film.

Control theory also goes along with peer pressure and social sanctions. This theory states that compliance with social norms requires strong bonds between individuals and society. This is seen when John distracts Vernon and sacrifices himself to get caught when they sneak out instead of everyone getting in trouble. This demonstrates the level of compliance given to Vernon because the other characters are scared of being caught.

Comment [s7]: Not only identifies the concept but defines it as well. The proceeds to give examples of where it is seen in the film.

Finally, the three sociological perspectives can be seen. Functionalist can be observed in the way the Saturday detention serves the community both manifestly and latently. The manifest function is to punish the students for misbehaving in school, while the latent function is in the way the students become friends and unite to oppose Vernon. Conflict perspective is demonstrated in the way the conflict between the group members at first serves

Comment [s8]: Selected the theory and explained how it was evident in the film.

them positively in the end. This is because even though they are all different and from different groups and backgrounds they are also very similar.

Comment [s9]: Selected the theory and explained how it was evident in the film.

In the end, they are able to offer different points of view on situations and share feelings and stories that eventually help each other deal with their individual problems. The symbolic perspective is seen through the essay at the conclusion of the film. Brian states in the essay that they are all a little bit of everything in the end. They accept that they are all outcasts and weird and despite what Principal Vernon wants them to write, they refuse to associate themselves with a single group and rather band together as one.

Comment [s10]: Selected the theory and explained how it was evident in the film.

Overall, The Breakfast Club demonstrates the effects of social conformity and peer pressure on individuals. It also discusses several types of deviance for each character and how they are all similar in the end. Eventually, they all become friends and help each other accept their differences and others' differences, as well.

Comment [s11]: Conclusion reflects the thesis.