

Week 7&8

Discussion Section Activities: Observing and discussion interactions

50 minutes for each discussion section

These observations are “practice” observations that each student will conduct and will be workshopped during discussion sections. This is to help them understand how to conduct observations for the additional observations hours required for the final paper. These are guidelines for when two days of discussion sections are dedicated to the activity.

- In week 5: divide students in half, one half will conduct observations for week 7 and one half will conduct observations for week 8
- Observations need to be done PRIOR to class, and a write up needs to be brought in for their discussion section. These two weeks are the only weeks ask students to do something outside of class and bring it to discussion section
- What to tell students in prep for discussion section
 - o Pick one location and observe it for about 45 minutes. Can be someplace on campus (e.g., Hub, Rivera library) or off campus.
 - o Write down exactly what you are witnessing and how you are connecting them to the readings
 - o Make sure they pay attention to and think about the following questions as they are observing:
 - If day on symbolic interactionism:
 - Pay attention to form and type of interaction, not just content. This includes numbers (dyads and triads, group size), distance, social types (the stranger, poor) and/or domination (superordination and subordination) (Simmel). It may also include the role of money, if applicable
 - Pay attention to behavior, including gestures and significant symbols (Mead), if possible also the last of the four stages of “the act”: consummation
 - If day on Chicago School
 - Pay attention to spatial configuration and how it relates to the concentric circles model
 - Pay attention to demographics of people in space and how they do or do not interact
 - Pay attention to the use of space, both in which types of buildings (or whatever) are there and what they’re used for etc
 - Can also bring in concepts from symbolic interactionism but should focus on space and place per Chicago School
 - o In general observations pay attention to:
 - What are people doing? What are people saying? How are people interacting? How do these connect?
 - How do broader social structures and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change their actions and statements?
 - How does the location you are observing (the where or place) relate and shape the content (or what) you are observing

- How does what you are seeing compare with what we're learning in the class?
- Have them bring to class a write up from their observation.
 - Tell them: Observation write-ups are ways for you to sort out your thoughts. Think of it as the midway point between your observations and writing a paper, it's where you work through your ideas between what you're seeing in real life and what you are learning about in class that week
- During discussion section: after 10-15 min review, divide into pairs, with each pair consisting of one person who did an observation and one who did not. Tell person who wrote observation write up to bring two copies to class, one for you and one for their paired classmate
- Generate list of how to do "peer review" – helpful and less helpful tips and points
- Break up into pairs
- Let paired person read and give feedback
- By next discussion section, they will give them a written feedback, which does the following
 - Summarizes what did
 - Point out what did well, including concrete examples from the observation write up
 - Point out at 1-3 ways for the person to move forward in their thinking of how to link concepts to observations etc
- By end of week 7 & 8, each student should have observed and written an observation write up one time and a response write up once