General Guidelines for Short Reports and Reaction Papers

Students do not need to answer all of the questions posed in the assignment, but you should make sure you consider as many of the questions as necessary to make a clear argument. Answering all of the questions may make the paper too diluted as you try to fit it into the space constraints (4 pages for short reports, 3 pages for reaction papers). Please check your grammar and spelling. Errors in these areas detract from the ideas you have developed in the paper.

We (TAs and Instructor) are available to answer any questions you may have. Also, if you are unsure of your writing, I suggest that you go to the writing center! They have very talented staff members who can help you make your writing better. You can find information about the writing center at: http://writing.umn.edu/sws/ 

Citing sources: You should cite the sources of material you use in your papers. While I am not strict about the style you use to cite your sources, you need to do it. Here are some guidelines:

- If you are using a direct quote (this means you are using the author’s words exactly), you should use quotation marks and cite the author by naming him/her in your sentence and then citing the source after the sentence. For example:
  
  Williams writes “There is no empirical evidence that children raised by gay or lesbian parents experience negative health or well-being.” (Pioneer Press, Sept. 6 2004).

- If you are paraphrasing (not using the author’s words), simply site the source at the end of the sentence (Williams, Pioneer Press, Sept. 6 2004).

- You should include a list of your four references at the end of your paper.

Short Report Guidelines:

- Introduce, define and describe in brief the social issue, norm, or system of stratification (depending on the short report topic) that you are writing about.

- Answer several of the questions posed in the second paragraph of the short report assignment. Be sure to support your answers with evidence, observations and examples.

- Conclude your report with discussion that ties your experience or observations with appropriate ideas we have discussed in lecture or labs or from your text book and/or course reader.
**Reaction Paper Guidelines:**

- Give a brief (about one paragraph) summary of the article you’ve chosen to write about.

- Answer the questions posed in the assignment with evidence and examples to support your answers.

- Conclude your reaction paper with discussion that shows how your views on the topic of the reading confirm or refute material discussed in lecture, lab or in your textbook.