SOCY 100: Introduction to Sociology

**Writing Assignment #2: *Obedience* or *Simulated Prison***

In class, we have been exploring two major building blocks of sociology: research methodology/the science of sociology and the impact of groups and collectivities on our behavior. For this assignment you will bring these two topics together, analyzing a social scientific study that sheds light on the power of groups and authority figures. After having read about/watched a clip discussing a social scientific study, you will complete an assignment in which you discuss some components of the research.

1. Choose either of the following two options for this assignment:

Option 1: Stanley Milgram “Obedience” Study (*A summary of the study on YouTube*): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W147ybOdgpE>

Option 2: Zimbardo’s Stanford Prison Study (for an explanation with text and pictures, click on “the story” link at the bottom of the home page): <http://www.prisonexp.org/>

1. Become familiar with the experiment of your choice.
2. Write a hypothetical dialogue between Dr. Stanley Milgram/Dr. Zimbardo and you. Those two scientists designed and conducted the “Obedience” experiment and the “Simulated Prison” experiment” respectively.
3. In the dialogue, provide your ***critique*** of the experiment. Then, think how Dr. Milgram/Dr. Zimbardo would ***justify*** their experiment. Summarizing the experiment is *not* your task.

Tips to write:

1. Your questions for Dr. Milgram/Dr. Zimbardo should be related to Chapter 2 and/or Chapter 5.
2. Why did Dr. Milgram/Dr. Zimbardo come up with conducting their experiment?
3. Ask methodological questions.
4. Are there any research ethical issues? If so, how would Dr. Milgram/Dr. Zimbardo justify what they did?
5. What methodological flaws/problems do you find in the experiment? If you do a similar experiment today, do you think that the result would be any different?
6. Read Chapter 5 and ask questions that connect human behaviors and the experiment.
7. You must use at least **two concepts/theories** from **Chapters 2 and 5**, in total at least **four concept/theories**. Be sure that these concept are relevant to the study’s findings and that you show you understand the concept/theory in your writing. You must **bold and/or underline** the concepts/theories that you use or else it will not be counted.
8. You do not need to cover every aspect of the experiment. It is all right to focus on a few aspects.

**Format:**

Your writing should look like an interview article in a magazine (see below).

**Smith**: Your question #1.

**Milgram**: Milgram’s response to Question #1.

**Smith:** Your question #2.

**Milgram**: Milgram’s response to Question #2.

To be continued**.**

**Important:**

1. About 2-3 double-spaced pages.
2. You do *not* need to write greetings such as “Hello, Dr. Milgram. It’s my pleasure to interview you.” Just **jump into your question!**
3. It is all right to get ideas from the internet. Since both are well known experiments, you will find plenty of information on the internet. However, you do need to **cite the source.** If you use other’s idea(s) without citation, it is a form of plagiarism. According to the Montgomery College student code of conduct, the minimum sanction is an F on the assignment and the maximum sanction is an F for the course.

For help with citation procedures, please check out some of these websites:

<http://libguides.montgomerycollege.edu/apa>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/cite/>.

1. If you are not clear about the format or the content, just ask the instructor.