

Personal History Reflection

Assignment Overview and Guidelines

Prompt: Reflecting on your background and personal experience in primary and secondary school, how has your social position (class, race, gender, region, etc.) been an educational advantage or disadvantage in your life?

Guidelines: Option A) Essay format should be a maximum of 1400 words, double-spaced, with page numbers and a references page at the end. Option B) In-class presentation, maximum 8 minutes, includes slides or a visual component (text and images), references page at the end.

Rubric: Your grade will reflect your ability to 1) make an argument that addresses the prompt, 2) apply theories and concepts from the course to your argument, and 3) provide examples and evidence from your past to support your argument.

Assignment Description

What social factors have influenced your ability to achieve academically? Think about your upbringing, your social networks, and the schools and educational experiences you have been a part of. Your assignment is to prepare a paper or presentation that draws from your own life experience to support, adapt, or critique the theories of educational inequality covered in this course. Some of the factors that influenced you may not correspond directly to theories covered in the course, but make sure you incorporate at least three theories, factors, or authors that we discussed.

Remember: you do not have the space to tell your whole life story. Take specific aspects or examples from your background and personal experience that are relevant to the broader question of unequal educational opportunities across social groups or class status.

To provide evidence for your claims, you should rely on A) examples and experiences from your past, B) an interview with your parents/family, peers, or educators, and/or C) data on the neighborhoods and schools you have lived in and attended. An A paper will use at least two of these three types of sources to persuasively make your argument.

Tip: If you are from the U.S., look up U.S. census data on your neighborhood (socialexplorer.com) and School Report Card data if you attended public school (for Californians: <http://sarconline.org>).

Relevant social factors in your case might include parent involvement in your schooling, peer influences, limited access to schools or courses, strong academic counseling or mentorship, biased or uncaring teachers, burdens or stresses in your everyday life, etc. Be sure to connect the dots between these specific factors in your life and broader patterns of educational inequality by race, class, or other social categories.

Assignment is due Monday, July 24.