

# Investigating the Social World

Analytical Essay

# Overview

- ▶ You will write an essay of 2,500 words in length
- ▶ The key idea is to choose **TWO** frameworks introduced after Reading Week to analyze an issue or problem of your choice
- ▶ You are free to carry out any necessary outside/additional research; cite references properly (e.g., APA or MLA)
- ▶ You can come to my office hours to discuss your preliminary responses with me; the goal is not to give you a mark before the deadline but to clear any confusion

# Questions

- ▶ **Choose two of the investigative frameworks introduced in the module and describe how they could be applied to an issue or problem of your choosing**
  - Rational choice
  - Psychosocial framings
  - Decolonizing social research
  - Intersectional sensibilities
  - Lived experience
  
- ▶ **Discuss which of the two frameworks you choose is more compelling**

# Key tasks involved

- ▶ Describe the frameworks and present the issue at stake
- ▶ Make a case for how each of these two frameworks could offer insight to the issue
- ▶ Explain which of the two frameworks is more compelling

## Step 1: Describe the frameworks

- ▶ Use a reading or two to explain how you define/understand these frameworks, focusing on the aspects of it that are most relevant to you
- ▶ Choose two frameworks only; in your dissertation, you might use more – but here you do not have the space

## Step 2: Present the issue

You do not need to be exhaustive in describing the issue but you should make reference to some kind of source materials – such as academic or policy related research, a news article, and material from a grassroots organization or activist group.

- ▶ The Opium War
- ▶ The 2011 global protests
- ▶ Homeless and housing crisis
- ▶ Rise of smartphone
- ▶ Hysteria
- ▶ Diagnosis of ADHD
- ▶ ... and so on so forth

## Step 3: Make your case and compare

- ▶ Make a case for how these frameworks could offer insight to the issue – What questions would the framework allow you to ask and why might this be valuable?
  - You could point to areas of potential investigation
  - You could point to existing research on your topic that doesn't give the kind of insight you're interested in
  - You could point to research from that perspective on other issues that you find intriguing that might have relevance for your issue
- ▶ Explain which of these two frameworks is more analytically compelling – perhaps one framework can generate some more new insights than the other? Perhaps one framework can garner more empirical support than the other?



- ▶ It is not a traditional essay – no need to provide fully developed research questions here like you do for your dissertation; you are not making an argument or a full empirical analysis as such
- ▶ A few sentences of overview at the start and some concluding reflections would be enough; what is your key takeaway from thinking this through?





# Reminders


- ▶ Before you start, **read the guidance and questions carefully**
- ▶ When you submit your essay
  - Attach the coversheet (available on Moodle)
  - Enter your student ID in the field of **Submission Title** on Turnitin
  - Submit your essay before **midday, 21 April 2025**

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