The Assignment:

Purpose: Keeping C. Wright Mills’ concept of Sociological imagination in mind, sociologically analyze any topic of interest that relates to the course. A good topic is one that is original, includes variety of concepts from the course, makes use of theoretical tools, and offers an argument (no descriptive papers please).

After having gone through research articles and papers and now armed with a good set of notes, come up with one good research question or an argument that you wish to make either in support or against a certain situation, policy or social matter.

Now divide your research question into 3 sections:

1) Theory: a. What theoretical perspective do you wish to use? b. Why this perspective and not some other one? c. How have you found others applying this theoretical perspective to your topic of interest? d. How does this theoretical perspective help you answer your research question or make an argument?

2) Substantive material a. What data supports the assertions of the theoretical perspective that you have chosen? b. How does this data support your argument or relate to your research question c. What data are there that would disagree with your assertions? How do you deal with these?

3) Policy implication and/or conclusion a. Does this paper support the policies put into place to deal with the issue at hand? b. How can these policies be improved? Spend one week on each section. Remember that you might have to do some more research, but this time, keep your search perimeter as narrow as possible.

Don’t forget about the bibliography!

**Length of the pape**r: 5 pages in length, excluding the bibliography.Times New Roman, Size 12 **Number of sources necessary**: You must use as many sources as are necessary to make your argument (around 10-15).

**How to make an argument:**Remember, although sociology is not a hard science, it is part of social sciences, thus its practice requires rigorous discipline and knowledge of the scientific method. In other words, your arguments must be logical, supported by evidence and methodically presented. In order to do that, you must put any personal opinion aside, and only present arguments that are supported by logic and evidence, even if they contradict your previously held belief. At the end of the day, your opinion is as valid and important as the evidence that you have in its support. Furthermore, all of your arguments and evidence must be grounded in your theoretical framework. This all might sound difficult and abstract, but once you read a few good papers you will get a hang of what it is that you are expected to do. Beyond everything else, we are interested to see if you can make a good logical argument that represents a particular point of view. Don’t be afraid of taking sides so long as you can support why you picked one side over another. A good way of making sure that all of your points relate and fallow one another is to ask yourself one question after making a statement or presenting a supportive data: “so what?” You can list pages of facts but if you don’t frame them within a theoretical framework, they become useless. As an old professor of mine used to say “science without theory is stamp collecting.”