SOCIIOLOGY IN LITERATURE:

Primary text and film resources for social studies
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BEYOND THE TEXTBOOK: RESOURCES FOR TEACHING SOCIOLOGY

- Poetry
- Fiction
  - Novels
  - Short stories
- Memoir
- Journalistic Accounts

- Film
  - Popular film
  - Independent film
  - “Foreign” film
  - Documentary film
POETRY

- Setting the tone – “Human Family”
  - Maya Angelou Reading Human Family
- Weaving poetry through the course by topic
- Students writing poetry
  - Found poems – Peter Kaufman
    - Everyday Sociology Blog - Poetic Sociology
  - Slam & Spoken Word Poetry
    - Sociopoetix - Spoken Word as an Academic Tool
- Closing the circle – “A Very Simple Wish”
  - From The Collected Poetry of Nikki Giovanni
FICTION

- Students select from a list for a longer writing assignment and class presentation
- One book assigned for the whole class
NOVELS

PROS

- Continuity of a story and characters
- Depth analysis using “thick” description

Challenges

- Novels involve a greater commitment of time
- Variation in student reading and comprehension
SHORT STORIES

- Short stories can be integrated by topic throughout the course
- Time limited and less intimidating
- Many anthologies available
MEMOIR

- Sociological imagination – linking individual lives to larger social contexts and structures

- Example: *Orange is the New Black*, Piper Kerman
MEMOIR

- Sociological Imagination Memoir
  - Ann Meier’s (U of Minnesota) Memoir Assignment
    - Sociological Memoir Directions (with Permission from the author)
  - Examples for students: Honky, Dalton Conley; The Other Wes Moore, Wes Moore; Glass Castle, Jeanette Walls; I am Malala, Malala Yousafzai
JOURNALISTIC ACCOUNTS

- Books that help illustrate the “real world” application of sociology

- Examples, *Nickle & Dimed*, Barbara Ehrenreich; *Zeitoun*, Dave Eggers
“(Sociologists can) use films as a lens for exploring the complexities of social class, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and to propel our analysis of these inequalities in the past and in contemporary life.”

Elizabeth Higgenbotham, 2013
Sociology Through Film Resources


Websites

- Sociology Through Documentary Film Wiki
- ASA Films for Introduction to Sociology
- The Sociological Cinema
- The Society Pages - Great Films for Sociology Classes
- Lesson Plans for Teaching with Films
FILM

- Popular Film
  - The Long Walk Home
  - Standing Together
  - Teacher's Guide for The Long Walk Home
FILM

- Independent & Foreign Films
  - Ma Vie en Rose

Boy or Girl?
FILM

- Documentary
  - The Lottery
    The Lottery Trailer
  - FLOW
    FLOW Trailer

Sociology Through Documentary Film
CONCLUSION: TEXTS & THE “REAL” WORLD

“We were inspired to adopt nontraditional (texts) into our respective classrooms to help address the challenges of teaching students how to think about the world sociologically.”

Castellano, DeAngelis, and Clark-Ibáñez 2008


POETRY

- Maya Angelou, Human Family
- Chrystos, No Public Safety
- Diane Gilliam Fisher, Kettle Bottom (works well with the film, Matewan)
- Nikki Giovanni, A Very Simple Wish
FICTION

- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*.
- Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*.
- Bebe Moore Campbell, *Your Blues Ain’t Like Mine*.
- Susanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*.
- Anna Quindlen, *Black and Blue*. 

SHORT STORIES


  - Toni Morrison’s only published short story. The story of two women who met as children in the state home they were placed in as a result of having unfit (ill; negligent) mothers. One of the women is white, one black, but the story never reveals which one is which race.