

**Introduction to Sociology**  
**SOCI 10100.14 – Spring 2010**  
**Assignment #2**

Subcultures and countercultures take time to develop and under normal circumstances one must be an insider to understand a group's distinct ways of thinking and doing. But filmmakers often highlight the distinctiveness of a group's subculture or counterculture in the course of telling a story (often about a person who does not quite fit into the subculture). Filmmakers can accomplish the task of identifying markers of a subculture or counterculture because they choose a few elements of a subculture or counterculture and then highlight those elements in the course of the story. The risk, of course, is that filmmaker distorts, misrepresents, and sometimes even mocks a particular subculture or counterculture in the course of telling a story. For this assignment, you will watch a feature-length film about a subculture or counterculture and then analyze the film using concepts you have learned in this course.

**As a courtesy, if you check a film out at the IC Library, please return the film promptly (and do not re-check the film).**

This assignment is designed to meet the following course goals:

- To enable you to articulate the unique perspective of sociologists (as opposed to other disciplines), particularly (1) the types of questions sociologists ask and (2) the ways that sociologists answer those questions;
- To prepare you to describe and examine social phenomena;
- To give you an opportunity to apply sociological insights to your own lived experience and the world around you.

The guidelines for your search are as follows:

1. Pick a film that emphasizes a particular subculture from the list below. Films marked with an asterisk (\*) are available in the library. Others may be rented from a video store or iTunes.
  - a. *New in Town* – Small-town Midwest culture
  - b. *\*Shawshank Redemption* – Prison culture
  - c. *\*North Country* – Laborer/working class culture
  - d. *\*Hoosiers* – Sports culture
  - e. *Flawless* (Phillip Seymour Hoffman & Robert DeNiro) – Gay/Drag queen culture or
  - f. *\*Office Space* – Corporate culture
  - g. *A Few Good Men* – Military culture
  - h. *Best in Show* – Dog show culture
  - i. *Lords of Dogtown* – Skateboarding culture
  - j. *\*Mi Vida Loca* – Latina gang culture
  - k. *\*Dead Poets Society* - Prep school culture
  - l. *A Price Above Rubies* – Hasidic Jewish culture
  
2. I have identified general subcultures for each film in the descriptions above. You may write about the subculture I have identified. Or you may choose to narrow your assignment further. For example, if you chose the *Shawshank Redemption*, you could write about prison culture in general, prison guard culture, or prisoner culture. It's up to you whether you choose to narrow the focus of your assignment. Regardless of your choice, select only ONE subculture to discuss and be consistent throughout your assignment.

3. While watching the film, you should take notes so that you remember key moments and events (and you won't have to re-watch the film). Please note that you will need to refer to specific incidents, events and quotes in your answers.

In the assignment that you submit, answer the following questions.

1. Film:
  - a. Identify the film you watched and the subculture you will discuss in this assignment.
2. Subculture or Counterculture:
  - a. Briefly describe the subculture depicted in the film. Give specific examples to illustrate and support your argument.
  - b. Is the group represented in your film a subculture or a counterculture?
    - i. Define the term (subculture or counterculture) *in your own words*. Do not directly quote lecture or the book (although you should reference one or both in your citation).
  - c. What are some of the distinctive markers of the subculture or counter culture that set this group apart from dominant culture?
3. Analysis:
  - a. Pick 5 concepts from the list that follows. For each separate concept that you choose, define (*in your own words*) and explain how this concept was illustrated in the film. You will need to refer to specific instances, events and quotes from the film. Number each concept (1-5 or a-e) and discuss each for 1-2 paragraphs.
  - b. Concepts to choose from:
    - i. Dominant culture
    - ii. Material culture
    - iii. Beliefs
    - iv. Values
    - v. Norms (you can discuss folkways, mores, and/or taboos)
    - vi. Sanctions
    - vii. Symbols
    - viii. Language/Argot
    - ix. Culture Shock
    - x. Ethnocentrism
    - xi. Socialization
    - xii. Agency
4. Critical Assessment of the Film:
  - a. By their very nature, fictional films distort reality. How well do you think that this film represents the subculture or counterculture that it portrays? Your answer will be graded on how well you argue your point. Your discussion should be 1-2 paragraphs.

Here are some additional notes on formatting your assignment.

1. You must address explicitly each of the questions above, following the outline provided. It is a good idea to label your answers with the outline numbers provided (1, 2, 3, etc.). All of your answers must be in complete sentences.
2. You are not required to use additional sources. However, should you choose to do so, you should reference and outside source materials using a standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.). *Plagiarism will not be tolerated.*
3. Style, grammar and spelling will be taken seriously. If you struggle with any of these issues, I highly recommend that you visit the Writing Center.

4. The tone of the assignment should be formal and academic (avoid jargon and colloquialisms). Your writing level should be college-appropriate and the final assignment should be fully edited.
5. The assignment must be printed and handed in. Include your name and the page number in the header of each page. Staple all pages together.
6. Collaboration is prohibited. You may watch the film with others, but you cannot discuss your answers/analysis/concepts. All work must be your own.
7. Late assignments will be penalized 10 points per day, including weekends.

### Grading Rubric

Item	Excellent - Student has engaged with the material in a sophisticated and creative way	Good - Student understands the material on a basic level (can repeat/restate ideas)	Weak - Student's understanding is flawed or student did not meet a requirement
<b>Subculture (10 points)</b>	Student clearly articulates the concept of a subculture and identifies relevant examples from the film to illustrate the concept	Student articulates the concept of a subculture, but some examples are vaguely discussed	Student quotes the definition of a subculture, offers an incorrect definition, or does not define a subculture; Student does not elaborate or uses incorrect examples
<b>Concepts</b>	Student clearly defines and illustrates concept using film materials; student offers unique insight and demonstrates engagement with course	Student's discussion of concept and illustrations are on the right track, but there are occasional errors or discussion is at times underdeveloped	Students discussion of the concept and/or illustrations is seriously flawed; Student does not demonstrate understanding/engagement with course materials
<b>Concept 1: (15 Points)</b>			
<b>Concept 2: (15 Points)</b>			
<b>Concept 3: (15 Points)</b>			
<b>Concept 4: (15 Points)</b>			
<b>Concept 5: (15 Points)</b>			
<b>Film Analysis (5 points)</b>	Student successfully defends her/his position	Student is somewhat convincing	Student's argument is unsuccessful
<b>Writing (10 points)</b>	College-appropriate writing/very few errors	In need of some revision/editing	In need of serious revision/not college-appropriate writing

**FINAL GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_