

There's Research On That! (TROT) Project

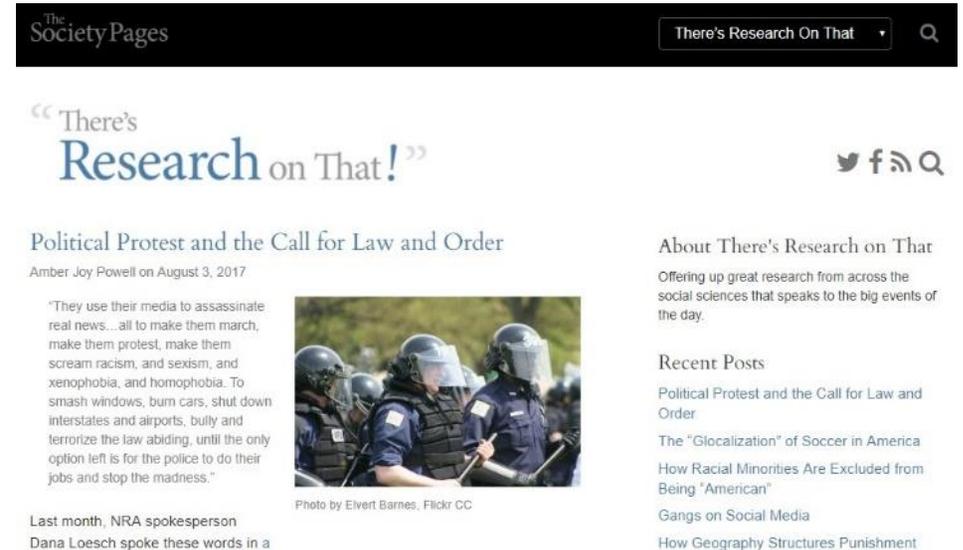
The basic idea

You'll be writing a short blog post in the style of a specific sociology blog, "There's Research On That!" (<https://thesocietypages.org/trot/>). According to the TROT website, the TROT blog's goal is "Offering up great research from across the social sciences that speaks to the big events of the day." The aim of this project is to familiarize yourself with sociological research on a topic or question important to you, then summarize that research in a compelling way for a public audience. Before finalizing your blog post, you'll review and summarize TROT blog posts most relevant to your interests, formulate your topic and question, find and summarize sociological articles that speak to your question, and draft your blog post for in-class peer review. Each portion of this six-part project will be due throughout the semester, and specific instructions for each part may be found below.

Technical details

With the exception of the draft blog post (assignment part 5), all portions of the assignment must be submitted electronically via Blackboard. Your final blog post must be a minimum of two double-spaced pages, written in 12-point font like Times New Roman (no Comic Sans, for the love of Pete), with one-inch margins. Word, .rtf, or .pdf submissions are acceptable. Each page should have your name in the top right corner and page numbers at the bottom right. Please review the syllabus for academic integrity and citation instructions; the academic integrity policy applies to every portion of this assignment. In your blog post, you *must* include properly-formatted references! *If you are unsure how to appropriately cite materials in a blog post, or how to craft a paper more generally, please do yourself a favor and talk to me during office hours. A brief chat with me during office hours could help you avoid plagiarism which, as I'm sure you've heard, can be pretty devastating to your academic career. In brief, when in doubt, talk with me before you submit your assignments.*

Remember that your aim here is to summarize sociological *research* sources that speak to a topic and question of your choosing. We'll talk more about what "sociological research sources" means in class, but in brief, you're looking for peer-reviewed journal articles in sociology journals. You could also choose sociology books from university presses (publishers like the "University of XYZ Press"), although that requires much more reading for you. If you find a book you'd like to use for your blog post, talk to me. **Please note that sociological research sources do *not* include Wikipedia or blog posts, editorials, or news articles.**



Part	Due	Points	Assignment
1: What is TROT?	Week 2, Friday by 11:59pm	20	Your aim in this brief assignment is to explore the "There's Research On That!" site and get some practice reading and summarizing articles (well, blog posts, in this case). First, pick a topic area on the site to explore. Navigate to the TROT website and scroll down to the "#TROT by Topic" drop-

			<p>down menu at the right. Choose a topic area that interests you, and pick 3 blog posts in that topic area to read and summarize. Then, respond to the following in a page or less (and don't forget to put your name somewhere on what you submit!):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which topic area did you choose and why? (Just 2-3 sentences would work here.) 2. For each of the 3 posts you read: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Note the title and a link to the post. b. What question does the research answer? In other words, what's the "that" the research is responding to? c. In 1-2 sentences, summarize how the research answers the question. 3. Choose one blog of the 3 posts you read and write a 2-3 sentence response. You could respond to <i>any</i> of the following questions (no need to respond to them all, though!): Did anything you read surprise you and, if so, why? Does the research contradict your experience, and what might explain that? What is "sociological" about this research? Does the research propose any solutions you think might work, and, if so, what are they?
2: Your TROT topic & question	Week 3, Friday by 11:59pm	10	<p>This part of the project is pretty simple: choose a topic area from the list on the TROT website, write the question you want your blog post to address, and explain in 2-3 sentences why it's important to you. Kicking around more than one idea? That's cool. Feel free to draft 2 or 3, and I'll give you feedback on which might be most useful for the class.</p>
3: Finding sociological research	Week 5, Friday by 11:59pm	40	<p>For this part of the project, find 5 <i>sociological, peer-reviewed</i> research articles that speak in some way to your chosen question. For each article, respond to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include a full citation in a consistent style for each article. More information about academic integrity and citation is available in the syllabus, but if you're not sure which style to use, you can use ASA style: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/. 2. Read the abstract for the article. If there is no abstract, read just the conclusion of the article. Then: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. In one sentence, summarize the main argument of the article. b. In a second sentence, explain how you think the article speaks to your question. <p>Finally, write a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) about your research experience so far. Respond to the following questions: Did you have trouble finding research that spoke specifically to your question? If so, what do you make of that? Did you notice any patterns in the research you found – for example, lots of research on X but not so much on Y? Any guesses about why these patterns exist? Anything else you want to share about your research experience so far?</p>
4: Literature review	Week 7, Friday by 11:59pm	30	<p>Choose 3 of the 5 articles you located for part 3 and read them, taking notes on their main argument and how they respond to your question. You're going to write a brief literature review using those 3 articles, and it should be structured as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In your first paragraph, summarize your question again and why it matters to you. Is there a brief anecdote or example from the literature, from the news, or from your life that you can use to introduce your question? Write it out here; this could be useful at the start of your blog post.

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. For each of the 3 articles you read, write a paragraph that summarizes the key parts of the argument in the article and how the article responds to your question. Cite the articles appropriately in your paragraphs, following ASA style. 3. In a concluding paragraph, say something about how the articles you read relate <i>to each other</i>. Did you notice any overlap in their arguments? Disagreements? Do some respond to your question in similar ways and, if so, how?
5: Draft blog post	Week 11, class day 2, <i>in class</i>	10	<p>It's time to draft your blog post! Using previous TROT blog posts as rough templates, write your 2-page blog post following these guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start with something compelling, either drawing from the first paragraph of your literature review, or using something else you've discovered in your research and reflection. Add in your concluding paragraph from part 4, and revise this introduction to be: a) interesting, and b) say something about the research you found, as a whole. 2. Add in your summaries of your three sources from part 4. You may need to make some revisions here, and <i>at least</i> three sources are required. 3. Write a concluding paragraph that includes something interesting, like perhaps unanswered aspects of your original question, or next (specific) steps for addressing your question. If you feel stuck here, revisit the TROT blog posts and/or the 3 articles you read to see how they handle conclusions. 4. Make sure to format your draft like the TROT blog posts: you can include a quote or two, if you like, and include full citations within the body of what you write. 5. Find an image you'd use at the top of your blog post, and make sure to include the link to the image so it may be properly attributed. <p>You <i>must</i> bring a paper copy of your draft to class for discussion/peer review! Make sure your name is on it, too!</p>
6: Final blog post	Week 15, Friday by 5:00pm	40	<p>Following the feedback from your peer review, revise your blog post. Then, in a paragraph each, respond to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you change your draft following peer review? What, specifically, did you modify? Was there any feedback you chose not to implement and, if so, why? 2. Think back to the beginning of class. If you were to craft a research project to respond to your question, knowing what you know now and building on the research you've already read, what research method would you choose for your research project and why? 3. How'd it go? In a brief paragraph, tell me about your experience writing this blog post. Did it help you understand the concepts we discussed in class? Do you think any differently about how you make arguments or claims about the world around you? How so or why not? Did you feel that this was a reasonable assignment, and were you able to complete it in a way that you found satisfactory? If not, how might it be improved in future classes? How much work did you feel you put into this project, and do you think it showed through in your final product? Is there anything else I should know about your work on this project? <p><i>Be sure to submit both your revised blog post and your responses to the above questions!</i></p>