

Fall 2009

# Paper 1

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**Introduction to Sociology**  
**Fall 2009**  
**Paper #1**

Rough Draft Due Date: **Thursday October 15** in class.

Due Date: **Tuesday October 20** in class. For a full grade you must turn in your edited rough draft, your peer review sheet and your final draft. Please paper clip these together before you come to class.

Your final paper is worth 17.5% of your grade and will be graded based on the criteria at the end of this assignment. Your rough draft is worth 2.5% of your grade and will be graded based on its level of completeness, not quality of writing.

In this paper you'll analyze how religion and culture affects attitudes towards health and illness. You will also experience qualitative interviewing by conducting two interviews. After transcribing and analyzing the interview results, you should write a 7-9 page paper answering the following questions. This paper should be double spaced with 1" margins and Times New Roman 12 point or equivalent font. You should compare within your answers to these questions the differences and similarities between your interviewees and both our guest speaker, Heather Ash Amara, and the book by Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, along with your sources. Your paper should include at least THREE articles from a sociology journal that are at least 10 pages long that address the topic of your paper. You should use these journal articles to help you make sense of the relationship between your interviews and Fadiman's book. You may use additional resources, such as newspaper articles or websites, that provide a background to your topic (i.e., yoga, Hindus, etc.) as long as those resources are appropriately cited.

This paper will address the question of "how does religion and culture affect attitudes towards health and illness?" In Anne Fadiman's book, the Hmong immigrants believed in supernatural or spiritual explanations for both why people become ill and what makes them better. You should select one of the paper topics below. Each topic includes TWO interviews with an ADULT using the interview format created in class.

1) *Faith, Illness and Healing*. If you select this paper topic, you will explore the relationship between spiritual or religious beliefs and beliefs about illness and healing. For your interviews you will select two individuals of similar religious backgrounds that are DIFFERENT than your own religious upbringing (e.g., two people who are Jewish if you are raised Methodist, etc.) To prepare for these interviews, you should do some brief online research on the religion in question, which you can include in your paper. This paper will compare and contrast the beliefs of your interviewees with the Hmong beliefs as documented by Fadiman. Topics you may want to include:

--Beliefs about what makes people sick, whether sickness can be a gift/blessing/curse from a divine being, whether or not religion makes you more or less likely to become sick.

--Religious practices related to health and remaining healthy (attitudes about drinking, sexuality, sleeping, praying, church attendance, and food consumption).

--Beliefs about healing and how healing happens, whether or not praying or confession can heal someone, beliefs about hands-on healing or faith healing, whether or not divine beings play a role in the healing process.

2) *Alternative or Holistic Healing Methods*. If you select this paper topic, you will explore the belief systems of practitioners of alternative healing methods (e.g., acupuncture, acupressure, reiki, chiropractic care, Ayurvedic medicine, therapeutic massage, etc.) For this paper, you will select one healing method and interview TWO ADULTS who either practice or participate in this healing method. You may also want to conduct preliminary online research on this alternative or holistic healing method. This paper will compare and contrast the beliefs of your interviewees with the Hmong beliefs as documented by Fadiman. Topics you may want to include:

--Beliefs about how and why the healing practice works, when it doesn't work, and what benefits there are to participating.

--Any connection between the healing practice and religion or spirituality.

--Understanding and experience with Western medicine or the biomedical model, and the comparison/contrast between their healing practice and Western medicine, whether or not the practitioner sees the alternative healing method as a substitute for or a complement to Western medicine.

### **Notes:**

*On the paper topic:* There is some flexibility in this assignment. If you are interested in an alternative paper topic related to Fadiman's book that involves the use of 2 qualitative interviews, come speak with me.

*On citations:* You should use the ASA citation style and include all resources in a bibliography. Any time you cite another person's work or another person's ideas, you should provide the appropriate citations. Exact phrases and quotes should include clear quotation marks, citation, and reference to the page number (AuthorLastName Year: Number). You do not need to provide citations for your interviews. However, you should give your interviewees pseudonyms (Bob, Sue, etc.) to protect their identity.

### Grading Rubric or *What Do I Have to Do to get an A?*

An A Paper has a strong thesis, and it is a well structured paper with a clear argument made throughout. It provides a combination of one's own innovative/analytical perspective and a thorough engagement with the literature on the subject. It has only a couple of minor grammar or style problems, if any.

A B Paper has a weak thesis but is a well written, well structured paper with an argument made throughout. It includes both the students' perspective and reference to the literature on the subject. It has some grammar, style or organizational problems, but they do not detract from the paper substantially.

A C paper has little or no thesis, and it is not very well written or structured. The argument of the paper is unclear, and it makes only minimal reference to the existing literature on the subject. It has grammar, style or organizational problems that substantially detract from the paper.

A D or F paper has many of the same problems as the C paper, but in addition the paper does not follow the existing assignment and/or has been turned in late.