**Front End Critique**

*SOC 4881 – Population Studies Research Practicum*

**DUE**

*March 4*

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Complete this assignment on your own.

You will be assigned to read one “front end” of a paper written by another group. I will share with you (via the class website) your assigned front end on February 25.

Each group will have to improve their front ends before moving forward, and they will do so based on feedback from you (and me). In this assignment, your objective is to provide detailed, constructive, and critical (but respectful) feedback to the group whose front end you will read.

Use the attached worksheet to provide your feedback. On it, address the following questions:

1. ***Did they follow the group assignment instructions?***

Below are the basic instructions from the “Front End” group assignment:

*To receive full credit, the front end should be about 3,000 words and should include (1) a title page; (2) an introduction of the general research topic; (3) a statement of the specific research questions; (4) a critical review of previous literature; (5) a theoretical argument and hypotheses; (6) a short wrap up or summary of the questions, argument, and contributions; and (7) a reference list.*

Did they follow them? If not, what needs to improve?

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about what the topic and specific research questions are?***

Are both the topic and the questions clear? Do the research questions follow logically from the introduction? How could they be improved?

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about why the topic/questions are practically and/or theoretically important?***

Have the authors made a compelling case that we NEED to answer their questions because the results will (a) have important real-life practical implications and/or (b) be important for the development or advancement of sociological or other ideas/theory. The fact that “nobody has studied this before” does not automatically make the topic or questions important. (There are lots of things that have never been studied that are not important!) Could you explain to someone who knows nothing about this research why we MUST have good answers to the author’s questions? What suggestions do you have for the authors about how to improve the front end in this respect?

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about how the group’s research will improve upon prior research?***

Why do we need another study on this topic? Have the authors critically evaluated the existing research literature, such that you have a clear sense of what has been done before, what has not been done, what was good/bad about prior research, and how the authors’ new research will build on and/or improve what we already know? What is unclear and how might the authors improve their critique of or engagement with prior research?

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about the group’s theoretically-informed expectations/hypotheses about what they will find?***

Are the authors clear about what they expect to find in terms of results? Have they offered a sound theoretical/logical rationale for WHY they expect those results? Do you find that rationale convincing? Can you think of counter-arguments or reasons to expect different results? How can you help the authors improve or strengthen their argument?

1. ***After reading the front end, are you excited to learn more? Have the authors made you care about their topic and questions? Have they convinced you that their results will be both practically and theoretically important?***

Basically, do the authors make you CARE about the research questions and results? Have they convinced you that it is urgent that we get good answers to their questions? How could the authors make a more compelling case or write a more exciting front end?

1. ***Is the Front End Well Written, from a Style and Technical Point of View?***

Is the front end clear and logically organized? Is it easy to follow? Is it well written, from a technical (i.e., grammar, sentence structure) point of view? What might be done to improve the writing?

**GRADING**

This assignment is worth 10 points. Questions 4, 5, and 6 are worth **2** points each. The others are worth **1** point each. Credit will be based on how thoroughly you answer the questions. Note that none of them are simple yes/no questions; all ask you to provide suggestions for how the authors might improve their front end. Turn in **just the worksheet** via Canvas.

Assignments turned in up to 48 hours late will receive half credit; those turned in beyond 48 hours late will not be accepted.

**WORKSHEET: CRITIQUE OF FRONT END**

**Your Name:** [Here]

**Topic of Group’s Paper:** [Here]

1. ***Did they follow the group assignment instructions?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about what the topic and specific research questions are?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about why the topic/questions are practically and/or theoretically important?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about how the group’s research will improve upon prior research?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***After reading the front end, are you clear about the group’s theoretically-informed expectations/hypotheses about what they will find?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***After reading the front end, are you excited to learn more? Have the authors made you care about their topic and questions? Have they convinced you that their results will be both practically and theoretically important?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***Is the Front End Well Written, from a Style and Technical Point of View?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]