

Evicted Activities

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SUGGESTED CITATION

When using resources from TRAILS, please include a clear and legible citation

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<https://trails.asanet.org/article/view/evicted-activities>.

Abstract

I assign *Evicted* in Introductory Sociology. We read the book throughout 3-4 weeks of the course. I do not lecture on *Evicted*, but instead, I place students in small discussion groups. They discuss the book in their group for 15-25 minutes, and then we discuss the book as a class for an additional 15-25 minutes. I assign students several *Evicted* Activities: Pre-Reading Questions essay, Reading Quizzes, Online Discussion Questions, Reading Groups, and an Essay. I also invite guest speakers from local housing programs, take my students to tour a homeless shelter, and I have taken students to hear a lecture by the author.

Details

Subject Areas: Introduction to Sociology/Social Problems

Resource Types: Assignment

Class Levels: Any Level

Class Sizes: Small

Learning Goals and Assessments

LEARNING GOALS

By pairing Evicted with learning activities (e.g., quizzes, in-class discussion, essays, guest speakers), students can gain an in-depth sociological experience in introductory sociology.

Have students demonstrate an application of introductory sociology themes to an emerging area of sociological interest that has little, if any, coverage in most introductory courses.

ASSESSMENTS

Students will prepare a pre-reading reflection essay and a post-reading application essay.

Students will complete reading quizzes and online discussion questions.

Resource Files

DOCX

DOCX

TECHNIQUE

EVICTED ACTIVITIES

AS USED BY

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COURSES

Any – used specifically in Introductory Sociology

ABSTRACT

I assign *Evicted* in Introductory Sociology. We read the book throughout 3-4 weeks of the course. I do not lecture on *Evicted*, but instead, I place students in small discussion groups. They discuss the book in their group for 15-25 minutes, and then we discuss the book as a class for an additional 15-25 minutes. I assign students several *Evicted* Activities: Pre-Reading Questions essay, Reading Quizzes, Online Discussion Questions, Reading Groups, and an Essay. I also invite guest speakers from local housing programs, take my students to tour a homeless shelter, and I have taken students to hear a lecture by the author.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOAL

- Goal 1: By pairing *Evicted* with learning activities (e.g., in-class discussion, essays, guest speakers), students can gain an in-depth sociological experience in introductory sociology.
- Goal 2: Have students demonstrate an application of introductory sociology themes (i.e., the sociological imagination, stratification, structure and agency, theory) to an emerging area of sociological interest that has little, if any, coverage in most introductory courses.

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Move beyond the textbook and get students reading work by a sociologist.
- Expose students to a topic they likely know little about.
- Give students a taste of upper-level sociology courses using guest speakers, site visits, or both.

ANTICIPATED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will

- Apply sociological concepts and theories to the topic of eviction and housing.
- Describe how housing and inequality are linked.
- Summarize some of the ways that their local community addresses housing insecurity.

- Develop a sense of empathy for people and families who are experiencing housing insecurity.
- Evaluate the methods of sociology.

RELATED TRAILS RESOURCES

- Hendley, Alexandra. 2018 "Home and Society Syllabus." Syllabus published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Medley-Rath, Stephanie. "Evicted Reading Quiz Questions." *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)

REFERENCES

- Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Hudak, Rachael. 2016. "Study Guide for *Evicted*." Penguin Random House. Retrieved July 29, 2017 (http://www.evictedbook.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/EVICTED.DESMOND.978-0-553-44745-3.InstructG_PG.16pgs.FINAL_.NO_CROPS.pdf).
- Lang, James M. 2018. "How to Prepare for Class Without Overpreparing." July 29. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved December 31, 2018 (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Prepare-for-Class/244015>).
- No author. 2016. "Reading Group Guide for *Evicted*." Retrieved July 29, 2017 (http://www.evictedbook.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Desm_9780553447453_RGG.pdf).
- Teaching in the Fast Lane. 2014. "Questions to Ask About Reading." Aug. 28. Retrieved December 31, 2018 (<https://teachinginthefastlane.com/2014/08/questions-to-ask-about-reading.html>).
- The Eviction Lab. 2018. Retrieved December 31, 2018 (<https://evictionlab.org/>).

ESTIMATED TIME

Three to four weeks for introductory students depending on whether or not you include guest speakers, site visits, and the academic preparedness of your students. Instructors could increase the weekly reading load for upper-level students or more academically prepared students who could get through the reading more quickly.

PROCEDURE, POSSIBLE PITFALLS, AND ASSESSMENT

"About this Project"

Students read "About this Project" during the second week of the semester when I teach methods in the course.

Pre-Reading Questions

The Pre-Reading Questions are due 3-4 weeks before we start discussing the text and any other reading from the book. I use the pre-reading questions to gauge how much

students already know about eviction. Most of my students know very little about eviction, foreclosure, mortgages, etc. Most of my students are living at home with a parent and have never paid rent or sought out a place to live. I also use the pre-reading questions to learn about my students' experiences with eviction. There is always at least one student that shares with me that they have been homeless or evicted. I make it clear to students that I will not disclose this information, but I will share with the class that there are students in the room who have had this experience so that their classmates are aware and are sensitive to this fact. Realize, too, that many first-year students were children during the Great Recession. It is likely that your students faced involuntary moves during their childhood, but their parents protected them from the full scale of what was happening to their household.

Reading Quizzes and Discussion Questions

I assign a combination of Reading Quizzes and Discussion Questions that are submitted on Canvas. I have set my course up so that there are six quizzes and six discussion questions to submit, but only the highest three of each are calculated in final grades. The Reading Quizzes and the online Discussion Questions are assigned to increase reading compliance. Further, students who complete the quizzes and discussion questions should be better prepared to discuss the material in class. The purpose of the reading quizzes and discussion questions are to increase reading compliance. The Evicted Reading Quiz Questions are available on TRAILS.

Reading Group

I assign students to a Reading Group. Each group includes 3-5 students. I ask students at the beginning of the semester for their approximate GPA and organize groups to include a range of GPAs. I set the groups up this way to increase the likelihood that at least one student in each group has done the reading and can help guide the group through their discussion. I include a set of discussion questions that each group should work through in their discussion in the Activities document. While they are in their groups, I do one of two things. I go around and "eavesdrop" on groups, participating in the discussion occasionally. Alternatively, I go over their Discussion Question responses that they posted online. Both are a means of gathering information to help guide our whole class discussion for the remaining class time. I am able to summarize what students are talking about in their groups, correct misinformation or clarify any confusion, and help start the discussion for the whole class. I also use Hudak's (2016) "Study Guide for *Evicted*" for questions to help jumpstart discussion (review and select questions in advance). I mix the discussion up each day. One day, I might stick closely to the broader discussion questions and then use one or two from one of the reading guides that already exist for *Evicted*. Another day, I might use the questions from the essay they will be writing in class. Another day, I might stick more closely to the reading guide questions. I usually have students who will participate in the whole-class discussion because they have had time to prepare in their reading groups and by doing the online Discussion Question before coming to class.

My class is capped at 39 students. For larger classes, reading groups may need to be eliminated or moved entirely online.

Guest Speakers

I invite guest speakers to talk about housing insecurity in our local area. During Fall 2018, I invited speakers from the Kokomo Housing Authority, Jackson Street Commons (housing for Veterans), and Advantage Housing (helps people get into low-income housing and prepares them for homeownership). I give each speaker about 20-30 minutes to talk and 10-20 minutes for questions (40 minutes total). I scheduled speakers on different days, so this meant the first half of class was with the speaker, and we still had about 30 minutes to break into reading groups and whole class discussion. During the most recent semester I taught the book, I invited the speakers to come on the same day as a panel. Each speaker had about 10 minutes to talk about their organization and then there was time for questions from students. The students really liked this format because they did not realize how interconnected these separate organizations were within the community. I will likely stick with this model in the future.

Site Visit

We also do a site visit of the Kokomo Rescue Mission (homeless shelter). Our campus is a five-minute drive from the Mission (but too far to walk). I schedule the tour to begin 10 minutes after normal class time begins and to end 10 minutes before normal class time ends. This buffer gives students 25 minutes to get to and from other classes. Be aware that late November and early December are difficult times for tours due to the work these organizations are doing to prepare for the holidays for their clients. Also, tour sites might not be able to accommodate large groups. Tours may also be inaccessible for students with disabilities and accommodations may be needed. My tour site splits us into smaller groups of 10-12 students, which they can manage. Larger classes might not be able to be accommodated. Be sure you know your institution's policies about field trips. My students had to sign waivers to attend. During spring 2019, I did not schedule a tour due to the time commitment. I will reevaluate to see if giving up an entire class is worth it.

During fall 2017, I only had one guest speaker and the Mission tour. Matthew Desmond had a public speaking engagement in Indianapolis (about an hour south of our campus). My university provided funding for transportation and pizza so that I could take my entire class to hear his talk. Thirty-three students attended along with another faculty member to help me supervise. The transportation cost about \$200.

Essay

Finally, students write an essay. I do not give an exam on *Evicted*. The essay takes the place of an exam. I ask students to make connections between course material earlier in the semester with housing insecurity. You may need to adapt these questions to reflect your course's needs. I take time in class during our whole class discussions to address questions 2, 3, and 4 (sociological imagination, theoretical application, and inequality). The essay also asks students to address the guest speakers and site visit.

Additional Resource

The Eviction Lab (<https://evictionlab.org/>) offers more resources including maps and eviction rankings that may be usefully incorporated into your *Evicted* activities. I pull up the maps and rankings in class to show how eviction compares locally to the nation and nearby states. For example, I compare Indiana (where we are located) with Illinois. The Indiana eviction rate is twice as high as Illinois' eviction rate even though percentage of renters is slightly lower, and rents are lower. I ask students to speculate as to why this might be.

Thumbnail Image

Medley-Rath, Stephanie. 2018. The *Evicted* Exhibit at the National Building Museum. Washington, DC.

Evicted Activities (30% of final grade)

Eviction: forced out of your home due to lack of payment or violation of the lease

Learning Objectives

1. Apply the sociological imagination to the study of eviction.
2. Apply functionalist, conflict, symbolic interactionist, and feminist sociological perspectives to the topic of eviction and housing.
3. Describe how housing is linked with racial and gender inequality.
4. Describe how housing discrimination effects families with children compared to families without children.
5. Summarize some of the ways that housing insecurity is addressed in **Howard County**.
6. Develop a sense of empathy for people and families who are experiencing housing insecurity.
7. Evaluate the methods of sociology.

Pre-Reading Questions (5%)

Before you start reading *Evicted*, you should write a 1-page essay answering the questions below. You should organize your response using the headings: Question 1, Question 2, Question 3.

1. What do you know about evictions, foreclosures, the right to housing, and how poverty and housing are linked?
2. Have you ever been evicted, or do you know anyone who has?¹ If the answer is yes, what was your/their experience like, and how has it affected your/their life? **OR** If you were unexpectedly evicted from your home, what would the fallout be? How would this impact your education, employment, and relationships? How might a sudden change like eviction affect your physical and mental well-being?²
3. Do you think housing should be a right in America? Explain.

You will turn in your response on **Canvas**.

Due March 6 by 12:59 pm (10% Bonus if on time)
No late responses will be graded after 11:59 pm on March 10

Rubric: Pre-Reading Questions

| Criteria | Point Value |
|---|-------------|
| What do you know about evictions, foreclosures, the right to housing, and how poverty and housing are linked? | 9 |

¹ From Reading Group Guide.

² From Study Guide by Rachael Hudak.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Have you ever been evicted, or do you know anyone who has? If the answer is yes, what was your/their experience like, and how has it affected your/their life? OR If you were unexpectedly evicted from your home, what would the fallout be? How would this impact your education, employment, and relationships? How might a sudden change like eviction affect your physical and mental well-being? | 9 |
| Do you think housing should be a right in America? Explain. | 9 |
| Format: typed, double-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman 12 pt. font, page numbers. Quotations are properly cited. Length 1 page. | 3 |
| On time bonus +3 | +3 |
| Total | 30 (+ on time bonus) |

Reading Quizzes on Canvas (5%)

There are six Reading Quizzes that you will take on Canvas prior to discussing the readings in class. Each quiz will be three questions each and will be open for six minutes. You can take each quiz twice with your highest score recorded. Your lowest three scores will be dropped from your final grade. The correct answers will not be released on Canvas but will be included in our class discussions. Once the quiz is opened, you will be given one question at a time and you will not be able to go back to change your answers after you have answered your question. Each quiz will lock 30-minutes prior to the start of class.

Discussion Questions on Canvas (5%)

For each day that we are scheduled to discuss *Evicted*, you will prepare a response to the following:

Identify a passage from today's reading that particularly stood out to you. Indicate the page number (or location if using an e-book) of your quote/passage. Explain why you found this passage interesting.

You will submit your response on Canvas no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of class. Your response will be graded as complete/incomplete. You are expected to use your response as part of your reading group discussion in class. You may miss one Discussion Question without penalty. You will not be able to see your classmate's replies until you post your response.

Your lowest three DQ responses will be dropped from your grade.

NOTE: Only your three highest quizzes and three highest discussion questions will count towards your final grade. Each quiz and discussion question will open on Canvas one week before its due date.

Due Dates for Reading Quizzes and Discussion Questions
No Late Reading Quizzes or Discussion Questions will be accepted

| Due Date | Chapters | Quiz # | Discussion Question # |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| April 3 by 12:30 pm | Prologue and Ch. 1-4 | 1 | 1 |
| April 8 by 12:30 pm | Ch. 5-8 | 2 | 2 |
| April 10 by 12:30 pm | Ch. 9-12 | 3 | 3 |
| April 15 by 12:30 pm | Ch. 13-16 | 4 | 4 |
| April 17 by 12:30 pm | Ch. 17-21 | 5 | 5 |
| April 22 by 12:30 pm | Ch. 22-24 and Epilogue | 6 | 6 |

Reading Group

You will be assigned to a reading group to discuss *Evicted* in class. I expect you to come to class prepared. That means, you have completed the reading and completed your Discussion Question and Reading Quiz on Canvas before coming to class. If you are repeatedly unprepared or disruptive, you will be asked to leave class that day.

Your group will discuss these questions³:

1. What passage from today's reading stood out to you? Why did you find this passage interesting?
2. How does something we read about for today connect to something you have learned in another course?
3. Have you had any personal experiences that connect to today's subject? Explain.
4. Have you ever learned about any of today's material in a book, film, television show, or music? Explain.
5. What questions do you have about what you read?
6. What else would you like to know about this topic?

NOTE: I also use discussion questions from the essay prompts (below) and from reading guides available online and cited below. While students are discussing the above questions in their reading groups, the instructor can also review the online discussion questions from students to determine which of the questions from the reading guides listed below to use to guide discussion.

Hudak, Rachael. 2016. "Study Guide for *Evicted*." Penguin Random House. Retrieved July 29, 2017 (http://www.evictedbook.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/EVICTED.DESMOND.978-0-553-44745-3.InstructG_PG.16pgs.FINAL_NO_CROPS.pdf).

No author. 2016. "Reading Group Guide for *Evicted*." Retrieved July 29, 2017 (http://www.evictedbook.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Desm_9780553447453_RGG.pdf).

³Questions 2-4: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Prepare-for-Class/244015>;
 Questions 5-6: <https://teachinginthefastlane.com/2014/08/questions-to-ask-about-reading.html>

Essay (15%)

You will prepare a 3-5-page essay about *Evicted* and the activities the class completed along with reading this book. You should be sure to address the following questions:

1. Personal Perspective: What was your perspective on evictions, foreclosures, the right to housing, and poverty before reading *Evicted*? How has your perspective changed?
2. The Sociological Imagination: How might the sociological imagination be used to understand the challenges of securing stable housing? Be sure to explain what the sociological imagination is.
3. Theoretical Application: Select either the conflict, symbolic interactionist, functionalist, or feminist perspective. How might a sociologist use one of these perspectives to understand or explain the challenges of securing stable housing? Be sure to explain your chosen perspective.
4. Inequality: How are housing and eviction related to race or gender?
5. Guest Speakers: How did the guest speakers enhance your knowledge of eviction, homelessness, and housing insecurity?
6. Reflection: Please reflect on how much knowledge you have gained on this topic since the beginning of the semester.

Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman 12 pt. font, and include page numbers. Any quotations should be properly cited. Any other sources should be identified in a reference section. Only peer-reviewed or credible news sources are acceptable as other references. There is no expectation that you will use additional references for this paper beyond your textbook, class notes, *Evicted*, and other course materials. You should organize your essay using these headers:

Introduction
Personal Perspective
The Sociological Imagination
Theoretical Application
Inequality
Guest Speakers
Reflection
Conclusion

Due April 24 by 12:59 pm (10% Bonus if on time)

No late essays will be graded after 12:59 pm on April 29

Rubric: Essay

| Criteria | Point Value |
|--|-------------|
| What was your perspective on evictions, foreclosures, the right to housing, and poverty before reading <i>Evicted</i> ? How has your perspective changed? | 12 |
| How might the sociological imagination be used to understand the challenges of securing stable housing? Be sure to explain what the sociological imagination is. | 15 |

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Select either the conflict, symbolic interactionist, functionalist, or feminist perspective. How might a sociologist use one of these perspectives to understand or explain the challenges of securing stable housing? Be sure to explain your chosen perspective. | 15 |
| How are housing and eviction related to race or gender? | 15 |
| How did the field trip and guest speakers enhance your knowledge of eviction, homelessness, and housing insecurity? | 12 |
| Please reflect on how much knowledge you have gained on this topic since the beginning of the semester. | 12 |
| This criterion is linked to a Learning OutcomeFormat: typed, double-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman 12 pt. font, page numbers. Quotations are properly cited. Length 3-5 pages. | 9 |
| On time bonus +9 | +9 |
| Total | 90 (+ on time bonus) |

References

- Hudak, Rachael. 2016. "Study Guide for *Evicted*." Penguin Random House. Retrieved July 29, 2017 (http://www.evictedbook.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/EVICTED.DESMOND.978-0-553-44745-3.InstructG_PG.16pgs.FINAL_.NO_CROPS.pdf).
- Lang, James M. 2018. "How to Prepare for Class Without Overpreparing." July 29. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved December 31, 2018 (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Prepare-for-Class/244015>).
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