

In-Class Collaborative Book Reviews for Punished, The Tender Cut, and Hunger: Used in Juvenile Delinquency and Deviant Behavior

Stephanie Medley-Rath

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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Abstract

Tying an assignment to course reading encourages reading compliance. However, more assignments lead to more time needed for grading. Group projects are often used to reduce grading volume. Students often resist group projects because they have trouble finding time outside of class to do group work. In this teaching artifact, I describe using in-class collaborative book reviews to address these three issues. By having students complete their collaborative book reviews during class time, they have time to complete the assignment as a group, while reducing the grading burden on the instructor. Further, because the instructor is present, they can observe group dynamics (who is doing the work and who is not) and answer questions when they arise. Students are able to complete their assignment without spending additional

time outside of class meeting with their group and are able to incorporate instructor feedback immediately because they are working near the instructor. This teaching artifact describes the collaborative book review as used in Juvenile Delinquency and Deviant Behavior.

Details

Subject Areas: Deviant Behavior/Social Disorganization

Resource Types: Assignment

Class Levels: College 300

Class Sizes: Small

Usage Notes

See submission for usage notes

Learning Goals and Assessments

LEARNING GOALS

Students will practice discussing a book of sociological importance with peers.

Students will collaboratively apply course concepts to the text.

Students will synthesize their discussion and application into a single collaborative book review.

ASSESSMENTS

Each group submits a single book review for grading.

Resource Files

DOCX

TECHNIQUE

In-Class Collaborative Book Reviews for *Punished*, *The Tender Cut*, and *Hunger*: Used in Juvenile Delinquency and Deviant Behavior

AS USED BY

Stephanie Medley-Rath, PhD
Sociology, History, and Political Science
Indiana University Kokomo
Kokomo, IN 46904
smedleyr@iuk.edu

COURSES

Juvenile Delinquency
Deviant Behavior
Upper-level elective courses

ABSTRACT

Tying an assignment to course reading encourages reading compliance. However, more assignments lead to more time needed for grading. Group projects are often used to reduce grading volume. Students often resist group projects because they have trouble finding time outside of class to do group work. In this teaching artifact, I describe using in-class collaborative book reviews to address these three issues. By having students complete their collaborative book reviews during class time, they have time to complete the assignment as a group, while reducing the grading burden on the instructor. Further, because the instructor is present, they can observe group dynamics (who is doing the work and who is not) and answer questions when they arise. Students are able to complete their assignment without spending additional time outside of class meeting with their group and are able to incorporate instructor feedback immediately because they are working near the instructor. This teaching artifact describes the collaborative book review as used in Juvenile Delinquency and Deviant Behavior.

LEARNING GOALS

- Goal 1: Students will practice discussing a book of sociological importance with peers.
- Goal 2: Students will collaboratively apply course concepts to the text.
- Goal 3: Students will synthesize their discussion and application into a single collaborative book review.

GOALS ASSESSMENT

- Each group submits a single book review for grading.

RELATED TRAILS RESOURCES

Chakravarty, Debjani. 2020. "Teaching Race with Novels." Assignment published in

- TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Medley-Rath, Stephanie. 2013 "A Sociological Analysis of *The Blind Side* Writing Assignment." Assignment published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Medley-Rath, Stephanie. 2019. "Evicted Activities." Assignment published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Oslawski-Lopez, Jamie. 2020. "Bringing Text to Life: Enhancing Introduction to Sociology with the Memoir *I Am Malala*." Assignment, Class Activity, Essay published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Simoni, Zachary. 2017 "Dystopian Book Report." Assignment published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Wynn, Colleen E. 2020. "Making Motherhood Work Reading and Discussion Questions." Class Activity published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)

REFERENCES

Assigned Books for Juvenile Delinquency

- Rios, Victor. 2011. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York: New York University Press.
- Thompson, William E. and Jack E. Bynum. 2017. *Juvenile Delinquency: A Sociological Approach*. 10th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Assigned Books for Deviant Behavior

- Adler, Patricia A. and Peter Adler. 2011. *The Tender Cut: Inside the Hidden World of Self-Injury*. New York: New York University Press.
- Gay, Roxane. 2017. *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*. New York: Harper.
- Inderbitzin, Michelle, Kristin Bates, and Randy Gainey. 2013. *Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological Perspective*. Los Angeles: SAGE

Assigned Book for Both Courses

- Johnson, Jr. William A., Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. 2017. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide*. 7th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Book Reviews for *The Tender Cut*

- Chandler, Amy. 2012. "Book Review: *The Tender Cut: Inside the Hidden World of Self-Injury*." *Cultural Sociology* 6(4):494-5.
- Kilby, Jane. 2012. "*The Tender Cut: Inside the Hidden World of Self-Injury*." *American Journal of Sociology* 118(2):529-31.
- Klineberg, Emily. 2012. "Review of *The Tender Cut: Inside the Hidden World of Self-Injury*." *Sociology of Health & Illness*. 35(5):806-7.

Ricciardelli, Rose. 2012. "Book Review: *The Tender Cut: Inside the Hidden World of Self-Injury*." *Contemporary Sociology*. 41(6):793-4.

Book Reviews for *Hunger*

Chocano, Carina. 2017. "Body Language." *The New York Times Book Review*, July 23, 14.

Lewis, Carly. 2017. "Body Language; Roxane Gay's New Memoir is a Profoundly Honest Account of What It's Like to be a Woman of Size." *Globe & Mail*, July 17, R20.

Patterson-Faye, Courtney. 2018. "A Fortress and a Prison: *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*." *Women's Review of Books* 35(1):30-2

Schine, Cathleen. 2017. "Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body." *New York Review of Books*. 64(13):39-40.

Williams, Mariam. 2017. "Author Offers Insight Into 'The Why of My Body.'" *National Catholic Reporter* 53(24):25.

Books Used for Assignment Criteria

Edwards, Mark Evan. 2012. *Writing in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Johnson, Jr. William A., Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. 2017. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide*. 7th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

ESTIMATED TIME

Varies

Reserve about 30 minutes to go over the instructions and collect any feedback you need to assign groups. My classes are 75 minutes long. Typically, I spend the first 40-45 minutes of class leading discussion about the assigned reading for the day. Then, the last 30 minutes is reserved for the group to get together in the classroom and work on their book review. The number of class periods devoted to each book varies:

- *Punished* – three 75 minute class periods (about one-and-a-half weeks of class)
- *Hunger* – five 75 minute class periods (about two-and-a-half weeks of class)
- *The Tender Cut* – six 75 minute class periods (about three weeks of class)

I had more time limitations in Juvenile Delinquency, so I cut the day reserved for reading professional book reviews of the assigned book. Three days was a bit rushed to discuss the book and complete the collaborative book review. I recommend reserving at least two weeks for each collaborative book review.

In a 50 minute class, I would likely split up each class day so that the first 20 minutes is for full class discussion, and the remaining 30 is for groupwork. It is important to have both full class discussion and group work each day to motivate students to come to the classroom to work on the collaborative book review.

Students should be able to complete the writing of the book review during class time. They should only need out of class time to complete the reading.

PROCEDURE, POSSIBLE PITFALLS, AND ASSESSMENT

I have successfully used this assignment in two different upper level elective courses (i.e., Juvenile Delinquency and Deviant Behavior). The assignment would likely work in lower-level undergraduate and graduate courses.

I typically have 15-25 students enrolled in these courses and try to limit groups to 3-4 students per group. This activity could likely work in larger courses, but more time would need to be reserved to move students into their groups. I have not used this assignment in online courses.

The appeal of this particular assignment is that I am present while students work to answer questions, observe, help them brainstorm, and overall intrude into their group when I see students are struggling or getting off track.

Procedure

The instructions to share with students are in Appendix A.

Groups

I use a Group Assignment form (see Appendix B) to assign groups using a combination of expressed interests the information students provide. I try to diversify groups using student reported GPA so that there are both high-achieving and low-achieving students in each group. In courses, where I assign more than one group project, I split students into new groups (they might still have one member that is the same).

Class Time

Please see the Estimated Time section for a description of how class time is used. When students are in their groups, I typically stay at the front of the room for the first few minutes quietly eavesdropping. After a few minutes has passed, I will float around the classroom, pulling up a chair with each group and just listen. I am there to answer questions, brainstorm, and provide additional information as needed. Depending on the question or additional information, I may interrupt the whole class to share.

I ask that students use the remaining class time to work with their groups. Students rarely try to pack up early because they know I would easily take away the in-class group time if they do not use it productively.

Laptops

I do not usually expect students to own a laptop or bring one to class. However, for this assignment, I encourage students (at least one member of the group) to bring their laptop on book review days. Most groups are able to do this. Occasionally, the student that was supposed to bring their laptop is absent, but the group can still work on paper to outline their book review. If the book review is coming due soon, then I would send a group without a laptop to a computer lab so that they can spend time typing their paper.

Reading Schedule for Punished in Juvenile Delinquency:

I use Thompson and Bynum (2017) as the main textbook and assign *Punished* as the last major assignment and reading for the semester in Juvenile Delinquency.

Day 1: Preface, Chapters 1 – 2

Day 2: Chapters 3 – 5

Day 3: Chapters 6 – 7, Conclusion, and Appendix

Day 4: Book Reviews Due

Reading Schedule in Deviant Behavior:

I use Inderbitzin, Bates, and Gainey (2013) as the main text during the first half of the semester and assign *The Tender Cut* and *Hunger* in the second half of the semester.

The Tender Cut:

Day 1: Chapters 1 – 2

Day 2: Chapters 3 – 5

Day 3: Chapters 6 – 9

Day 4: Chapters 10 – 12

Day 5: Student choice: pick two of the book reviews of the assigned book to read

Hunger:

Day 1: Part I, p. 1 – 23

Day 2: Part II, p. 27 -111

Day 3: Part III, p. 115 – 149

Day 4: Part IV, p. 153 – 212

Day 5: Part V and VI, p. 215 – 304

Day 6: Student choice: pick two of the book reviews of the assigned book to read

Collaborative Book Review Grade Weight

I weight each collaborative book review between 10 to 15 percent of the final grade. The variance depends on what other work the students are completing in the course.

The Sociology Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide

In any class using this assignment, I assign section 6.6. on writing book reviews from *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide* (Johnson, Scott, and Garrison 2017). I have students read this in preparation for the day we go over the assignment. The criteria for the book review itself comes from that text.

Pitfalls

Divvying Up the Work, and Not Working Collaboratively

Even though students have sufficient in-class time to work collaboratively on these book reviews, they still tend to fall back on their typical method for doing group work: divide and conquer. Students have a hard time working together on the same section. When students divvy up the work and take different sections, they typically fail to make sure

they are still presenting a final product using a united voice with transitions between each section.

In the future, I will likely direct students to focus on specific assignment criteria each day so that each group member is working together on the same part of the assignment. This might require more class time to get through the book and the assignment but would move students closer to learning how to work collaboratively.

Groups that are behind on the readings

Because I assign these books in the second half of the semester, students should have the books. I make sure our library has copies on reserve, and copies that can be checked out.

Other students are just behind on doing the reading, or do not read at all. This makes it more difficult for groups to do their work. Pairing high-achieving and low-achieving students in the same group increases the likelihood that at least one student in the group has done the reading. This also prevents groups from sitting around staring at each other because no one has done the reading.

One option could be to ask unprepared students to sit in a different part of the classroom from their group and use the time to do the reading. That individual student would earn a lower grade on the assignment because they are not contributing, but then the group could focus on writing their book review rather than bringing group members up to speed on the reading.

Groups with multiple absent members

In my experience, this usually does not happen in upper level courses. Students with any missing group members is rare. If a student were on their own for the day, I would likely ask them to just jump in with a different group for the day. They would still be able to contribute to discussion and work on developing their own ideas for the book review. My classes are small, and students generally know one another, so they would be comfortable jumping into another group for the day and the group would be welcoming. Further, if a student is absent, their grade on the book review will be docked 10 percent each day they are absent. I do work with students with extenuating circumstances. I do not have any other attendance grade for the course. If I already had an attendance grade for the course, then I might not dock any points on the assignment.

Assessment

I use the following rubric for grading submissions. I deduct 10 percent each day that a student is absent on the project.

For criteria 2-8, I grade mostly on effort. Undergraduate students are not experts in the field and that needs to be remembered when evaluating their work. Criteria 2-8 are about practicing these skills more than execution of these skills. Undergraduate students, however, should have the skills to be able to respond to Criteria 1 and 9 and be evaluated on the content on these two points.

The criteria may vary slightly for each book. If there is a question specific to a book, then the rubric will need to be adapted to address that question.

Rubric						
Criteria	Ratings					Pts
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Marks	Total
1. Provide a brief summary of the book's contents and central thesis.	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
2. How important is the subject to the field of sociology?	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
3. How complete and thorough is the author's coverage of the subject?	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
4. How carefully is the author's analysis conducted?	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
5. What are the strengths and limitations of the author's methodology?	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
6. What is the quality of the writing? Is it clear, precise, and interesting?	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
7. What contributions does this book make to sociology?	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts

8. Who will enjoy or benefit from this book?	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
9. Assess how well the book fits within our overall course topic.	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
10. 12-point font • Times New Roman or Arial • Double spacing • 1-inch margins • Page numbers • Reasonable paragraph length (no paragraphs that are $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page or longer) • Complete sentences are used throughout • Proper attribution of sources (in-text citations and quotes) • Correct spelling and grammar usage • Meets page length requirements (3-5 pages) • Avoids using long quotes or organizing your book review chapter by chapter	10.0 pts	8.0 pts	6.0 pts	4.0 pts	0.0 pts	10.0 pts
Total Points: 100.0						

Thumbnail Image

“Open Book on a Stack of Books.” <https://pixy.org/715667/>

Appendix A. Collaborative Book Review (For Students)¹

Note: You will need to edit these instructions to include only the book(s) you are assigning.

Abstract

You will be assigned to a group to complete your book review. Each group will submit a single collaboratively written book review.

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss a book of sociological importance with peers
2. Apply course concepts to the text
3. Synthesize the discussion and application into a single collaborative book review
4. Work collaboratively with a team to produce a single product

Group Participation Expectations

You are expected to maintain regular communication with your group. If a student does not contribute to any part of the review, leave their name off of it and/or notify me. An individual student's grade may not be the same as other group members if I can see they did not do their fair share. Group conflicts should first be dealt with in the group before you come to me with your problems.

You will be provided time in class to work on your book review. **Students who miss these in-class sessions for any reason** will have their Collaborative Book Review grade deducted by 10% for each absence even if your group is ok with your absence. You should not split up the questions and work on them individually, then cobble the review together. You should work together and discuss each question together and write the review together.

General Format

Each book review should be in essay-format and address all the points below. You should include an introduction and conclusion. You should be able to address each question in 1-3 paragraphs (3-5 pages altogether).

Guiding Questions: Punished (Juvenile Delinquency)

1. Provide a brief summary of the book's contents and central thesis.
2. How important is the subject to the field of sociology?
3. How complete and thorough is the author's coverage of the subject?
4. How carefully is the author's analysis conducted?
5. What are the strengths and limitations of the author's methodology?

¹ Guiding Questions are adapted from: Point 1: from Edwards, Mark Evan. 2012. *Writing in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. (pp.121-124); Points 2-8 from Johnson, William A., Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. 2017. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual and Reader's Guide*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

6. What is the quality of the writing? Is it clear, precise, and interesting?
7. What contributions does this book make to sociology?
8. Who will enjoy or benefit from this book?
9. Assess how well the book fits within a course on Juvenile Delinquency. Be sure to give examples from the course to support your assessment.

Guiding Questions: *The Tender Cut* (Deviant Behavior)

1. Provide a brief summary of the book's contents and central thesis.
2. How important is the subject to the field of sociology?
3. How complete and thorough is the author's coverage of the subject?
4. How carefully is the author's analysis conducted?
5. What are the strengths and limitations of the author's methodology?
6. What is the quality of the writing? Is it clear, precise, and interesting?
7. What contributions does this book make to sociology?
8. Who will enjoy or benefit from this book?
9. Assess how well the book fits within a course on Deviant Behavior.

Guiding Questions: *Hunger* (Deviant Behavior)

1. Provide a brief summary of the book's contents and central thesis.
2. How important is the subject to the field of sociology?
3. How complete and thorough is the author's coverage of the subject?
4. What are the strengths and limitations of this book?
5. What is the quality of the writing? Is it clear, precise, and interesting?
6. What contributions does this book make to it sociology?
7. Who will enjoy or benefit from this book?
8. Assess how well the book fits within a course on Deviant Behavior.
9. If Roxane Gay were sitting with you right now, what would you say to her?

Formatting and Organization

All written work should follow these formatting and organization expectations:

- 12-point font
- Times New Roman or Arial
- Double spacing
- 1-inch margins
- Page numbers
- Reasonable paragraph length (no paragraphs that are $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page or longer)
- Complete sentences are used throughout
- Proper attribution of sources (in-text citations and quotes)
- Correct spelling and grammar usage
- Meets page length requirements (3-5 pages)
- Avoid using long quotes or organizing your book review chapter by chapter

APPENDIX B. Group Request Form.

If you collect group requests on paper, you can fit three forms per sheet and cut them into strips.

Name _____

1. Do you have any group member requests?

Please indicate here: _____

2. Is there anyone in class that you are unwilling or unable to work with?

Please indicate here: _____

3. What is your major? _____

4. What is your GPA? _____

5. Is there any other information you wish to share with me to better fit you with a group (e.g., you want to/need to work with other parents)?

Please indicate here:

Name _____

1. Do you have any group member requests?

Please indicate here: _____

2. Is there anyone in class that you are unwilling or unable to work with?

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Please indicate here: