

JOURNAL ENTRY TWO: REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL CLASS

In our society, there are several categories of class – the most common are Lower Class (or Poor), Middle Class, and Upper Class (or Wealthy). We also have subdivisions of these groupings (e.g., Working Class, Upper Middle Class). This journal entry will ask you to go beyond just labeling your class by thinking more deeply about your experience of class. *Since this journal has a more focused topic than the last journal, you can write this piece as one cohesive journal entry – you do not have to answer it question by question unless that is helpful for you.

1. How would you describe your class background as you experienced it, growing up?
 - *Helpful Hint: For assistance answering this question, refer to questions 1-6 on the “Class Background Inventory” under “Journal Prompts and Resources” on Edmodo. This will help you think about various manifestations of class (housing, education, values, etc.).*
2. When did you first become aware of class? What made you aware of class? Describe some of the critical incidents that shaped your awareness of your class background.
3. What were the advantages and strengths you gained from your class background? What do you appreciate or feel you have gained from your class background?
4. What were the disadvantages and challenges you experienced in your class background? What has been hard for you from your class background?
5. What stereotypes have you heard about your class? What do you want other people to understand about your class?
6. In what ways have you experienced the privileges or the disadvantages of classism?
 - *For this question, refer to “Deep Thoughts about Class Privilege,” which is under “Week Four Readings” and in the “Journal Prompts and Resources” folder on Edmodo. This reading asks people to reflect on class privilege in a number of areas – big decisions, work and school, where you live, discrimination, social situation, financial status, health, and legal system. Choose 1-2 (or more) of these areas and answer this question by reflecting on how you have been privileged or disadvantaged by your class in that area. (This reading uses the word privilege but the same questions can apply to class disadvantage.)*
7. What are some ways that other forms of privilege or disadvantage —based on race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, religion—intersect with your experience of class?
 - *For an example of other forms of privilege: I grew up in a low-income family but because I look white and received a decent education, I was able to come to Miami University and be the first person in my immediate family to earn a college degree. Additionally, people with more money than me often didn’t instantly assume I was poor – because I was white, spoke “correctly,” and was “polite,” they accepted me more readily as “one of them.”*
 - *For an example of other forms of disadvantage: after my dad left my family, my mom struggled to get a job because she was a woman with little work experience and no college education. In this case, her gender and lack of education disadvantaged our family because she struggled to support four children on a minimum wage job.)*