Inequality: A Sociological Analysis

Assignment Overview:

All UNT students who take sociology 1510: Introduction to Sociology (regardless of whom is teaching it) are required to write a research paper. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate your ability to synthesize numerical data and sociological perspectives. Throughout the semester, you will develop your understanding of the Conflict and Functionalist perspectives. In this exercise, you will use the data attached from the Central Texas Sustainability project (CTSIP) to (1) identify patterns in the data and (2) use each of the perspectives to explain why these patterns may exist. Thus, from a functional perspective one would provide explanations that this perspective offers. From a conflict perspective one would have a different explanation(s) for the patterns seen in the data. The CTSIP is a comprehensive evaluation of "sustainability indicators" in Central Texas.

Below is a suggested outline to help guide your development of the paper.
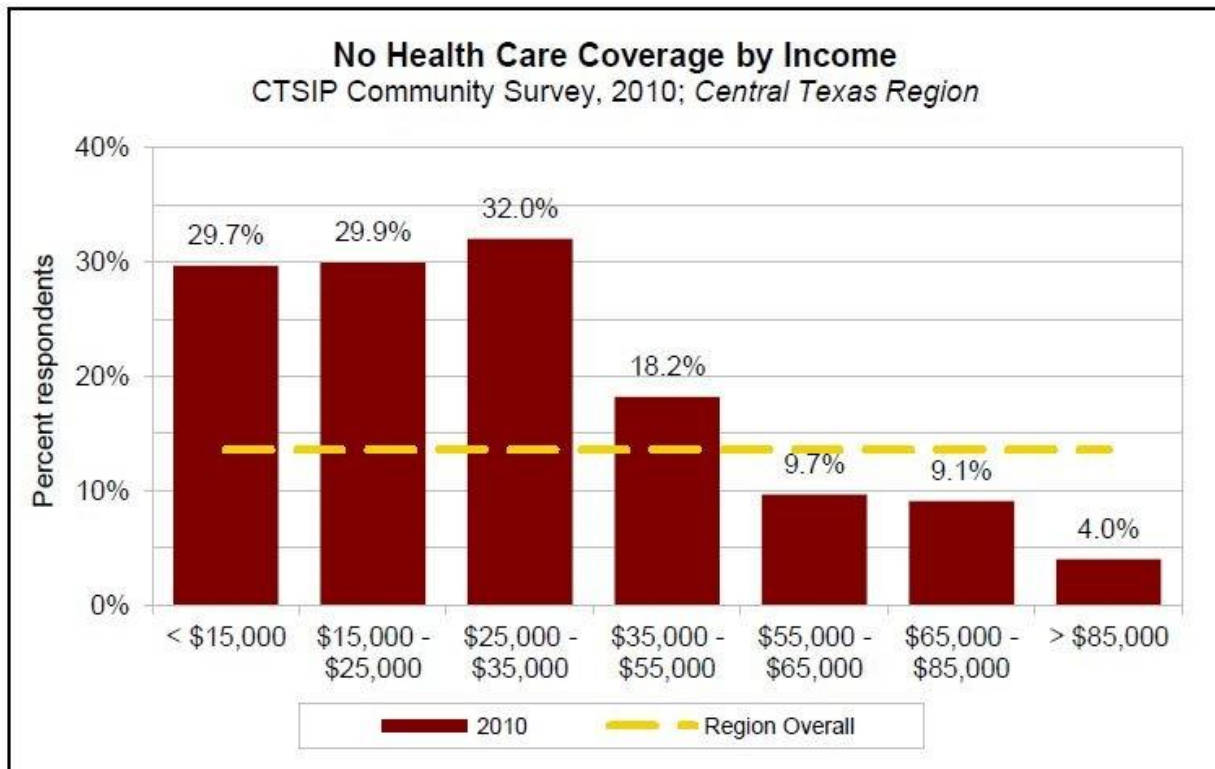
Suggested Outline:

Paragraph 1	Introduction	State the issue that you will be examining (relationship between income inequality and health coverage/status). Explain why this is an important area to examine. Be sure to gain the readers interest in the topic within your introduction. End by letting the reader know what major areas are covered in the paper
Paragraph 2-3	Theory	Explain that there are two theoretical perspectives (conflict and functional) that provide explanations for income inequality and health care coverage/status. Provide a brief description of each perspective and what each might predict and why with regard to health care coverage and status in the U.S.
Paragraph 4-7	Data	Provide an overview of what the information in the tables tells us. What explanation does the functional perspective gives us with regard to the relationships found in the tables? What explanation(s) does the conflict perspective provide? Discuss each theory's ability to explain the findings. Which theory appears to do the best job of explaining the findings? Perhaps they each do a good job but from a different perspective (there is no right or wrong answer but you must support whatever perspective you take).
Paragraph 8	Conclusion	Provide a brief conclusion that (1) summarizes the data and how each theory explains the data and (2) considers the social implications of the data (note how these patterns relate to the larger society).

Formatting Requirements:

The assignment must adhere to the following formatting requirements:

- The paper must be at least 2 pages and no more than 5 pages (not including bibliography).
- The paper must be emailed to the TA in PDF format. The paper must also be printed and the hard copy turned in on the day it is due (thus 2 copies on emailed one turned in).
- The paper must be written in 12 point Times New Roman font.
- The paper must be double spaced.
- All page margins must be 1 inch.
- Citations can be used but are not necessary. Any articles, books, etc. that are used <u>must be cited appropriately</u>, using any conventional citation method you are familiar with (e.g., APA, MLA, ASA, etc.). A reference list (bibliography) should also be provided at the end of the paper to show the resources used/cited. If you are not familiar with a citation method, seek assistance from the instructor or the free University writing lab (http://www.unt.edu/writinglab/).
- If you have any questions send your professor an email: yeatts@unt.edu.

TABLE 1: Percentage Reporting No Health Care Coverage across Various Income Levels

Survey Question: Do you currently have any kind of health care coverage, including health insurance, prepaid plans such as HMOs, or government plans such as Medicare?

TABLE 2: Reason for No Health Care Coverage

Reason for No Health Care Coverage (Top Five)
CTSIP Community Survey, 2010; *Central Texas Region*

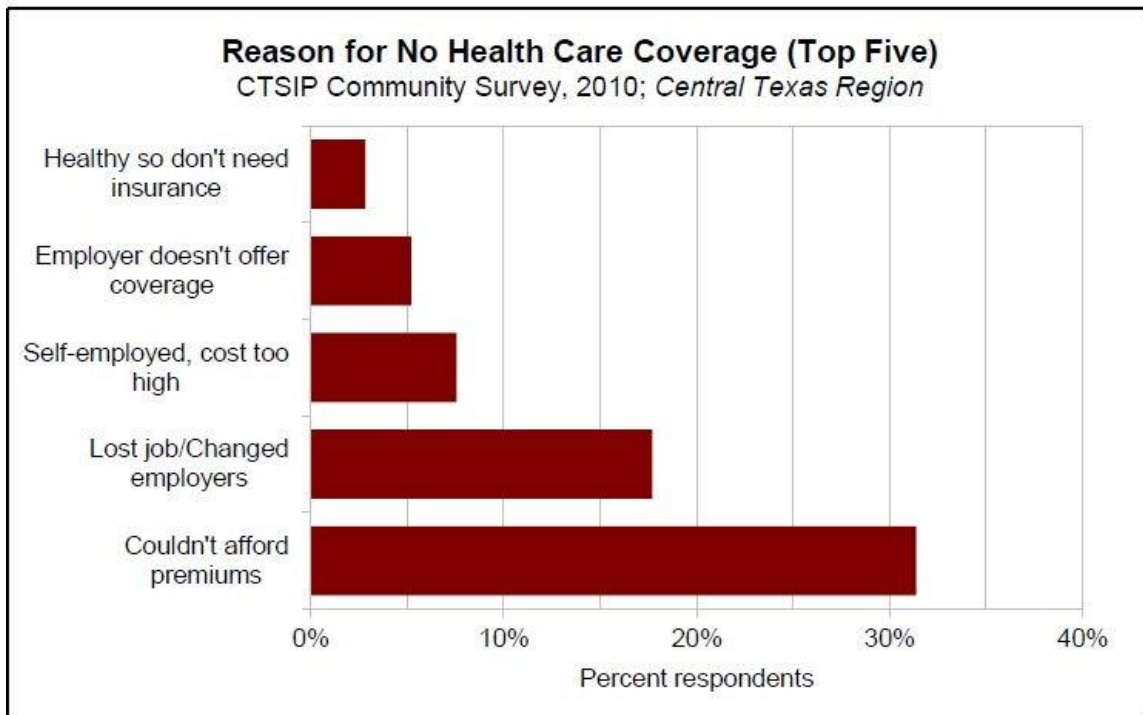| Reason	Percent respondents
Healthy so don't need insurance	~3%
Employer doesn't offer coverage	~5%
Self-employed, cost too high	~7%
Lost job/Changed employers	~17%
Couldn't afford premiums	~31%

TABLE 3: General Health Status for Various Income Levels

General Health Status by Income
CTSIP Community Survey, 2010; *Central Texas Region*

■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very Good ■ Excellent