

# **Brief history of the peoples and ecology of NYC**

**indigenous peoples, colonization, Manahatta, ecological changes**

# AGENDA

- Reading Quiz 2 and summary – student constructed
- Manahatta video
- Recognizing your place in social and ecological history - sociological imagination overview
- Climate change narrative assignment introduced

# READINGS

1. "Manahatta to Manhattan: Native Americans in Lower Manhattan." 2010. Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. [https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-10/manahatta\\_to\\_manhattan.pdf](https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-10/manahatta_to_manhattan.pdf)
2. Tarr, Joel A. "Land Use and Environmental Change in the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Region, 1700-1980, with an Addendum to 2018" in *Coastal Metropolis: Environmental Histories of Modern New York City*, edited by Carl A. Zimring, and Steven H. Corey, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021. Login with BC Library credentials at: *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/brooklyn-ebooks/detail.action?docID=28433366&pq-origsite=primo>
3. Excerpt from *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), pp. 6-13 in *Thirty Readings in Introductory Sociology (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)* edited by Gould and Lewis, 2017. Password Protected at: [https://libguides.brooklyn.cuny.edu/ld.php?content\\_id=74917666](https://libguides.brooklyn.cuny.edu/ld.php?content_id=74917666)

# Manahatta

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKNEu\\_8t65s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKNEu_8t65s)



Photo source:  
<https://www.thenatureofcities.com/2013/08/21/form-function-and-cultural-memory-recalling-the-nature-of-cities/>



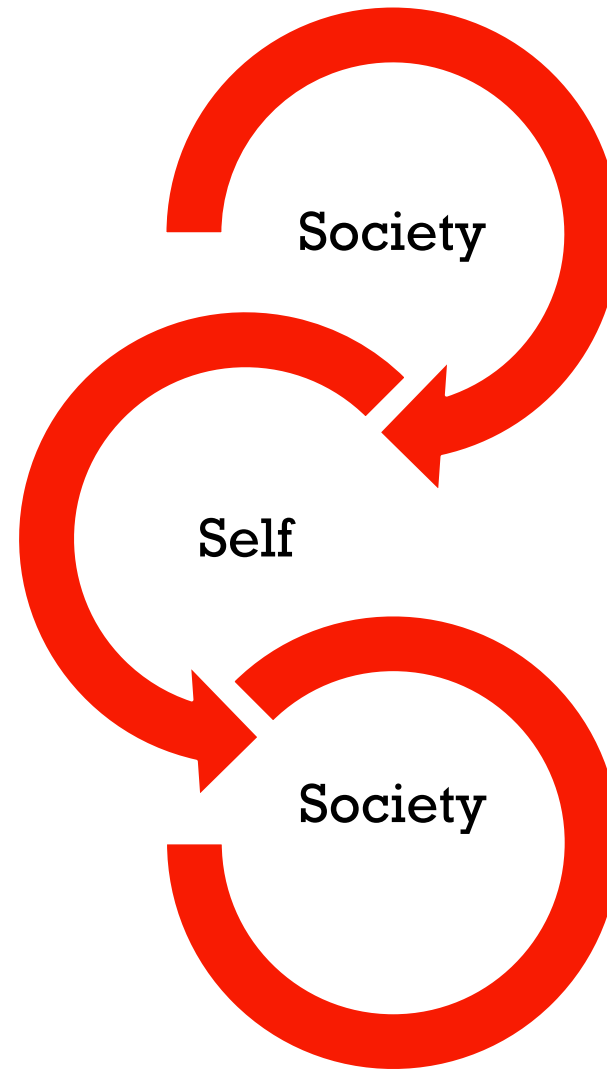
The Sociological Imagination – recognizing your  
place in social and ecological history

**What is the sociological imagination?**

# Sociological imagination

<b>Typical understandings of our circumstances:</b>	<b>Sociological understandings:</b>
Individualistic	Social explanations based on social location (sex, gender, race, class, nationality, etc.)
Self/biography	Understand our own situation in the context of social structure and world history
Private troubles: traps/orbits/problems	Public issues: understand the challenges we face in the context of historical and institutional changes

Society (social structure) shapes individual behavior/choices (agency) and individual behaviors (agency) shape and recreate society (social structure)



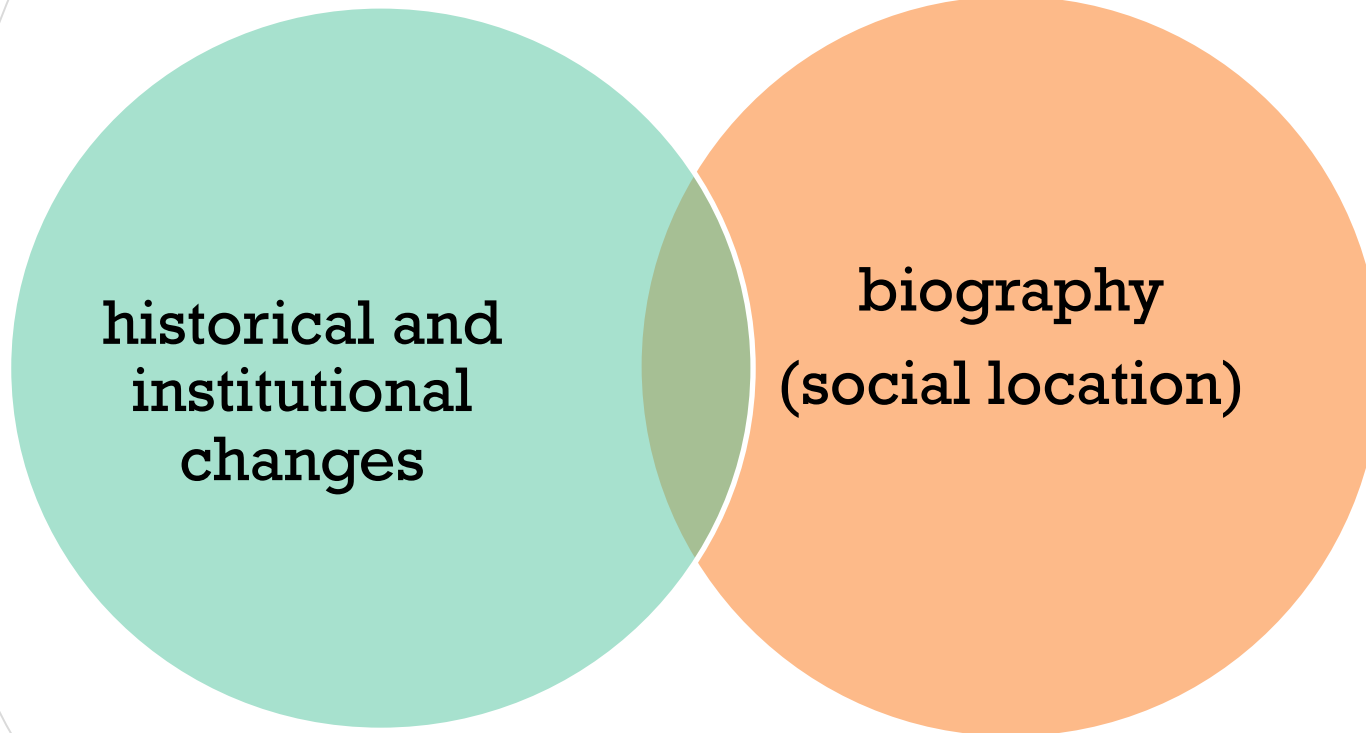
# Applications

**Explain the sociological imagination using one of the examples used by C. Wright Mills  
(unemployment, divorce, war, the metropolis)**

**What are some of the social forces (historical changes and institutions) that affect you/your biography?**



Your self is the intersection of  
history and biography





Source: [thesocietypages.org](http://thesocietypages.org)

## Sociology's "promise"

- "The first fruit of this [sociological] imagination...is the idea that the individual can understand his [sic] own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own changes in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances. In many ways it is a terrible lesson; in many ways a magnificent one." – C.Wright Mills
- What does he mean by this?

# Climate change narrative

## MCHC 2002: Macaulay Honors College Seminar 4: Shaping the Future of New York City Professor Lewis

**Climate narrative** – An essay reflecting your personal experience of climate change

The sociological imagination asks us to examine the relationship between public issues and private troubles. How has the public issue of climate change affected your personal orbit? How have you experienced climate change firsthand?

In a 2 to 4 page essay, describe an experience of a place you have lived or visited, and explain how climate change affected your experience. Be specific.

Consider how your biography, history, group membership (race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, etc.), culture and social structure influenced the experience (your personal orbit). Is your experience universal (in other words, does everyone have the same experience in that setting)? How would the experience be different for someone who lived in another era, another culture, or who had a different social identity?

Place your experience of climate change within the intersection of your individual biography and your history. In other words, situate your personal experience in the larger context of climate change as a public issue. Use evidence from at least two sources to do this. The evidence can be a research article, statistics from a government report, or other reputable data. Recall that public issues affect more than just a small number of people (refer back to C. Wright Mills' discussion of unemployment, divorce, and war). Discuss the evidence in relation to the experience you described.

In addition to exploring a firsthand account of your experience of climate change, this assignment aims to connect your individual biography to history. Students will present their narratives in class and we will use them to generate ideas for group projects.

Some logistics: Create a descriptive title for your paper. Double space the paper and use one inch margins and 12 point font. Cite your sources. Late papers will be penalized one full grade per day (i.e. from B+ to C+). Papers will be evaluated based on: 1) the quality of the firsthand description, 2) the discussion of biography, history and group membership, 3) the situation of the personal experience in the larger historical context, 4) the quality and integration of evidence, and 5) the quality of writing and proper source citations.