**Chapter 2: Examining The Social World: How Do We Know?  
This American Life**

**Recommended Readings**

Peter Berger, Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic PerspectiveThis classic work explains the history and traditions of sociology and encourages the use of scientific methods within the discipline.

Dan Clawson, Robert Zussman, Joya Misra, Naomi Gerstel, and Randall Stokes (Eds.)   
Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-first Century  
Here, a number of prominent sociologists debate the usefulness of moving sociological work outside of academia. This book would be helpful for discussing applied sociological research.

Barry Glassner and Rosanna Hertz, Our Studies, Ourselves: Sociologists' Lives and Work   
In this book, Glassner and Hertz explore what motivates sociologists to study particular topics and how the topics they study impact their lives outside of academia.

Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life  
In this book, Goffman lays out his symbolic interactionist theory of the presentation of self in which each individual uses an act to influence others' impressions of her.

George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*

In this text, Ritzer uses Max Weber’s theory of bureaucracy and applies it to a familiar example, McDonald’s restaurants. His treatment of the theory makes it very accessible and fun to read.

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*

Diamond integrates modern functionalism theory into a discussion of economic and social development in the world over time. He shows the role these three central and interconnected elements play in societal development.

Joel Best, *Stat-Spotting: A Field Guide to Identifying Dubious Data* and *Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists*

In these books, Best does as excellent job of explaining how non-specialists should think about and interpret statistics. He explains that problems exist among people who present as well as people who interpret statistics.

Collins, Randall, *Four Sociological Traditions Selected Readings* and *Four Sociological Traditions*

These books do an excellent job of explaining in a brief, readable format the 4 main schools of sociological thought, with the selected readings book providing intellectual highlights of each school along with exceptional readings that range from the classics to the contemporary. Together, or individually, these books represent a concise intellectual history of the development of sociology while clearly presenting the conflict tradition of Marx and Weber, the ritual solidarity tradition of Durkheim, the microinteractionist tradition of Mead, Blumer, and Garfinkel, and the rational choice/utilitarian tradition.

Van den Hoonaard, *Walking the Tightrope: Ethical Issues for Qualitative* *Researchers*.

This is a multidisciplinary assessment of the special ethical considerations in qualitative research. Contributors to the volume draw on their own research encounters with ethical issues.

Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point*

A journalist examines how certain benchmarks or milestones are portrayed in news-breaking stories, such as drops in crime, the impact of smoking, and the influence of children’s television programming.