

## **Sociology 194.2: Writing for Sociology**

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Office hours: Mondays & Fridays 10:10-12 noon  
and by appointment, 483 Barrows (M)  
& Caffè Strada (F)

Class meetings: Section 1 Mondays 9-10  
(w/2 Wednesday meetings, see schedule)

Section 2 Fridays 9-10

Class location: 402 Barrows

This course is designed as a writing tutorial to familiarize you with the mechanics of writing sociological papers – specifically, long research papers – and, secondarily, with the norms and values of the American style of academic writing. While many of you probably have significant experience with paper-writing for other classes, at other institutions or in other disciplines, there are particular aspects of academic writing that are unique both to sociology and to colleges and universities in the United States.

Your work for this class will be centered around a long research paper, drawing on either an expansion of work for another class or a piece of original research. Over the course of the semester, you will also gain some familiarity with Berkeley campus resources to help you with research and writing, and improve your critical reading and writing skills through an intensive peer review process where you and other students evaluate each other's work and give feedback.

An important note: this course is brand new to the Berkeley sociology department this year, and we'll be working together over the course of the semester to figure out what strategies work best to support student writing. With that in mind, you should consider all aspects of this syllabus potentially subject to change.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Department of Sociology, UC Berkeley. *Writing for Sociology*. 2011. Available at Copy Central, 2560 Bancroft Way.
- Booth, Wayne C, Gregory C. Colomb & Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*, Third Edition. (ISBN# 0226065669) Can be purchased online through Amazon.com or other retailers or ordered from local bookstores (your first readings from this text are due in Week 5).
- Assorted articles and book excerpts available through the course bSpace website (you will have access to bSpace as soon as you are officially registered for the class).

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Grade Breakdown:**

- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Course Feedback: 10%
- Small Research Paper Assignments (4 total, plus responses to peer feedback for each assignment for 4-credit students): 20%
- Peer Feedback (8 total): 20%
- Campus Resource Field Trip Memos (2 total for 3-credit students/3 total for 4-credit students): 10%
- Final Research Paper: 30%

**Attendance and Participation:** Like other small courses you might take at Berkeley, this course is largely discussion-based. Your participation in our discussions is an essential part of learning about writing, and cannot be replaced by out-of-class work. Additionally, missing class deprives your classmates of your insights into and experiences with the topics we're discussing. With this in mind, I expect you to attend all class meetings, do all readings, and actively participate in class. Missing more than two classes will have a negative impact on your grade; if this will pose a problem for you, please come see me in office hours. Being more than ten minutes late to class will count as an absence.

**Course Feedback:** As I say above, this course is a new one for the sociology department; we want to make sure that it's serving you and helping you to improve your sociological writing. With that goal in mind, you will be providing feedback on different aspects of the course throughout the semester. Some of this feedback will be anonymous; other feedback activities will ask you to discuss your experience in class, or to reflect in writing on how helpful various aspects of the course were for you.

**Small Research Assignments (4 total):** Both writing and research are many-step processes. In most courses, you are responsible for pacing yourself and organizing these steps on your own; in this course, you will do four small assignments over the semester which are designed to keep you on track, clarify your thinking and help you produce a better final paper. These include:

- Assignment #1: Research Proposal (due Week 6)
- Assignment #2: Preliminary Literature Review (due Week 8)
- Assignment #3: Introduction (due Week 10)
- Assignment #4: Paper Outline (due Week 14)

You will submit assignments to me and your peer reviewers by email the night before your class meets, and also bring a hard copy to class for review by your research partner. I will give you more information on this before your first assignment is due.

A note for 4-credit students: part of your grade for each assignment will be a 2-page memo responding to the peer feedback you received. These memos will be due to me by the start of the next class period after the peer review session, and we'll talk more about them before the first assignment is due.

**Peer Feedback (8 total):** Early in the semester, you'll be paired with another student who will be your research partner for the duration of the course. You'll work together in class every few weeks to evaluate each other's research assignments, and will provide written feedback on each phase of your partner's work. For each assignment, you will also be given the name of 1 other student for whom you will provide written feedback by email. This feedback will be due within 3 days of the class meeting where the assignment is due.

**Campus Resource Field Trip Memos (2 or 3 total, depending on enrollment status):** One of our course goals is to help you become familiar with campus resources that can help you with writing and research. This part of the course asks you to take "field trips" out onto our campus, acquainting yourself with these resources and writing a memo on your experience.

- Field Trip #1: Attend a workshop at the Student Learning Center on writing research papers or on providing peer feedback

- Field Trip #2: Take a tour of one of the libraries on campus.

Both the SLC and library tour field trips have preset dates for you to choose from. I will provide a list of possible dates, and update the syllabus with final weeks when field trip memos are due, within the first two weeks of class.

Students taking the class for 4 credits are expected to complete 1 additional field trips:

- Additional Field Trip (memo due by Week 9): Make an appointment with a professor somewhere on campus whose research interests overlap with your own. Present your research topic to them and ask for their advice on materials you might read or expansions you might make to your project.

**Final Research Paper:** Your final assignment for this class will be an 18-20 page research paper, incorporating what you've learned over the semester about sociological writing. This paper can take one of three forms.

- Option 1: If you are a visiting student completing a long paper for your home university, you may use that paper (or at least a portion of it) to fulfill the requirements for this course. To pursue this option, you must meet with me to get approval for your topic.
- Option 2: If you are enrolled in another Berkeley sociology course which requires a short paper drawing on course readings, you may **expand** that topic into a full-scale research paper. Please note that it is against university policy to submit the same paper for two courses: this is considered self-plagiarism. To pursue this option, you must meet with me and explain how you will expand your topic to avoid self-plagiarizing.
- Option 3: You may do an empirically-based paper comparing some aspect of the American higher education system with the higher education system in another country. If you choose this option, I can provide some preliminary readings and data sources for your research on the American educational system. You will be responsible for finding materials for your comparative country.

You must decide which option you want to choose before your research proposal is due in Week 6. If you choose Option 1 or 2, you must also meet with me in office hours before Week 6 to make sure that your topic meets the parameters of the class.

Your final paper will be due Monday, May 7, at NOON, the day of our scheduled final exam.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Week 1 (18 Jan (Section 1) or 20 Jan (Section 2): Course Introduction

Week 2 (23 Jan or 27 Jan): Writing Research Papers in the United States

WfS Chapter 2, "Understanding the Assignment" (pp. 19-25). Pay special attention to Section 2.6, "The Components of a Research Paper."

Research Paper Model and sample research papers 1 & 2.

Week 3 (30 Jan or 3 Feb): Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

WfS Chapter 6, "Handling Other People's Writing" (pp. 65-74).

Berkeley Library guide to "Citation Styles, Style Guides, and Avoiding Plagiarism" (available at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html>).

Possible guest speaker from Student Conduct Office.

Week 4 (6 Feb or 10 Feb): Principles of Good Writing

WfS Chapter 4, "Mechanics" (pp. 45-54).

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Chapter 3, "The Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles," excerpt (pp. 169-171).

Fischer, Claude S. 2008. "Paradoxes of American Individualism." *Sociological Forum* 23(2):363-372.

Week 5 (13 Feb or 17 Feb): Choosing a Research Topic

Booth et. al. Chapter 3, "From Topics to Questions," & Chapter 4, "From Questions to a Problem" (pp. 35-66).

Hout, Michael and Claude S. Fischer. 2002. "Explaining the Rise of Americans with No Religious Preference: Generations and Politics." *American Sociological Review* 67:165-190.

Week 6 (22 Feb (Section 1) or 24 Feb: Peer Review of Research Topics

**\*\*RESEARCH TOPIC DUE\*\***

Come to class prepared for peer review. See peer review guidelines for details and deadlines.

Please note: due to the President's Day holiday, this week Section 1 will meet Wednesday instead of Monday. Thus, for this week only, peer review deadlines are as follows (bold indicates a change from usual deadlines):

- Submit assignment to reviewers by **Tuesday night (Section 1)**/Thursday night (Section 2)
- Come prepared for peer review on **Wednesday (Section 1)**/Friday (Section 2)
- Submit second review by **Friday (Section 1)**/Monday (Section 2)
- Submit response-to-critics memo, if applicable, by the following Sunday night(Section 1)/Thursday night (Section 2).

Week 7 (27 Feb or 2 Mar): Building a Literature Review

Booth et. al. Chapter 5, "From Problems to Sources," & Chapter 6, "Engaging Sources" (pp. 68-102).

Leidner, Robin. 1991. "Serving Hamburgers and Selling Insurance: Gender, Work, and Identity in Interactive Service Jobs." *Gender & Society* 5(4):154-177.

Stevens, Mitchell L., Elizabeth A. Armstrong, and Richard Arum. 2008. "Sieve, Incubator, Temple, Hub: Empirical and Theoretical Advances in the Sociology of Higher Education." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34:127-151.

Week 8 (5 Mar or 9 Mar): Peer Review of Literature Reviews

**\*\*LITERATURE REVIEW DUE\*\***

Come to class prepared for peer review. See peer review guidelines for details and deadlines.

Week 9 (12 Mar or 16 Mar): What is a Thesis Statement?

**\*\*LAST WEEK TO HAND IN PROFESSOR FIELD TRIP MEMO\*\***

WfS Chapter 5, "Thesis Statements and Arguments" (pp. 57-65).

Booth et. al. Chapter 16, "Introductions and Conclusions" (pp. 232-248)

Smith, Sandra S. 2005. " 'Don't Put My Name On It': (Dis)Trust and Job-Finding Assistance Among the Black Urban Poor." *American Journal of Sociology* 111(1):1-57.

Week 10 (19 Mar or 23 Mar): Peer Review of Thesis Statements

**\*\*INTRODUCTION DUE\*\***

Come to class prepared for peer review. See peer review guidelines for details and deadlines.

Week 11: SPRING BREAK

Week 12 (2 Apr, 4 Apr or 6 Apr):

No group meeting. Solo meetings with instructor required, in regular or supplementary office hours, M/W/F. Bring revised introduction and literature review for evaluation.

Week 13 (9 Apr or 13 Apr): Setting Up the Long Paper

Booth et. al. Chapter 7, "Making Good Arguments: An Overview," Chapter 8, "Making Claims," and Chapter 9, "Assembling Reasons and Evidence" (pp. 108-135)

Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5): 937-975.

Week 14 (16 Apr or 20 Apr): Peer Review of Outlines

**\*\*OUTLINE DUE\*\***

Come to class prepared for peer review. See peer review guidelines for details and deadlines.

Week 15 (23 Apr or 27 Apr): Drafts and Revision

Booth et. al. Chapter 12, "Planning," Chapter 13, "Drafting Your Report," Chapter 14, "Revising Your Organization and Argument," and Chapter 17, "Revising Style: Telling Your Story Clearly." (pp. 177-211 & 249-268).

Drafts of article (available on bSpace)

Week 16: Reading Week. No required class. Supplementary office hours for optional solo meetings with instructor, dates TBD.

**Final Paper due Monday, 5/7 at NOON, submitted by email to hbemery@gmail.com.**

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Email Policy:** I check email daily during the week (please note I do not use my Cal email address for student emails – you should send all email to hbemery@gmail.com), and usually respond within 24 hours. I don't usually check email on the weekend. Email works best for procedural questions (setting up appointments, etc.); detailed questions about course material are usually easier to clarify in class or in office hours. I will set up an email list for each section, and intend to send out announcements via email.

**Office Hours:** I hold office hours Mondays (in 483 Barrows) and Fridays (at Caffé Strada) from 10:10 AM-12 noon. Office hour signups are available at <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/cgryv>. If you cannot meet during my regular office hours, email me and we can arrange another time to meet. I encourage you to come by regularly: office hours are your best opportunity to get one-on-one feedback on your writing. You are welcome to come to office hours in pairs or small groups.

**Grading Policy:** You will not receive a formal attendance grade; if your attendance or participation is negatively affecting your grade in the class, I will let you know. Course feedback and field trip memos will be recorded on a credit/no credit basis (if you do the assignment, you will receive full credit). Small research assignments and peer review work will be graded on a check/check-plus/check-minus scale, and your final paper will be graded on a 100-point scale.

Part of your grade on all written assignments will depend on the quality of your writing. Good writing is a key part of expressing your thoughts; the ideas you're conveying can't be unlinked from the words and sentences you're using to present them. If writing is a challenge for you, come talk to me in office hours, and I can help you address these issues or put you in touch with writing resources on campus.

All materials submitted should be double-spaced, using twelve-point font (Times New Roman or equivalent) and one-inch margins, and you should number your pages. I will deduct points for incorrect formatting.

**Late Assignment Policy:** Assignments are due on their scheduled due date. Unless you have major extenuating circumstances (severe illness, family emergency requiring travel), in many cases I will not accept late assignments. If you require an extension on any work, you must contact me with this request in advance, and be prepared to provide documentation.

Field trip memos can be submitted any time before the final due date on the syllabus. Small research assignments and peer review work should be submitted in line with the weekly schedule discussed in class: late submission of these materials inconveniences your peers and is unprofessional.

If your final paper is submitted late, your grade on it will drop by 5 percentage points. If you turn it in more than one week late, the grade will drop by a total of 10 percentage points.

**Electronics in Class:** Our class is discussion-based, and we've all experienced the distraction potential of electronics in the classroom. For this reason, I ask that you please keep your cell phone on silent and out of your sight during class. I also ask that any notes you take in class be handwritten – i.e., there should be no use of laptops in class. If this will present a significant problem for you, please come see me in office hours.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. All work must be your own. This means no borrowing of ideas or wording from friends' work, other authors' work, or the Internet. Any time you draw on another person's work, you must use proper citations. We will discuss how to do this in class, but as a general rule, if you are quoting a published source (or a Web site) and the quotation is short, put it in quotation marks. If you quote a longer

passage, indent it and single-space. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses, and include it in your works cited page (unless course instructions specifically tell you otherwise). If I find that your work has been plagiarized or that any other form of cheating has occurred, you will receive an F for the course.

***Accommodation Policy:*** If you require special accommodations for this class, please let me know as soon as possible. This applies to students working with the Disabled Students' Program, student athletes, students with childcare responsibilities, and transfer students. You are never required to tell me personal information; however, if you're having problems that affect your ability to attend, participate, or keep up with the workload in this class, please don't wait until right before a deadline to ask for help, and don't just disappear. I may be able to help you or direct you to someone else who can.