

Sociology 193

Sociological Writing and Analysis

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UC Berkeley
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Writing is more than a means to communicate; it provides us with a special tool to develop our analytical minds. These capacities facilitate success in social science scholarship and even in fields that put less emphasis on epistolary dimensions of work. “Writing analysis” trains students in explicit and tacit skills that formal academic writing requires.¹ In the first part of the course, we will cover the fundamentals of analytical writing, including structure, argumentation, sentence mechanics, and analytical techniques. We will apply these fundamentals in our readings of substantive texts. The second part of the course focuses on more-advanced training as we move from writing shorter essays to a longer paper that requires: 1) evaluating and synthesizing multiple sources; and 2) organizing the claims and evidence of a relatively complex argument.

Instructional readings on writing analytically—and how to write well more generally—provide a foundation for our work. Additionally, we will read substantive texts on the relationship between care, empathy, and inequality. We will ask questions such as: 1) what arguments do these authors make? 2) what is their evidence 3) what is their methodology? 4) what is the scholarly context of their analyses?

Work for this challenging, writing-intensive course includes the preparation required for each meeting, in-class writing exercises, participation in discussions, peer-editing assignments, and three essay papers. Goals of this course include an increased ability to think critically, analyze texts and social phenomena, work with theory and evidence, construct logical arguments supported by evidence, write clearly, and develop a personal writing practice.

Note: this course is reserved for sociology majors. Non-sociology majors may take the course with the instructor’s permission (even if you are already “enrolled”).

Coursework and Grading

All assignments must be submitted in class on paper; no electronic submissions will be accepted.

Attendance and Participation.....	20%
Peer-review.....	5%
Reading-Response Memos.....	10%
Essay One (First and Second Draft).....	15%
Essay Two (First and Second Draft).....	20%
Essay Three (First and Second Draft).....	30%

¹ My pedagogy includes training students in both the explicit and implicit knowledge required for social analysis. Training in explicit knowledge will occur through reading, lectures, explanation, and discussion. Training in implicit knowledge will involve practicing analytical techniques, observing how others apply them, and receiving individualized feedback.

Participation

Attendance and participation are essential to doing well in this seminar course. Students are expected to participate regularly by coming prepared and contributing to our discussions. Keeping up with the weekly readings is a condition of possibility for meaningful participation. Please be mindful of group dynamics so that everybody feels comfortable to speak up. Also, there will be in-class writing workshop activities. You can miss one class before losing points. A letter grade penalty will be assessed for every class you miss after the first. In-class work cannot be made-up under any circumstances, even if you have a legitimate reason (and evidence) for missing class.

Reading-Response Memos

There will be 5 one-page long (MAX) reading-response memos on the substantive reading.² Reading carefully is a condition of possibility for doing well and having good discussions; these reading-response memos will help you practice reading and writing analytically. Memos are thoughtful, analytical responses, not simply statements of opinion.

Each student must write 5 memos of at least passing quality to receive full credit (check = passing, check-minus = non-passing). Non-passing memos yield zero points. Passing memos are worth 2 points each. No more than 5 memos will be accepted. Memos must be written in a formal discussion style (no bullet points, lists, etc.). For each memo, in a well-written one-page discussion, answer the following:

- What is the structure of the author's main argument?
- How does the author support that argument?
- What is a possible counter-argument to the author's argument?

A hard copy of each memo must be submitted at the beginning of the class whose "Reading Due" corresponds to the texts analyzed in the memo. No late memos will be accepted under any circumstances. Memos may not be redone or made up under any circumstances. Only one memo per class/assigned reading is allowed.

Peer Review

For each peer-review assignment you will exchange a draft of your essay with one of your peers and edit one another's work. The "peer editing" section of your grade will reflect the quality of the feedback you provide your partner. Peer-review assignments must be submitted on time to receive credit.

Essays

There will be three essay assignments. For each essay, you will turn in a first draft, receive feedback on it, and then submit a revised second draft. It is important to integrate the feedback you receive. Your grade on the final draft will depend on how you incorporated the feedback that you received as well as on the quality of the final draft itself. Specific instructions for each essay will become available as the semester unfolds.

² Substantive reading does not include any of our texts on writing.

Get creative as you write your first draft. Free-writing stream-of-consciousness may help you get started, but make sure to revise it before you turn it in. Develop your main argument, evidence, and reasoning as much as you can; the better your first draft, the better the feedback we can give you. At this point, it's more important to focus on the substance of your analysis than on its presentation. Remember that each draft is a work-in-progress. At the same time, by the time you hand in the first draft it should be fairly coherent and readable, and it should follow the structure laid out in the prompt.

The second draft should contain a clear, logical, and rigorous analytical argument that is plainly laid-out in an explicit thesis statement in the introduction section and developed coherently and consistently in each subsequent section of the paper. Be sure to support your argument with reasoning and evidence. Here, in this second draft, the organization, analytical prose, mechanics, evidence, reasoning, creativity, formatting and incorporation of course material will be closely evaluated.

Note: both the first and second draft of your essay—and the peer review—must be submitted on time. It is very important to keep up with the course schedule. Late work will be penalized on letter grade for every day.

Guidelines and Resources

Formatting

All work must be formatted correctly. Familiarize yourself with MLA style formatting. Refer to The Purdue Owl Writing Lab.³ Then, note the following variations that we use in our course's modified MLA format style:

- single space* the header at the top-left of your first page (name, course, assignment, date);
- center your creative title above the start of your text;
- no title page;
- use *two spaces* between sentences;
- single space* block quotations;
- 1" margins;
- doubled-spacing;
- pagination;
- 12-point Times New Roman font;
- staple pages together;
- no passive voice;
- no contractions.

Disability Accommodations

If you need disability-related accommodations in this class please inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students who need academic accommodations should contact the Disability Students Program, 260 Cesar Chavez Center.

Student Learning Center (SLC)

The SLC provides peer writing tutors. You are expected to make use of their services. You do

³ <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

not need an appointment. Find them in the Chavez Center (<http://slc.berkeley.edu>).

NOTE: Plagiarism, broadly put, is the presentation of another's words and/or ideas as one's own. It is grounds not only for automatic failure, but also for administrative disciplinary action. This also applies for other forms of academic dishonesty (a.k.a. cheating). Please see the Berkeley Campus Code of Student Conduct, Section III B, Academic Violations, and Section IV, Disciplinary Procedures.

Attention! Students who miss any of the first three weeks of classes may be dropped from the class.

Course Materials

We have one book, available at the bookstore: Rossenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*. Sixth Edition. MA: Wadsworth, 2012.

We also have several other texts, available on our BCourses website.

Recommended Supplementary Reading

Becker, Howard & Pamela Richards. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Johnson, William A., et. al. *Sociology Student Writer's Manual*. Fifth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2006.

Metzger, Deena. *Writing for Your Life: a Guide and Companion to the Inner Worlds*. UK: HarperCollins, 1992.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: the Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

Office Hours

Office hours are an important part of university learning. I ask students to email me to arrange an appointment in order to find times that work for everybody. My email address is: j_kaiser@berkeley.edu. Allow at least 24 hours for a reply. I usually do not use email over the weekend or holidays.

Course Schedule

Attention: changes to this syllabus may occur at the discretion of the instructor.

An "*" followed by *italicized* words denotes an assignment due in class.

Week One, January 17 Course overview

Week Three, January 31 Analytical techniques I

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 1, "Introduction" (5-16), Ch. 2, "Analytical Methods I" (23-29) and Ch. 7, "Making Common Topics Analytical" (151-160)
Quinn. "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: the Power and Meaning of 'Girl Watching.'"

Week Four, February 7 Thesis statements and essay structure

Discuss prompt for Essay 1

Writing for Sociology. Ch. 3, "Writing Processes," Ch. 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6. of "Mechanics": and Ch. 5, "Thesis Statements and Arguments."
Rosenwasser and Stephen. Chp 15, "Forms and Formats" (333-347).
Darley and Batson. "From Jerusalem to Jericho: a Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior."

Week Five, February 14 Analytical techniques II

**First draft of Essay 1 (2 copies)*

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 3, "Analysis" (53-66) and Ch. 5, "Writing about Reading (105-129)
Rosenhan. "On Being Sane in Insane Places."

Week Six, February 21 Developing your argument

**Peer-review*

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 11, "Making a Thesis Evolve" (227-253)
Bonilla-Silva, E. "The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America" and "The Central Frames of Colorblind Racism" (1-48).

Week Seven, February 28 Sentence mechanics and style

**Second draft of Essay 1 (2 copies)*

Discuss prompt for Essay 2

Writing for Sociology. Ch 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 of “Mechanics.”

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 18, “Revising...Rhetoric of the Sentence” (391-416)

Thorne, Barrie. “Creating a Sense of ‘Opposite Sides.’”

Week Eight, March 7 Word choice: concision v. precision

**First draft of Essay 2 (2 copies)*

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 17, “Word Choice” (375-390)

Zinsser. “Simplicity,” “Clutter,” “Style,” “Words,” and “Usage”

Messner. “Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities.”

Week Nine, March 14 The logic of arguments

**Peer-review*

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 12, “Recognizing and Fixing Weak Thesis Statements,”
and Ch. 9, “Analyzing Arguments” (191-205).

Garland-Thomson. “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory.”

Week Ten, March 21 Beginning a research paper

**Second draft of Essay 2 (2 copies)*

Discuss prompt for Essay 3

Alford. “Designing a Research Project.”

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 14, “Finding, Citing, and Integrating Sources” and Ch
15, “Forms and Formats” (317-325)

Wilkinson and Pickett. “Physical health and life expectancy.”

Week Eleven, March 28 Spring break!

Week Twelve, April 4 Synthesizing evidence from multiple sources

**Proposal and list of sources (2 copies)*

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 13, "Using Sources Analytically" (267-281),

Week Thirteen, April 11 Using evidence to build arguments

Rosenwasser and Stephen. Ch. 8, "Reasoning from Evidence to Claims" (165-190)

Week Fourteen, April 17 Writing workshop

**First draft of Essay 3 (2 copies)*

Week Fifteen, April 25 Writing workshop

**Peer-review due in class*

Final Paper is due in my box in 410 Barrows Hall by Monday, May 8th at 2pm. No late or electronic submissions will be accepted.

List of Sources (in alphabetical order)

- Bonilla-Silva, E. *Racism Without Racists: Color Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the U.S.* Laham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. "The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America" and "The Central Frames of Colorblind Racism" (1-48).
- Darley, J. M. and C. Batson. "From Jerusalem to Jericho: a Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 27, 100-119, 1973.
- Garland-Thomson, Rosmarie. 2002. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal*, Vol 14 No. 3.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "Creating a Caring Society." *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Utopian Visions: Engaged Sociologies for the 21st Century, Jan, 2000.
- Messner, Michael. "Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 1990.
- Quinn, Beth A. "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: the Power and Meaning of 'Girl Watching.'" *Gender and Society* 16, No. 3 (June 2002): 386-402.
- Rosenhan, D. L. "On Being Sane in Insane Places." *Science*, 1973.
- Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*, 6th edition, Wadsworth Publishing, 2012.
- Thorne, Barrie. Ch. 5, "Creating a Sense of 'Opposite Sides.'" In *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993.
- Wilkinson, Richard and Kate Pickett. *The Spirit Level*. NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2010. Ch. 6, "Physical health and life expectancy" (74-87).
- Zinsner, William. *On Writing Well: the Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.