

Sociology R1B: Social Inequalities

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UC Berkeley
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Course description

Sociology R1B fulfills the second half of the Reading and Composition requirement. It has three main goals: 1) to assist you in developing a clear, persuasive, and personal prose style in English; 2) to refine and build upon the close reading techniques you practiced in R1A; and 3) to equip you with the skills necessary for writing a research paper—a standard requirement of many upper-division (100-level) courses. Other goals include: an increased ability to think critically, analyze and comprehend texts, construct arguments supported by evidence and reasoning, write clearly, and enjoy scholarly activity. Additionally, this course encourages students to cultivate a personal writing practice as a tool for analytical thinking and reading critically.

Writing is more than a means to communicate; it provides us with a special tool to nurture our analytical and creative thinking. These capacities facilitate success in scholarship, and in fields that put less emphasis on writing. Sociology R1B trains students in the analysis, comprehension, structure, mechanics, and creativity of formal academic writing. We apply these skills in our reading of course material. The essays progress in difficulty and complexity through the semester, culminating in a longer paper that incorporates advanced techniques of style, creativity, and organization of complex arguments. This course emphasizes revising in the writing process. Since our readings mostly cover social science, this course also introduces concepts useful for reading texts in these fields.

Course theme

This course uses several forms of social inequality in the United States as a substantive basis for our analysis and writing work; this is not a systematic examination of inequality. An intersectional approach enables us to analyze how race, class, and gender inflect cultures, institutions, and structures of inequality. We also cover mechanisms that create and reproduce inequality. We ground our analysis in contexts of healthcare, education, work, and political economy. This is a writing course and our earnest and passionate engagement with issues of inequality shall inspire us as a means to that epistolary-didactic end.

Coursework and Grading

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

Grading:

Participation.....	20%
Reading-Response Memos.....	10%
Peer-Review Editing.....	10%
Paper One (first and second draft).....	10%
Paper Two (first and second draft).....	15%
Presentation.....	5%
Paper Three (first and second draft).....	30%

Participation: Regular attendance and good participation is essential for doing well. You are allowed one absence. More than one absence will lower your participation grade. More than two absences will seriously affect your grade. Do not email the professor when you miss class unless you have already missed on class and you have evidence of legitimate reason for missing (you must present that evidence when you email the professor). Tardiness is disruptive and will also adversely affect your grade. Please refrain from distracting and disrespectful behavior, such as side-talking and otherwise disengaging from class. Distracting behavior will lower your grade.

Students are expected to participate regularly by contributing to our discussions. Please be mindful of group dynamics so that everybody feels comfortable to speak up. Contributing to discussions, which includes positive attitude and listening as well as talking, is essential. There will also be in-class writing exercises and group work. Participation credit and missed lectures cannot be made up under any circumstances, even with evidence of legitimate reason for missing class. Always bring the hard copy of the reading to every class.

Reading: You are responsible for all assigned reading and assignments. You are expected to have completed each day's reading and assignment(s) as preparation for class attendance and participation. Always read with a pen or pencil in hand and take notes as you go. Come to class with questions and observations about what you found interesting, significant, puzzling, etc. This will help you develop ideas for your essays. If you don't read carefully and keep up, you will probably feel lost and frustrated with the course.

Writing: For this course, you will submit a minimum of 32 pages of writing, which is the university requirement for the second part of the Reading and Composition sequence. There will be three essay assignments that increase in length and difficulty. The first two focus on course material, while the third necessitates research with outside texts. 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. A hard copy of each draft is due *in class*. Bring two (2) copies of each draft. You must submit every assignment in order to pass the course. Late work will not be accepted.

Final Paper: There is no final exam for this course. Students will complete a final research paper in lieu of an exam. This final research paper shall demonstrate your mastery of course material.

Presentation: Students will give short (10 minute) presentations of the preliminary findings of their final papers at the end of the semester.

Exercises: There will be a take-home writing exercise due. These exercises are found in *Writing Analytically* (page number is noted on the schedule). These count towards your participation grade.

Peer-Review Editing: 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 provided your partner.

Reading-Response Memos: There will be 10 one-page (MAX) reading-response memos on the substantive reading (we have 10 such texts). Substantive reading does not include the texts about writing. Reading carefully is a condition of possibility for doing well and having good discussions; these reading-response memos will help you read the texts and keep up with the course.

Memos must be thoughtful, analytical responses, not simply statements of opinion. 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 (submitted more than thirty-minutes after our class meeting) will be accepted. Memos may not be redone or made up under any circumstances, no exceptions; you may not submit a memo for past reading or classes. A memo is due every class from Week 2 to Week 11. Only one memo per class/text.

Each student must write 10 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 1 point each. For each memo, in a well-written, one-page discussion, answer the following:

What is the author’s main idea/argument? Explain.
How does the author deliver this main idea? Support your claim using examples.
Describe anything interesting, unclear, or problematic.

Memos must be written in a formal discussion style (no bullet points, lists, etc.).

A grade of at least “C-” is required to pass this course.

Guidelines and Resources

Formatting: All work must be formatted correctly. Familiarize yourself with MLA style formatting. Refer to The Purdue Owl Writing Lab.¹ 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.

¹ <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Disability accommodations: If you need disability-related accommodations in this class please inform the instructor. 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 not need an appointment. Find them in the Chavez Center (<http://slc.berkeley.edu>).

Disclaimer: this course includes material that may be emotionally-difficult and disturbing. Valence, including, but not limited to, discomfort, anxiety, anger, sadness, disgust, guilt, and stress to course material is not grounds for exemption from, or customization of, policies pertaining to coursework, participation, assignments, and exams et cetera.

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 classes will be dropped or otherwise not allowed into the class.

Course Materials

Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*, 6th edition, Wadsworth Publishing, 2012.

Writing for Sociology. The Department of Sociology. 2011. Available on BCourses.

A course reader will be available at Replica Copy, 2138 Oxford. A complete list of the texts in the course reader follows the schedule below.

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.

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

Office Hours

Email me to arrange an appointment. My email address is: j_kaiser@berkeley.edu
Please allow at least 24 hours for a reply. I usually do not check email on the weekends.

Course Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Week One, August 24 Course Overview

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work

Week Two, August 31 Analytical techniques I

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: Ch. 1, "Introduction" (5-16), Ch. 2, "Analytical Methods I" (23-29) and Ch. 7, "Making Common Topics Analytical" (151-160) Marx: "The Communist Manifesto"		Meditation "Notice and Focus"

Week Three, September 7 Thesis statements and essay structure

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
<i>Writing for Sociology</i> : Ch. 3.4, "Template for an Analytical Paper," Ch. 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 of "Mechanics," and Ch. 5, "Thesis Statements and Arguments" WA: Ch. 15, "Forms and Formats" (333-347) Forbes: "Consuming Another's Life" (9-25) and "Deception, Brutality, and Greed" (35-48)		Discuss prompt for Essay 1 Free-write for Essay 1 Structure Workshop: Label the Function of Sentences (339)

Week Four, September 14 Analytical techniques II

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: Ch. 3, “Analysis” (53-66) and Ch. 5, “Writing about Reading (105-129) Bourdieu: “The Forms of Capital” (241-258)	Paper 1: first draft (2 copies)	Peer-Review Workshop “Inferring Implications” (64) Apply a Reading as a Lens (129)

Week Five, September 21 Developing the argument

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: “Making a Thesis Evolve” (227-236) Omi and Winant: “Racial Formation” (197-203)	Peer-Review Reports	Qualifying Overstated Claims (234)

Week Six, September 28 Sentence mechanics and style

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
<i>Writing for Sociology</i> . Ch 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 of “Mechanics.” Ch. 18, “Revising...Rhetoric of the Sentence” (391-416) Quinn: “Girl Watching” (386- 402)	Paper 1: second draft (2 copies)	Discuss prompt for Essay 2 “Doing 10 on 1 with a Reading” (216)

Week Seven, October 5 The logic of arguments

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: Ch. 9, “Analyzing Arguments” (191-205) and Ch. 12, “Recognizing...Weak Thesis Statements” (255-265) Bonilla-Silva: “The Central Frames of Colorblind Racism” (25-48)	Paper 2: first draft (2 copies)	Peer-Review Workshop Revising Weak Thesis Statements (261)

Week Eight, October 12 Concision v. precision: word choice

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: Ch. 17, “Word Choice” (375-390) Zinsser: “Simplicity,” “Clutter,” “Style,” “Words,” and “Usage” Larson: “Black Lives Matter”	Peer -Review Reports	Word Choice Workshop + “Cutting the Fat”

Week Nine, October 19 Beginning a “research” paper

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: Ch. 14, “Finding, Citing, and Integrating Sources” (283-314), and Ch. 15, “Forms and Formats” (323-325) Glenn: “Creating a Caring Society” (84-94)	Paper 2: complete second draft (2 copies)	Discuss Prompt for Paper 3 Sources Workshop Free Write for Paper Three

Week Ten, October 26 Synthesizing evidence from multiple sources

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
Ch. 13, “Using Sources Analytically” (267-281) Wilkinson and Pickett: “Physical Health and Life Expectancy” (74-87)	Paper 3: Proposal, Outline, and list of sources (2 copies)	Peer-Review Workshop: Literature Review

Week Eleven, November 2 Using evidence to build arguments

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: Ch. 8, “Reasoning from Evidence to Claims” (165-190) Alexander: “The Lockdown” (58-94)	Paper 3: Introduction and two pages (2 copies)	Peer-Review Workshop: Distinguishing Evidence from Claims (189)

Week Twelve, November 9 Sentences: grammar

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
WA: Ch. 19, “Revising...Grammar and Punctuation” (417-445)	Paper 3: first draft (2 copies)	Peer-Review Workshop

Week Thirteen, November 16

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
Individual Sources	Peer-Review Editing Presentations	Writing Workshop

Week Fourteen, November 23 **No Class**

Week Fifteen, November 30

Reading Due	Assignment Due	In-Class Work
Individual Sources	Presentations	Writing Workshop

Final Paper is due in my box in 410 Barrows Hall on Thursday, December 15 by 2pm.

List of Texts in Course Reader (in alphabetical order)

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. NY: New Press, 2011.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. *Racism Without Racists: Color Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the U.S.* Laham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- Bourdieu, P. "The Forms of Capital" in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Ed. J. Richardson, pp. 241-258. New York, 1986.
- Forbes, Jack. *Columbus and Other Cannibals*. NY: Seven Stories Press, 2008.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "Creating a Caring Society." *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Utopian Visions: Engaged Sociologies for the 21st Century, Jan, 2000.
- Larson, Eric. "Black Lives Matter and Bridge Building: Labor Education for a "New Jim Crow Era." *Labor Studies Journal*. 2016, Vol. 41(1) 36–66.
- Marx, Karl. "The Communist Manifesto."
- Omi, M. & Winant, H. "Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s", in Eds. Grusky, D. & Szelenyi, S. *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class and Gender* (2007), p.197-203. Westview Press: Boulder, CO.
- Quinn, B. "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: the Power and Meaning of 'Girl Watching'" (386-402).
- Wilkinson, Richard and Kate Pickett. *The Spirit Level*. NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2010. Ch. 6, "Physical health and life expectancy" (p. 74-87).
- Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: the Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. NY: HarperCollins, 2006.