

Sociology 193

Reading and Writing for Sociology

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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 social science scholarship and even in fields that put less emphasis on epistolary dimensions of work. “Reading and Writing for Sociology” trains students in the comprehension, structure, mechanics, analysis, and practice of formal academic writing. In the first part of the course, we will cover the fundamentals of the writing process, including structure, technique, mechanics, and analytical forms. We will apply these fundamentals in our analysis of substantive readings. The second part of the course focuses on more-advanced training as we move from writing shorter essays to a slightly-longer paper. These advanced components of reading and writing include style, expression of personal voice, creativity, and integrating theory with analysis.

My pedagogy includes training in the explicit and implicit knowledge essential for social analysis. Training in explicit knowledge will occur through instruction, explanation, and discussion. Training in implicit knowledge will involve practicing analytical techniques and observing how others apply them. Goals of this course include an increased ability to think critically, analyze social phenomena, work with theory, construct logical arguments supported by evidence, comprehend sociological texts, and enjoy scholarly activity.

Instructional readings on how to write analytical essays—and how to write well more generally—provide a foundation for our discussions and exercises. Additionally, we will read texts from various substantive areas of sociology in order to learn from the structure of their analysis and respond to their arguments. 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 analysis?

Work for this course includes the preparation required for each meeting, in-class writing exercises, participation in discussions, peer-editing assignments, and three essay papers. These progressively-more-challenging essays are designed to train students in: 1) the fundamental structure of essay writing; 2) how to analyze texts; 3) how to construct a thesis claim and support it with evidence and logic; 4) how to apply theory. Throughout the semester you will practice writing with attention to formal detail, structure, mechanics, style, creativity, and the quality of your argument and analysis.

Assignments and Grading

Two categories of work determine your grade for the course. The first area includes attendance, participation in discussions, and in-class peer review and writing exercises.

Participation is essential. Students are expected to participate regularly by contributing to

our discussions. However, please don't come to class if you don't feel well. You can miss two classes before it directly affects your participation grade. Do not email me about missing class unless you will miss more than two. Please be mindful of group dynamics so that everybody feels comfortable to speak up. Keeping up with the weekly readings is a condition of possibility for meaningful participation. There will be relatively short, in-class writing opportunities to provide you a structure that helps you keep up. The nature of these opportunities will vary and they will be integrated into every session. In-class writing cannot be made-up under any circumstances.

There will also be three essay assignments. The first two will each be three-pages long, while the third will be six to eight pages long. 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. You will receive a grade for each draft. Specific instructions for each essay will become available as the semester unfolds. Each essay must be formatted: 1” margins, doubled-spaced, pagination, 12-point Times New Roman font, bibliography, standard citations, two spaces after periods, and stapled.

For each of these assignments you will exchange a draft 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 for your partners on their rough drafts. Your grade on the final draft of your essays will include evaluation of how well you incorporated the feedback that you received.

First drafts are a great time to get creative. You want to develop your argument and reasoning. At this point, it’s more important to focus on the substance of your analysis than on its presentation. Remember that this is a work-in-progress. Write with the creativity of a mind on fire. By the time you hand in the first draft, it should be fairly coherent and well-organized.

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. Here, at this final stage the organization, flow, composition, mechanics, editing, evidence, reasoning, creativity, and formatting will be closely evaluated, with an eye to detail. Thus, your final paper should contain a clear, logical, and rigorous analytical argument that you articulate in a thesis statement in the introduction. You should develop the argument coherently and consistently in each subsequent section of the paper. You should support your argument with reasoning and evidence.

Attendance and Participation.....	20%	Ongoing
Peer-review.....	5%	See below for due dates
Essay One, First Draft.....	5%	February 29
Essay One, Second Draft.....	15%	March 14
Essay Two, First Draft.....	5%	March 28
Essay Two, Second Draft.....	15%	April 11
Essay Three, First Draft.....	5%	April 18
Essay Three, Second Draft.....	30%	May 5 by 2pm in my box in 410 Barrows

Course Materials

A reader will be available at Replica Copy, 2138 Oxford.

Writing for Sociology. Department of Sociology, UC Berkeley, 2011. Our reader will not contain this material. It is available online at Berkeley Sociology Department website under "Undergraduate Resources." It is also on our BCourses site.

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.

Course Schedule

Week One; January 25 Course overview

Week Two; February 1 Fundamentals of form

Writing for Sociology. "Preface," "Introduction," and Ch. 1, "Thinking and Reading for College."

Johnson, William, et. al. Ch. 1, "Writing as Communication." In *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual*. Fifth Edition. NJ: Upper Saddle River, 2006. Johnson.

Ostertag, Stephan. *Writing in Sociology: A Guide for UConn Students*.

Week Three; February 8 Writing Processes

Writing in Sociology. Ch. 3, "The Writing Process."

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "Creating a Caring Society." *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Utopian Visions: Engaged Sociologies for the 21st Century, Jan, 2000

Solari, Cinzia. "Professionals and Saints: How Immigrant Careworkers Negotiate Gender Identities at Work." *Gender and Society*, Vol. 20, No. 3, June 2006.

Week Four; February 15 No class

Week Five; February 22 Thesis statements

Writing for Sociology. Ch. 5, "Thesis Statements and Arguments."

Quinn, Beth A. "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: the Power and Meaning of 'Girl Watching.'" *Gender and Society* 16, No. 3 (June 2002): 386-402.

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.

Week Six; February 29 Reading techniques

*First draft of Essay One due in class; bring two copies

Writing for Sociology. Ch 2, “Understanding the Assignment” and Ch. 6, “Handling Other People’s Writing.”

Apesoa-Varano, Ester Carolina. Ch. 3, “The Dilemma of Caring.” In *Conflicted Health Care: Professionalism and Caring in an Urban Hospital*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014.

Lopez, Steve. “Emotional Labor and Organized Emotional Care: Conceptualizing Nursing Home Care Work.” *Work and Occupations*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 133-160, May 2006.

Week Seven; March 7 Mezzo-mechanics: paragraphs; topic sentences; transitions.

*Peer-review due in classmate

Writing for Sociology. Ch. 4, “Mechanics.”

Rosenhan, D. L. “On Being Sane in Insane Places.” *Science*, 1973.

Berry, Brandon, Ester Carolina Apesoa-Varano, Yarin Gomez. “How family members manage risk around functional decline: The autonomy management process in households facing dementia.” *Social Science and Medicine*. 130 (2015) 107-114.

Week Eight; March 14 Micro-mechanics: concision; clarity; precision.

*Second draft of Essay One due in class

“Writing Competently” (Ch. 2). *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual*.

Messner, Michael. “Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction of Masculinities.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 1990.

Thorne, Barrie. Ch. 5, “Creating a Sense of ‘Opposite Sides.’” In *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993.

Week Nine; March 21 No Class

Week Ten; March 28 Working with theory I: technical dimensions of style

*First draft of Essay Two due in class; bring two copies

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well*. ”Simplicity” (ch. 2), “Clutter” (ch. 3), “Style” (ch. 4), “Words” (ch. 6), and “Usage” (ch. 7).

Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation.” In *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.

Wilson, Timothy. *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002. Selections.

Week Eleven; April 4 Working with theory II; more on style

*Peer-review due in class

Becker, Howard. Ch. 1, “Freshman English for Graduate Students: A Memoir and Two Theories” and Ch. 4, “Editing by Ear.” In *Writing for social scientists: how to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Garland-Thomson, Rosmarie. 2002. “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory.” *NWSA Journal*, Vol 14 No. 3.

Williams, Raymond. “Structures of Feeling.” In *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Week Twelve; April 11 Technical and substantive creativity

*Second draft of Essay Two due in class

Becker, Howard. Ch. 3, “One Right Way.” In *Writing for social scientists: how to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Murray, Davis. “That's Interesting! Toward a Phenomenology of Sociology and a Sociology of Phenomenology.” *Philosophy of Social Science* 309-344, 1971

Week Thirteen; April 18 Embodied creativity

*First draft of Essay Three due in class

*Bring two copies

Metzger, Deena. “On Creativity” and “Writing as a Spiritual Practice,” selections. *Writing for Your Life: a Guide and Companion to the Inner Worlds*. NY: Harper-Collins, 1992.

Week Fourteen: April 25 Writing to full fruition

*Peer-review due in class