

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 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.

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

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.

Coursework and Grading

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

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

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-to-two-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

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

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.

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, 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 may not be accepted. If accepted, all late work will be penalized one letter grade for the first day late, then 1/3 of a letter grade each day thereafter (e.g. an “A” paper becomes a “B” if submitted the day after it is due; a “B-” if submitted two days after; a “C+” three days after, and so on).

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;

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

12-point Times New Roman font;
staple pages together;
no passive voice;
justify the left but not the right;
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 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.

Course Materials

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

We also have several other texts 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 and Email

Office hours are an integral part of college learning, and I encourage you to make use of them. I ask students to email me to arrange an appointment. We will arrange the time and location over email. Note that I am usually only on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays this semester.

My email address is: j_kaiser@berkeley.edu. Please allow at least 24 hours for a reply. I usually do not use email over the weekend, on holidays, or after hours.

Course Schedule

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

An “” indicates substantive reading.*

Week One, January 16

Course Overview

Week Two, January 23

Reading Analytically

Writing Analytically. Ch 2, “Analytical Methods I” (23-28; 33-34; 36-37; 39-40; 43-49) and Ch 5 “Writing about Reading,” (105-119)

*Marx, Karl. Excerpts from *The Communist Manifesto* [“Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism”] (32-41). From *Selected Works, Vol. I*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964 [1848].

Week Three, January 30

Thesis Claims

Berkeley’s Writing Guide. Ch 3.4, “Template for an Analytical Paper,” and Ch 5, “Thesis Statements and Arguments.”

Writing Analytically. Ch 11, “Making a Thesis Evolve” (227-236).

*Robinson, William. “Global Capitalism: Reflections on a Brave New World” (0-13). *GTI*, June 2017.

Week Four, February 6

Essay Structure

Berkeley’s Writing Guide. Ch. 4, “Mechanics,”

Writing Analytically. Ch 15, “Forms and Formats” (333-347)

*Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Ch 7: 191-219). Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016.

[Discuss Essay One]

Week Five, February 13

Analytical Technique

Writing Analytically. Ch 3, “Analysis” (53-82)

*Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "Creating a Caring Society" (84-94). *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 1, January 2000.

-->>**FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER ONE DUE** (two copies)

~~~~~**Week Six, February 20**~~~~~  
**Sentence Mechanics**

*Writing Analytically*. Ch 12, "Recognizing Weak Thesis Statements" (255-265) and Ch 18, "Revising...the Rhetoric of the Sentence."

\*Bonilla-Silva. E. "The Strange Enigma of Race in Contemporary America" and "The Central Frames of Colorblind Racism" (1-48). From *Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

-->> **PEER REVIEW DUE**

~~~~~**Week Seven, February 27**~~~~~  
More Analytical Techniques

Writing Analytically. Ch. 4 "Toolkit of Analytical Methods II" (85-103)

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

-->> **SECOND DRAFT OF PAPER ONE DUE**

[Discuss Essay Two]

~~~~~**Week Eight, March 6**~~~~~  
**Word Choice**

*Writing Analytically*. Ch 17, "Word Choice" (375-390)

\*Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital" (241-258). From J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. NY: Greenwood Press, 1986.

-->>**FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER TWO DUE** (two copies)

~~~~~**Week Nine, March 13**~~~~~  
The Logic of Arguments

Writing Analytically. Ch 9, “Analyzing Arguments” (191-205).

*Wilkinson and Pickett. “Physical Health and Life Expectancy” (74-87). From *The Spirit Level*.
NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2010.

-->> **PEER REVIEW DUE**

~~~~~**Week Ten, March 20**~~~~~  
**Beginning a Research Paper**

Alford. “Beginning a Research Project.”

*Writing Analytically*. Ch 14, “Finding, Citing, and Integrating Sources” (283-314).

Sources workshop-----> *bring your laptop to class!*

-->> **SECOND DRAFT OF PAPER TWO DUE**

[Discuss Paper Three]

~~~~~**Week Eleven, March 27**~~~~~  
Spring break, no class

~~~~~**Week Twelve, April 3**~~~~~  
**Synthesizing Evidence from Multiple Sources**

*Writing Analytically*. Ch 13, “Using Sources Analytically” (267-281)

Individual research material for Final Paper

-->> **PROPOSAL AND LIST OF SOURCES FOR PAPER THREE DUE**

~~~~~**Week Thirteen, April 10**~~~~~  
Using Evidence to Build Arguments

Writing Analytically. Ch. 8, “Reasoning from Evidence to Claims” (165-190).

Individual research material for Final Paper

~~~~~**Week Fourteen, April 17**~~~~~

**Writing Workshop**

*Final Project Presentations*

Individual research material for Final Paper

-->> **FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER THREE DUE** (*Two copies*)

~~~~~**Week Fourteen, April 24**~~~~~

Writing Workshop

Final Project Presentations

Individual research material for Final Paper

-->> **PEER REVIEW DUE**

*The Final Paper is due in my box in 410 Barrows by 2pm on Monday, May 7th.
Not late or electronic submissions will be accepted.*