

Sociology R1B

Social Inequalities

John Kaiser, PhD
UC Berkeley
Spring 2021
Wednesdays 2pm-4pm
Online

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 a special tool to nurture analytical and creative thinking. These capacities facilitate success in scholarship, even in fields that put less emphasis on writing. Designed to significantly improve composition skills, 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 and outside texts. Not all of the readings exemplify excellent writing styles; rather they provide examples of various styles, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

Our essay assignments progress in difficulty and complexity through the semester, culminating in a longer research paper that incorporates advanced techniques of style, creativity, and organization of complex arguments. This course emphasizes revising in the writing process. Since our readings cover social science, it also introduces concepts useful for reading texts in these fields.

This course uses several forms of social inequality and current events in the United States as objects of analysis. An intersectional approach enables us to analyze how race, class, and gender inflect cultures, institutions, and structures of inequality. We also analyze mechanisms that create, reproduce, and transform relations of domination/subordination and exploitation. A central theme is how divisions between groups facilitate structures of domination and how people overcome divisions, leading to various types of transformation. Our essays invite students to synthesize complex, abstract theories of inequality and creatively apply them to current events while evaluating both theory and evidence.

Coursework and Grading

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

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|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Attendance and Participation..... | 15% |
| Reading Responses..... | 20% |
| Essay One..... | 15% |
| Essay Two..... | 15% |
| Final Paper..... | 35% |

Seminar participation: This course is organized as a seminar. Seminars depend on the engaged and active participation of their members. Please bear in mind that the quality of that participation will be more important than quantity. If internet connectivity keeps you from attending class, you will need to communicate with me at least 24 hours before any given absence so that we can develop an alternative contribution to the class's learning experience. Missing more than two classes (in either synchronic or in a negotiated alternative form) will affect your grade. Our discussions will not be recorded. If you are synchronically present, you will be expected to participate in class discussions. Please be mindful of group dynamics so that everybody feels comfortable to speak up.

NOTE: students who miss two classes during the first two weeks may be dropped.

Video policy: This is a seminar discussion, not a large lecture, so I ask that everybody turn their video on. Good communication is an important part of seminar discussions, and visual cues facilitate communication. Turning your video on or off affects the group. Feel free to turn it off when you need to for whatever reason (like you need to take a break), as long as it stays on most of the time. At the minimum, turn your video on when speaking and always during breakout room discussions. Please email me if having your video on is going to be a problem for any reason.

If you are self-conscious about seeing your own video or you find it distracting, know that you can turn off "self view" by clicking on your image/box and choosing that option from the list that pops up. If you have a concern about your personal space, you might consider: 1) positioning the camera so that only a wall is visible in the background; 2) adjusting the lighting so that you are less visible (backlit/dark); 3) using a virtual background.

WARNING: Do not record our meetings! It is illegal to record without notifying and getting consent from everybody in your recording.

Reading Responses: Students will write a total of five reading responses on substantive reading, which is indicated by an "*" in the schedule. Responses should be analytical—not simply statements of opinion. Each must be about 500 words in length (two pages of double-spaced text). You will not receive full credit if your response is 50 words or more under the 500 word requirement. Anything over the word limit will not be read or graded. Responses must be submitted to bCourses by the deadline: 24 hours before class meets that week (Tuesdays at 2pm). Since one of the purposes of these responses is to promote quality discussions on the material, they must be submitted on time. You may not submit a response for a week's reading

retroactively (no late responses will be accepted). Only one reading response per qualifying week is allowed. Unlike the essay assignments, there will be no accommodations made regarding this policy for the Reading Responses. See assignment on bCourses for detailed instructions.

Peer- Review Editing: For each essay, you and a partner (TBD) will exchange drafts and review one another's work, for the first draft of each essay. Do not forget to put your name on your partner's paper so you can get credit for your work!

Reading: You are expected to have completed each week's reading as preparation for class attendance and participation. Always read analytically and take notes as you go. Come to class with questions and observations about what you found interesting, significant, puzzling, etc. If you do not read carefully and keep up, you might feel frustrated or disappointed with the course. When page numbers are listed next to a reading, you are only responsible for those pages.

Essays: This course requires a minimum of 32 pages of writing, which is the university requirement for the second part of the Reading and Composition sequence. Three essay assignments, combined with the reading responses, meet this requirement in length and difficulty. The first two focus on course material, while the third necessitates library research and outside texts.

For each essay, you will turn in a first draft, receive feedback on it, and then submit a revised second draft. Your grades depend on: the quality of your writing and analysis; how well you integrate feedback; how you apply the course's writing techniques and material. You must submit every draft of every assignment in order to pass the course.

Late Policy: timely submission of your work is so important to the structure of this course that late Reading Responses will not be accepted. Late essays will be penalized 2/3 of a letter grade for every day it is late (e.g. A>B+). This applies to both drafts of each essay (Reading Responses may not be submitted past the deadline, no exceptions). If you have trouble uploading any assignment to bCourses, you must email it to me by the deadline:

j_kaiser@berkeley.edu

Please do not ask for an extension for any of the assignments! You may let the instructor know of any special circumstances that may affect your performance, but please do not ask for an exception to course policy unless you are able to provide proof of special circumstances that warrant it (e.g. DSP, illness, personal crisis/emergency). *Official supporting documentation must be presented.* Although you may have a legitimate reason for making such a request, not all of your classmates—even those with more serious situations—necessarily feel entitled enough or comfortable asking.

Note: please submit all your papers in WORD files.

Writing Workshop: Students will present drafts of their final papers and provide constructive criticism on each other's work at the end of the semester. You will receive detailed instructions at the appropriate time.

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 should demonstrate mastery of course material. You will receive detailed instructions at the appropriate time.

Guidelines and Resources

Formatting: All work must be formatted correctly. Familiarize yourself with MLA style formatting. Refer to *The Purdue Owl Writing Lab*¹ and note the following specifications for our course's format and style guidelines:

- *single space* the header at the top-left of your first page, and include only the following information: name, course, assignment, due date
- center your **creative title**, in bold, above your first paragraph;
- no title page;
- *single space* block quotations;
- 1" margins;
- indent paragraphs (no extra spaces between paragraphs);
- no justification for right-side margins;
- doubled-spacing (except the header, block quotations, and the works cited page);
- page numbers (bottom center);
- 12-point Times New Roman font;
- all other formatting guidelines that we cover in class

Student Learning Center (SLC): The SLC provides peer writing tutors. You are expected to make use of their services: <http://slc.berkeley.edu>

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. Note that DSP accommodations are not retroactive. DSP students whose accommodations grant extra time on take-home assignments must email the instructor at least 24 hours before an assignment is due if they wish to use those accommodations on that assignment. This must be done for each assignment. Once we agree on your DSP deadline it becomes a firm deadline that cannot be extended further. Extensions will not be granted retroactively.

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.

Wellness Resources: Berkeley offers several types of counseling services. You can call to talk to someone for help or to make an appointment: 642-9494 or <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling/lets-talk>. You will also find a comprehensive list of various types of resources (financial, food, and

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

housing; sexual harassment; technology; writing; mental health) on bCourses/files: "Student Resources."

Course Materials

All of our reading material is available on bCourses. If you have trouble accessing all the pages of any given reading, try downloading it.

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 Contact Info

Office hours are important and I encourage you to make use of them. Please email me to arrange an appointment for a Zoom meeting. We will work together to arrange a time that fits both of our schedules. My email address is: j_kaiser@berkeley.edu. Please allow at least 24 hours for a reply. I usually do not check email on holidays or weekends. NOTE: do not try to contact me through bCourses or reply to bCourses announcements; email me directly instead.

Course Schedule

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

An "" indicates substantive reading.*

~~~~~Week One, January 20~~~~~  
**Course Overview**

Introduction to the course

~~~~~Week Two, January 27~~~~~  
Reading Analytically

*Davis and Moore. "Some Principles of Stratification." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 10, No. 2, 1944, Annual Meeting Papers (Apr., 1945), p. 242-249.

Recommended: "Analysis."

~~~~~Week Three, February 3~~~~~  
**Thesis Statements and Essay Structure**

\*Tumin, Melvin. "Critical Response." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 18, No.4, (Aug., 1953), p. 387- 394.

Income and Wealth Inequality: <https://inequality.org/facts/income-inequality/>

Recommended: *Berkeley's Writing Guide*. Ch. 5, "Thesis Statements and Arguments," and Ch. 6, "Handling Other People's Writing."

~~~~~Week Four, February 10~~~~~

Sentence Mechanics and Making Evidence-Based Claims

Freewrite for essay one due by 11:59pm Sunday

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

Racial Economic Inequality: <https://inequality.org/facts/racial-inequality/>

Recommended: "Recognizing Weak Thesis Statements" and *Berkeley's Writing Guide*, Ch. 4, "Mechanics."

~~~~~Week Five, February 17~~~~~

### **Developing the Argument**

Essay One due 11:59 Sunday

\*Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2016. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Haymarket Books. Ch. 7, "From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation."

Recommended: "Making a Thesis Evolve" (227-235)

~~~~~Week Six, February 24~~~~~

Concision and Precision

*Omi, Michael. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge. "Introduction."

Recommended: "Simplicity," and Ch. 3, "Clutter" (6-16).

~~~~~Week Seven, March 3~~~~~

### **Syntax and Style**

Freewrite for Essay Two due by 11:59pm Sunday

\*Brucato, Ben. 2014. "Fabricating the Color Line in a White Democracy." *Theoria*, Issue 141, Vol. 61, No. 4 (December).

Recommended: "Revising...Rhetoric of the Sentence" (391-414)

~~~~~Week Eight, March 10~~~~~

Finding One's "Voice"

Essay Two due by 11:59pm Sunday

*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.

Recommended: "On Creativity."

~~~~~Week Nine, March 17~~~~~

**Beginning a Research Paper**

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

Recommended: Alford. "Beginning a Research Project."

*In-class workshop: finding sources*

~~~~~Week Ten, March 24~~~~~

Spring Break

~~~~~Week Eleven, March 31~~~~~

**The Structure of Arguments**

***PROPOSAL AND LIST OF SOURCES DUE***

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

"Analyzing Arguments"

Individual reading for final paper

~~~~~Week Twelve, April 7~~~~~

Synthesizing Evidence from Multiple Sources

Freewrite for Final Paper due

"Example student paper I"

Recommended: "Using Sources Analytically" (267-281)

~~~~~Week Thirteen, April 14~~~~~

**Evaluation of "Exemplary" Student Papers**

*Initial Analysis for Final Paper due*

"Example student paper II"

Individual research and reading for final paper

~~~~~Week Fourteen, April 21~~~~~  
Writing Workshop

Project Presentations

Individual research and reading for final paper

~~~~~Week Fifteen, April 28~~~~~  
**Writing Workshop**

*Project Presentations*

Individual research and reading for final paper

**The Final Paper is due to bCourses by 11:59pm Wednesday, May 12th. Late submissions may not be accepted, and if accepted, will be subject to the course policy on late assignments.**