



SOCIOLOGY 504/703: GRADUATE WRITING SEMINAR

SPRING 2016

WEDNESDAY, 4:10-6:50PM

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OFFICE HOURS: WEDNESDAY 3-4PM, DAVISON HALL ROOM 126

Course Description This course has two main purposes. The first is to provide support and feedback during the process of turning a paper draft into a publishable article or a complete QP submission. In the process, we will develop generalizable insights about academic writing that can be used in your future scholarly endeavors. There is a lot to keep track of in academic writing including: the larger argument of your project, the way each section is structured to contribute to that argument, whether your evidence adequately supports your argument, whether alternative explanations also fit your evidence, and sentence-level clarity of writing and style. We will pay attention to all of these elements.

Second, the class is an exercise in professional socialization as participation in workshops and providing feedback to peers on their own work is a core responsibility of an academic. Giving thoughtful and useful criticism is a real skill that can (and should) be developed. It is a huge, if under-discussed, element of the profession. But you also gain enormously from reviewing the work of others: you keep up on new work in your field, you learn new methods and techniques, you see what piques (or fails to pique) the interest of other researchers and editors.

Learning Goals In this course, we will:

- Learn how to turn a working paper into a paper that is ready for journal submission
- Learn how to provide constructive feedback to peers on their own work
- Identify techniques to maximize the clarity of arguments and writing
- Identify methods for writing that work best for each individual, including how to break a project down into manageable steps
- Discuss and assess writing advice from other scholars
- Discuss practical issues in paper submission and reviewing
- Learn how to present one's research findings in multiple forms and venues, including posters, oral presentations, abstracts, policy reports and other forms for general audiences
- Learn strategies to optimize participation in workshops

We will work towards these goals by:

- Writing and revising drafts of papers for journal submission
- Responding to feedback about your writing
- Providing careful feedback on other students' work each week in both written and spoken form
- Completing brief summaries of books on social science writing
- Keeping a writing log for the first couple of weeks of class

- Participate in class discussions about the process of journal submission

Class Structure

- Each seminar member will choose two weeks in which they will present their work and receive feedback. First round presentations will be solo and second round presentations will be two students per class. You must **send me your paper by noon the Wednesday before you present** so that I can make it available to the class via Sakai. The second round paper will be a revision based on the comments from the previous round and include a cover letter that responds to the previous comments and describes your changes, as you would for a journal revise and resubmission.
 - o Identifying your audience and crafting your argument, citations, and evidence for that audience is an enormously important part of the process of journal submission. Toward that end, when you submit your paper, please also identify at least 4 journals that it might be suitable for. You can use the ASA's "Guide to Publishing" that I've posted under Resources on Sakai.
- During the first round, you will be responsible for providing a **review of each paper and posting it on Sakai by noon on Tuesday, the day before the author is presenting.**
- The first 20-30 minutes of each class will involve a discussion of writing tips and insights from different authors plus a discussion of practical issues with writing and journal submission. **Each seminar member will select a resource to summarize, and a date on which to present.** On the day you present your writing resource summary, please provide an outline of your distilled insights on Sakai. You will review these main points and lead a conversation with one or two points or questions for the group to discuss.

Evaluation Work for this course will be assessed as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Attendance and participation are expected in every class. The requirements for receiving a satisfactory grade are submitting your first round paper draft at least a week before you are assigned to present; submitting a revised paper draft with a cover letter explaining changes (addressing reviewer concerns) at least a week before you are assigned to present for the second time; submitting thoughtful, constructive feedback to other workshop participants on time; and preparing a brief summary of the highlights of insight from a selected resource on writing to the group when assigned.

Class Policies Workshopping papers can be a delicate business that requires good faith and persistence on both sides. To encourage the free exchange of ideas, the classroom should be safe, supportive, and productive. To facilitate such an environment, all class participants, students and faculty, must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Please come talk with me about these issues at any point.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social

class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

List of Books and Other Resources on Writing Each seminar member will select a resource from this list, or select a resource on the process of social science writing that is not on this list on which to briefly present one week.

"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein

Seven Rules for Social Research Glenn Firebaugh

The Clockwork Muse Eviatar Zerubavel

Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish your Thesis, Book, or Article Howard Becker

Writing Strategies: Reaching Diverse Audiences, Qualitative Research Methods Laurel Richardson

On Writing Well William Zinsser

On Writing Steven King

Writing about Multivariate Analysis Jane Miller

Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success Wendy Belcher

Selections from: <http://sociologicalimagination.org/archives/13630>

Goldberg, A. E. & Allen, K. R. (2015). "Communicating qualitative research: Some practical guideposts for scholars." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77: 3-22.

White, L. (2005). "Writes of passage: Writing an empirical journal article." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67: 791-798.

SCHEDULE

Week One Introduction & Abstract and Style Workshop

****Please bring an e- or paper version of your paper abstract to class, as well as a printed 2-3 page selection of your paper to exchange with another seminar member****

Wednesday January 20:

- Introduction to each other and the projects
- Course overview and scheduling
- Discussion about Writing: Writing logistics and the journal submission process
- Discussion about Reviewing: What makes reviews useful, building a template
- Abstract Workshop
- In pairs: exchange sample writing for evaluation

Week Two

Wednesday January 27:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 1: Feedback and discussion

Week Three

Wednesday February 3:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 2: Feedback and discussion

Week Four

Wednesday February 10:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 3: Feedback and discussion

Week Five

Wednesday February 17:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 4: Feedback and discussion

Week Six

Wednesday February 24:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 5: Feedback and discussion

Week Seven

Wednesday March 2:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 6: Feedback and discussion

Week Eight

Wednesday March 9:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 7: Feedback and discussion

Week Nine Spring Break-- No Class (March 16)

Week Ten

Wednesday March 23:

- Discussion of insights into writing, summary of a writing resource
- Presenter 8: Feedback and discussion

Week Eleven

Wednesday March 30:

- Presenters: Round 2

Week Twelve

Wednesday April 6:

- Presenters: Round 2

Week Thirteen

Wednesday April 13:

- Presenters: Round 2

Week Fourteen

Wednesday April 20:

- Presenters: Round 2

Week Fifteen

Wednesday April 27:

- Individual meetings