

Soc 703: WRITING SEMINAR --*TENTATIVE SYLLABUS*
Mon 9:50-12:30

Professor Arlene Stein
Lucy Stone A345
Office hours: Wed 2:30-4pm and by appt.
arlenes@rci.rutgers.edu

Since sociology is a form of storytelling, sociological writing should be judged for *what* it says as well as *how* it says it. This course will explore the art and craft of sociological writing, focusing upon writing dissertations and books. Each student will work on a project relating to his/her own research. The course is designed to help prepare you to submit your work for publication and to conceptualize the dissertation (and book!). Therefore, you should come to class with an article in the “rough” or a dissertation chapter that you will refine and revise during the course of the semester--or a dissertation outline. In addition to the practical component of this course, we will also spend a great deal of time reflecting upon the art and craft of sociological writing. We will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different narrative approaches, and the writing challenges posed by various methodologies. We’ll also consider debates about sociological audiences and “public sociology” in relation to the changing contours of the publishing industry, and explore, more practically, how dissertations become books. Finally, we’ll reflect upon how our biographies shape the kinds of writing we do.

Required Books

Ben Agger, *Public Sociology* Rowman & Littlefield, ISBN 0-8476-9841-6
Howard Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists* ISBN 0-226-04107-7
Barry Glassner and Rosanna Hertz, *Our Studies, Ourselves*, Oxford, ISBN: 0195146611

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

Jan. 22. Introduction.

Jan. 29. Sociological Writing as Craft

C. Wright Mills, “On Intellectual Craftsmanship,” from *The Sociological Imagination*

Howard Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists*, ch. 1

James Jasper, “Why So Many Academics are Lousy Writers”

Feb. 5. The Craft of Sociology

Howard Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists*, ch. 2-5

Feb. 12. The Craft of Sociology

Howard Becker, ch. 6-10

Feb. 19. Sociological (and other) Journals

<http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?section=Journals&name=Editorial+Offices>

<http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/asaguidelinesnew.pdf>
<http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?section=Journals&name=Writing+an+Informative+Abstract>
<http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?section=Journals&name=Other+Scholarly+Publishing+Outlets>

Feb. 26. The Journal Review Process

Alan D. Meyer, "Balls, Strikes, and Collisions on the Basepath: Ruminations on a Veteran Reviewer"

Arlene Stein, misc. journal reviews

March 5. Journals and the "Science Aura"

Ben Agger, *Public Sociology*, ch. 1-4

March 19. Journals and the "Science Aura"—cont'd

Ben Agger, ch. 5-7

March 26. Thinking about the Dissertation

"Choosing Your Thesis or Dissertation Topic"

Lee Clarke, "Notes on Proposing"

Ms. Mentor, "Rumblings of a Dissertation Writer"

April 2. Turning Dissertations into Books

Editor, Rutgers University Press (tentative)

April 9. Exploring "Public Sociology"

Ben Agger, ch. 8

Herbert Gans, "Best Sellers by Sociologists: An Exploratory Study"

Todd Gitlin, "How Our Crowd Got Lonely"

April 16. The Risks and Rewards of Public Sociology

Symposium, "Engaging Publics in Sociological Dialogue through the Media"

Steven Johnson, "Own Your Own Words"

April 23. Why Do We Do What We Do? Bringing the "Self" Back In

Barry Glassner and Rosanna Hertz, *Our Studies, Ourselves*

April 30. Bringing the Self Back In—cont'd

Barry Glassner and Rosanna Hertz, *Our Studies, Ourselves*

Final project due.