

**Fall 2014**  
**Writing Seminar: 920:703: 01**  
**Selected Social Problems: 920: 503: 01**  
**Wednesdays 1:00-3:40 pm**

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“... **the journal review process is central to each scholar's growth and development.** Thinking back over my own publication experiences, the high and low points were associated with journal reviews. **A number of reviews were absolutely devastating.** The reviewers seemed determined to be destructive, hurtful, and narrow minded. **But** I have also been buoyed, supported, cheered, helped, and encouraged by reviewers, and **constructive criticism has improved my work dramatically.** The review process can have enormous impact, either positive or negative, so it seems important to share views about it (Richard L. Daft, emphasis added).”

### **Course Description**

This writing seminar is for grad students who are at various stages of the writing process. The majority of you fall into one of the following categories: (1) those focusing on reworking a draft of a QP project for committee acceptance, (2) those in process of transforming an already accepted QP into an article for journal publication, (3) those who are reworking a dissertation chapter. We will capitalize on those differences as a way to gain multiple perspectives on each project.

The seminar is designed to meet your specific needs by operating as a supportive environment through *constructive criticism* of your work. We will therefore be treading that fine line between “objective” criticism and laudatory feedback. Our fundamental concern will be with energizing your writing productivity. Towards that end we will spend a short period of time discussing readings before moving onto the following tasks that will facilitate the production of your specific project: (1) sharpening your ability to orally and visually represent your work, (2) encouraging you to use a writing log in order to help you identify and strengthen your writing routines, and most importantly (3) your project will receive multiple class reviews that are structured to mimic the journal review process. Although specifically structured around the journal review process, you will be able to notice its usefulness regardless of the stage of your writing project.

### **Course Objectives**

#### **1. Life lessons: *encouraging self-support***

Once you have undertaken a project, approach the subsequent tasks that follow from its completion with the “I have chosen to do this” thinking rather than with an “I have to do this” thinking. *The distinction between the two is between ownership of your work and the attitude that the work has suddenly been imposed upon you from the outside.*

Treat the tasks for the completion of your project from an “I will start here” point of view rather than from an “I must finish” outlook. *This clear variation on the lesson above focuses on having a healthy mindset once the project is underway. The “I will start here” approach encourages you to begin where you are with the understanding that there are multiple moments of beginning, none of which necessarily assumes that the success of the next phase of the work is determined by the completion of the project.*

## **2. Career lessons: *energizing your writing***

Develop productive writing habits that will serve you well throughout your career.

Develop the habit of breaking down the overall project into small steps. *This involves two practical activities: (1) be aware of the need for the overall coherence of your work, while being mindful of the fact that regardless of size, it is composed of smaller parts, (2) the smaller parts should be represented by subheadings, each covering a small step towards a coherent statement.*

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

The basic requirement for admission to the seminar is that you have a draft of a QP project, article, or dissertation chapter to work on during the semester. Grading for the course is exclusively concerned with monitoring your development as a scholar. As such, I state the obvious in saying that you are expected to consistently and constructively participate in the seminar in order to further your work and those of your colleagues.

**Locations of Readings are at the end of this document.**

## Course by Topics, Readings and Assignments

### Phase I (Orientation)

Date	Topic	Day's Reading	Day's Assignments
9-3-14	Introduction Overview	#Collins, R. <i>Sociology of Philosophies</i> Chapter. 1 "Coalitions of Minds"	<i>Bring a draft of your project to class</i> -Discuss course structure -Sociology as an Interaction Ritual -Introduce the writing log and visualizing your writing
9-10-14	Structuring your writing time	\$Zerubavel Chapters 1-5	<i>Bring a log of your weeks writing</i> Engaging the philosophy behind logging
9-17-14	Getting an overview of your project	\$Booth et al. Chapters 3-4	Working in Pairs: <i>Bring the output</i> (approx. 1 page for each) of the application of Booth's "simple" exercise to your paper and to your partner's paper. Seminar discussion will be around common and unique responses
9-24-14	Sociologists on writing	*Mills (Appendix) **Davis, **Erikson, #Ingold, Plummer, Strathem	Moments of Reflection
10-01-14	Insights from a Sensitive Reviewer	**Daft	Using Daft's "what you can do" discussion, describe the "story" of your paper. Use your Intro and Conclusion as examples. As a supplement bring a visual image of your project
10-08-14	Review and Responding to Reviewers	#Editors define the "good" review **Responding to reviewers	Agency in the review process Identify common threads: Gut feelings <i>Writing log check-in</i>

## Phase II (The Review Process)

**During this phase seminar you are expected to continue to work on your own project. Note *writing log check-in(s)***

Cover sheet for your paper based on the type you are submitting for review

*Specific tasks when posting paper for review by those working on a Dissertation chapter*

(1) Specify the conversation/literature/community you are engaged with, (2) describe your dissertation as a voice in that conversation, (3) indicate how your chapter fits into the overall story of your dissertation.

*Specific tasks when posting paper for review by those working on a journal article*

(1) Select an article from the journal you have your eye on. (2) After describing the conversation/literature/community in which the article is embedded discuss how your paper engages with that conversation. (3) Post a copy of the journal's "Instructions to authors" with your paper.

*Specific tasks when posting paper for reviews by those working on a QP*

(1) In what conversation/literature does your QP fit? (2) What specific aspect of the conversation/literature/community does your paper address? (3) Give a description of the guidelines (departmental in addition to committee expectations) with which you are working.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Day's Reading</b>	<b>Day's Assignments</b>
10-15-14	Class review of 1 <sup>st</sup> paper		During this second phase of the seminar everyone will read and critique the paper of the week. Comments are to be written and posted separately from the paper itself. Do not make use of comment inserts. Your observations should be driven by the insights gained during the 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> weeks (reviewers and reviewing) of the seminar. While reading, never loose sight of the fact that, as a fragmented discipline, there are a variety of "good," ( <i>because supported by a community of thinkers</i> ) ways to engage with ideas. <i>Writing log check-in</i>

10-22-14	Class review of 2 <sup>nd</sup> paper		
10-29-14	Class review of 3 <sup>rd</sup> paper		
11-05-14	Class review of 4 <sup>th</sup> paper		<i>Writing log check-in</i>
11-12-14	Class review of 5 <sup>th</sup> paper		
11-19-14	Class critique of 6 <sup>th</sup> paper		
12-03-14	Class review of 7 <sup>th</sup> paper		<i>Writing log check-in</i>
12-10-14	Giving yourself the go ahead from Daft	**Daft	Self-reflection: story and visual map of your paper <i>now</i> compared with your initial presentations

## Location of Readings

### \$Required

Booth, W. (et al) *The Craft of Research*

Zerubavel, E. *The Clockwork Muse*

### \*Books Recommended for your Library

Becker, H. *Writing for Social Scientists*

Elbow, P. *Writing with power*

Mills, C.W. *The Sociological Imagination*

Zinsser, W. *On writing well*

### \*\*On Sakai Site

Daft, Davis, Erikson

### #Web Access

Collins (For reasons that are not clear to me the entire 1121 pages of Collins' text *The Sociology of Philosophies* is available online at the site below. I am passing this information along rather than recommending that you download the book. In any event, we will be discussing its first chapter during our first meeting.

[http://www.wunderkim.com/collin-the\\_sociology\\_of\\_philosophies\\_a\\_global\\_theory\\_of\\_intellectual\\_change.pdf](http://www.wunderkim.com/collin-the_sociology_of_philosophies_a_global_theory_of_intellectual_change.pdf)

Ingold, Plummer, Strathem (I recommend these 3 because you would not be likely to read them. However, feel free to explore any or all of the others on the list

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

Editors define the "good" review

<http://orgtheory.wordpress.com/2011/05/31/the-editors-speak-what-makes-a-good-review>

### ##Supplementary References

Thomson, P and Kamblar, B 2012 *Writing for peer reviewed journals. Strategies for getting published*. London: Routledge

Writing for journals

<http://patthomson.wordpress.com/writing-for-journals>