

WRITING FOR SOCIOLOGISTS

920: 504/703:01

Professor Karen A. Cerulo, Department of Sociology
Wednesday – 4th period 1:00PM-3:40PM
Davison Hall Seminar Room—Rm. 127

Office: Davison Hall – Room 130
Email: cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday: 3:45PM – 4:45 PM
...and by appointment

OBJECTIVES

Learning Goals: This course is designed with two very specific goals in mind: 1) to help every student prepare an article length paper for publication, and 2) to train students in the art of manuscript review.

Methods for Achieving Learning Goals: Students enrolled in the course are expected to bring to the class a completed course paper or qualifying paper that they wish to prepare for journal submission. Each student's work will be reviewed *twice* over the course of the semester. Both the professor and students enrolled in the class will provide authors with written feedback on their work—*constructive* criticism designed to improve every author's final product.

The class will also address some basic writing issues: writing resources, pitfalls of academic writing, choosing a journal for your work, and the actual process of journal reviewing.

DESIGN OF THE CLASS

There are three requirements for the course:

1) As an author, you will be assigned two classes for the presentation of your work. For each of these meetings, you must send me your completed paper via email and I will post the paper on our Sakai site. *Your paper must be available for review one week prior to our class meeting so that everyone has time to read and comment on the work.* I am a stickler about deadlines in this context, so, out of respect to those commenting on your work, please make sure to meet these deadlines.

Presumably, your first posting is ready to go as you came into the class with a completed paper. Your second posting should reflect a “new and improved draft” of your work—one that takes into account the suggestions of your “reviewers”.

As would be true for any journal submission, your second draft should be accompanied by a “cover letter” itemizing the reviewer suggestions you chose to incorporate into your paper as well as your reasons for rejecting any reviewer suggestions. **This portion of the course will account for 55% of your grade.**

Design of the Class, con't.

2) As a reader/reviewer, you are required to a) read the two papers being reviewed in each class and b) produce a 1-2 page (single spaced) review of the paper assigned to you each week. Each student will produce one review per week—half of the class will be assigned to one paper; half will be assigned to the other paper. Your reviews should cover the following points:

- a) a concise statement of the paper's topic and goals.
- b) a short paragraph detailing the paper's strong points.
- c) short paragraphs itemizing potential problems with the paper along with suggestions for overcoming those problems.

To access papers: a) go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> and log in. b) go to our course site; if you registered for 504, that will be called "Selected Sociological Problems"; if you registered for 703, it may be called Writing Seminar". c) look at the bar on the left side of the screen and click on "Resources". d) look for the paper using the author's last name. If you have any problems logging in, call Sakai Help at **848.445.8721**

Your comments must be emailed *to the author and to me* by Tuesday at noon—again, *please be on time*. **This portion of the course will account for 35% of your grade.**

3) You are expected to attend every class and fully participate in class discussions of the paper. **This portion of the course will account for 10% of your grade.**

Some additional things to note:

- ✓ We are here to constructively support one another. Please take care to refrain from cruel, thoughtless or sarcastic feedback in your written or oral comments. Think of it this way ... you do not enjoy thoughtless feedback, so don't give it to others.
- ✓ ***All reading and comments must be completed prior to class.*** Our classes revolve around discussion. Therefore, familiarity with the material is essential.
- ✓ 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.

Knowing this, our classroom should be considered a "safe place" for everyone. Students are encouraged to engage in discussion and debate related to the readings and topics scheduled for the class provided that one's views are not intended to provoke, insult, or damage another member of the class or the instructor. To facilitate such an environment, all of us (students and instructor) must act with mutual respect and common courtesy.

CLASS SCHEDULE

JAN. 21: *Introduction to the Class*

Today we will: assign presentation days, talk a bit about the pitfalls of academic writing, discuss selection of a good venue for your manuscript, and look at the back-stage of journal operations.

Assignment:

- ✓ Make sure you are registered on the Sakai site. If you cannot access the site, please contact Sakai personnel at sakai@rutgers.edu or **848.445.8721**. Sakai Help Desk representatives are available **Monday through Friday 8:00AM-6:00PM**.
- ✓ **Read Becker: Chapter 1.**
- ✓ Sunday is my birthday. Make sure to tell me how youthful I look.

JAN. 28: *The Bones of Journal Articles:* Today, I will do some lecturing and we will do lots of discussing surrounding the basics of producing a publishable article.

Assignment:

- ✓ Read Brief Guide for Writing Paper *and* Graff and Birkenstein
- ✓ Read the introduction in Schneiderhan et al. and Polletta and Tomlinson
- ✓ Read “Theoretical Context” in Schneiderhan et al. and “Romantic Relationships and Desistance” in Wyse et al.
- ✓ Read “Data and Methods” in introduction in Schneiderhan et al., Polletta and Tomlinson, and Wyse et al.
- ✓ Read “Results” in Schneiderhan et al. and Wyse et al.
- ✓ Read “Discussion and Conclusions” in Schneiderhan et al.

FEB. 4: *Two Paper presentations*

FEB. 11: *Two Paper presentations*

FEB. 18: *Two Paper presentations*

FEB. 25: *Two Paper presentations*

MAR. 4: *Two Paper presentations*

MAR. 11: Individual Meetings

MAR. 18: No meeting—**Spring Break**

MAR. 25: *Two Paper presentations*

APR. 1: *Two Paper presentations*

APR. 8: *Two Paper presentations*

APR. 15: *Two Paper presentations*

APR. 22: *Two Paper presentations*

APR. 29: Individual Meetings: **All final papers due**