

Sociology 875 002: Masters Thesis Writing Workshop

Fall 2019

W 3:30-4:45 p.m.

6310 Sewell Social Science Building

Professor: Monica Grant

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Office: 4458 Sewell Social Sciences

Office hours: TBD

This course is designed to provide a structured process for writing the masters thesis. By the end of this semester, students will (1) understand the structure and form of journal article, (2) learn how to give constructive feedback to peers, (3) develop a draft of the introduction and literature review of a master's thesis, and (4) develop a plan for data collection and analysis to be executed for the master's thesis. This course is **NOT** designed to replace regular interaction and consultation with your master's thesis advisor. You are expected to check in with your advisor to discuss your research question and the progress of your draft.

Department learning objectives

Beyond the specific substantive content we will cover in this course, this course is designed to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

- *Critically Evaluate Published Research*: Students will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications
- *Communicate Skillfully*: Students will write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner

Course structure and attendance

The course meets approximately every other week for 75 minutes. In the weeks when we do not meet, you are expected to spend substantial time working on the assignments that will lead to your master's thesis. You are expected to complete all assignments by the date indicated in the schedule of classes. All writing assignments must be submitted to Canvas **two days before** the date they will be reviewed in class. You are expected to read 2-3 of your classmates' submitted writing prior to class and to provide written feedback at that time. If you meet all deadlines, you will receive an A in the class.

Please be mindful that this course is centered around the peer-review process. If you will be unable to meet any of the stated deadlines, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can make arrangements to minimize the disruption for your classmates.

Recommended readings

The following books and articles are recommended:

Becker, Howard. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article (Second Edition)*

Billig, Michael. 2013. *Learn to Write Badly: How to Succeed in the Social Sciences*

Raewyn Connell. 2015. *Writing for Research: Advice on Principles and Practice*

Tanya Golash-Boza. 2011 "Writing a Literature Review: Six Steps to Get You from Start to Finish"

Miller, Jane E. 2008. *The Chicago Guide to Writing about Numbers*

Martin & Risman, "Preparing a paper" and G&S "article preparation guidelines"

LaRossa, Ralph 2012 "Writing and Reviewing Manuscripts in the Multidimensional World of Qualitative Research" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74 (August): 643 – 659

Silvia, Paul *How to Write a LOT*

Uggen and Eliason "preparing for peer review"

Lynn White. 2005. "Writes of Passage: Writing an Empirical Journal Article." *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 67(4): 791-798

Accommodations

This course has been developed under the principles of universal design. All assignments are available at the beginning of the semester and sufficient time has been allocated to meet most accommodation needs. Please contact Dr. Grant if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for assignments or other aspects of the course. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu>.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for university-related travel, religious observances, national guard service, etc., you must notify Dr. Grant by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation. For religious observance accommodations, see <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/> for details.

Academic Integrity

In your exams and written assignments, you are expected to exercise academic honesty and integrity. According to UWS 14, academic misconduct occurs when a student:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of [...] academic performance
- Assists other students in any of these acts

Cheating, plagiarism, or any other breach of academic integrity on an assignment in this course will result in an automatic failing grade of 0 for the exam or assignment in question, and a submission of written reports to your college dean and the dean of students. Those administrators may (at their discretion) take further disciplinary action. Please note that lack of familiarity with policies will not excuse failure to comply with them.

The university's Writing Center has an excellent webpage about how to successfully quote and paraphrase texts: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>. See also these guidelines about avoiding plagiarism: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html. Please make every effort to avoid such issues in your section writing assignments.

Departmental notice of grievances and appeal rights

The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science (cschwart@ssc.wisc.edu).

Schedule of classes

Sept. 4	<p>Developing research questions</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Write a 150-200 word abstract that clearly identifies your research question, contextualizes the topic, and suggests a hypothesis or finding (Due 9/9)</p> <p>**Make appointment to talk to your advisor about your initial plan**</p> <p><i>Read:</i> Introduction sections of the Light and Thomas 2019 and Daminger 2019 papers</p>
Sept. 11	<p>What goes into the introduction of a paper?</p> <p><i>Assignment 1:</i> Write a draft of your introduction. It should be 4-8 paragraphs long. This text establishes your research question, why it is of scholarly interest, what it contributes to the existing literature, and describes your methodological approach and preliminary hypotheses/expected findings (Due 9/23)</p> <p><i>Assignment 2:</i> Read 2-3 of your colleagues' draft introductions. Be prepared to provide feedback to your peers in class on Sept 25</p> <p><i>Read:</i> LaRossa, Ralph 2012 "Writing and Reviewing Manuscripts in the Multidimensional World of Qualitative Research" <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 74 (August): 643 – 659 Uggen and Eliason "preparing for peer review"</p>
Sept. 18	<p><i>No meeting</i> – work on introduction</p>
Sept. 25	<p>Peer-reviewing introduction – how do you give good feedback?</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Begin your literature review with an annotated bibliography. Identify at least 10-15 articles/texts that are directly relevant to your research question. For each article, identify 2-3 bullet points that summarize the key contributions of the paper and how it supports your research question (Due 10/9)</p> <p><i>Read:</i> Tanya Golash-Boza. 2011 "Writing a Literature Review: Six Steps to Get You from Start to Finish"</p>

Oct. 2	<i>No meeting</i> – work on annotated bibliography
Oct. 9	<p>How do you structure the literature review?</p> <p><i>Assignment 1:</i> Identify the first sub-heading of your literature review. Write a draft of this section that summarizes the relevant literature and begins to identify how your project will expand this literature (Due 10/21)</p> <p><i>**Make appointment to talk to your advisor about the organization of your thesis**</i></p> <p><i>Assignment 2:</i> Read 2-3 of your colleagues' draft literature reviews. Be prepared to provide feedback to your peers in class on Oct 23</p>
Oct. 16	<i>No meeting</i> – work on first section of literature review
Oct. 23	<p>Peer-reviewing the first section of the literature review</p> <p><i>Assignment 1:</i> Identify the second sub-heading of your literature review. Write a draft of this section that summarizes the relevant literature and begins to identify how your project will expand this literature (Due 11/4)</p> <p><i>Assignment 2:</i> Read 2-3 of your colleagues' draft literature reviews. Be prepared to provide feedback to your peers in class on Nov. 6</p>
Oct 30	<i>No meeting</i> – work on second section of literature review
Nov. 6	<p>Peer-reviewing the second section of the literature review</p> <p><i>**Make appointment to talk to your advisor about your data and methods**</i></p>
Nov. 13	<p>What goes in the data and research methods section?</p> <p><i>Assignment 1:</i> Write a draft of your data and methods section. This section should identify your data and describe your anticipated analytic strategy (Due 12/2)</p> <p><i>Assignment 2:</i> Read 2-3 of your colleagues' draft data and methods sections. Be prepared to provide feedback to your peers in class on Dec 4</p>
Nov. 20	<i>No meeting</i> – work on draft of data and methods section
Nov. 27	<i>No meeting</i> – continue to work on draft of data and methods section
Dec. 4	Peer-reviewing the data and methods section
Dec. 11	Planning for the rest of your thesis