

SOC 470 & 776 – Writing Sociology Autumn 2009

Mgr. Benjamin Vail, M.Sc., Ph.D.

SOC470 Credits: 10

SOC776 Credits: 15

Seminar time: Thursdays 12.00-13.30

Classroom: 117

Office hours: Tuesdays 10.00-11.00 in room 3.59

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Course Description

This course is intended to help masters students improve their academic writing skills and practice English. Sociology 470 is intended for Czech students, while international students should enroll in SOC776. This is a writing-intensive course that provides training in the methods of researching and writing Sociology essays in several different styles, such as writing book reviews, social issue reaction papers, and reports on quantitative and qualitative research. This writing experience is intended to enhance students' knowledge and understanding of sociological theory and methods and help them develop critical writing and reading skills to assist them in their Masters studies. By the end of the semester, they will gain experience writing in a variety of academic literary genres, learn about different perspectives on proper professional writing, understand and be able to follow academic honesty standards, and be able to cite information properly according to academic norms.

Assignments and Evaluation

Writing and Homework

- **Homework:** There will be several homework assignments so students can practice technical aspects of writing and demonstrate their understanding of the course requirements.
- **Weekly essays:** Approximately every two weeks, students will write two drafts of an essay based on the assigned reading. In each two-week cycle, students will write a draft of the essay in the first week. This draft essay will receive written and verbal feedback in class from the teacher and other students. You will use this peer review feedback to revise the essay and turn in a final draft during the second week. This gives you an opportunity to improve your writing and learn to give and receive constructive criticism. More details about these assignments will be given in class. Each essay should be 1500-2000 words in length.
- **Final essay:** A research essay 2000-3000 words in length is due in January 2010. You are invited to make your thesis topic the focus of this essay. More details will be provided in class.

Class Participation

- **Attendance:** All students are required to attend every seminar meeting. Any absence must be documented (for example, due to family or medical emergency). Your attendance is important because the course is organized around classroom discussion and giving feedback to each other.
- **Discussion:** Active participation in classroom discussion is an important part of your grade. You are required to read the assigned literature before the seminar meeting to facilitate discussion.

- **Peer Review:** Approximately every other week, we will engage in the written and oral in-class critique of each student's first-draft essay. Each student will be assigned to read another student's draft essay and give a presentation about suggested revisions.

Evaluation

The quality of your use of English is not part of the grade, but you must write the essays at an adequate level of language use such that they are understandable. Your essays should express your own ideas (see the section on Academic Honesty below). However, you are free to consult with classmates or others to check the quality of your use of English.

Students will receive a final letter grade (A-F) for the semester based on the follow criteria:

Final grade components	Final grade scale
10% - Homework	A = 90 – 100%
10% - Attendance and class participation	B = 80 – 90%
80% - Essay assignments	C = 70 – 80%
	D = 60 – 70%
	E = 50 – 60%
	F = <50%

Penalties for Late Assignments

Assignments should be submitted into the Assignments folder in the course's IS page by 11.59 on the due date, unless otherwise specified by the teacher. First drafts that are received late need not be read or commented on by the teacher or the author's peer review partner. Final drafts that are late will receive a grade of F and no feedback. Homework assignments received late will receive a grade of F.

E-mail Policy

Students may contact the instructor at any time by e-mail with questions about the course. I will strive to reply to your questions within 48 hours of receipt of your e-mail. I usually do not read or respond to e-mail on weekends or holidays.

Academic Honesty

The Faculty of Social Studies at MU expects students to know the study rules and maintain academic honesty by refraining from plagiarism and from cheating during exams. Plagiarism means that one presents other peoples' ideas as one's own and does not credit the author. Plagiarism is one of the most serious breaches of ethical standards in the academic environment, for it denies the mission of the university and the meaning of studying. From a legal perspective, plagiarism is the stealing of intellectual property. The official FSS policy on academic honesty is available in the course's interactive syllabus in IS in English and Czech. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated under any circumstances at FSS. The minimum penalty for academic dishonesty is expulsion from the course, a grade of F for the semester, and referral to the Faculty disciplinary committee.

In this course, students will become thoroughly acquainted with the problem of plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you have questions about plagiarism, contact the instructor. In the first weeks of class, students are required to read about ASA citation guidelines and write a short essay entitled "What is plagiarism and how can I avoid it?" Students are also required to read and sign a Statement on Academic Honesty and give it to the instructor within the first two weeks of class. These materials can all be found in the "Writing Resources" section of the interactive syllabus in IS.

Weekly Schedule

(See online Interactive Syllabus for specific reading assignments)

Week	Date	Seminar topic	Required reading (* = reading for SOC776 students only)
1	Sept 24	Course orientation; Proper citation and writing guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllabus - Quick guide to essay-writing and citation style - Stern: Avoiding plagiarism - Johnson, et al. pp. 14-98, 108-110
2	Oct 1	Writing an expository essay (5-paragraph essay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASA style guide - Trim: Traditional peer review - Guide to writing well (online) - Sociology Writing Group: Working With Sources; Outlining
3	Oct 8	Discuss expository essay 1 st draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sociology Writing Group: Finishing Up - 26 Golden rules - Handout on writing expository essays - Internet resources on 5-¶ essays - Orwell: Politics and the English language*
4	Oct 15	Writing a book review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Johnson, et al. pp. 181-203 - Sociology Writing Group: The Textual Analysis Paper - Belcher: Book Review Guidelines - Examples of book reviews
5	Oct 22	Discuss book review 1 st draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procter: Book review guidelines - Dartmouth Writing Center: Why and How to Revise
6	Oct 29	Writing a social issue paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Johnson, et al. pp. 156-180 - Examples of social issue papers
7	Nov 5	No class – Reading week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little, Brown Handbook - Zinsser: Simplicity* - Mahrer: Proofreading Your Own Writing
8	Nov 12	No class – Research and writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strunk: <i>The Elements of Style</i> pp. 1-89 (online)* - Orwell: Politics and the English Language* - Giddens: What is Sociology?* - Mills: The Promise* - Charon and Vigilant: The Discipline of Sociology & The Meaning and Uses of Sociology*
9	Nov 19	Discuss social issue paper 1 st draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little, Brown Handbook
10	Nov 26	Writing a quantitative report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Johnson et al. pp. 100-138, 147-154, 204-218 - Sociology Writing Group: The Quantitative Research Paper - Van Poppel and Day - Arber - Marsh - Mack and Lansley

11	Dec 3	Writing a qualitative report	- Johnson, et al. pp. 219-234 - Sociology Writing Group: The Ethnographic Research Paper - Kerlin - Holdaway - Polsky - Duneier
12	Dec 10	No class – Research and writing	- Little, Brown Handbook
13	Dec 17	Discuss quantitative/qualitative report 1 st draft	- Homan - Georges and Jones - Mills: On Intellectual Craftsmanship*

Summary of Assignments

(All assignments should be submitted to the Assignments folder by 23.59 on the due date; those marked * should be uploaded to the Assignments folder before class **and** submitted in class on the due date.)

Due date	Assignment
October 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short essay on plagiarism* • Sign and return statement on academic honesty (due in class) • Choose book to review
October 3	Expository essay topic and outline
October 6	Expository essay 1 st draft
October 8	Citation homework*
October 14	Expository essay
October 20	Book review 1 st draft
October 28	Book review
October 29	Paraphrasing homework
November 5	Submit social issue paper topic
November 17	Social issue paper 1 st draft
November 25	Social issue paper
December 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstract writing homework • Statement with information about your research paper
December 15	Quant/qual report 1 st draft
December 22	Quant/qual report
January 25	Final essay

Literature	No. of pages
Arber, S. 1998. "The Research Process: Planning Social Surveys," Pp. 312-317 in Marsh, I., Cambell, R. and Keating, M. <i>Classic and contemporary readings in sociology</i> . Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.	6
American Sociological Association. 2007. <i>American Sociological Association Style Guide</i> . Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.	46
Belcher, Wendy. "Book review guidelines." http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/press/siteart/jli_bookreviewguidelines.pdf	4
Charon, Joel M. and Lee Garth Vigilant. 2002. <i>The Meaning of Sociology</i> , 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.	22
Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. "A Statement on Method," pp. 333-357 in <i>Sidewalk</i> . New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.	25
Fowler, H. Ramsey and Jane E. Aaron. 1989. <i>The Little, Brown Handbook</i> , 4th ed. Glenview, IL:Scott, Foresman and Co.	~76
Georges, R.A. and Jones, M.O. 2001. "The Human Element in Fieldwork." Pp. 384-385 in Giddens, A., ed. <i>Sociology: Introductory readings</i> , revised edition. Cambridge: Polity press.	2
Giddens, Anthony. 2006. "What is Sociology?" in <i>Sociology</i> . Cambridge: Polity Press.	28
Holdway, S. 1998. "Participant Observation (1): Inside the British Police," Pp. 318-323 in Marsh, I., Cambell, R. and Keating, M. <i>Classic and contemporary readings in sociology</i> . Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.	6
Homan, R. 1998. "The Effects of Social Research," Pp. 350-355 in Marsh, I., Cambell, R. and Keating, M. <i>Classic and contemporary readings in sociology</i> . Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.	6
Internet resources on writing expository essays	5
Johnson, W., et al. 2006. <i>The sociology student writer's manual</i> (5th edition). Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.	264
Kerlin, B. 2000. "Qualitative Research in the United States," <i>Forum: Qualitative Social Research</i> 1(1).	10
Mack, J. and Lansley, S. 2001. "Absolute and Relative Poverty in Britain: An Illustration of Survey Work," pp. 386-388 in Giddens, A., ed. <i>Sociology: Introductory readings</i> , revised edition. Cambridge: Polity press.	3
Mahrer, Kenneth D. 2004. "Proofreading your own writing? Forget it!" <i>The</i>	2

Leading Edge, November.

- Marsh, C. 2001. "The Value of the Survey Method," Pp. 382-383 in Giddens, A., ed. *Sociology: Introductory readings*, revised edition. Cambridge: Polity press. 2
- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford University Press. 52
- Orwell, G. 1946. "Politics and the English language." ~20
- Polsky, N. 1998. "Participant Observation (2): Deviant Lives and Careers," Pp. 324-331 in Marsh, I., Cambell, R. and Keating, M. *Classic and contemporary readings in sociology*. Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall. 8
- Procter, Margaret. 1999. "The book review general guidelines."
<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/> 1
- Stern, Linda. 2007. *What Every Student Should Know About Avoiding Plagiarism*. New York: Pearson Longman. 21
- Strunk, William. 1918 [1999]. *Elements of Style*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Priv. print. [Geneva, N.Y.: Press of W.P. Humphrey]. 90
- Trim, Michelle. 2007. *What Every Student Should Know About Practicing Peer Review*. New York: Pearson Longman. 20
- Sociology Writing Group. 2008. *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*. 6th ed. New York: Worth Publishers. ~115
- Van Poppel, F. and Day, L.H. 1996. "A Test of Durkheim's Theory of Suicide – Without Committing the 'Ecological Fallacy,'" *American Sociological Review* 61(3):500-507. 8