

WAC Plan
Sociology Department
Submitted by Paul Knudson October 11, 2018

1. Writing Excellence in Sociology

Writing excellence in sociology is characterized by analytic precision and clarity. Sociology is a social science and therefore clarity of expression and organization of supporting evidence are measures of good writing. In addition to general standards of good writing, it is important that students learn to communicate data analysis, findings, and evidence for claims in a clear manner. This includes (1) a well-defined and articulated research question, (2) analysis, (3) organization of writing, (4) grammatical accuracy, (5) use of evidence, and (6) application of sociological concepts and/or theory.

2. Writing Courses: Required Courses

SOC 1510 is a requirement for all Justice Studies majors and fulfills the Social Science and Liberal Arts elective. It is also required for the Sociology major and minor. It is the only 100-level course offered by the department. SOC 2530 fills the Global Perspectives elective, Social Science elective, or Liberal Arts elective.

All of the following courses are required for sociology majors. Majors pick one of two theory classes.

SOC 1510: Principles of Sociology

Knudson: Seven, 2-page reading analysis papers: 25% of course grade

Rogoff: One five-page research paper: 30% of course grade

SOC 2530: Global Social Problems, Rogoff. 8-page paper, 30% of total grade.

SOC 3320: Methods of Social Research, Knudson. 12-15-page report, completed in 3 sections. 30% of total grade

SOC 4500: Research Seminar, Rogoff and Knudson. Minimum 12-page report; 55% of course grade.

- One of the following two courses is required for majors.

SOC 4200: Contemporary Sociological Theory, Knudson. Minimum 8-10-page paper. 25% of course grade.

SOC 4310: Classical Sociological Theory, Dyke.

In Methods of Social Research and Research Seminar sociology students must develop an original research question and follow an outline when producing a research report. The mechanics of formulating a research question and drafting a research literature review are taught as part of writing a

research proposal in Methods of Social Research, which precedes Research Seminar in the sequence. In Research Seminar a detailed research question is examined through the analysis of data.

The attached rubric is a model of general principles for the assessment of writing in sociology. It is used in the following required courses: SOC 1510, 2520, 3320, 4500, 4200, and 4310.

| Writing Component | Excellent | Proficient | Fair | Inadequate/Poor |
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| Research Question | Research question is concrete and presented in the opening and concluding sections of the paper. | Research question is concrete and presented in the opening and concluding sections of the paper but is not clearly stated. | Research question is unclear and takes work for the reader to fish it out of the text. | No research question is stated in the paper. |
| Literature Review and Conceptual Framework | Demonstrates solid understanding of the literature and concepts. Literature review is organized clearly around major themes and findings. There is a clear conceptual framework constructed that connects the existing literature to information/data analyzed in the paper. | Demonstrates a solid understanding of the literature and concepts, but the literature review is somewhat disjointed and not organized around major themes. The conceptual framework is clear, but there is little description of how it connects the existing literature to the information/data analyzed in the paper. | Literature and concepts are used but left poorly defined. The literature review lacks a solid grasp of the literature and is disjointed and not organized around major themes. The conceptual framework is not clear, and it is not connected to the existing literature or the information/data analyzed in the paper. | Literature and concepts are included, but there is little demonstration of how they relate to the research focus and question of the paper. The literature review is insufficient, with poor organization, and the readings are not specific to or focused on the research topic. There is no conceptual framework. |
| Organization of Paper | Clear organization with a natural flow. Paper has a title and pages are numbered. Includes an introduction, transition sentences to connect major | Clear organization with introductions, transitions, and a conclusion, but writing is not always fluid. | Organization is unclear or without necessary component parts. | Little discernible organization. |

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| | ideas, and a conclusion. | | | |
| Use of Evidence (data or existing literature) | Each logical point is backed up by one or more examples from qualitative, archival, or quantitative data, or existing literature. Evidence is strong and sufficient to advance the major pattern identified. Exceptions to the pattern are accounted for and addressed with evidence. | Each logical point is backed up by one or more examples from qualitative, archival, or quantitative data or existing literature. Evidence advances argument, but may not be sufficient. Exceptions to the major pattern are accounted for, but may not be sufficiently addressed with evidence. | Several points of the main pattern are left without evidence from qualitative, archival, or quantitative data or existing literature. Evidence is insufficient. | There is qualitative, archival, or quantitative data or existing literature used but not to defend the main argument or address the research question. |
| Analysis and Conclusion | Analysis is presented clearly and logically. Logical points build directly on the major pattern. Exceptions to the pattern are addressed, dismantled, and folded into the conceptual framework of the paper. Conclusions are specific and derived logically from the material and/or data presented. | Analysis is presented clearly and logically, but points do not necessarily build on each other. Exceptions are addressed, but many are left hanging or are dealt with inadequately with regard to the conceptual framework of the paper. Conclusions are derived logically from the material and/or data but are somewhat too general. | Analysis is disorganized, the major pattern is left unaddressed. Exceptions may be presented but left unaddressed in relation to the conceptual framework of the paper. Conclusions exist but the writer does not explain in enough detail how they are derived in logical terms or how they relate to the findings. | There is no discernible major pattern analyzed and no alternative interpretation is presented. There is either no conclusion or the conclusion is illogical. |
| Grammar and Citations | There are few or no spelling and grammatical | There are several grammar and spelling errors. | Significant grammar or spelling errors. | Significant grammar and spelling errors. |

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| | errors. Ideas and evidence are correctly cited. | Ideas and evidence are correctly cited. | Ideas and evidence are correctly cited. | Evidence and ideas are not correctly cited or cited at all. |
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