SOCIOLOGY 503 (16:920:503)
Second Year QP Seminar
Wednesdays 3:30-6:00 (*every 2 weeks)

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description, Goals, and Outcomes

This course prepares second-year sociology graduate students to plan for and actualize a complete draft of their first qualifying paper (QP). The course is held every other week for a full academic year. It is one-part social research methods seminar and one-part writing seminar. By the end of the course, students should have a solid draft of a QP that is ready for comments from their QP committee members.

Preparation for the course begins the summer preceding the start of the seminar. Students should aim to have data collected by the early fall, meaning the summer is a time to find a QP chair, prepare the IRB proposal (if necessary) and/or collect data or clean/arrange access to necessary datasets. Sign-on for the QP should happen by late fall, and an early first draft of the QP should be ready by late January of the spring semester. Students will work together in writing groups and pairs, with regular consultation with their QP chair.

This syllabus was originally created by Norah MacKendrick.

Learning Goals

This course contributes to the learning goal of "*Conduct original, theoretically engaged research grounded in highly skilled methodological techniques*." The course works toward these following more specific goals:
- Plan a QP research project specifying topic, research question and methodology
- Collect / locate and analyze data
- Develop an original argument
- Prepare a defensible QP that can be circulated to the student's committee for feedback.

Diversity statement

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 clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

Keeping up with class material

Active participation and attendance, as well as "showing up" for other classmates (through thoughtful feedback and engagement with their work) is vital to everyone's success in this course.

Discussions and respect

Graduate classes involve critique and discussion. We will likely encounter disrespectful or harmful comments, assumptions, and ideas in the materials we're reading or in our class discussions. These situations shouldn't be dismissed or ignored. Likewise, fear of offending our colleagues should not silence us. Therefore, we will develop a community agreement where we outline a process for handling such moments so we can all feel welcome in class, participate openly and respectfully, and learn from one another's histories, perspectives, and backgrounds.

Books
Required:
- Luker, K. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences.*
- Booth, Wayne, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2003. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago press. [Any year is fine]

Highly recommended:
- Miller, Jane E. 2005. *Writing About Multivariate Analysis.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. [Any version fine]
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, LTD.

Definitely worth your time:
- Zerubavel, E. (1999). *The clockwork muse: a practical guide to writing theses, dissertations, and books*. Harvard University Press.
- White, L. (2005). Writes of passage: Writing an empirical journal article. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *67*(4), 791-798.
- Silvia, P. J. (2007). *How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing*. American Psychological Association.
- Belcher, Wendy Laura. 2019. *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. Second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hayot, E. (2014). *The elements of academic style: Writing for the humanities*. Columbia University Press.
- Thomas, F. N., & Turner, M. (2011). *Clear and simple as the truth: Writing classic prose*. Princeton University Press.
- Becker, Howard, Writing for Social Scientists or Tricks of the Trade
- Abbott, Andrew. 2004. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company. (Highly recommend that you read/skim entire book)

Helpful Blogs:
- Thesociologyphdandme.wordpress.com
- Getalife.blogspot.com

Technology

Canvas

Grading Policy

This class is designed to help you move through the program on time. It's a chance to write your first QP for credit with the support and direction of your classmates and an instructor.

For this class to work for us all, there has to be consistent attendance and active participation from everyone. With that in mind, to receive an A, you need to attend and participate in every class, complete the writing / workshop assignments on time, provide constructive and timely feedback to your peers, and complete revisions to your QP draft as required. If you don't do the exercises, login late, miss more than one class, and/or put minimal effort into peer review you can expect to get a B or a C. I understand that the pandemic continues to affect our schedules and well-being, so I will make accommodations for health issues, caring responsibilities, technological glitches, etc.

Workload from other courses is not a valid excuse for late assignments or poor attendance.

*This class is designed to support your progress in the program. Please come talk to me if you feel like the course content or structure isn't helpful.

BEFORE classes start:
- By 8/26, send me a one-page memo outlining the project, including data collection plans, QP advisor name, status of IRB proposal or any necessary permissions to access datasets or archives.
- Ideally before September, submit any IRB proposal using the e-IRB portal https://eirb.rutgers.edu/
- Coordinate with your QP advisor for regular consultations over the academic year. Please share the syllabus with them. Let me know if you are having trouble finding an advisor.
- Read: *Craft of Research*: Section 1.0 up to and including 4.4.; *Salsa Dancing*: Chapters 3 and 4

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Sep 7: Getting Started: Research Question and Research Problem

(1) Introductions
(2) Drafting a community agreement
(3) Going over the syllabus
(4) What is a QP anyway?
(5) Workshop research questions and problems: "Research Overview" – state your interest, topic, research question, and research problem.

Before Next Class:

➢ Share "Research Overview" with your advisor and the class by Wednesday September 14th at 11 pm.
➢ Before class: read your classmates' Research Overviews and prepare comments to share.
➢ Read: *Salsa Dancing*, Chapters 6 & 7
➢ Complete, in a Google doc, a "Methods Overview." Provide a general overview of the methodology or methodologies you're using for your QP. Think about Luker's points about operationalization and sampling. Add a section called "Roadblocks and Questions" where you outline any problems and questions you have about your research design, data collection, and/or analysis.
➢ Share "Methods Overview" with your advisor and the class by Monday September 19th at 11 pm.
➢ Before class: Read your classmates' Methods Overviews and prepare to discuss in class.

Week 3, Sep 21: Refine Research Overview and Methodology/Data

(1) Review community agreement and sign
(2) Workshop and troubleshoot our research questions and problems
(3) Work in pairs to review methodology roadblocks
(4) Regroup and discuss common problems and solutions

Before Next Class:

➢ Read *Craft of Research* sections 5 & 6; Salsa Dancing Chapter 5
➢ Come up with a system for organizing your literature. Consider using a reference management program. Organize readings in a way that makes sense to you.
➢ Start a Google doc called: "Literature Review." Use headings. Add a key point you want to make and what articles/books you'll cite in that section.
➢ Find one literature review that you like or admire. Share the article with the class by Wednesday September 28th at 11 pm. Prepare to talk about it in class.
➢ Read classmates' literature review recommendations.

Week 5, Oct 5: Literature Reviews, Pt 1

(1) Present literature review
(2) What makes a good literature review? What are some common problems?

Before Next Class:

➢ Write a rough draft of your literature review section. Share with your advisor and the class by Thursday October 20th at 11pm.

Week 8, Oct 26: Literature Review, Pt 2 [Note: Even # week]

(1) Workshop literature review draft
(2) QP progress check-in: how is data collection going? Have you been in touch with your advisor? What things are holding back? What progress have you made?

Before Next Class:
➢ Read *Craft of Research, S*ections 7-10.
➢ Start a Google doc called "Key Claims and Arguments." This will be preliminary and likely will involve some guesswork. But it's good practice even at this stage.
➢ Next revise each part of your "Research Overview" document. Observe how it has changed (or not).
➢ Share revised "Research Overview" and "Key Claims" with the class by Monday October 31st at 11 pm.
➢ Read classmates materials and prepare comments to share in class

Week 9, Nov 2: Preliminary claims and arguments

(1) Work in pairs to workshop claims and arguments
(2) Re-group to discuss common problems, patterns and solutions
(3) Data analysis check-in: hiccups, delays, and achievements.

Before Next Class:
➢ Begin to outline a theoretical framework. Headings and bullet points preferred.
➢ Use a mapping/visualization technique to connect your research question to the theoretical framework. If you're working with variables, include them in this map. Be prepared to share this in class.

Week 11, Nov 16: Mapping a theoretical framework

(1) Class discussion to talk about theoretical frameworks
(2) Workshop framework maps: Provide a typed-out version of your question and an outline of your theoretical framework. Your partner will map this. Then compare your map with your partner's and discuss.
(3) Discuss common problems, etc.

Next Class:
➢ Continue with data collection/analysis
➢ Continue working on your literature review
➢ Begin outlining your QP
➢ Share outline of QP with class by Monday November 28th at 11 pm.
➢ Read outlines and prepare comments to share in class
➢ Check in with your QP chair

Week 13, Nov 30: Going over our drafts
(1) Discuss feedback
(2) Outline next steps for winter break
(3) Discuss goals for spring semester

- ➤ <mark>Submit revised outlines or full drafts to me before individual meetings, no later than Friday December 9th at 11 pm.</mark>
- ➤ Check in with your QP chair

Weeks 14/15: Individual meetings

Over the holiday break:
- ➤ Check in with your QP chair
- ➤ Work on data collection and analysis
- ➤ Work on literature review
- ➤ Consider submitting to ESS, ASA, or SSSP 2023
- ➤ Read *Craft of Research*: All of section IV.

SPRING SEMESTER
For the spring semester you'll spend most of your time in small groups. The first few classes are devoted to developing and improving specific sections. After that, we'll workshop whole drafts of your papers. Each class will start with a check-in and overview of the meeting's objectives and activities. You'll then break into groups. We'll close each class with a discussion about common problems and troubleshoot questions.