

# Topics in Sociology — Getting Your Paper Published

## Sociology 8090 — Spring 2020

Social Sciences 1183 — Tuesday — 11:45am-2:15pm

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*Office Hours: By appointment (via Google Calendar)*

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Graduate students in this course will submit a paper to an academic journal by the end of the semester.

Students should start the semester with (1) a research project that is essentially completed but (2) a manuscript describing that research that has not been started or is not very far along. The objective of the course is to help students develop a strong, persuasive, and publishable research manuscript.

The class is open to students who use any methodological and theoretical approaches, who study any substantive topic, and who are from any discipline or program.

Throughout the class, students will develop their manuscripts through writing and revising based on the instructor's and their classmates' feedback and examples.

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### COURSE SCHEDULE

#### January 21

Syllabus/course overview; 10-minute introductions; Basic overview of what an article looks like and how it is structured; Generating a list of target journals; Scheduling “who will present” each week; Scheduling “who will review whom” each week; Generating a list of target journals

#### January 28

More on targeting journals; Detailed overview of what an article looks like and how it is structured; How to structure the front end of a paper; Demonstration of reviewing and critiquing a paper

#### February 4

\*\*\* NO CLASS \*\*\*

#### February 11

Discuss and Critique: Front end of papers, Part 1

#### February 18

Discuss and Critique: Front end of paper, Part 2; How to structure methods and results sections

**February 25**

Discuss and Critique: Revised front end / methods / results sections of papers, Part 1

**March 3**

Discuss and Critique: Revised front end / methods / results sections of papers, Part 2; How to structure a discussion section

**March 10**

\*\*\* NO CLASS — SPRING BREAK \*\*\*

**March 17**

Discuss and Critique: Complete draft of papers, Part 1

**March 24**

Discuss and Critique: Complete draft of papers, Part 2

**March 31**

Details of how the article review process works

**April 7**

Discuss and Critique: Revised complete draft of papers, Part 1

**April 14**

Discuss and Critique: Revised complete draft of papers, Part 2

**April 21**

Presentation by Emma Molls (University Publishing Services Librarian) on publishing ethics

**April 28**

Discuss and Critique: Re-revised complete draft of papers, Part 1

**May 7 \*\*\* NOTE: DURING “STUDY DAY” \*\*\***

Discuss and Critique: Re-revised complete draft of papers, Part 2

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**THE BASICS****1. Respect for Others**

Everyone in the class must treat everyone else in the class with unfailing respect. We are here to learn from one another, and we can learn the most from people who don't think like us or have the same perspectives or experiences as us. This means it is crucial that everyone feel free to voice their opinions and perspectives—even if others disagree with those opinions or have different perspectives. In my experience, people can only effectively communicate when they feel they are being treated with respect.

Listen carefully and respectfully to others. No shouting. No interrupting. No sarcasm. No personal attacks. If you get really upset, take a break, take a deep breath, maybe go for a short walk, and then come back to the discussion ready to calmly and respectfully re-engage.

## 2. Technology in the Classroom

Many instructors forbid or limit the use of iPads, laptop computers, tablets, phones, and other devices in class. Not me! Bring them and use them—they can be great resources and learning aids. In fact, I insist that you bring them since I might ask you to use these devices for some interactive exercises and in-class assignments. However:

- a. Do **not** distract or annoy your classmates or me! This means: Notifications and ringers off. Media sound off. If you are likely to use technology in some way that might distract or annoy people, sit in the very back of the room. Use good judgment. Don't be a jerk.
- b. If you are easily distracted or annoyed by other people's (mis)use of technology, sit toward the front of the classroom. Then you won't easily be distracted by them.
- c. My advice: Use technology sparingly while in class. Use it, when appropriate, for class-related activities. Use your cell phone to send or respond to urgent messages and to respond to polls or quizzes that I send out. Otherwise, try to pay attention to me and your peers. Snapchat and Twitter can probably wait until after class.
- d. I reserve the right to change this policy at any time.

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## GRADING AND EVALUATION

### 1. Writing Assignments

*(50 points, or 50% of course grade)*

As described in the schedule above, there are five writing assignments:

1. Front end
2. Revised front end, methods, and findings
3. Complete draft
4. Revised complete draft
5. Re-revised complete draft

Each is worth 10 points. Scores will be based on how diligently you work to complete the assignment, which in most cases means revising previous writing based on earlier feedback.

**Assignments must be shared with the class at least five days ahead of time!**

### 2. Critique Assignments

*(40 points, or 40% of course grade)*

For each of the five writing assignments, you will get three sets of feedback—one from me and two from your classmates. For this to work, you will need to provide feedback on other students' papers 10 times.

Critiques should be professional, thorough, and critical. They might offer some introductory praise or compliments, but mostly they should include ideas about how to clarify, strengthen, change, or otherwise improve the paper. Their length will vary but should generally be a page or two of single-spaced text.

Critiques should be shared with the author at the end of the class session in which the author's paper is being discussed. Please share it with me, too, so I know you did the assignment.

Each of the 10 critiques is worth 4 points. Scores will be based on how thorough, thoughtful, constructive, and professional your critique is.

### 3. Attendance and Engagements

*(10 points, or 10% of course grade)*

For this to work, it is important that every student attend every day. It is absolutely essential that each author attend on the days their papers will be discussed, and it is equally essential that each of the assigned critics of their papers attend. Beyond this, it is essential that everyone in class read all of the papers that will be discussed in each class session so that they can meaningfully participate in discussions. In short, every student needs to attend—and they need to read all the assigned papers ahead of time.

### 4. How Grades Will Be Assigned

There are 100 total points in the class. Your end-of-semester letter grade will be based on the percentage of the 100 points that you earn:

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	93.0% to 100.0%	B-	80.0% to 82.9%	D+	67.0% to 69.9%
A-	90.0% to 92.9%	C+	77.0% to 79.9%	D	63.0% to 66.9%
B+	87.0% to 89.9%	C	73.0% to 76.9%	F	less than 63.0%
B	83.0% to 86.9%	C-	70.0% to 72.9%		

Group assignments are worth a total of 80 points (or 40% of the course grade) and individual assignments are worth 120 points (or 60% of the course grade). You can get up to 7.5 points of extra credit.

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## OTHER INFORMATION

### 1. Contesting Grades

I might sometimes make grading mistakes—it happens—but I want you to get the grade you deserve. To contest a grade on an assignment: First, wait 24 hours after you receive the grade. Are you *sure* the grade was unfair? Then, if you still want to contest the grade, email me a list of your reasons for your dissatisfaction with the grade.

## 2. Incompletes

According to university policy, a course grade of “Incomplete” is only given when (1) a student is making good progress throughout most of a course and then (2) some unexpected event or circumstance temporarily prevents that student from completing the course assignments on time. I will only agree to give an “Incomplete” when both conditions are met. Also, I will only give an “Incomplete” once you and I have met to sign the required university paperwork and have agreed about how and by what date all course assignments will be completed.

## 3. Learning Styles, Abilities, and Accommodations

If you are overwhelmed or feel like you could use some helping catching up in the course, one good first step is to visit with me in my office. In most cases I can help you get back on track, especially if you talk to me early.

Everyone learns in different ways. If, for any reason, you become concerned about your ability to fully participate in this course due to the structure of activities or assignments please talk to me about it. I am committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities.

Disability Services is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, or systemic), are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at 612-626-1333 (V/TTY) or [ds@umn.edu](mailto:ds@umn.edu). Additional information is available at <http://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with Disability Services, please notify me at the start of the semester.

If you would like help with your writing, Student Writing Support at the Center for Writing (<http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>) offers a variety of very useful resources.

## 4. Sexual Misconduct

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment. I also have a reporting responsibility related to my role: I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime of sexual misconduct with the Office for Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action (EOAA) at [diversity.umn.edu/eoaa/home](http://diversity.umn.edu/eoaa/home). For victims of sexual assault: The Aurora Center provides free and confidential support and academic advocacy via their 24-hour help line (612-626-9111) and by email ([aurora.umn.edu](mailto:aurora.umn.edu)).

## 5. Academic Misconduct

I strongly encourage you to collaborate and brainstorm with your classmates and to review and critique one another's work, both in and out of class. However, individual assignments and essays should represent your own ideas and be your own work. If any words are not your own, you must place them in quotes,

include a citation, and include the reference in a bibliography at the end of the assignment. If any ideas are not your own even if the words are, you must still include a citation. (See the American Sociological Association's [Style Guide](#) for useful direction on citations and references.) It is OK to reflect on and synthesize the ideas of other people, with proper citation of sources. It is not OK to imply that those ideas are yours or to use them without attribution. When in doubt, cite!

Taking credit for work that is not your own constitutes scholastic dishonesty. I am a “zero tolerance” professor when it comes to scholastic dishonesty. The university makes it easy for me to report it, too. I fill out one short report via a very nice web interface—I can do it from my phone!—and they take it from there. If I ever think you engaged in scholastic dishonesty, I will discuss it with you first. After that, if I still think you engaged in scholastic dishonesty, I will give you a zero on the relevant assignment and report the incident to the university. Not sure what scholastic dishonesty is? Read about it in the “Scholastic Dishonesty” section of the [Student Conduct Code](#).