SYO 5515: SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH PRACTICUM
Fall 2015
Thursday, 9:30 a.m. - Noon
519 Bellamy

Professor: Dr. Kathryn Harker Tillman
Office: 614 Bellamy
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Thursday 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., and by appointment

Contact Information: Email: ktillman@fsu.edu
Office Phone: 850-644-1669
Office Fax: 644-8818
Course Website on BlackBoard

Description:
Writing is a crucial skill for the academic researcher. Despite its importance, students often receive very little systematic training in how to communicate their research to academic audiences and how to write for publication.

The goal of this course is to provide you with a basic introduction to academic writing. While the course may be helpful to graduate students at any stage of the program, most students will use it as an opportunity to work on their master’s papers. The course will cover a number of important topics, including a refresher of basic writing and grammar skills, how to structure your writing, and how to meet readers’ expectations. We’ll also discuss writing-related topics like how to maximize your writing productivity, working with co-authors and mentors, navigating the IRB process, and engaging in peer review.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to do the following:
1. Describe the general expectations of readers.
2. Recognize whether these expectations are violated or confirmed in a particular piece of writing.
3. Restructure text to bring it in line with expectations.
4. Be proficient at offering constructive feedback on peers’ scholarly projects.
5. Have a plan for maximizing your writing productivity/efficiency.

*The semester’s tangible products will include a short segment of a paper that has been crafted using the tools we learn over the semester and a point outline of the literature review and methods sections of your master’s paper (or other academic paper in preparation).

Contacting Me:
The quickest way to contact me is through email at: ktillman@fsu.edu. Email is an efficient way to ask simple questions and to arrange meetings outside of office hours. Feel free to come to my office hours on Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. or Thursday 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. If these times conflict with your schedule, I am more than willing to arrange another time during which to meet.
Course Materials:
Required Books:


*All other required reading materials will be available on the course BlackBoard site.*

We will also be reading extensively from this book ([It is a bit expensive. PDFs will be available on BB, but you may wish to purchase it](#)):

Other potentially useful books:
William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*
Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations.*
Helen Sword. 2012. *Stylish Academic Writing.*

Grading:
Course grades are “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” At the end of the term, I will consider two equally weighted factors in determining your grade. First, I will consider your participation and effort in the course. This will involve an assessment of your attendance, in-class participation, and effort at responding to your classmates’ written work. Second, I will examine your final written products at the end of the course for evidence that you have applied the principles we’ve discussed in class. Keep in mind that attendance is required. More than two unexcused absences will result in a grade of “unsatisfactory.”

Course Requirements:
Students will be required to do a lot of writing and critiquing throughout the semester. In particular, we will spend a lot of time providing feedback to each other. Peer review and constructive criticism are incredibly helpful and are a cornerstone of the academic research process, but can also be very uncomfortable. You will be asked to put your writing out there for all to see, laying bare any “mistakes” or “weaknesses” it might have. Please trust that the amount you learn will be well worth the risks that this process entails. Because we’ll be working with each other’s writing samples, I ask that you be very conscious of how you express your thoughts and feedback and remain respectful of each other at all times.
There are two main sets of writing activities in this course:

1. **Feedback on Peer Papers**
   You will be working in pairs (or triplets) to provide peer-level feedback on your written work. The groupings will change throughout the semester. There will be a total of 4 peer-review assignments.

   We will discuss in class how to best provide peer review, but there are three general issues to which you should pay attention:
   1. The mechanics of writing (e.g. spelling, grammar, sentence structure, typos).
   2. Whether or not the writing has met reader expectations (i.e. are the sentences written in a way that most readers of English would expect? Is the piece written in compliance with academic conventions/expectations?).
   3. Substantive content and clarity.

   Peer-review comments should avoid simply making judgments and using negative language (e.g. “unclear,” “awkward,” “wordy,” “confusing.”). Instead, comments should articulate why such judgments can be made and, ideally, offer constructive advice on how to improve the writing. I will provide concrete suggestions for beginning each of your peer review papers.

2. **Final Assignments**
   At the end of the semester, you will turn in two written products. One is a short (2-3 page) section of an academic paper that you have crafted using the tools we learn over the semester. For most of you this will be a portion of your master’s paper, but you may also use any other academic paper on which you are working. This short section should include clearly stated research questions. The other written product is a detailed point outline for the literature review and methods sections of your master’s paper.

**IMPORTANT NOTES**
Be sure to email me your first 1 page paper segment for peer review by Monday, August 31st at noon. An introduction to a paper (or a section of it) should work well for our purposes. You may want to submit a different section later in the semester. I’ll post all of the papers to our course BB site, so please submit them to me in MS Word format and use the following convention for naming the file: “Johnson_paper 1” or “Smith_paper 2”

All papers should be typed and double-spaced using 12 point font and 1” margins. You should include page numbers on all pages. Do not include cover pages.
Course Policies, Student Responsibilities and Decorum:

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes, having completed the week’s reading and formulated thoughtful questions and/or comments. To do well in any graduate seminar, preparation for and attendance of class is absolutely necessary. I consider missing more than two classes during the semester to be poor attendance. Missing more than two classes without legitimate, excusable reasons will lead to a grade of “unsatisfactory.” Because lateness is both unprofessional and disruptive, please do not come to class late. Persistent lateness to class may also result in a grade of “unsatisfactory.” If you know that you will miss or be late to a class, please let me know ahead of time.

Late work will not be accepted, except under extreme circumstances (at the instructor’s discretion). If due dates for course assignments coincide either with the observation of religious holidays or the representation of FSU at official functions you must contact your instructor in advance of the due date for the assignment for which alternative arrangements will be made.

I expect all students to regularly participate in discussions and to act professionally throughout the semester. This includes respectfully listening and responding to your colleagues in a scholarly manner. Unprofessional behavior will be penalized and may include being downgraded or dismissal from class.

Scholarly comments are: A) Respectful of diverse opinions, analysis, and methodologies; B) Open to follow-up questions and/or discussion about the assumptions upon which comments are grounded; C) Related to the class and course material (rather than simply reflective of personal beliefs); D) Delivered in normal tones and in a non-aggressive manner (rather than yelling and interrupting).

Incomplete Grades:

Missing work or uncompleted assignments are insufficient reasons for a grade of Incomplete. An Incomplete grade will not be given except under extenuating circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. Note that College of Social Science and Public Policy guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.

Academic Honor Code:

The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. [http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/acad_regs.htm]

All work (discussion questions, papers) must be in accordance with the University Honor Code. Please read the Honor Code and make sure that you understand it. If you have any questions regarding the Code and how it specifically pertains to your work, please ask me.
Plagiarism caution: The Provost and legal counsel of Florida State University warn us that any uses of others' copyrighted materials without proper acknowledgement is unlawful and may lead to criminal prosecution. To this end, please be scrupulous in using the work of others by giving full and appropriate credit to the sources and materials that you use. Please use care when taking words and phrases from others. As a general rule, if you use a string of three or more exact words from another source, you should place the words in quotes and cite the author, year and page number. Be a stickler about citing; cite more rather than less; cite early rather than late. Do NOT appropriate the concepts, phrases, or ideas of other people without giving them credit. If you do so, you risk losing your good name and getting into legal trouble. Any confirmed instance of plagiarism will result in a “U” grade for this course and will also be reported to the University Judicial Office for official adjudication.

Americans with Disabilities Act:
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the 1st week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact: Student Disability Resource Center, Dean of Students, 08 Kellum Hall Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4400, (850) 644-9566 (voice), (850) 644-8504 (TDD), SDRC@admin.fsu.edu, http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

On-Campus Resources:
Please be aware that the following resources are available to you on campus to help you improve your learning and writing skills.

   http://www.lib.fsu.edu/services/rwc.html
2. Tutoring options available at FSU.
   http://guides.lib.fsu.edu/tutoring

Syllabus Change Policy:
Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.
## Course Schedule
*(topics and topic sequence subject to change depending on student needs):*

*All reading assignments are due for the day assigned on the syllabus.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>Welcome! Course Introduction &amp; Plans for the Semester</td>
<td>“Relax! You’ll be more productive” <em>NY Times</em>, Feb. 9, 2013</td>
<td>Email your first 1 page paper to me by <em>Monday, August 31, noon</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 3</td>
<td><strong>No Class Meeting Today (sorry!)</strong></td>
<td>Lambert – Introduction and Part I</td>
<td>Work on Lambert’s Appendices A &amp; B</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>Managing your Writing -<em>Priorities and Efficiency</em></td>
<td>Lambert – Part II</td>
<td>Complete Lambert’s Appendices A &amp; B (bring your written responses to class!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>Managing your Writing -<em>Action and Agency</em></td>
<td>Lambert – Part III</td>
<td>Peer response paper #1 is due. See “Suggestions for Beginning your Response Papers” on BB -- Make sure to read Gopen BEFORE writing this response!</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>DEDICATED WRITING TIME IN THE LAB</strong></td>
<td>George Gopen, <em>The Sense of Structure</em>, Ch. 1 (pp. 3-13); Ch. 2 (pp. 14-25) and Part II-Punctuation (pp. 159-179)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 24</td>
<td>Strategies for Approaching Your Graduate School Career and Mentorship</td>
<td>Lambert – Part IV (Chapters 14 &amp; 15 only)</td>
<td>Peer response paper #2 is due. See “Suggestions for Beginning your Response Papers” on BB -- Make sure to read Gopen BEFORE writing this response!</td>
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<td>Mechanics of Writing -<em>Subject-Verb-Complement Separations</em></td>
<td>George Gopen, <em>The Sense of Structure</em>, Ch. 2 (pp. 25-46) and Part II-Punctuation (pp. 179-196)</td>
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<td>October 1</td>
<td>Mechanics of Writing - <em>Topic and Stress Positions</em> - <em>Development within a Paragraph</em> - The “Risks” of Writing</td>
<td>George Gopen, <em>The Sense of Structure</em>, Ch. 3 (pp. 47-64; 84-93) and Part II-Punctuation (pp. 196-217) Pamela Richards, in Becker (1986) “Chapter 6: Risk,” pp. 108-120</td>
<td>Peer response paper #3 is due. See “Suggestions for Beginning your Response Papers” on BB -- Make sure to read Gopen BEFORE writing this response!</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>Mechanics of Writing - <em>Paragraphs</em> - The Academic “Pose”</td>
<td>George Gopen, <em>The Sense of Structure</em>, Ch. 4 (pp. 94-148) and Part II-Punctuation (pp. 209-232) Rachel Toor, “‘It can Thereby be Shown…’ <em>The Chronicle of Higher Education</em>. November 18, 2010.</td>
<td>Peer response paper #4 is due. See “Suggestions for Beginning your Response Papers” on BB -- Make sure to read Gopen BEFORE writing this response!</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td><em>No Class Meeting</em> <em>Today – SDA Conference in San Antonio</em></td>
<td>Rachel Toor, “Bad Writing and Bad Thinking.” <em>The Chronicle of Higher Education</em>. April 15, 2010.</td>
<td>Work on your research questions for your master’s (or other paper)! Determine likely source of data Determine whether to submit abstract to SSS Conference (April 13-16, 2016 in Atlanta)</td>
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<td><strong>DEDICATED WRITING TIME IN THE LAB (for those of you not at SDA)</strong></td>
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<td>*DEDICATED WRITING TIME IN THE LAB</td>
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<td>*Deadline for submission to last Human Subjects Committee meeting of 2015 is 11/20/15</td>
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<td>Bring any SSS abstracts to class (Abstracts due ????).</td>
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<td>October 29</td>
<td>Developing Your Research Questions</td>
<td>Booth et al., Chs. 1-4 (pp. 9-67)</td>
<td>Bring a draft of your research question(s) to peer-review in class today.</td>
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<td>November 5</td>
<td>Finding &amp; Using Sources</td>
<td>Booth et al., Chs. 5 &amp; 6 (pp. 68-101)</td>
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<td>**DEDICATED WRITING TIME IN THE LAB</td>
<td>Examine example point outlines on BB</td>
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<td>November 12</td>
<td>Developing Arguments</td>
<td>Booth et al. Chs. 7 &amp; 8 (pp. 105-129)</td>
<td>Work on your point outline</td>
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<td>Examine example point outlines</td>
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<td>November 19</td>
<td>Arguments and Evidence</td>
<td>Booth et al. Chs.9-11 (pp.130-169)</td>
<td>Bring in an outline of the main points you’ll make in your lit review</td>
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<td>**DEDICATED WRITING TIME IN THE LAB</td>
<td>Examine the example point outlines on BB</td>
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<td>November 26</td>
<td>No Classes (university-wide) – Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<td>December 3</td>
<td>Last Day of Class &amp; Feedback on project plans</td>
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<td>Bring in an outline of your lit review and your methods section</td>
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<td>December 10</td>
<td>Final Assignments - DUE BY NOON</td>
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