Writing Workshop

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2025 SEMESTER

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Office Hours:

- M: 7:00am – 9:00am (in-person)
- By Appointment (zoom)
- Advising Drop-In Hours: 10:30 – 12:00pm (M/W)

Class Information:
Modality: In-Person
Date/Time: M/W 9:00 – 10:15 AM
Room: DMH 162

SJSU

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

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What is this course about?

Welcome to the Writing Workshop!

I understand that some of you may be wondering what exactly this course entails, or even questioning the need for yet another English-related class. It's a fair question! I'd like to take a moment to explain how Writing Workshop is different and why it's a valuable addition to your academic and professional journey.

Rather than revisiting general writing skills such as grammar and structure—topics already covered in previous English courses—this class focuses on the specific genres and writing practices unique to the field of sociology. Writing in sociology goes beyond basic communication; it involves mastering a range of specialized forms, each with its own conventions and purpose. In this course, we'll explore these genres in depth, helping you refine the skills you need to write effectively and professionally within the sociological discipline.

Throughout the course, we will focus on essential sociological writing tasks such as literature reviews, Op-Eds, and research reports—skills that are vital for effective sociological inquiry and professional communication. While clear and effective writing will certainly be a key component of our work, the primary goal of this course is to help you master the specific genres and techniques that are integral to sociological practice. In this way, Writing Workshop offers more than just instruction on writing—it is an opportunity to further develop your expertise as both a sociologist and a professional communicator.

What background knowledge do I need before taking this course?

Before you take this course, you should take two courses: SOCI 1 and A3 OR an equivalent second-semester composition course. You should also be a sociology, behavioral science, and/or Chicana/Chicano Studies major.

As a personal aside, you may want to refresh your knowledge about the five-paragraph structure of writing if it's been a while since your composition courses.

What will I learn in this course?

Required G.E. Learning Outcomes (G.E.L.O.):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

GELO 1: Explain, analyze, develop, and critique ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse

GELO 2: Organize and develop complete discipline-specific texts and other documents for both professional and general audiences, using appropriate editorial and citation standards

GELO 3: Locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose and to communicate that purpose in writing

GELO 4: Produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in language use, grammar, and clarity of expression.

Writing Requirement: GE requirements for 100W stipulate that each student shall write a minimum of 8000 words in the course of the semester and that they shall be provided with frequent practice and feedback for improving their communication skills.

University Credit Hour Notice

This is a 3-Unit CORE Class.

Which means by taking it SJSU expects that you will dedicate 2 hours of work outside of lecture per every credit (6 hours total per week). These 6 hours will cover time spent reading, doing written homework, and projects.

What are the required texts and materials?

1. All readings and resources will be provided on your Canvas Page. Do not purchase any texts.

What technologies will we use?

For this course, you will be learning how to use AI responsibly and the limits of this new technology. You will be required to create one (**free**) account:

- Elicit: For assistance with literature analysis (Not to replace reading)

You will also need to submit word documents. All students have free access to Microsoft Word through the university. Follow these instructions to access word for free.

What am I required to do in this class?

These are the assignments that will constitute your final grade.

Assignment Type	Points Total
In-Class Participation	300
Homework	340
Writing Center Visits	60
Final Literature Review	100
Final Op-Ed	100
Total	900

Regular Assignments

Homework: In order to give you time to complete your literature review, the majority of your regular homework for the first nine weeks are low-stakes assignments showing progress toward the draft. Some of these assignments will be graded pass/fail, others will incorporate analytical rubrics. Completed drafts of major projects will be considered homework.

The remainder of your assignments will explore other sociological genres of writing including but not limited to the Op-Eds, research reports, statements of purpose, and requests for letters of recommendation. Each homework assignment is worth 20 points – however you will be required to write 8000 words by the end of the course in order to pass so each assignment is crucial. If you do not write 8000 words – you automatically fail the class per university policy.

Instructions for your homework will be located in Canvas. Assignments will be due on Fridays @ 5:00pm unless indicated otherwise (Total Points: 340 Points)

Writing Center Visits: In addition to regular homework, you will be required to visit the writing center at least three times during the semester. These visits are spaced out according to the three stages of writing: planning, drafting, revising – but you can and should visit prior to the due date.

You will be required to make appointments ahead of time and follow the policies and procedures of the writing center. Each student is required to submit documentation from the writing center indicating that they were there and prepared in order to receive credit.

Late visits will only be accepted up to 14 business days after the deadline. Failure to attend these visits will result in a zero. No partial credit will be given. (Total Points: 60 Points)

Participation

Poll Everywhere: Attending class regularly and actively participating in lectures and drafting sessions are essential components for succeeding in this writing workshop. While attendance cannot be directly graded, your regular participation will earn you points through participation assignments.

This semester, among other canvas and paper activities, we will utilize Poll Everywhere to manage class participation. Poll Everywhere is a free platform that can be accessed via phone, computer, or tablet. During each class, I will provide codes for you to use, as well as a URL link, which will allow you to answer questions or complete the day's assignments.

If you are absent, you will lose out on points. See the Class Policies section for policy on earning back participation points.

(Total Points: 300)

Major Projects

You will complete two major projects for this semester.

Literature Review: The literature review is an important genre in sociological writing. It is a synthesis of research that has been done about a certain topic –asking us what we already know and helping us discover what we don't know. You will be required to compose a literature review (at least 2000 words or more) based on 8 peer-reviewed journal articles in the field of sociology. You will compose a cohesive review of the literature highlighted by an analytical thesis statement.

Examples and an outline will be provided to assist you in this process as well as a paper checklist in Canvas. You will complete one graded draft which will be provided feedback, before submitting a final draft. Further requirements will be defined in the assignment instructions. The Literature Review will be worth 100 points.

Op-Ed: As professional sociologists, Op-Eds (or opinion essays) provide a powerful avenue for engaging with the public. In this class, you will draft an opinion essay based (at least 600 words or more) on an aspect of your literature review topic. Your essay will advocate for or against a particular stance, leveraging the literature you have previously collected as supporting evidence. This assignment will be submitted once during the semester as a draft (worth 20 points). After receiving feedback, you will revise your essay and submit the final Op-Ed. (100 points)

Total Points for the Class: 900

Extra Credit

Each student is allowed to review the course at the end of the semester. This review is incredibly important to the university and me personally – it helps determine the direction of the course in the future and contributes to job retention. Therefore, I will give each student ten points extra credit for filling out this evaluation tool.

To receive this extra credit, please take a screenshot or picture of the final screen in SOTE/SOLATE which says you've completed the evaluation for my course. Once you submit this picture to our Canvas page, I will add the points to your grade. Because evaluations are meant to be confidential, please be extra careful not to include a picture of your evaluation itself.

Of particular importance to me is the strength and improvements section. Even a tiny bit of (constructive) written feedback can help me decide what to keep at the end of the semester, ways to improve assignments, or what I should get rid of. I take these very seriously, as I want to make interesting courses that facilitate your learning!

Grading Scale

The final class letter grade will be assigned as follows. *

A+: 97 - 100%
A: 94 - 96%
A-: 90 – 93%
B+: 87 - 89%
B: 83 - 86%
B-: 80 - 82%
C+: 77 - 79%
C: 73 - 76%
Not passing: 72 – 0%

*I will round up if your grade is .5 or above only. Meaning if you have 93.5%, I will round that number up. If you have a 93.4%, however, your grade will be rounded down to 93%.

Please note: Percentage grades can often fluctuate during the semester. Please do not panic if one assignment throws a grade off. It will not remain so forever so long as you continue completing assignments.

Class Policies

How do I contact the professor?
I prefer you email me via Canvas. That way I have a constant visual reminder that an email is waiting and it won't get lost in my school inbox. I attempt to respond within 24-48 business hours (excluding holidays). If something is urgent, like a question about a project, please do not wait until the last minute. I cannot guarantee that I will get back to you immediately.

If I haven't gotten back to you in 48 hours, please send a (kind) follow-up email.

Is there a late policy?

I completely understand that your lives are busy, and/or you may experience poor health during certain points in the semester. As a professor, we go through this too. To that end, I have created a late policy that considers individual situations and gives you an on-ramp back to the course. **Unless otherwise noted**, late submissions will be accepted and docked points.

In order to utilize the late policy, you will need to write a note in the comment box of the assignment indicating you need an extension **prior** to the due date. Each day you will get a 5 percent penalty for late work. This will continue until you reach 25 percent (15 days after due date). After 15 days no assignments will be accepted.

If you have further questions about the late policy, please email me or see me during office hours.

What happens if I don't turn in anything?

All assignments that are missing will be marked at 25 percent. Instead of giving you zero points, which makes it almost impossible to rejoin class after a period of hardship, you will have fewer points to make up.

That said, this is not a permanent solution, particularly in writing workshop where a C- is considered not passing. So please, make up the assignments where you can.

Can I make up participation points?

Yes! If you miss class, you have the opportunity to earn back up to 40% of the lost points by attending office hours. In order to do so, you must visit office hours within one week of your absence, bringing a written report outlining where you are in the writing process and a plan to catch up.

For students missing multiple days in a row, I encourage you to attend office hours as soon as possible to discuss how to get back on track. If your absences are more than a week apart, you will need to attend office hours for each missed period in order to demonstrate continued progress. The maximum points you can earn back **across all absences is 40%**, regardless of how many days you miss.

Important Note: If you do not attend office hours within one week of an absence, you will forfeit the opportunity to earn back points for that missed work. However, continued communication with me about your situation is encouraged, and I am happy to help you develop a plan to stay on track.

Will you look over drafts of assignments?

Of course! Looking over drafts of assignments takes time though, so I would ask that if you want feedback on a draft, please email it to me at least 72 business hours before the deadline. Feedback will be conceptual in nature and will not include inline-edits. I am happy to tell you if you are on the right track, and whether there are any glaring issues.

Will we get feedback on completed assignments?

You will receive all the necessary feedback to help you succeed! While some assignments are graded on a pass/fail basis and won't require detailed feedback, others will be assessed using rubrics, and I'll provide constructive feedback accordingly.

To keep things efficient, I will leave comments on the first paragraph (or page, depending on the length of the assignment) along with the rubric. These comments will follow an abbreviation system, which you can reference in a corresponding Google Doc linked in Canvas. If you'd like more feedback beyond that, feel free to attend office hours, and I'll be happy to go over the rest of your work with you.

Please note that for late work, I will grade it using a rubric, but detailed feedback will only be provided if you attend office hours or speak with me after class. I'm always happy to discuss your strengths and areas for improvement!

When will my assignments be graded?

I will begin grading assignments in the order in which they are received. My goal is to have assignments graded one week after submission at the absolute latest.

Please note: If you turn in your assignment late, I will attempt to grade your assignment in a timely manner, but I cannot make guarantees. New assignments are given priority.

Can I appeal the grade I received?

Yes. You have up to one week after the submission of grades to appeal grades earned. In order to do so, you will need to write a concise report, using both the instructions and the rubric if provided, to explain where there is an inconsistency. This doesn't mean that I must change your grade, but I will be happy to hear out your thought process and make changes if I feel they are appropriate. After one week, no grades can be appealed.

What if Canvas isn't working and I need to turn in an assignment?

Canvas does not usually crash for one student only. In the case of a school-wide Canvas issue, the university will send out an announcement. I will then make an announcement about potential assignment extensions.

In the case you are having an individual technical issue that hinders your ability to submit an assignment on Canvas, please email me the assignment ASAP.

Where do I go if I have general questions about Canvas?

If you have general questions about Canvas, please feel free to click on this link.

What if I'm having internet connection issues?

In the event that you are having internet connection issues and need to turn in an assignment, each document on your computer shows when you created the document and when you last modified it. I want you to email me a picture of the date created and date modified on the assignment, whenever your internet services are restored. You will receive proper credit so long as it was completed on time.

I have a disability and I need accommodations. How does this work?

Both students and professors have certain responsibilities in order to establish the proper accommodations for student success. Student responsibilities include but are not limited to: getting medical documentation, taking that documentation to Accessibility Services, getting the official letter documenting accommodations needed, presenting that letter to the professor, and bringing any texts (including PDFs) to Accessibility services to be loaded on screen-readers (if applicable). My responsibility is to provide you the accommodations that are given in your letter.

Please Note: Accommodations are not retroactive. Meaning if you bring me an accommodations letter mid-semester, it only applies from that moment forward. No additional time, makeups, etc. will be provided for assignments and activities prior to receipt of accommodations letter. Please give me your letter ASAP – help me, help you.

What is Academic Dishonesty?

Academic dishonesty includes a range of prohibited behaviors such as plagiarism, cheating on quizzes and exams, working on exams as a group etc. Plagiarism is the most common of these offenses and so I want to take a little time to clarify what plagiarism constitutes.

In the most basic sense, plagiarism is taking the thoughts, ideas, opinions, or work of others and presenting it as your own. It happens in a variety of ways sometimes by accident (like paraphrasing an idea and forgetting to cite), or on purpose (like directly copying or buying a paper), but no matter the context plagiarism is plagiarism.

Please be aware you are responsible for knowing about the various types of Academic Dishonesty located in your student catalogue. Failure to read the catalogue does not excuse academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism also includes copying your own work. You cannot "double dip", meaning you cannot (1) submit the same paper for two courses, (2) use parts of a paper in one class and insert them into another, or (3) submit any of your work as a "new assignment" which was previously submitted elsewhere (either in this class or in another class).

If I commit Academic Dishonesty, what's going to happen to me?

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. If such an act occurs, there are several avenues that I may pursue ranging anywhere from having you redo the assignment or assigning a zero, to assigning an F for the course. In addition to these individual punishments, I will write up an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report beginning with the very first act of plagiarism. These reports are sent to the Academic Affairs Office. Continued plagiarism reports could result in expulsion from the university. If you are having trouble understanding plagiarism it is your responsibility to see me during office hours for further help.

AI Policy

I understand that as people living through the advent of AI there is a temptation to use it for everything – it is a really interesting piece of technology! However, in this classroom I expect that AI usage will remain at minimum, as an assistant to help develop a skeleton outline, and at maximum, as an editor, rather than as a replacement for original thought. What does this mean for you?

It means that if I suspect you've used AI you will 1) be required to attend a meeting with me during office hours (or at a time which works for both of our schedules), 2) you will produce proof that the work is original (showing the before and after of AI) and/or 3) you will be required to sit for an oral exam / conversation regarding the work.

In the case where you cannot prove that you created original content that was then edited by AI, your ability to demonstrate understanding and/or application face-to-face will replace the zero you would receive for using AI to create content. The maximum points earned in this case is a 90 percent.

Are the Materials of This Course Copyrighted?

My lectures and course materials, including presentations, tests, exams, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. I encourage you to take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. However, you may not, nor may you knowingly allow others to, reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly without my express written consent.

This includes providing materials to commercial course material suppliers such as CourseHero and other similar services. Students who publicly distribute or display or help others publicly distribute or display copies or modified copies of an instructor's course materials may be in violation of University Policy 406, The Code of Student Responsibility. Similarly, you own copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in anonymously posting your answers or papers on the course web site as examples, I will request your written permission.

Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during class unless the student obtains permission from the instructor. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Students with specific electronic recording accommodations authorized by Accessibility Services do not require instructor permission; however, the instructor must be notified of any such accommodation prior to recording. Any distribution of such recordings is prohibited.

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic of the Week	Readings and Resources (due before class on Mondays)	Assignments due	Important Dates
1	1/27 – 1/29	☐ What genres of sociological writing will we be tackling?	☐ Syllabus and Assignment Instructions ☐ The Literature Review Checklist ☐ The Literature Review Outline	☐ Syllabus Agreement ☐ Personal Essay: Selecting a topic (250 words)	
2	2/3 – 2/5	☐ Ethical Considerations of AI in Writing ☐ **No Class 2/5**	☐ ChatGPT as Assistive Technology	☐ Personal Essay: Exploring the Impact and Ethics of AI (500 words)	2/3: Waitlist ends
3	2/10 – 2/12	☐ What constitutes literature and how do we find it?	☐ Web Literacy for Students - SJSU ☐ Evaluating Internet Resources - Georgetown	☐ Work Cited List ☐ What do we already know and what have we been told? (250 words)	
4	2/17 – 2/19	☐ How do we annotate Journal Articles ☐ Basic APA Style (W)	☐ Online Workshop: Recognizing Parts of a Research Paper (11:43) ☐ Online Workshop: Un-Blurring Plagiarism and Paraphrasing Workshop (~9 min) ☐ Reading 3 Individual Articles ☐ Example Annotations APA and ASA Style Guide	☐ Annotation 1 - 3	2/18: Last drop-day
5	2/24 – 2/26	☐ Group Feedback Session (M) ☐ Online Workshop: Using Elicit (W)	☐ Select a time to meet at my office	☐ Personal Essay: Leveraging AI as a Reading Tool (250 words) ☐ Writing Center Visit: Planning / Pre-Writing (organization)	
6	3/3 – 3/5	☐ How do we write a literature review? Key parts and language needed.	☐ Reading 3 individual articles ☐ Sentence Variety and Rhythm (W) ☐ Selecting and Integrating Source Material (W)	☐ Annotations 4-6	

			☐ Online Workshop: Writing Concisely and Eliminating Wordiness (~7 min) ☐ Online Workshop: Creating Easy-to-Read Paragraphs (10:44)		
7	3/10 – 3/12	☐ How do we begin to draw connections between articles?	☐ TBD	☐ Organized Notes Assignment (250 words) ☐ Writing Center Visit: Drafting (Content / Organization/Grammar)	
8	3/17 – 3/19	☐ Exploring completed versions	☐ Final Paper Checklist	☐ In-class review due (150 words)	
9	3/24 – 3/26	☐ How do we provide actionable feedback?	☐ Final Paper Checklist	☐ Draft of Literature Review Due (2000 words) ☐ In-class Peer Review Due (150 words)	
	3/31 – 4/2	Spring Break			
10	4/7 – 4/9	☐ One-on-One Meetings: Discussing Intro and Section 1	☐ Online-Workshop: Muscle Verbs for Good Writing (17:26) ☐ **Workshop:** Revising for Clarity (M)	☐ Writing Center Visit: Revising (Organization / Formatting) ☐ Literature Review Due - 4/11 @ 5pm (2000 words)	
11	4/14 – 4/16	☐ How do we use sociological knowledge to write Op-Eds?	☐ Thomas Friedman Explains... ☐ How to Write an Op Ed or Column ☐ Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers New York Times Opinion Guest Essays	☐ Draft Op-Ed Due (600 words)	
12	4/21 – 4/23	☐ Peer Review	☐ Op-Ed Paper Checklist	☐ Peer Review Due (150 words) ☐ Op-Ed Due (600 words)	4/22: Withdrawal Deadline
13	4/28 – 4/30	☐ How do we write a professional research report?	☐ TBD	☐ Research Report (550 words)	
14	5/5 – 5/7	☐ How do we write a statement of purpose for graduate school?	☐ How to: Write a Statement of Purpose ☐ Dr, Khalifa's Guide	☐ Statement of Purpose (350 words)	

15	5/12	☐ Professional Writing: Requesting Letters of Recommendation	☐ Hailey's Student Guide to LORs	☐ Letter of Recommendation Request (350 words)	